

# Education Funding Advocacy

---

ELLEN LYONS

JESSICA DUBOIS

PAULA CASTANO



**PTA is the Oldest & Largest  
Volunteer Child Advocacy Organization  
in the Country.**

# IMPORTANT!

## PTA is a non-partisan organization

- As PTA we focus on issues that have been voted on by our membership at a national, state, county council or school level
- It can be quite challenging to not focus on individuals, especially with representatives that clearly do not support public education.



# Brief Overview – Public Education in Florida

**1996** Florida legalizes charter schools

**1998** Florida creates FCAT standardized testing

**1999** Under Bush, Florida legalizes Opportunity Scholarship Program vouchers and McKay Scholarship for students with disabilities

**2002** Class Size Amendment in Florida Constitution wins voter approval, litigation over class size begins

**2003** Florida begins appointing education commissioners

**2006** High-water-mark of education funding: \$7,400/student; ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> nationally

**2007** Per pupil funding was \$7,300; reduced to \$7,000 during a special session and was reduced again to \$6,844 later that year

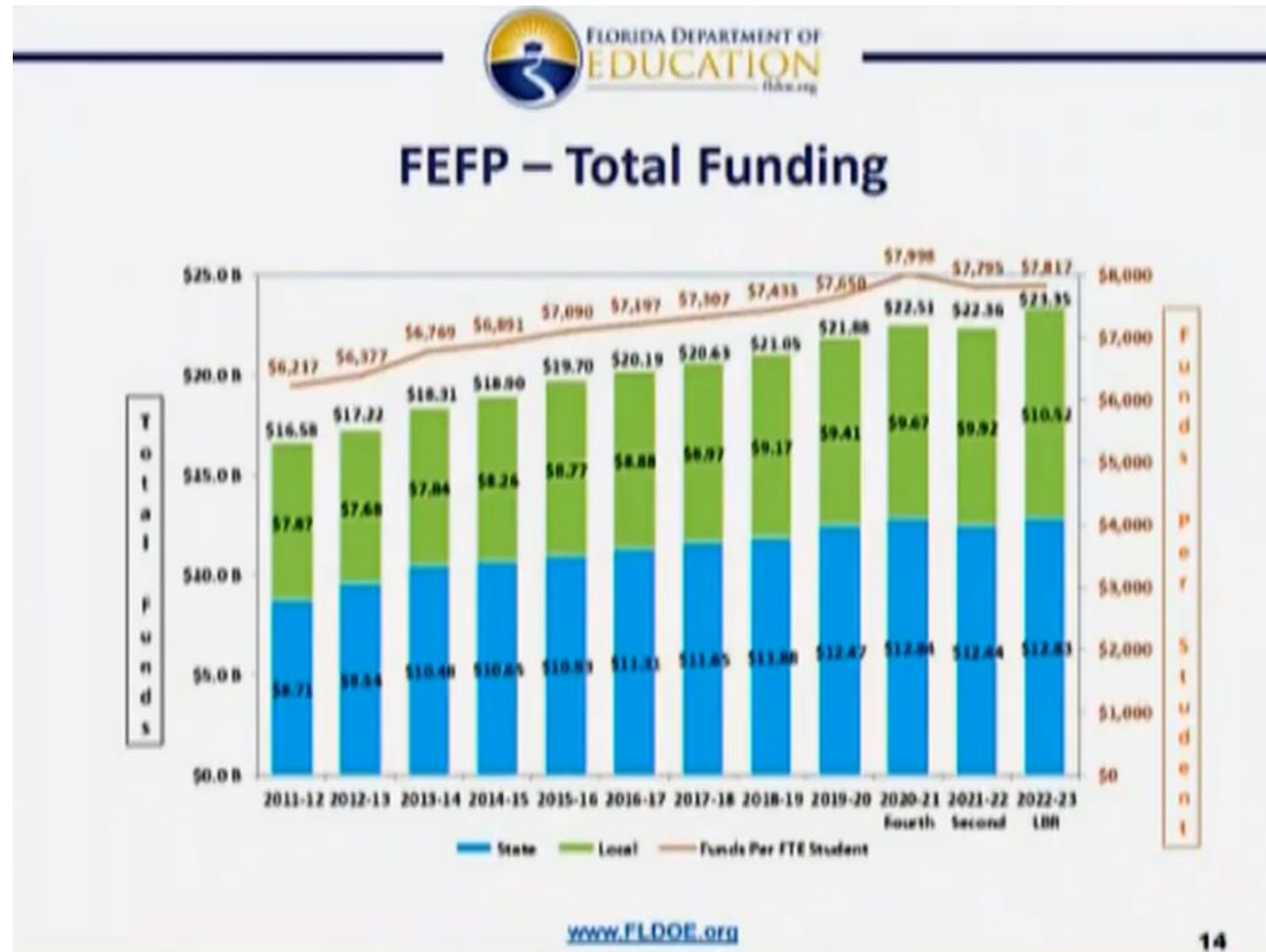
**2008** Voters passed Amendment I, which decreased property tax revenues. The legislature also lowered the millage for school capital projects from 2.0 to 1.75 and then to 1.5. Projected cuts equal \$9.3 billion over five years

