



SESSION FOCUS

Six Critical Priorities

Strong public schools are the heartbeat of our communities. From the joy and energy of an elementary school cafeteria at lunchtime, to the camaraderie of sharing a school bus ride, to Friday night football with the grandeur of a high school marching band — school is where childhood happens. Our public schools are where children’s imaginations are sparked, where lifelong lessons are learned and where students gain the skills they need to thrive as they transition to adulthood. **Our public schools are the best places to inspire students’ natural curiosity and their desire to learn.** When we work together, we can build the world-class education system that we dream of. By ensuring that resources are available, the Florida Legislature can demonstrate their commitment to providing every child the education they deserve, regardless of race, income or ZIP code.

1. **Pay** for all educators needs to be competitive with the top 10 states nationwide. From pre-kindergarten to graduate schools, students deserve a world-class education . This means they must have highly qualified and certified teachers and support staff. In order to retain the top educators in the field as well as recruit new educators to Florida, we must invest in raising educator salaries.
2. **Provide** qualified, experienced teachers the opportunity to earn long-term contracts so the best teachers stay in our schools and don’t seek jobs elsewhere.
3. **Protect** academic freedom for all our students and teachers K-12, state colleges and universities.
4. **Enhance** the Florida Retirement System without burdening employees with additional costs.
5. **Prioritize** teacher-led assessments and learning over state-mandated standardized tests.
6. **Respect** the rights of people to make decisions locally. Those who know the names and faces of the students are best suited to make decisions regarding their education.



Session Focus

Florida's students deserve to attend schools that are fully staffed with highly qualified and certified teachers; schools with small class sizes that allow for one-on-one attention; schools with full-time registered nurses, counselors and mental health professionals; schools that focus on real learning and authentic assessment; schools where students' unique needs are met and every student excels, no matter, their race, income, ZIP code or ability. Members of the Florida Education Association work hard to ensure **our public schools are places where students' imaginations can soar**, and each and every student is provided the tools and lessons to make their dreams come true.

Unfortunately, self-interested politicians have spent two decades attacking that vision. Rather than investing in schools as a place of world-class education for all students, they have schemed to divert public funding to their friends who profit from charter school corporations and from unaccountable private and religious schools. This diversion of funds has come at a significant cost. Low pay, failed bonus schemes and policies passed in Tallahassee that value student data more than students themselves have forced professional educators to seek employment elsewhere.

Educators have had enough, and we are coming together and demanding better for our students, ourselves and our communities. This legislative session we stand united to ensure lawmakers will live up to their mandate in the Florida Constitution that every student has a right to a "high quality system of free public schools." We are 150,000 members strong from Pensacola to the Keys, and we are speaking with one voice to say that, after two decades of disinvestment in public schools, we are ushering in a decade of progress.

How You Can Take Action Today!

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



2023 Legislative Session Updates
FEAweb.org/Session



FEA Action Alert Texts
Text "edactivist" to 22394

We are calling on lawmakers to:

- » **Expand** the financial investments in our schools and allocate sufficient funds to fairly compensate all school employees.
- » **Ensure** that students and educators are kept safe and learning progress continues as we recover from the pandemic.
- » **Help address** our educator shortage by allowing qualified, experienced teachers to earn multi-year contracts.
- » **Waive fees** for certification renewals, add-on certifications and certification tests for teachers and those in teacher preparation programs.
- » **Design and fund** pathways to teacher licensure for current education staff professionals at no cost to the educator.
- » **Allow** teachers who retire from FRS to return to work immediately rather than sit out for six months.
- » **Open** the extended DROP program to all educators.
- » **Fund** a full-day PreK program in "opportunity zones" of high poverty.
- » **Revise** statutes related to Required Local Effort to maintain current taxation rates.
- » **Provide** all schools the statutory flexibility granted to charter schools.
- » **Prioritize** teacher-led assessments and learning over mandated standardized tests.
- » **Respect** the rights of people to make decisions locally.
- » **Protect** academic freedom for all our students and teachers in K-12, state colleges and universities.