



## **HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY COUNCIL PTA**

**Every Child. One Voice.**

### **Why is it important to Advocate for my student?**

Hillsborough County PTA believes that **all Florida Public School Students should have the following rights\*\***:

- The right to well-maintained schools, current curriculum, safe transportation and adequate school supplies.
- The right to be taught by caring, committed and qualified teachers and education support professionals. This requires fully funding competitive, professional base pay and benefits to attract and keep high-quality K-12 school faculty and staff.
- The right to learn in clean and safe school facilities, including ample classroom space equipped with modern technology. This requires fully funding school construction to modernize existing schools, build new schools and expand classroom capacity.
- The right to attend local public schools that have the flexibility to meet their unique needs.

\*\*Excerpted from the Washington Education Association Student Bill of Rights.

### **Why is it important RIGHT NOW?**

The Florida State Legislative Session began on 1/9/18 and ends 3/9/18. Before it ends, they will vote on funding for public education. Current bills that impact our students are related to texting and driving, charter schools, Bright Futures, graduation requirements, mandatory retentions, student discipline, etc.

### **How does our current State Budget impacts the Student Bill of Rights?**

State of Florida public school **funding per student is nearly \$4,000 below the national average** and \$3,000 below states with similar tax codes.

Florida's 2017-18 budget is \$7,296 per student. Prior to this increase, the highest per student funding in Florida was in 2007-2008 at \$7,126. Adjusted for inflation, per student funding would need to be \$8,150 to equal what our students had a decade ago.

The national average is between \$11,000 - \$12,500 per student. Texas, which also has several large school districts and no state income tax, comes in below the national average but substantially higher than Florida with 2016-17 per student expenditures of \$10,017.

## How did your State legislator vote on this budget?

HB (House Bill) 7069 was the bill in the 2017 Florida Legislative Session that included appropriations for education along with a devastating provision that diverted ½ of funding for school construction and maintenance to charter schools. How Florida Legislators from Hillsborough County voted on HB 7069:

Florida Senate (Passed 20-18)	Florida House of Representatives (Passed 73-36)
Dana Young – Yes	Janet Cruz – No
Darryl Rouson – No	James “J.W.” Grant – Yes
Tom Lee - Yes	Shawn Harrison – Yes
Bill Galvano – Yes	Wengay “Newt” Newton No
	Jake Raburn – Yes
	Sean Shaw – No
	Ross Spano – Yes
	Jackie Toledo – Yes
	Dan Raulerson – Yes (resigned 8/15/17)

## What can you do to get better funding for Florida/Hillsborough County Public Schools?

### #1 - Find your State Legislators and keep their Contact Information nearby

Find your State Rep: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Representatives>

Find your State Senator: <https://www.flsenate.gov/Senators/Find>

### #2 – Follow what is happening in the State Legislative Session

- Click here for Tampa Bay Times Education Blog <http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/>
- Go to Florida House or Senate websites, click on ‘Bills’, search for ‘education’ or other areas of interest.
- Like HCC PTA/PTSA on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram
- Join the Alliance for Public Schools – [all4schools.org](http://all4schools.org)

### #3 – Contact your State Legislators during the Session when Bills are pending

- Email, call or both: each contact helps build a relationship with them.
  - Sample emails are provided by Alliance for Public Schools and other sources. Edit before sending to include personal information about why the issue is important to you.
  - Be specific about why you are contacting them and what action you would like them to take.
  - Talk to their aide if they are unavailable.
- Meet with them if you can
- Send them a leftover Holiday/New Year card to put a face with the name and include why education funding needs to be increased on the back.

**Each contact can make a difference. Last year’s devastating bill would not have passed if just one more Senator had changed their vote to No.**