**2009** Property tax values plummet driving FEFP down to \$6,400 (\$10k national average); Stimulus money helps districts balance their budgets.

**2010** FEFP up to \$6,873; FL legislature shifts more to property owners, (51% paid by State, 49% paid by local property owners)

**2011** Federal Stimulus money runs out. This is the beginning of serious funding issues

# After financial crisis, funding increases *marginally*





# AMOUNT PER FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT



Fiscal Year	Per Pupil Funding	Increase/Decrease	Fiscal Year	Per Pupil Funding	Increase/Decrease
2007-2008	\$7114.45	\$306.58	2014-2015	\$6925.33	\$89.92
2008-2009	\$6883.90	(\$230.55)	2015-2016	\$7105.60	\$180.27
2009-2010	\$6535.86	(\$367.53)	2016-2017	\$7172.15	\$66.55
2010-2011	\$6683.17	\$147.31	2017-2018	\$7225.13	\$52.98
2011-2012	\$6333.85	(\$349.32)	2018-2019	\$7336.50	\$111.37
2012-2013	\$6458.78	\$124.93	2019-2020	\$7553.34	\$216.84
2013-2014	\$6835.40	\$376.62	2020-2021	\$7858.08	\$304.74
			2021-2022	\$7679.17	(\$178.91)

The amount per FTE for 2021-2022 is \$564.72 higher than in 2007-2008

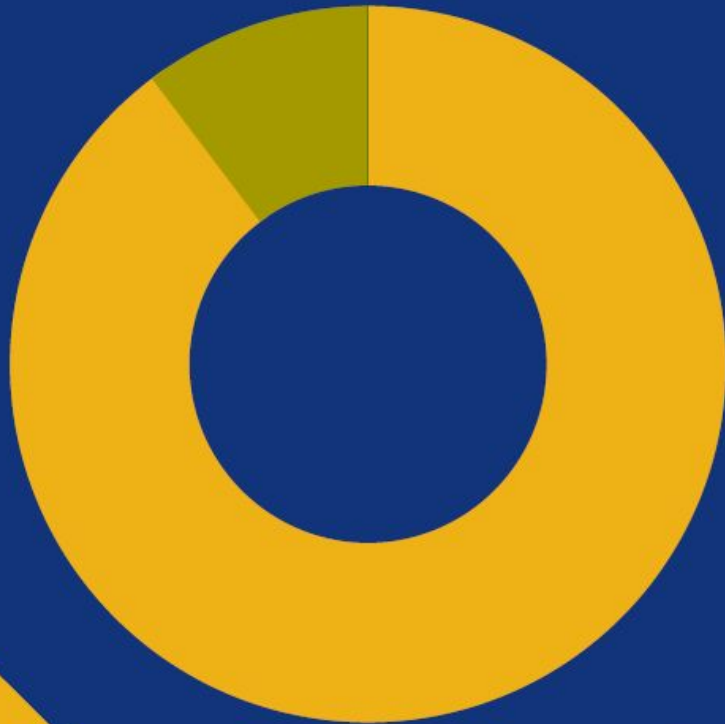
This represents a 7.93 percent increase over 15 years.

The inflation rate in Florida for the calendar year 2021 was 6.81 percent.



