

Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards

GFCSB Federal Advocacy Platform

Who We Are

The Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards (GFCSB) currently represents more than 1.5 million students in 12 Florida school districts across 19 congressional districts. Together, we speak with one voice to ensure federal investments in public education are strong, reliable, and aligned with student needs.

Our Ask of Congress

Federal investment in public education is a nonpartisan, high-return investment in America's future. Predictable and adequate funding for IDEA, Titles I–IV, infrastructure, mental health, connectivity, and disaster preparedness protects students, strengthens local budgets, and creates resilient communities.

- **Provide adequate, reliable, and timely federal funding** for public schools, ensuring resources reach districts for their intended purposes.
- **Oppose block grants without accountability**, preserve protections ensuring funds benefit the students with the highest needs.
- **Keep federal school funding student-centered**, tied to accountability, transparency, and student outcomes.

Guiding Principles

1. **Student-first:** Students are the ultimate beneficiaries of federal investment in learning, safety, and opportunity.
2. **Local flexibility with accountability:** Districts need flexibility to target resources while demonstrating results and transparency.
3. **Cost-effectiveness:** Investments in teachers, mental health, infrastructure, and cybersecurity reduce long-term costs and build a stronger economy.
4. **National security & resilience:** School facilities, broadband, and data security are essential to continuity of learning and the nation's preparedness.
5. **Educational priorities:** Safe schools, strong teachers, special education services, disaster recovery, and student protections build strong communities, and are critical to the future of the American workforce.

Block Grants Concerns:

Current federal funding structures ensure that investments are tied to specific benefits for identified populations. If federal programs like IDEA or Title I are converted into block grants, it should be with guardrails that ensure the intended student groups are still served, and that a level of accountability is maintained. These programs ensure that children with disabilities get the services they need and that schools serving low-income students receive extra support. Maintaining guardrails would ensure that funds are not redirected to cover budget gaps or unrelated projects. Thoughtful implementation of any redesign of the current delivery of federal support should maintain accountability and protection for our most vulnerable students so they can continue to thrive as part of a successful, strong community and nation.

Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards Federal Priority Asks

1. Fulfill the Federal Commitment to IDEA

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) guarantees students with disabilities a free appropriate public education (FAPE). Yet, historically Congress has funded only a fraction of the federal commitment (~15% vs. 40% authorized). Local school districts shoulder the unfunded mandate, diverting resources from general education.

Ask:

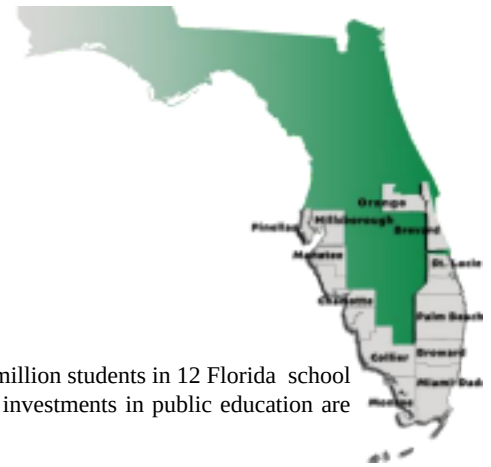
- Establish a multi-year glide path toward full IDEA funding.
- Provide predictable appropriations and targeted support for high-need districts.
- Support the IDEA Full Funding Act (H.R. 2598).

2. Prioritize K–12 Education Funding (Titles I–IV)

Federal Title I-IV Funding is essential for K-12 Education:

- **Title I, Part A** provides supplemental funding for high-poverty schools, helping pay for teachers, aides, materials, tutoring, and extended learning. Without it, schools would face larger class sizes and elimination of programs like after-school and summer learning.
- **Title II, Part A** supports teacher pipelines, including recruitment, mentoring, professional development, and retention. Cuts would worsen shortages and reduce educator quality, directly impacting student achievement.

Visit www.GFCSB.com for more information



- **Title III, Part A** provides funding to support English Language Learners (ELLs) with language instruction, teacher training, and family engagement. Without it, ELL students would fall behind academically, widening achievement gaps leading to a host of worsening academic and socio-economic outcomes.
- **Title IV, Part A** (Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants) helps districts offer well-rounded education, integrate technology, and maintain safe and healthy schools. Loss of funding for these programs would undermine student enrichment and limit digital literacy.

Ask:

- Increase sustained funding for Title I, Part A to expand interventions, tutoring, extended learning, and summer programs for students.
- Increase and stabilize Title II, Part A to address educator shortages through recruitment, mentoring, professional development, and retention.
- Protect and expand Title III to ensure English Language Learners gain language proficiency in order to access academic and workforce opportunities.
- Protect and grow Title IV to sustain STEM, arts, technology, and safe schools' initiatives.

3. Invest in School Infrastructure

Many Florida school facilities are outdated, with urgent needs for HVAC upgrades, safe drinking water, ADA accessibility, energy efficient systems, and hurricane resilience. Local school districts cannot meet these needs without federal partnership. Modern facilities improve student health, learning conditions, community quality of life, and long-term cost savings.

Ask:

- Create and expand flexible capital grant programs (formula + competitive) for HVAC, indoor air quality, ADA compliance, lead/asbestos remediation, school hardening, and energy retrofits.
- Dedicate a K–12 tranche within federal infrastructure programs to ensure schools are not left behind.

4. Support School-Based Mental Health

Students' mental health needs are rising, and schools are often the first point of access for services. School-Based Mental Health Grants allow districts to expand counselors, psychologists, and social workers, as well as telehealth partnerships. Without reliable federal funding, these critical supports are unsustainable.

Ask:

- Secure sustained, dedicated funding for School-Based Mental Health Grants.
- Support workforce pipelines to attract mental health professionals into schools.

5. Invest in School Safety

School districts need resources to protect students through both physical security and prevention. Evidence-based approaches—threat assessment teams, safe school climate initiatives, and evidence based practices—must be paired with infrastructure like smart cameras, controlled access and communications systems.

Ask:

- Expand DOJ School Violence Prevention Program (SVPP)/COPS grants for both safety programming, personnel, and facility upgrades.
- Increase competitive funding for evidence-based prevention strategies alongside physical security improvements.

6. Prioritize Connectivity and Cybersecurity (E-Rate)

Reliable internet access and secure networks are now core to K–12 education. The federal E-Rate program has been essential for broadband and Wi-Fi in schools. However, funding caps and outdated rules limit its ability to cover cybersecurity needs. Districts cannot meet these demands without strengthened E-Rate support and/or additional federal investment.

Ask:

- Protect and strengthen the E-Rate program to preserve discounts for broadband, Wi-Fi, and internal connections.
- Increase funding caps and expand eligible uses to include cybersecurity and modern network security.
- Increase federal investments in educational technology to enhance student academic outcomes.

7. Strengthen Disaster Preparedness & Recovery (FEMA)

Florida schools face frequent hurricanes and natural disasters. FEMA's Public Assistance program can be slow and inconsistent, delaying recovery and reopening of schools. Districts need clear, expedited processes and dedicated school-specific resiliency funding.

Ask:

- Streamline FEMA reimbursement and expand school-specific resiliency authorities.
- Ensure districts can access pre-disaster mitigation and planning grants.
- Protect schools in any FEMA restructuring by prioritizing expedited aid.