



Committed to Excellence

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May 12, 2017

The Honorable Rick Scott
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

On behalf of the Lake County School Board and the district at large, I am asking that you veto the proposed state budget and House Bill 7069.

You have noted on several occasions that the budget has too little money for schools. We agree. The limited funding, along with the changes that would come as a result of this education bill, would have a detrimental impact on the students we serve in Lake.

- While the budget includes a meager \$2.61 per student increase in funding – or a total of about \$1.3 million – our costs for FRS increased by about \$800,000 and the proposed increase in the cost of health insurance is about \$1.7 million. That leaves us with a \$1.2 million deficit and no remaining money to cover the cost of the projected 176 new students we expect to enroll next year.
- The education bill would require us to share about \$1 million in capital funding with charter schools, even if they are managed by for-profit private companies. This is on top of the \$4.7 million we are already spending on debt service for charter schools in our county. The mandatory capital transfer along with the debt service will require an expenditure of \$1,617 per charter school student when we generate only \$667 per student. This loss of money from our district budget will cause us to continue to delay preventive maintenance projects and much-needed new construction in fast-growing areas of our county. Such delays are likely to result in higher costs for the district in the future.
- The bill also stands to redirect and dilute the Title I funds we use to provide a variety of district-wide programs to our schools with the greatest needs. If this bill passes, we will lose valued programs and personnel.

We are equally concerned about the \$234 million bonus package for teachers and principals. Those bonuses are temporary, the money doesn't count toward retirement, and the bill is unclear about which teachers would qualify – only classroom teachers or all instructional personnel? These educators work hard, produce results and deserve permanent raises, not a short-term boost in pay that will feel like a pay cut when the bonus goes away in a year or two, as has historically been the case.

Additionally, the public was not allowed to give any input as this bill was being crafted behind closed doors. The lack of transparency is troubling.

Superintendent:
Diane S. Kornegay, M.Ed.

School Board Members:
District 1
Bill Mathias
District 2
Kristi Burns, Ph.D.
District 3
Marc Dodd
District 4
Sandy Gamble
District 5
Stephanie Luke

As a new Superintendent, I have great hope for Lake County Schools. I'm excited about the good things already happening in our district and energized by the opportunity to improve student achievement. But these proposed changes will make the implementation of my improvement efforts much more difficult. Across the district, we are feeling disheartened and betrayed by a budget and bill that, ultimately, will cause our students to suffer.

Legislators can and should make a stronger effort to support our schools. A veto from you, Gov. Scott, would allow them that opportunity.

Sincerely,



Diane S. Kornegay, M.Ed.
Superintendent

DSK/pjp