

Education

Under the Governor's leadership, Florida has become the national leader in education. Florida is again ranked #1 overall in education, #1 in education freedom for the second year in a row and has been ranked #1 in higher education for nearly a decade. The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues to propel Florida's education forward by investing in our students and families.

Several important investments include:

- **\$1.25 billion, an increase of \$200 million**, in funding to provide salary increases for teachers and other instructional personnel.
- **\$1.6 billion** in funding for early child education, including **\$450 million** for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK).
- Historic **\$27.8 billion** in funding, of which **\$15.1 billion** is record state funding for the K-12 public school system.
 - This covers the costs associated with the current projected enrollment of over 3.1 million students, including over 274,000 students projected to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.
- **\$1.7 billion** in state operating funding for the Florida College System.
- **\$3.7 billion** in state operating funding for the State University System.
- **\$125 million** in total funding to reward quality nursing education programs to address nursing vacancies.
- **\$150 million** for the State University System and the Florida College System for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty.

Combatting Antisemitism

In addition to elevated funding appropriated during 2023's Special Session C, to address the rise of antisemitic threats and safety concerns for Florida's Jewish communities, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes the following:

- **\$10 million** to enhance safety measures, hire school safety officers, upgrade safety equipment, facilities and technology, and increase security services at all Florida Jewish Day Schools;
- **\$600,000** for the Florida Holocaust Museum; and
- **\$100,000** for the Florida Holocaust Task Force.

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The budget provides **\$450 million** for Florida's VPK program, a high quality, free education initiative, which serves approximately **138,000** four- and five-year-olds. VPK prepares each child for kindergarten by building a strong foundation for school and focusing on early literacy skills.

The budget also provides **\$6.9 million** for the establishment of the Summer Bridge Program for VPK students who score below the tenth percentile on the second administration of the Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring (CSPM) System.

School Readiness

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget maintains funding provided in the current fiscal year that allowed additional children to be served in the School Readiness program, and rewarded School Readiness providers who participate in program assessments and implement quality improvement strategies.

The following initiatives that support early learning are also maintained at current year funding:

- **\$10 million** for the T.E.A.C.H. program to provide early childhood teacher scholarships;
- **\$4.5 million** for the Help Me Grow program to connect children and families with information, resources and developmental services to enhance health, behavior and learning in the development of young children;
- **\$3 million** in teacher training for statewide professional development to improve childcare instructor quality; and
- **\$3.9 million** for the Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) to deliver high-quality School Readiness curriculum directly to parents so they may strengthen the cognitive and early literacy skills of at-risk children.

K-12 Public Education

Governor DeSantis continues to put Florida's families first. Under his leadership, Florida has implemented the most expansive school choice policies in the nation.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes the highest per student investment of **\$8,842** in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is an increase of **\$175 per student** over Fiscal Year 2023-24. Governor DeSantis is once again acknowledging Florida's hard-working educators by providing funding for school districts to provide any eligible teacher and other instructional personnel with a salary increase.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes **\$27.8 billion** in total funding for the FEFP, which includes the following increases:

- Increase of **\$107** in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- An increase of **\$200 million**, for a total of **\$1.2 billion** for pay increases to teachers and other instructional personnel;
- Increase of **\$20 million**, for a total of **\$180 million** for the mental health allocation; and
- Increase of **\$20 million**, for a total of **\$556 million** for student transportation.

School Safety

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues to invest in school safety initiatives, continuing Governor DeSantis' commitment to ensuring Florida's students and teachers are in a safe and secure learning environment.

