

Education

Under the Governor's leadership, Florida has continued to prioritize students, expand opportunities, and empower educators. From workforce education and teacher quality to school safety and academic progress, Florida remains steadfast in delivering a world-class education system. Florida is still the national leader in education as demonstrated by being ranked #1 in education for the second consecutive year, #1 in education freedom for the third year in a row, and #1 in higher education for nearly a decade. The Governor's Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget continues to drive Florida's education forward by investing in our students and families and providing them with choices that best fit their needs.

Several important investments include:

- **\$1.5 billion, an increase of \$246.7 million**, in funding that must be used to provide salary increases for eligible teachers and other instructional personnel.
- **\$1.76 billion** in funding for early child education, including a total of **\$465.8 million** for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) initiatives.
- Historic **\$29.7 billion** in funding, of which **\$16.1 billion** is record state funding for the K-12 public school system.
 - This covers the costs associated with the current projected enrollment of over 3.2 million students, including almost 358,000 students projected to participate in the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program.
- **\$1.7 billion** in state operating funding for the Florida College System.
- **\$3.9 billion** in state operating funding for the State University System.
- **\$130 million** in total funding to reward quality nursing education programs to address nursing vacancies.
- **\$100 million** for the State University System for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty.

Combatting Antisemitism

The Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget includes the following initiatives that support Florida's Jewish communities:

- **\$9 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 and Preschools, and **\$10 million** for the Nonprofit Security Grant Program that provides funds to schools, houses of worship, museums, and community centers that are at high-risk for violent attacks.
- **\$600,000** for the Florida Holocaust Museum; and
- **\$100,000** for the Florida Holocaust Task Force.

Early Learning

Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten

The budget provides a total of **\$465.8 million** for Florida's VPK program, of which **\$431.6 million** will ensure a high quality, free education initiative, which serves approximately **136,000** four- and young 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 maintains **\$4.1 million** to continue supporting the Summer Bridge Program for VPK students who score below the tenth percentile on the final administration of the Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring (CSPM) System.

Finally, the budget provides **\$30.1 million** in funding for the VPK provider designation differential payments that rewards highly proficient or excellent VPK providers.

School Readiness

The Governor's Budget provides **\$1.2 billion** in funding for the School Readiness program and continues the School Readiness Plus Program by providing **\$20 million** in funding that supports families who are transitioning out of being eligible to participate in the School Readiness Program.

The budget includes funding for the following initiatives that support early learning:

- **\$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;
- **\$3.5 million** to ensure quality child care instruction; 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 ensure Florida's families have the ability to choose the best educational option for their children. Under the Governor's leadership, Florida has implemented policies that provide Florida families with a wide variety of school choice options, which includes private school scholarships, scholarships for home school students participating in a personalized education program, and charter schools.

The Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget includes the highest per student investment of **\$9,205** in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), which is an increase of **\$222 per student** over Fiscal Year 2024-25. 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 Governor's Budget includes **\$29.7 billion** in total funding for the FEFP, which includes the following increases:

- Increase of **\$95** in the Base Student Allocation (BSA);
- An increase of **\$246.7 million**, for a total of **\$1.5 billion**, that will be used for pay increases to eligible teachers and other instructional personnel; and
- Increase of **\$10 million**, for a total of **\$566.6 million** for student transportation.

School Safety and Mental Health Initiatives

The Governor's 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:
 - **\$300 million**, an increase of **\$10 million**, for the safe schools component of the FEFP;
 - **\$190 million**, an increase of **\$10 million**, for the mental health allocation;
 - **\$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;
 - **\$3.3 million** to continue the Florida Safe Schools Canine Program;
 - **\$6.5 million** to implement safe school technology systems; and
 - **\$5 million** for District Threat Management Coordinators.

Literacy Initiatives

The Governor's Budget provides funding for the following literacy initiatives:

- **\$5 million** for the Regional Literacy Teams initiative; and
- **\$38.4 million** for the New Worlds Scholarship Program.

K-12 Civics Engagement

The Governor's Budget provides funding for the following civic initiatives:

- **\$1.5 million** to support and continue expanding the Florida 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 Debate Initiative has expanded from 59 schools to over 400 schools in 59 Florida school districts.
- **\$4 million**, an increase of **\$500,000**, 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.

- **\$10 million** for the Florida Civics Seal of Excellence Program that will allow approximately 2,800 educators to receive a \$3,000 stipend for completing the Florida Seal of Excellence endorsement coursework.

Promoting Computer Science

The Governor's Budget continues support for the Computer Science Certifications and Teacher Bonus initiative by providing **\$8.5 million** in funding 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.

Higher Education

The Governor's Budget provides key investments to continue the mission of Florida's #1 ranked higher education system while moving towards becoming #1 in workforce education by 2030.

The Budget also includes state operating funding for Florida's higher education system:

- **\$1.7 billion** for Florida's state colleges; and
- **\$3.9 billion** for Florida's state universities.

The Governor's Budget maintains **\$11 million** in total funding for two programs to support Law Enforcement Officers and First Responders.

- **\$10 million** for the First Responders Scholarship Program to provide financial assistance at approved training programs.
- **\$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.

Bright Futures

The Governor's Budget fully funds the projected student enrollment for the Bright Futures Scholarship Program at **\$632 million**.

Holding the Line on Tuition

The Governor's 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 Governor's Budget increases the following performance funding at career technical centers, state colleges, and state universities:

- **\$10 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

- **\$100 million** for the recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty at our state universities.

Workforce Initiatives

To meet the goal of becoming #1 in workforce education by 2030, Governor DeSantis has committed more than **\$10 billion** to workforce education programs spanning secondary to postsecondary since 2019, which has achieved the following:

- Postsecondary enrollment has increased a record of over 479,000 students currently enrolled and a record of over 800,000 students enrolled in high school Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs since 2019.
- Florida's education system is #1 in the nation for entrepreneurship education and training, with over 81,000 students earning an industry certification in Entrepreneurship and Small Business (ESB) since 2021-2022.
- Since 2018-19, over 443,000 rapid credentials have been awarded to date, reflecting the state's strong commitment to workforce readiness.

To continue elevating Florida's workforce program, the Governor's Budget includes **\$766 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:

- **\$449.4 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
- **\$100 million**, in the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program for the creation or expansion of CTE programs.

The Focus on Fiscal Responsibility Budget continues to invest in Florida's nursing workforce by maintaining **\$130 million** to support two nursing education initiatives:

- **\$100 million** for the Prepping Institutions, Programs, Employers and Learners through Incentive for Nursing Education (PIPELINE) to reward excellence in nursing education programs.
- **\$30 million** for the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) fund to incentivize collaboration between nursing education programs and healthcare partners.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The Governor's Budget provides **\$146.5 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.
- **\$115 million** in operating funds for Florida A&M University.

Education Infrastructure

The Governor's Budget provides **\$795.5 million** in funding for education capital outlay initiatives, including:

- **Special Facility Construction**
 - **\$191.8 million** for Special Facility Construction projects for Baker, DeSoto, Gilchrist, Hendry, Holmes, Union, and Wakulla counties.
- **Maintenance and Education Capital Projects**
 - **\$239.8 million** for public charter school maintenance;
 - **\$143.9 million** for maintenance at the state colleges;
 - **\$143.9 million** for maintenance at the state universities;
 - **\$8 million** for state university construction;
 - **\$10 million** for lab school maintenance;
 - **\$7 million** for the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind maintenance;
 - **\$7.6 million** for Public Broadcasting projects;
 - **\$1.5 million** for the Division of Blind Services; and
 - **\$42 million** for the School Safety Grant Program.