



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 its commitment to providing every child with 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 in 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, rather than working with the teachers and education staff professionals who educate Florida's children to make that dream a reality, certain politicians have tried to silence our collective voice. But those politicians who oppose the rights of teachers and staff to have a union are finding out their plan to attack us is failing. Already, more than 100,000 educators have made the switch from payroll deduction to another form of dues payment. **Very soon, we'll be back at our full strength from the last legislative session of 150,000 members.**

What the politicians don't understand is that educators have had enough; we are coming together and demanding better for our students, ourselves and our communities. 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 in every ZIP code in Florida 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.**



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.
- » **Help** address our educator shortage by allowing qualified, experienced teachers to earn multi-year contracts.
- » **Protect** academic freedom for all students and teachers in PreK-12, state colleges and universities.
- » **Waive fees** for certification renewals, add-on certifications and certification tests for teachers and those in teacher preparation programs.
- » **Promote and fund** pathways to teacher licensure for current education staff professionals at no cost to the educator.
- » **Continue** extended DROP program to all educators.
- » **Restore** previous Cost of Living Adjustments for current and future retirees.
- » **Fund** a full-day PreK program in "opportunity zones" of high poverty.
- » **Revise** statutes related to Required Local Effort to maintain current taxation rates.
- » **Address** the impact of the state's property insurance crisis which affects school and family budgets.
- » **Prioritize** developmentally appropriate, teacher-led assessments and learning over mandated standardized tests.
- » **Respect** the rights of people to make decisions locally.