

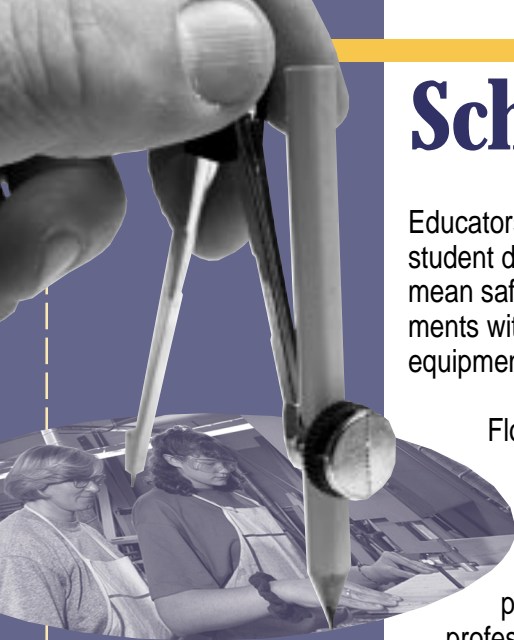
# School and Learning Conditions

Educators know what it takes to help every student do better! Optimal learning conditions mean safe, state-of-the-art learning environments with necessary resources, staffing and equipment.

Florida is a long way from optimizing learning conditions for its students. While the state has made a greater commitment to school construction, school districts continue to have problems with resources, adequate professional staff, and up-to-date technology for every child.

**FEA recommends these specific actions to improve school and learning conditions for Florida's public schools.**

- Ensure students are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten through a commitment to quality childcare and pre-kindergarten education programs.
- Reduce class size with emphasis on students with below-average performance. While elementary grades should be the highest priority, smaller class sizes must be a priority for any school graded D or F and for all low-performing students. Parents want smaller class size and teachers know that class size is growing, not declining.
- Provide additional funds to improve D and F schools. All stakeholders at these schools should have a voice in deciding how to use such funds. Uses could include after-school remediation and recreation programs, extended school year, mentoring programs, measures to attract exemplary teaching and additional staff to the school, community involvement programs, and technology upgrades.
- Add nurses in schools and fund full-service schools with money from the tobacco lawsuit. Nonmedical school
- personnel should not be required to perform health-related procedures.
- Expand alternative programs for disruptive students. It is important that each public school has a continuum of discipline alternatives that are appropriate for violations of the code of conduct. When students are chronically disruptive or violent, alternative placements and second-chance schools must be provided and adequately funded. Alternative programs should not be solely isolation and detention but should be designed to improve educational performance.
- Extend the Teacher Authority Act to include bus drivers and other education staff. Bus drivers especially must be privy to the same information relating to safety and discipline as teachers and other classroom personnel.
- Identify students' technology needs for success in the 21st century and budget a continuing cost per student to meet those needs.
- Balance education, including school-to-work and vocational programs, to ensure student success in all paths. These programs should be offered and supported in the K-12 system.
- Provide up-to-date textbooks, consumable materials and software to develop the skills required by Sunshine State Standards. Teachers should primarily determine what learning materials are needed for instruction.
- Provide a minimum of \$250 for each full-time teacher and instructional specialist to be used for the discretionary purchase of materials and supplies.



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