# DISTRICT BUDGET EXPENDITURES

All Other Categories  
10.3%



Salaries & Benefits  
89.7%

Category	Expenditures	Percentage
Salaries & Benefits	\$1,451,624,860	89.70%
Purchased Services	\$54,212,835	3.35%
Energy Services	\$40,488,103	2.50%
Material Supplies	\$32,951,983	2.04%
Capital Outlay	\$4,504,475	0.28%
Other	\$32,371,825	2.00%
Transfers Out	\$2,234,570	0.14%
Total	\$1,618,388,651	100%



# EDUCATION FUNDING IN FLORIDA

## HOW FLORIDA'S PER-PUPIL SPENDING COMPARES TO OTHER STATES



**\$7,672  
PER-PUPIL**

Florida ranks in the **BOTTOM 10** in the nation for per-pupil spending at **\$7,672**. According to figures from the U.S. Census Bureau, the national average is **\$11,392** per student every year.

Source: Baker, et al., "Is School Funding Fair?"  
Estimated per student state and local funding, after adjusting for cost of living, poverty, and other factors.

## WHERE FLORIDA TEACHER PAY RANKS NATIONWIDE

The national average starting salary is **\$39,249** and the national average salary is **\$60,477**.

Florida's average starting salary is **\$37,636** and average salary is **\$48,168**.

Florida is ranked **46<sup>TH</sup>** in the nation for teacher pay.

NEA Today, March 2019

## EVEN THOUGH FLORIDA'S ECONOMY IS ONE OF THE TOP FIVE IN THE NATION



Despite having a **\$1 TRILLION** state economy, the **3<sup>RD</sup>** most populous state, **4<sup>TH</sup> LARGEST ECONOMY IN THE NATION** – the **17<sup>TH</sup>** largest economy in the world – Florida is **43<sup>RD</sup>** in the nation when it comes to total public education funding.

SOURCE: Eileen Norcross and Olivia Gonzalez, "Ranking the States by Fiscal Condition, 2018 Edition".



# Charter legislation continues - strong push toward privatization

Florida >

## Family Empowerment Scholarship Program (Voucher)

STATE GROUPS

Voucher | Enacted 2019 | Launched 2019

Florida's Empowerment Scholarship Program was created to alleviate the waitlist of the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program while expanding school choice options for thousands of other low- and middle-income residents. It allows public school students from low- and middle-income families to receive vouchers to attend private schools of their choice. Learn more about the most up-to-date program details on this page, including eligibility, funding, regulations, legal history and more.

*We do not administer this program.*

ELIGIBILITY TEST

APPLY

[STUDENT FUNDING](#)

[STUDENT ELIGIBILITY](#)

[EDCHOICE EXPERT FEEDBACK](#)

[RULES/REGULATIONS](#)

[GOVERNING STATUTES](#)

[LEGAL HISTORY](#)

**74,418**

Participating Students  
(Fall 2020)

**52%**

of Families Income-  
eligible Statewide

**1,978**

Eligible Schools  
(2020-21)

