ABOUT THE FOUNDATION FOR FLORIDA’S FUTURE

The Foundation for Florida’s Future supports Sunshine State leaders in developing and advancing a broad range of student-centered policy solutions that increase student learning, advance equity, expand access to a quality education and ready graduates for college and high-quality, high-paying and high-demand 21st century careers.

A PROVEN RECORD | 20 YEARS OF REFORM

FLORIDA IN 1999 VS. FLORIDA IN 2019

Nearly half of Florida fourth graders were reading severely below grade level.

Fourth Grade Reading

Ranked 6th in the nation in fourth grade reading achievement.

Only 0.4 percent of all K-12 students - 9,135 - attended a public charter school.

Public Charter Schools

More than 1 in 10 students - 313,000 - attended a public charter school.

Increased Florida’s statewide graduation rate by more than 30 percentage points.

High School Graduation

More than 140,000 low-income students and students with disabilities received scholarships.

K-12 Student Scholarships

Fewer than 10 students received a K-12 scholarship.

Fourth Grade Math

Ranked 4th in the nation in fourth grade math achievement.

Nearly half of Florida fourth graders were performing below grade level in math.

Advanced Placement

Ranked 3rd among states for the percentage of students successfully completing AP courses.

Nearly half of Florida fourth graders were performing below grade level in math.

Ranking among the worst 10 states for the percentage of students successfully completing AP courses.

3-YEAR IMPACT | 2017-2019

$392 million

Additional funding for charter schools

300,000

Charter school students benefitting from new capital outlay funds

$177 million

New funding for private school choice programs

61,600

Nearly funded private school choice scholarships

$11.5 million

New funding for computer science

86,000

Students with expanded access to online courses

1st

In the nation of Hope charter program for rapid turnaround of failing schools

Largest

First-year enrollment in private school choice history (Family Improvement Scholarships)

885,500

Students benefiting from new or improved early literacy policies

2nd

In the nation of low-income students at risk for dropping out of high school

1st

In the nation of Reading Scholarship Accounts for struggling readers

11.

National Assessment of Educational Progress

2. The College Board

3. Florida Department of Education

4. Step Up for Students

5. National Center for Higher Education Management Systems

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FIRST IN CLASS FLORIDA

THE FLORIDA STORY
Two decades ago, Florida began a massive overhaul to transform its education system from one that accepted mediocrity to one that puts students first, with high expectations and educational opportunity.

THE RESULT? Florida’s students rose from the bottom of the pack to the top ten nationally in reading and math. But, according to the nation’s most recent report card, Florida’s students—as in other states across the country—are beginning to stagnate. And that’s not good enough for the Sunshine State. When it comes to education, it’s time to make Florida first in class.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD
Despite Florida’s monumental progress:
• More than 60% of 4th graders aren’t reading on grade level.¹
• Over 65% of 8th graders aren’t proficient in reading or math.¹
• 13% of high schoolers aren’t meeting the requirements to graduate.³
• 100,000 students are waiting to attend a charter school.³
• Nearly 39,000 students who applied for special needs- and income-based scholarships remain on waitlists.⁴
• 1/3 of high school graduates aren’t immediately pursuing college.⁵

THREE GOALS IN THREE YEARS
To get back on track, state leaders can adopt 21st century policy solutions that put Florida’s students first and ensure the state remains a model for the nation.

WILL YOU SUPPORT OUR WORK to place Florida First in Class?

3 GOALS

1. STUDENT SUCCESS
   Close learning and opportunity gaps for all students, especially our most at-risk students through support for early literacy, resources for low-income students and bridging the digital divide. Florida will be in the top 10 for student achievement in all grades and subjects.

2. EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM
   Increase options for families, teachers and schools so Florida can lead the nation in educational opportunity and innovations. Florida will remain #1 in the nation for family empowerment.

3. EDUCATION TO WORKFORCE
   Create high-quality, education-to-workforce pathways leading to high-skill, high-wage, in-demand jobs. Florida will be #1 in the nation for quality postsecondary college and career outcomes.
2021 PRIORITIES

STUDENT SUCCESS

• Support success in early literacy:
  - Measure reading skills from pre-K to 8th grade through a statewide-aligned, direct early literacy screener and progress monitoring tool, then target support for students who need it most.
  - Screen K-1 students who are identified as at-risk for dyslexia so parents and teachers are better informed on needs.
  - Support K-4 teachers and administrators with statewide science of reading training.
  - Support struggling readers in K-2 with access to Reading Scholarship Accounts.

• Support low-income students by providing additional funds to schools that serve them.

• Take steps to bridge the digital divide:
  - Annually collect and report data on device and internet connectivity to identify gaps with families and teachers.
  - Ensure all low-income students have access to devices and broadband internet.
  - Support Florida’s teachers with annual professional development in online learning.
  - Provide parents with access to technical assistance and resources so they can help students with online learning.
  - Create a biennial state term contract for digital devices to lower cost for districts and taxpayers and simplify procurement for districts that choose this option.

EDUCATIONAL FREEDOM

• Support military, foster care and adopted students with guaranteed access to educational choice through the creation of the new Family Heroes Scholarships.
• Expand access to Family Empowerment Scholarships and McKay Scholarships by removing the requirement for prior year public-school enrollment.
• Customize learning for students by converting Florida Tax Credit Scholarships and Family Empowerment Scholarships to ESAs.
• Close learning gaps by establishing Learning Equity and Progress (LEAP) grants for public school families impacted by learning loss during the COVID-19 pandemic.
• Provide options for state-certified teachers to work directly with families for student instruction through parent-teacher compacts.
• Create “teacher wallets” so educators have funds and choice in their training opportunities and classroom supply needs.
• Empower public schools to serve more students through part-time enrollment options in district-run schools.
• Allow flexibility for innovative districts and charter schools to establish classrooms outside of district property.

EDUCATION TO WORKFORCE

• Increase incentives and support for students who will earn degrees in areas of critical importance for Florida (high-need, high-wage, high-demand occupations).
• Create a designation for early college high schools, recognizing schools that help students earn an associate’s degree or 30 hours of aligned, postsecondary credit while in high school.
• Create a process for students to receive college credit for certified work experience.
• Create a data dashboard for state leaders that provides information on degrees and credentials earned as well as alignment with workforce needs in the state and local communities.
• Ensure the credentials and skills gained in high school closely align with postsecondary and employment opportunities, including those dramatically changed due to the pandemic.
• Establish a biennial audit to ensure graduates are receiving the coursework and credentials to succeed in college and the workforce.
• Ensure quality of data reporting through data sharing agreements with credentialing organizations.

“We must meet the historic challenges that Florida students and educators are facing by protecting and increasing funding for our schools and at-risk students and advancing policies that empower families and promote equity.” —Governor Jeb Bush

www.aFloridaPromise.org