- The budget includes the following school safety initiatives:
 - **\$290 million**, an increase of **\$40 million**, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;
 - **\$5.5 million** for the Mental Health Awareness and Assistance Training;

- **\$6.5 million** for the Guardian Program to certify and train school guardians and provide a one-time stipend of \$500;
- **\$845,000** for the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool;
- **\$3 million** to continue providing a centralized integrated data repository and data analytics resources to improve access to timely, complete and accurate information;
- **\$6.4 million** to continue providing school districts access to a mobile panic alert system that is capable of connecting multiple first responder agencies;
- **\$42 million** for public school hardening grants;
- **\$5.8 million** for the procurement of a statewide transparency tool to support the implementation of instructional and library materials;
- **\$6.5 million** to implement safe school technology systems; and
- **\$5 million** for District Threat Management Coordinators.

Literacy Initiatives

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides funding for the following literacy initiatives:

- **\$7.2 million** to continue the early literacy through grade-12 micro-credential and reading endorsement incentives;
- **\$5 million** for the Regional Literacy Teams initiative;
- **\$4 million** for the New Worlds Reading Scholarship Program; and
- **\$3 million** provided to Just Read, Florida! to support literacy initiatives.

K-12 Civics Engagement

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides funding for the following civic initiatives:

- **\$1.5 million** to support and continue expanding the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative, which creates new and enhances existing speech and debate programs with a focus on civic education. Since its inception in 2020, the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative has expanded from 59 schools to over 400 schools in all Florida school districts.
- **\$3.5 million** to provide support to school districts for the improvement of civic literacy for Florida's students using regional civics literacy captains and coaches.
- **\$2.8 million** for the Civics Professional Development Initiative to support professional development focused on the new civics and government standards.
- **\$45 million** for the Florida Civics Seal of Excellence Program that will allow 15,000 educators to receive a \$3,000 stipend for completing the Florida Seal of Excellence endorsement coursework.

Promoting Computer Science

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget maintains **\$10 million** to enhance efforts to certify teachers in computer science courses, and to provide bonuses to teachers who hold educator certificates or industry certifications in computer science.

Teacher Recruitment

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget maintains **\$10 million** in funding for a first come, first served recruitment bonus for retired military veterans and retired first responders

who commit to joining the teaching profession. These heroes are required to teach a minimum of two years. Individuals teaching in a high-demand area may receive an additional bonus.

The program will:

- Provide a bonus of **\$4,000** for 2,000 military veterans and retired first responders.
- Provide an additional **\$1,000** for 1,000 individuals teaching in high-demand areas.
- Waive the initial certification and exam fees for first responders, which is a current benefit that military veterans and their spouses already receive.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget maintains **\$4 million** for the Teacher Apprenticeship Program and Mentor Bonus. The program will provide individuals who have their associate degree the ability to participate in a two-year paid apprenticeship program. The program will provide bonuses for 2,000 mentor teachers to receive \$2,000 upon completion of year one and \$2,000 upon completion of year two.

Higher Education

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget continues to provide key investments in our #1 higher education system and continues the path towards #1 in workforce education by 2030.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes state operating funding for Florida's higher education system:

- **\$1.7 billion** for Florida's state colleges; and
- **\$3.7 billion** for Florida's state universities.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget invests **\$35 million** in state funding to continue the Open Door Grant Program, including **\$15 million** for School District Workforce Education Institutions and **\$20 million** for Florida College System Institutions. The program is designed to create a demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand occupations.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget provides **\$8.5 million** for Alzheimer's and Dementia research at state universities.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget maintains **\$6 million** in total funding for two programs to support Law Enforcement Officers.

- **\$5 million** for the Law Enforcement Academy Scholarship Program to cover the cost of law enforcement academies for prospective officers.
- **\$1 million** for the Out-of-State Law Enforcement Equivalency Reimbursement initiative to cover the cost of the State Officer Certification Exam fee and any necessary equivalency training for law enforcement officers who relocate to Florida.

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget maintains **\$3.5 million** for the Dual Enrollment Teacher Scholarship Program to support public school teachers in obtaining a master's degree in their area of certification to allow them to teach dual enrollment courses on their public high school campuses, increasing access to college level courses to students at these schools.

Bright Futures

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at **\$603 million**.