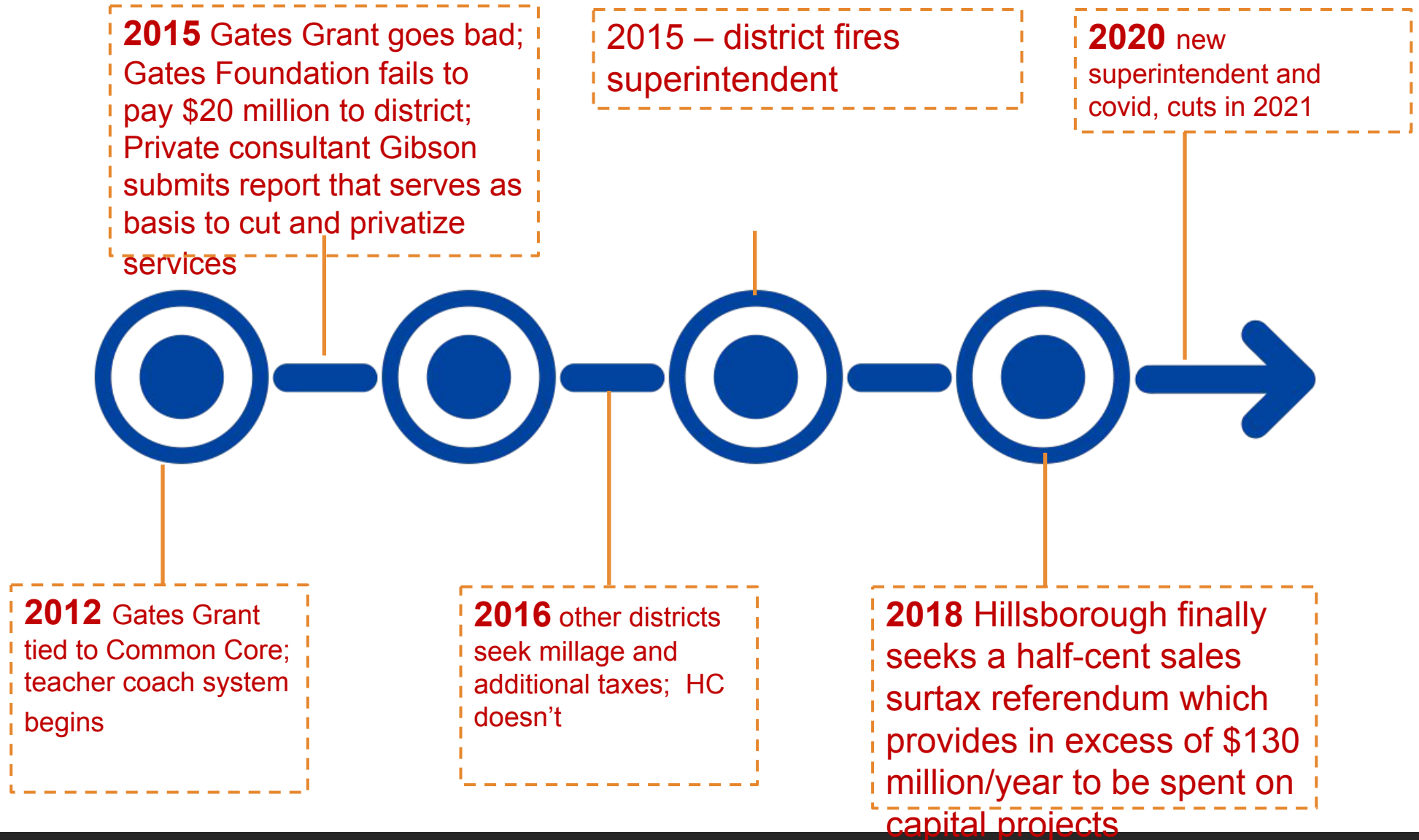
**\$7,300**

Average Voucher Value  
(Fall 2021)

**67%**

Average Value as a Percentage  
of Public School Per-student  
Spending

# Hillsborough County 2012 and Beyond





# Making the Grade 2021

## Florida



### SELECT STATE

Florida

### STATE DEMOGRAPHICS

Enrollment: **2,812,329**  
District Poverty (Census): **17%**  
Percent Asian: **3%**  
Percent Black: **22%**  
Percent Hispanic/Latino: **33%**  
Percent Native American: **0%**  
Percent white: **38%**

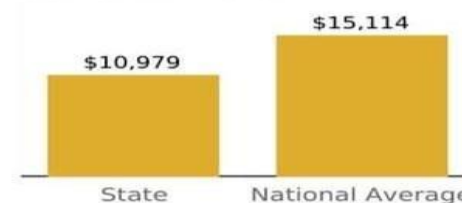
### Funding Level

State and local revenue per pupil, adjusted for regional cost differences.

Florida ranked 45 out of 51 on funding level with \$10,979 in cost-adjusted per pupil revenue. That is \$4,135 below the national average of \$15,114.



#### PER PUPIL FUNDING



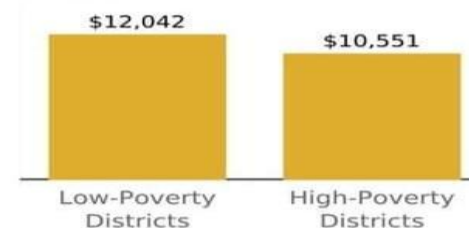
### Funding Distribution

The allocation of funds to school districts relative to the concentration of student poverty. States are classified as progressive, regressive, or flat.

Florida's funding distribution was regressive: on average, high poverty districts receive 12% or \$1,492 less per pupil than low poverty districts.



#### PER PUPIL FUNDING BY DISTRICT POVERTY



### Funding Effort

Funding allocated to support PK-12 education as a percentage of the state's economic activity (GDP).

