



# SESSION FOCUS

The Covid-19 pandemic is teaching everyone what educators already knew: our neighborhood public schools are essential for student learning, for students' emotional and psychological well-being, for the health of our communities, and for the economy. The world watched as our teachers and education staff professionals overcame tremendous obstacles to keep students safe, fed, and learning.

In Florida, educators' dedication to our students stands in sharp contrast to our state's disregard for public education. We are experiencing more than a decade of state-sanctioned disinvestment of our public schools, erosion of local control in our school districts, high-stakes testing regimes that steal away time for real teaching and learning, and a school accountability system that penalizes impoverished schools in poor communities.

Now, more than ever, Floridians need lawmakers who will focus on continuing our **Decade of Progress**. It is time to invest in our neighborhood schools, to retain and recruit the best workforce in the country, and to prioritize student success. We are experiencing a massive teacher shortage all across our state, and the situation has only gotten worse during the pandemic. Florida's lawmakers must prioritize proactive, constructive actions during the 2021 Legislative Session. **We are calling on lawmakers to:**

-  **Preserve and expand the financial investments in our schools, and allocate adequate funds in order for districts to fairly compensate all school employees**
-  **Ensure that students and educators are kept safe in the ongoing pandemic**  
**Help address our educator shortage by allowing qualified teachers to earn multi-year contracts**
-  **Pause the negative consequences associated with high-stakes testing for at least two years**
-  **Allow locally elected school boards more control over their own districts**
-  **Protect academic freedom at our state colleges and universities**

**Florida's students, educators, and public schools deserve our lawmakers' support for public education,** and their genuine effort in creating a "high quality system of free public schools"\* in the state. In the best interest of future generations, lawmakers must do what is right for our schools. What we are seeing instead is time and effort wasted on measures that would harm both students and the people who serve them. **We will continue to stand united against:**

-  **Bills that take away our freedom to join in union to advocate for our students and our profession, such as taking away payroll deductions and singling out educator unions.**
-  **Voucher expansion bills which expand unaccountable private and religious school voucher programs and drain resources from our public schools.**
-  **Retirement legislation that threatens the stability of the FRS pension plan or forces employees into plans that have a less stable and less reliable returns, or require higher employee contributions.**
-  **Legislation that attempts to block and limit the academic freedom of college and university professors.**
-  **Attacks on Florida's Sunshine Laws, such as exempting colleges and universities from revealing applicants for president of an institution.**

## HOW YOU CAN TAKE ACTION TODAY:

Visit the **FEA website** to learn more about session and sign up for **FEA Action Alert texts**.

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 FEA Action Alert Texts  
Text "edactivist" to 31996



\*Florida Constitution Article IX, Section 1.