

2011 Priority Issues

Funding

PCCPTA urges the Legislature to place priority on the basic education programs and ensure that the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) be adequately funded to guarantee an equal educational opportunity for all children. Funding formulas must assure equalization of funding for all school districts.

Funding Children's Programs

PCCPTA urges the Legislature to take whatever action is necessary to fully fund strategies and programs that ensure the health, safety and education of the children of Florida.

Florida Tax Structure

PCCPTA urges the Legislature to increase tax revenue through tax structure reform in order to adequately fund services necessary to meet the educational, health, safety, recreational and other basic needs of Florida's children. PCCPTA urges immediate reform of Florida's system of sales and use taxes. Exemptions for products and services should be retained only where they meet an overriding public policy interest. PCCPTA supports amendments to the Florida Constitution that enhance the ability of the state to fully fund services to meet the needs of Florida's children.

Tax Limitation

PCCPTA opposes any tax limitation by constitutional amendment that would limit the progress being made in attaining the state's goal for education and for programs that promote the welfare of children and youth.

Taxes Comprehensive Revenue Restructuring

PCCPTA urges the Legislature to implement a comprehensive restructuring of Florida's tax system with the goals of guaranteeing stable and adequate funding of public schools and necessary services for children.

Fulfilling Our Mission as Advocates for Children Since 1897

The mission of PTA is threefold:

- To be a powerful voice for all children,
- To be a relevant source for families and communities, and
- To be a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.



"There is only one child in all the world, and that child's name is All Children."

- Carl Sandburg

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**Representing 23,000+ members
from 120 local PTA units.**

Pinellas County Council

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2011 Legislative Program

The Pinellas County Council PTA asks simply that our legislators follow the Florida Constitution which states:

"The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children..."

This Legislative Program brochure may include selected Florida PTA Action Platform items as well as other national, state and local PTA position statements that are top priority items for the Pinellas County Council PTA.

For comprehensive information on PTA positions please visit our websites:
www.pccpta.org
www.floridapta.org

Facts

Florida is currently ranked 50th out of 50 states in per capita funding for K-12 public education and 39th in per pupil funding.

**U.S. Census Bureau, Education Week
"Quality Counts 2009"**

Although it is the Constitutional duty of the legislature to fund education, property owners are footing more of the public education bill through higher, local property taxes. The state funded 61% of education 10 years ago. Currently, only 51% of education costs are supplied by the state.

OCPS Budget Presentation 2009

Since 2007, Florida's legislature has cut the K-12 education budget by \$1,384,803,118. In 2006, we spent \$7,400 per pupil and today we spend a shocking \$6,400 per pupil. (The national average is over \$10,000.)

**2009-2010 Florida Legislature
Conference Report**

State spending on education as percentage of total resources: Florida ranks 42nd. As a state, Florida spends only 3.1% of its resources on education.

Education Week "Quality Counts, 2009"

Florida ranks 50th in per capita spending on education but ranks 16th in the nation in spending on corrections.

NEA Rankings of the States 2008

The Alliance for Excellent Education estimates that if the 1.2 million high school dropouts from the Class of 2008 had earned their diplomas instead of dropping out, the U.S. economy would have seen an additional \$319 billion in wages over these students' lifetimes.

www.All4ed.org

If the high school drop out rate is allowed to continue, more than 12 million students will drop out of school during the next decade at a cost to the nation of more than \$3 trillion.

www.All4ed.org

Invest in Children Invest in Public Education

As members of the largest child advocacy organization in this state and nation, we are concerned about cuts to the education budget. The manner in which Florida provides for the educational, health, safety, recreational and other basic needs of Florida's children determines the quality of life for every Florida citizen and providing for those needs lays the foundation of the future of our state. Recent budget cuts have already resulted in program and service cutbacks in schools and communities. Further losses will have a direct and detrimental impact on the classroom and our children.

The Pinellas County Council PTA urges our Legislature to fulfill the constitutional mandate calling for the state to make adequate provision for a **"uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education."** In pursuit of accomplishing this paramount duty, PCCPTA urges the Legislature to give full and open-minded consideration to identifying new state and local revenue sources to support education and to diversify Florida's revenue structure.

Article IX, Section 1 Your Oath, Your Duty!

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Facts

"For every dollar invested in high-quality, comprehensive programs supporting children... there is a \$7-\$10 return to society in decreased need for special education services, higher graduation and employment rates, less crime, less use of the public welfare system, and better health."

Chicago Longitudinal Study

"If the United States had in recent years closed the gap between its educational achievement levels and those of better-performing nations such as Finland and Korea, Gross Domestic Product in 2008 could have been \$1.3 trillion to \$2.3 trillion higher. This represents 9 to 16 percent of GDP."

McKinsey & Co. Report 2009

On average, a high school graduate earns \$600,000 more during his/her lifetime than a dropout.

Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau and Bureau of Labor Statistics

70% of people in top 10% income bracket have at least a bachelor's degree and someone with a college degree makes 73% more over a lifetime than someone with only a high school degree.

**McKinsey Global Institute and "Education Pays: the Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society," 2004,
The College Board**

A high school dropout is 5-8 times more likely to be incarcerated than a college graduate.

**"Crime and the Costs of Criminal Justice"
Pew Center**

A 10% increase in high school graduation rates would reduce murder rates by 20%.

National Bureau of Economic Research

In 1970, the United States had 30% of the world's college graduates, now it has only 15%.

National Governors Association

Facts source: <http://www.fundeducationnow.org>