Florida makes a lower than average effort to fund schools. The state's fiscal capacity (GDP per capita) is lower than average.



#### EFFORT INDEX



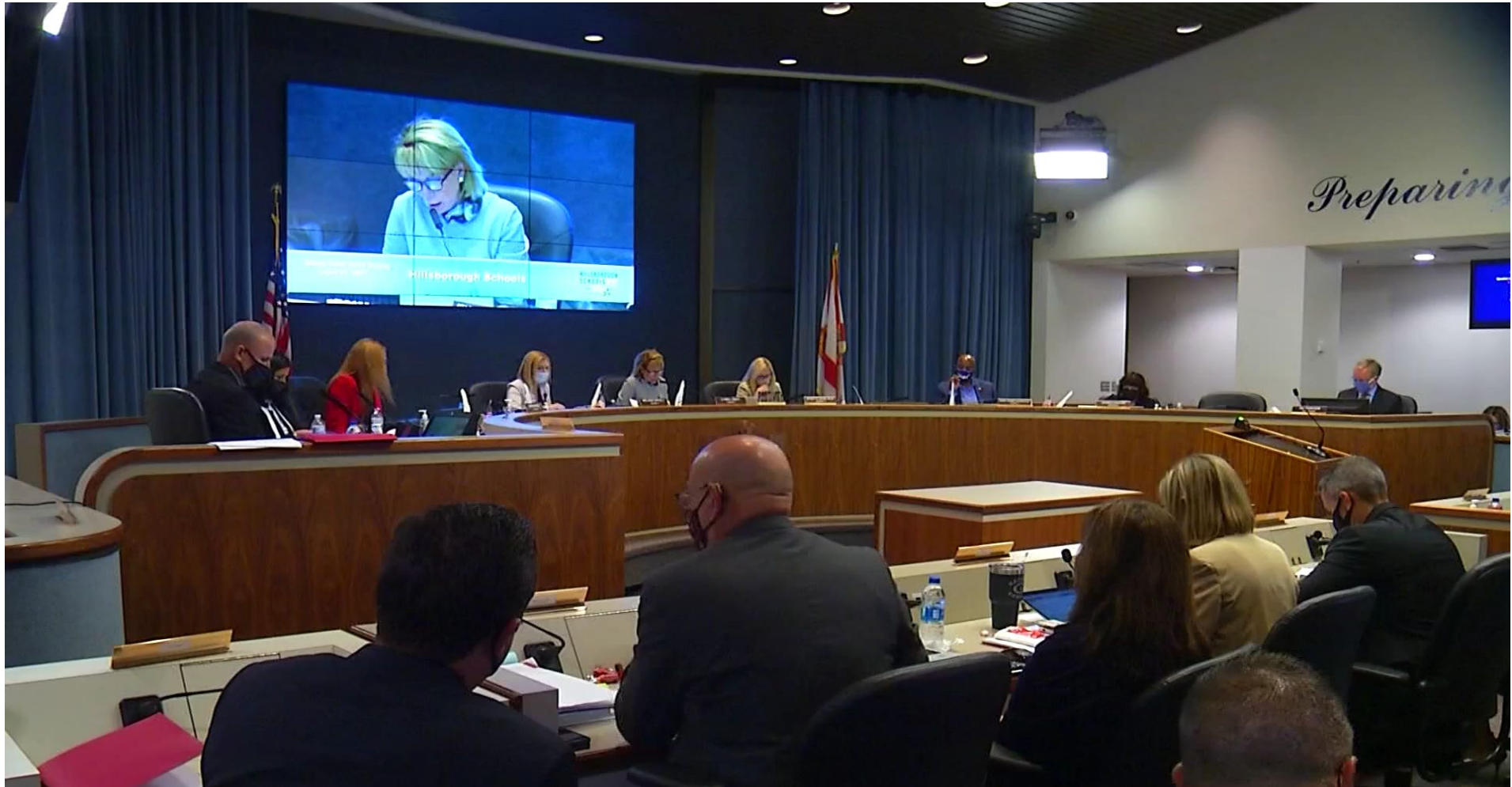
#### PER CAPITA GDP



# Financial Condition of the District

---

[https://www.baynews9.com/tampa/news/2021/04/23/state-watching-as-hillsborough-school-board-convenes-for-emergency-meeting?firebaseString=true&cid=app\\_share](https://www.baynews9.com/tampa/news/2021/04/23/state-watching-as-hillsborough-school-board-convenes-for-emergency-meeting?firebaseString=true&cid=app_share)





# Holding Charters Accountable

---

- Charter School Research Project
  - Compilation of irrefutable facts; past grades, services offered to children

NEWS / THE EDUCATION GRADEBOOK

## Hillsborough School Board surprises, saying no to six charters

A seventh school is getting a shorter contract as the board's Tuesday night vote signals a change in attitude toward charters.



