



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

1. PreK teachers to be included as classroom teachers, creating consistency between Pre-K and K-12 teachers.

Goal: There is an imbalance between PreK teachers in the school system and K-12 teachers regarding benefits as well as performance incentives, this imbalance disincentivizes high quality certified teachers from committing to our youngest learners. PreK teachers in the public school system should be included as classroom teachers and given the same benefits and incentives as K-12 classroom teachers.

Proposal Summary: Request an OPPAGA study during the 2021 session, requested by either the Senate President or House Speaker. The study would give a good baseline to the differences between the educators and offer a path toward creating equality for both, incentivizing high quality educators to work with our youngest learners establishing a strong educational foundation for them when they move to K-12.

Additional Information: Pre-K teachers in public schools are not provided the following benefits that are offered to K-12 teachers despite having to meet the same certification requirements:

- *Best and Brightest / Bonuses*
- *Federal Loan Forgiveness (are based off the state statute 1012.01(2) which list teachers K-12)*
- *Extending drop retirement benefits*
- *PreK ESE classrooms do not have a CAP ratio even though these children are removed for smaller classroom instruction (some ESE classrooms have more students than VPK students)*
- *Do not qualify for raises under the State of Florida raise incentives*
- *Do not qualify for teacher authority act*

2. Redefine “classroom teachers” to include all instructional personnel.

Goal: The state’s definition of a classroom teacher from [Section 1012.01\(2\)\(a\), Florida Statutes](#), does not include vital educators like media specialists, counselors, and other instructional personnel who have a significant impact on the success of our students. Additionally, the exclusion of these individuals creates morale issues, disincentivizes those positions, and creates divisiveness within our schools.

Proposal Summary: Including those instructional personnel delineated in 1012.01(2)(b-d) in legislation that has traditionally been targeted only at narrowly defined classroom teachers, especially with regard to minimum salary, pay for performance, etc.

3. School Security: request funding for school guardian training.

Goal: More than \$40 million from The Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program was vetoed over the summer. We would like to work to get that funding reinstated. Without it, there is no funding to train replacements for any guardians who separate from their position. The Sheriff's Departments do not have the funds to do it on their own and district budgets are already challenging.

Proposal Summary: Reinstatement funding for the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program.

Additional Information: The Office of Safe Schools has been gathering information from the Sheriff's Departments throughout the state regarding their anticipated need for recurring funding for the training. They should have good information on what the recurring annual funding would need to be to support this program.

4. Evacuation Drills: Quality over Quantity.

Goal: Schools are currently required to have a fire drill and active shooter/hostage situation drill monthly while school is in session. This requirement takes away significant instructional time to accommodate two drills per month. Request is to make school emergency drills more effective by improving quality and lowering quantity and decreasing interruption to instructional time.

Proposal Summary: Decrease number of drills required to allow for one drill per month alternating fire and active shooter/hostage situation. HB1355 in the 2020 session would have accomplished this by amending Florida Statute 1006.07.

5. Request resources for district social workers and mental health experts.

Goal: Need for more mental health experts and social workers in schools.

Proposal Summary: Increase state funding for these positions by adding new, recurring, money to the education budget or developing a pathway for funding in other budget areas to support mental health of students in our schools.

Additional Information: While mental health funding has increased over the past few years, we are seeing an even greater need in our schools than we have before. Many families are facing additional challenges and we cannot currently fund enough social workers and mental health counselors to meet the needs.

