



Sarasota County Schools 2024 Legislative Platform

- 1.) **Funding** – Continue the statewide funding increases for teacher compensation, additional increases similar to the 2023 Legislative Session for BSA and total FEFP to provide districts the resources needed for various areas, and keep up with rising costs in all aspects of education. This would include:
 - Retain the full calculation of RLE
 - Incorporate additional cost factors in the FEFP for high-cost counties
 - Recreate the state’s funding formula for workforce fund allocation as a yearly model, rather than a three-year rolling model
 - Continue to fund the technical colleges at 100% of the state funding model.
 - Continue or increase funding for those Credentials of Values aligned with the post-secondary and secondary CTE programs.
 - Continue or increase funding for expedited training, such as Fast-Track, Rapid Credentialing, and Quick Response to meet employer high demand, entry-level positions while providing a living wage, benefits, and career opportunities to local talent.
- 2.) **Pre-Kindergarten Opportunities** – Bolster state funding for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten programs, offering full-day VPK for all students, rather than partial-day. Modify the School Readiness Pre-School application to fund wrap-around services for Pre-K students.
- 3.) **School Safety** – Increase the Safe Schools component of FEFP by at least the \$40 million requested by the Florida Department of Education. Increase in the Mental Health Assistance Allocation funding by at least \$20 million and authorize school districts to use the Mental Health Assistance Allocation to fund school counselor, school social worker, school psychologist, and school nurse bonuses to help recruit and retain those essential positions.
- 4.) **Instructional Programming** – Sarasota County Schools requests legislative and Florida Department of Education clarification and guidance relating to CASEL and SEL programming frameworks within state standards, up to and including instructional materials review at the state level.
- 5.) **Teacher Recruitment/Retention** – Similar to military, retired first responders and veterans, fund the cost of background checks for bus drivers and teachers. Currently, Sarasota County Schools employees in those categories pay \$90 out of pocket for those background checks. Exempt penalties for certified out-of-field instructors teaching related subjects, as well as waiving fees for certification renewals, add-on certifications and certification tests for teachers and those in teacher preparation programs.
- 6.) **Deregulation and Accountability** - Allow traditional public schools the same leeway granted to Academically High-performing School Districts and the operational adaptability given to charter schools. This includes eliminating any requirements of public school districts which are above what is required of charter schools. Ensure actionable results from the FAST progress monitoring



Sarasota County Schools 2024 Legislative Platform

system, while preserving the flexibility for students to achieve graduation concordance, including through PERT.

Appropriations Requests

- 1.) **SCS Career Technical Education** – The FARM at McIntosh
 - Currently, Sarasota County Schools has allocated \$3.9M for phase one of this project. The total cost for the remaining phases of the project is approximately \$4M. Sarasota County Schools requests \$3M to assist with the funding of the remaining portion of this project which will have far reaching impacts throughout the Sarasota County community as a whole.

Additional Support

Sarasota County Schools supports the renewal or increase of the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee's Holocaust Education Center's 2023 appropriation in 2024. In a continued effort to be a leader in Holocaust education in Florida, this funding will have a direct impact on our district through the Federation's efforts to:

- Build a comprehensive professional learning program to equip Sarasota County School educators to meet and exceed Florida's Holocaust education mandate for grades 5-12, including providing a summer teacher training.
- Provide customized age-appropriate curriculum and educational materials.
- Provide for the costs of bus transportation and related expenses for regular student field trips to the Center.