▶ Listen 03:45



The Hillsborough County School Board set precedent for Florida on June 15, 2021 when they rejected several charter renewal contracts and applications of new charter schools. Can we paint a broad stroke on all charter schools in our district? No! There are a number of successful ones. However, the charter schools presented at the meeting and their CMOs were IN VIOLATION OF CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS for free and appropriate public education, lack of exceptional student education programs, non-compliant class sizes, among a host of other issues.

Many newspaper articles and TV stations are skewing this issue- even a big paper in Tampa Bay. Why you ask? There are legislators and even local citizens in Hillsborough County profiting from these big, for-profit management companies. Every time we name someone on our page, the negative news connected to their names are scrubbed on the internet. We saw that happen today! Luckily, HPS Advocates downloads all those articles:)

## How to Build Coalitions

Research, Research,  
Research

Understand relationships

Build Relationships

Get everyone to speak up

Handling nay-sayers



# Advocacy In Action

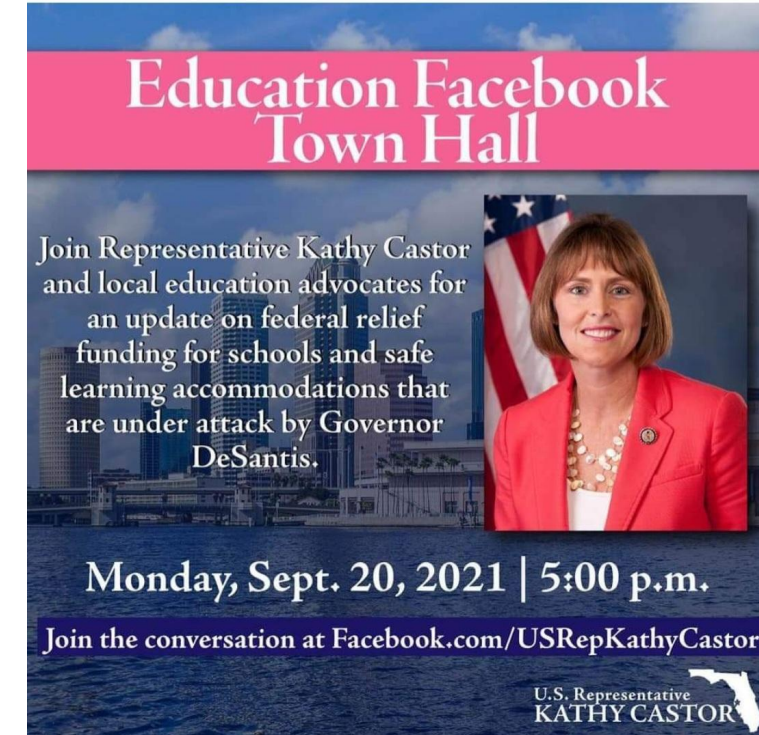
## Why do we have continued success?

### 1] Advocacy on a federal level

If you have Twitter, get 60 Minutes' attention as seen in another member's post. If not, call the show: 212-975-3247 or email: [cbsnews.com](mailto:60minutes@cbsnews.com). Tell 60 Minutes that the FL DOE Commissioner is trying to force Hillsborough County School District to accept charter schools that are breaking federal laws (FAPE, ESE, ELL laws). Mr... See more



**Federal - Federal**  
Congresswoman Kathy Castor  
presenting the Castor  
amendment on the House floor  
– signed into law April 2022!!