Holding the Line on Tuition

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget does not include any tuition or fee increases for Florida's colleges and universities. Our students and families should not face any additional financial burdens as they are completing their education.

Performance Funding

The Focus on Florida's Future Budget increases the following performance funding at career technical centers, state colleges, and state universities:

- **\$8.5 million**, for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at career technical centers;
- **\$20 million**, for students earning industry certifications in high-skill, high-demand areas at Florida colleges;
- **\$30 million** in performance funding for state colleges through the 2+2 Student Success Incentive Fund and the Work Florida Student Success Incentive Fund;
- **\$645 million** in performance funding for state universities; and
- **\$150 million** for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty at our state universities and colleges. Of the total, **\$100 million** is included for the State University System and **\$50 million** is included for the Florida College System.

Workforce Initiatives

To meet the goal of becoming #1 in workforce education by 2030, Governor DeSantis has committed more than **\$8 billion** to workforce education programs spanning secondary to postsecondary since 2019, which has achieved the following:

- Postsecondary enrollment has increased with more than 380,000 students currently enrolled and a record 800,000 students enrolled in high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs since 2019.
- Florida's education system became the #1 in the nation for entrepreneurship education and training, with more than 20,000 students earning an industry certification in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ESB).

To continue elevating Florida's workforce program, the Focus on Florida's Future Budget includes an historic **\$853 million** to support workforce education programs to ensure Florida students are prepared to fill high-demand, high-wage jobs, and help Florida meet its goal of becoming first in the nation for workforce education by 2030. Highlights include:

- **\$439.4 million** in operational funding for Florida's CTE programs;

- **\$20 million**, for the Governor’s Pathways to Career Opportunities Grant Program to establish or expand pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs for high school and college students. Within the \$20 million, **\$5 million** is dedicated to the Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program; and
- **\$200 million**, an increase of **\$100 million**, in the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program for the creation or expansion of CTE programs.

The Focus on Florida’s Future Budget continues to invest in Florida’s nursing workforce by maintaining **\$125 million** to support two nursing education initiatives:

- **\$100 million** for the Prepping Institutions, Programs, Employers and Learners though Incentive for Nursing Education (PIPELINE) to reward excellence in nursing education programs.
- **\$25 million** for the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) fund to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners.

The Focus on Florida’s Future Budget provides **\$80 million** to the Florida Semiconductor Institute at the University of Florida to support workforce development for semiconductor manufacturing alongside research and development focused on advanced packaging, artificial intelligence, and assurance.

The Focus on Florida’s Future Budget invests an additional **\$25 million**, for a total of **\$35.5 million**, in the Florida Center for Cybersecurity at the University of South Florida to strengthen the state’s cybersecurity industry by enhancing education, research, and workforce development.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Focus on Florida’s Future Budget provides **\$152 million** for Florida’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

- **\$17 million** in operating funds for Bethune-Cookman University.
- **\$7 million** in operating funds for Florida Memorial University.
- **\$7.5 million** in operating funds for Edward Waters University.
- **\$110.5 million** in operating funds for Florida A&M University.
- **\$10 million** for HBCU facility hardening.

Education Infrastructure

The Focus on Florida’s Future Budget provides more than **\$922 million** in funding for education capital outlay initiatives, including:

- **Special Facility Construction**
 - **\$180 million** for Special Facility Construction projects for Hendry, Wakulla, Gilchrist, Gadsden, Glades, and Putnam counties.
- **Higher Education Construction**
 - **\$53 million** for Florida College System remodeling and renovation construction needs.
 - **\$163 million** for State University System remodeling and renovation construction needs.

- **Maintenance**

- **\$220 million** for public charter school maintenance;
- **\$139 million** for maintenance at the state colleges;
- **\$139 million** for maintenance at the state universities;
- **\$11 million** for lab school maintenance;
- **\$12 million** for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance;
and
- **\$6.3 million** for Public Broadcasting projects.