

Joint Statement from Suwannee County Superintendent, Ted Roush, and United Teachers of Suwannee County, Annette Kinsey

On behalf of the children in Suwannee County Schools, their families, and the teachers and education staff professionals who work with our students, we cannot stand by in silence as the legislators in the Florida Senate and House of Representatives attempt to place our schools on a starvation diet. We are gravely concerned that the budget the Legislature has produced will limit any meaningful opportunity to provide our students with the resources they deserve.

Here are just a few low points in the Legislature's budget:

- This budget decreases the base funding by \$20.04 per student for the 17-18 school year in Suwannee County
- The paltry overall increase of less than \$300,000 will not even cover increases in retirement contributions, workers' compensation insurance premiums, and energy costs. This is not even an inflation level increase.

While the Legislature did put some money into a bonus package for SOME teachers, we strongly believe teachers and education staff professionals deserve an overall salary increase. Bonuses do not pay mortgages or recruit and retain quality teachers for our students.

As if the budget wasn't bad enough, just hours before the House and Senate went into recess on Friday, they released a 278 page bill (HB7069) that included provisions that had not been thoroughly vetted through the legislative process. Some had even been voted DOWN in committee, yet they were still included in this monster bill. Included in this bill are provisions to provide increased funds to charter schools while bleeding public schools dry. In addition, the annual contract language that we just negotiated which provides job security for our effective and highly effective teachers was outlawed by this ill-conceived piece of legislation.

Just yesterday, Governor Scott called this budget and bill a "backroom deal" and threatened to veto the whole thing. We think that's exactly what he should do and we need your help! Please take out your phone and call Governor Scott at 850-717-9337 or log on to flgov.com/contact-governor to send him an email. Ask him to VETO the budget and HB7069 and SB2500. Ask him to do what's right for our students and our communities!

Sincerely,

Ted Roush
Superintendent
Suwannee County Schools

Annette Kinsey
President
United Teachers of Suwannee County