**Federal –** In Sept 2021, Rep. Castor held roundtable around ESSER fund release and application for federal food assistance; within days \$820M in funds were applied for at state level

**Federal –** Constant social media/Twitter campaigns towards US Secretary of Education Cardona and other federal officials to bring awareness to FL

# Continued Success, cont.

---

## 2) Advocacy on a State Level



**State** – As a direct result of an email and call campaign, the FL State Board of Education amended an administrative rule that would have increased concordant scores for the Florida standards assessment; increased scores would have affected 25% of seniors in the class of 2022

# Continued Success, cont.

---

## 4) Involve membership with action alerts

- Mid 2021: Email and call campaign led to release of ESSER II dollars to Hillsborough County
- Fall 2021: Citizens Advisory Committee formed to oversee district budget decisions and provide transparency
- Spring 2022: putting together campaign for ESSER III release

Today's Action Alert.

Contact Kathy Castor's and leave a message with her aide, Dewayne and ask for help getting our ESSER money. We still are at risk of going into receivership. Call 813-871-2817





# Continued Success, cont.

## 5) Build strong relationships with trusted local and national media sources



## The Washington Post

### Florida's Republicans keep their attacks on public education right on coming



By Valerie Strauss

Staff writer

June 29, 2021 at 7:41 p.m. EDT

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) speaks at the Shul of Bal Harbour, a Jewish community center in Surfside, Fla., on June 14. DeSantis visited the temple to denounce antisemitism and stand with Israel, while signing a bill into law that would require public schools in his state to set aside moments of silence for children to meditate or pray. (Wilfredo Lee/AP)

Here's a very short quiz:

The Hillsborough County School Board in Florida met this month to consider a dozen proposals to open new charter schools or extend the operating agreements on others. The board considered data, recommendations of its staff and testimony from community members about the charters, which are funded by public tax dollars but privately operated.

Then it voted to approve four and deny eight (not always accepting the staff's counsel). Four of those denied were requests from existing schools to keep. The decisions were made by the board made after members learned about poor academic outcomes, violations of federal law and other issues at some of the schools. Those four schools are supposed to now close and their students must find other schools.

What did the charter-school-loving administration of Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis (R) do? Did it let the local school board do its work without state interference? Did it point out what it considered errors in the process and offer to help the board resolve them? Or did it threaten to withhold funding from the district over the four existing charters that were told to close?

It's Florida, where Republican officials have long since abandoned the pretense that they believe communities should run their own public schools without micromanaging from Tallahassee or that they want to maintain the integrity of traditional [public school](#) districts.

Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran took the last option, sending a letter to the board which said it had violated a state statute by closing down four schools and gave the board a deadline to explain itself and change course or else face the loss of millions of state dollars.

Board lawyers are planning to challenge Corcoran's interpretation of the statute, but district officials say that isn't expected to stop Corcoran from trying, somehow, to keep the schools open. School board Chair Lynn Gray said in an interview that the panel was going to fight him, though, she added, "It could cost us."

# Hillsborough County Council PTA/PTSA 2022 Legislative Platform

## Florida Education Finance Program

Bring Florida's total per-pupil funding to at least the **median** in the U.S. Department of Education's Ranking of the States, which is \$11,732. *The United States average per pupil state per-pupil funding is \$12,624. Florida's current per pupil funding is \$7,795 per student, and ranks near the bottom of education funding in the United States.*

## Overall Education Funding

HCC PTA finds that currently there are over 90 unfunded or underfunded mandates in Florida schools, despite very small increases in the level of per pupil spending, which is just \$700 more than it was 10 years ago. These mandates must be appropriately funded, separate and apart from per pupil spending.

HCC PTA advocates for:

- Adequate funding and the flexibility to implement programs, mitigate unfunded mandates and adopt spending plans that best meet their communities' needs.
- Equity in capital improvement funding using a formula which is based on district student enrollment rather than a standard millage rate for all districts.

## Equity

Education is needed regarding the implications of all legislation on ESE, ELL, SLD and other exceptional students.

HCC PTA urges state and local policy makers to:

- Amend legislation to create pathways for our English Language Learners (ELL) to demonstrate their ability to meet requirements for graduation by providing assessments in their native languages or a waiver of assessment results based on the ELL committee. ELL students face unique challenges in Florida's mandated assessment process.
- Encourage legislation that requires pre-service and ongoing post-service training to include:
  - dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other SLD.
  - the warning signs of dyslexia.
  - the appropriate instructional approaches.
  - the use of early screening for dyslexia.
  - successful approaches to communicating with parents
- Implement and fully fund the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act provisions in all Florida school districts and establish ample funding allocation for the Title 1, Part A set-aside and Title X, which are funding sources used to support the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.



