



Reality Check: Tampa Bay Times “What does 47 cents buy?”

A recent Tampa Bay Times column repeats several misleading statements from a few superintendents about the Legislature’s funding of education. The column alleges the Legislature robs education to pay for school safety.

In reality, this is not accurate. Both student safety and education are funded at historic levels. Comparing the total FY 2017-18 FEFP to the total FY 2018-19 FEFP, the increase in statewide average funds per student is \$101.50. This increase in funds per student reflects a total FEFP for FY 2018-19 of \$21.1 billion; of which approximately 70% is **not** devoted to safety measures or tied to specific earmarks.

However, the Florida House believes that no child should fear going to school. We increased the school safety allocation **151%** to the amount of \$161,956,019. The safety of our students is unquestionably a priority.

If after two sessions of record education funding school districts are still having financial troubles, the issue may lie with internal spending practices—not funding levels.

In addition to funding school safety we:

Invested in Florida’s Children

- The PreK–12 Education state budget totals \$15.7 billion which is a \$621.5 million (or 4.0 percent) increase over the base budget and a \$438.9 million (or 2.9 percent) increase over the current year.
- **FEFP** includes \$21.1 billion in total funding, this includes the \$166.7 million appropriated in the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public Safety Act and represents a total increase of \$484.8 million compared to the current year FEFP.
- The Florida House made an extraordinary commitment to the well-being of our students with \$69,237,286 in new funding for **Mental Health Assistance**.
- **Teachers Classroom Supply Assistance Allocation in the FEFP** increased from \$250 per teacher to \$300 per teacher in an effort to help our classroom teachers get the supplies they need to effectively educate students.
- **Early Learning Services budget** increased by \$36.1 million.
- **The School Readiness program’s** total budget is \$630.8 million and includes an additional \$7 million from federal awards for an estimated 1,228 additional childcare slots.
- The Legislature has accounted for an estimated increase of 26,792 K-12 students with \$198.5 million in funding for **Student Enrollment Growth**.

Funded Florida’s Future without Raising Taxes

- **Required Local Effort (RLE):**
 - The RLE is the amount of funds each school district must provide annually toward its cost of the Florida Educational Finance Program (FEFP) for grades K–12. The Legislature determines the total amount of revenue that must be generated from the RLE, and each local school district generates, collects and retains its RLE by levying millage rates on ad valorem property in the district.
 - The adjusted RLE will result in a \$375.6 million tax reduction to Florida property owners.

Bottom Line: The Legislature has invested a historic level of funding in our education system, while remaining committed to the safety and security of our children. Student safety and education are not mutually exclusive, and both were well funded this past session.