

# HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## 2023 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

### Academic Excellence

- Fund an HCPS early childhood literacy mobile classroom to provide children and families with access to high-quality resources, including empowering parents with practical, supporting materials, introducing them to the New Worlds Reading Initiative, and recruiting children for early childhood programs.
- Create and fund a statewide workforce grant program for school districts to apply for start-up funds to develop programs for innovative and high-wage, in-demand career pathways. Fund the state grant program at \$20 million.

### Supportive Organization Culture

- Support initiatives to fully fund the Student Transportation categorical, reduce hazardous walking conditions, and seek pedestrian accommodations to improve safer walks to and from school. Authorize local governments to install speed detection systems to enforce speed limits in areas designated as school zones. Any funds received from violations are provided to the school district in which the violation occurred. The funds must be used for the safety of the transportation of students.
- Support VPK funding increases for the school year and summer BSA for school districts to expand programming and to provide a full-day program at no cost to families.
- Support continued dedicated funding and sustainability of the Mental Health Assistance Allocation.

### Exceptional Talent

- Authorize school districts to re-employ retired employees earlier than 12 months after retirement and without FRS pension penalty.
- Support and grow Florida's teaching workforce by funding the cost of background checks for new teacher hires and waive any required Florida teacher certification exam costs to be a certified teacher in the state of Florida. In addition, waive the Florida educator certification renewal fee.

### Fiscal and Operational Responsibility

- Increase the Base Student Allocation by at least 5%, or \$230, and provide school districts with additional flexible operating funds. Allow greater flexibility with funding by eliminating some categoricals in the FEFP.
- Increase FTE counts of students from 4 to 6 times a year to allow for more equity in money following the student. Increase the number of student counts so school districts and charter schools can accurately capture the students they are serving.
- Amend existing law to allow school districts to fund employee salaries who support projects described under Florida Statute to be recorded in the capital fund. The proposed change would improve accounting practices by reducing the amount of revenue transfer that occur between a school district's capital projects fund and the general fund.