## **School to Prison Pipeline**

HCC PTA finds that:

- Students from two groups, racial minorities and children with disabilities, are disproportionately represented in the school-to-prison pipeline
- Black students are suspended or expelled at a rate almost 3.5 times greater than White students
- Black students are most often disciplined for more subjective offenses, such as throwing food, cursing, disobeying a teacher, loitering, or making excessive noise, whereas their Caucasian schoolmates are less likely to be suspended for more concrete offenses that include smoking, skipping school, or vandalism.

HCC PTA:

- encourages collaboration between law enforcement, the judicial system, and child welfare agencies;
- promotes alternative dispute resolution techniques that are positive and instructive rather than punitive discipline.
- urges the prevention of the incarceration of youth in adult facilities;
- supports assisting youth leaving the juvenile justice system with programs that prevent recidivism.
- recommends the district develop and publish school discipline report cards on the district's website based on data collected through the school environmental safety incident reports. This data should be broken down by type of incident and the imposed discipline. This data should also be broken down by sex, race, English Language Learner status and disability.

## **Voucher Funded School Accountability**

All educational institutions receiving public dollars, whether directly or indirectly, should be held to the same academic and accountability standards as traditional public schools.

- While continuing to oppose vouchers in all forms, the HCC PTA PTSA urges the Legislature to impose strict eligibility requirements on private institutions and non-public K-12 schools receiving public dollars through any state funded voucher, grant, or scholarship programs, and at a minimum, require them to meet the same accountability standards as public schools.
- Our association believes that private school choice systems have detrimental effects on our public school systems. Public dollars must remain vested in public schools for the benefit of all students and the future of our nation.



- Eliminate the Florida Standards Assessments, but do not replace it with any other high-stakes statewide tests, assessments or computer-based progress monitoring
- Stop financially punishing low performing schools and school districts
- The HCC PTA/PTSA strongly advocates that the Legislature stop using the FSA for promotion, graduation, remediation, financial allocation, teacher evaluation, and school grades.
- Stop the use of state or nationally mandated standardized tests as the sole criterion for measuring student progress or school performance. We believe that student assessments should:
  - identify how instruction and learning can be improved.
  - be used to help parents and teachers determine specific academic needs of students.
  - Increase opportunities for student learning.
- Policy alternatives to social promotion and grade retention must be established.

### **Mental Health**

HCC PTA urges state and local policy makers and school districts:

- to employ evidence-based best practice ratios of those most qualified to provide school-based mental health: school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses.
- to provide the necessary resources and support to ensure students have access to the proactive continuum of mental health services and they are incorporated with a strong family engagement component.
- to amend the statute to specify that excused absences from school include both physical and mental health (F.S. 1003.24(4)).
- to reduce the frequency of active shooter drills required by the Florida Legislature as recommended by the November 1, 2019 report by the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission.

### **School Safety**

HCC PTA advocates for full funding for school safety initiatives that are mandated by the state by the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act. The State of Florida currently underfunds school safety for Hillsborough County Public Schools by 50%.

### **Early Childhood Education**

HCC PTA supports expanding and funding early childhood education offerings through Hillsborough County Government and local partnerships to include three and four year olds. When students enter kindergarten prepared to learn with previous classroom experience, there is a greater likelihood that they will be on grade level in reading in the 3rd grade, which is a direct correlation with on-time graduation.

# How do I stay up on what's happening?

- Join HCC PTA/PTSA Advocacy Group Facebook group
- Join Hillsborough County Council PTA/PTSA Facebook group
- HCC PTA/PTSA website
  - <http://hccptapta.org/>
- Join the Florida PTA Facebook group and Advocacy group
- Florida PTA website
  - <https://floridapta.org/>
- Florida PTA Voter Voice
  - <https://floridapta.org/voter-voice-legislative/>
- National PTA Take Action Network
  - <http://www.pta.org/advocacy/takesaction.cfm?navItemNumber=3451>

# How to stay informed?

- Join the FB Group & Turn on Notifications for:
  - HCC PTA Advocacy Group
  - Hillsborough County Council PTA/PTSA
- Twitter @hccpta