



**For Immediate Release**

June 2, 2014

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## **Governor Scott: It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget Funds Education at Record Levels**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** – Governor Rick Scott today highlighted the education investment in his It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget which includes \$22.6 billion in total education funding – an increase of \$529.4 million over the current year's Budget. Specifically, the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) was increased by \$574.8 million in state and local funds for a total of \$18.9 billion for the 2014-15 school year—which constitutes historic state and total funding for Florida's K-12 schools. This provides per student funding of \$6,937, an increase of \$176 or 2.61 percent over the current year. Included in this funding is continuation of the \$480 million in funding to increase teacher salaries that Governor Scott championed last year.

Governor Scott said, "Last year, we made strategic investment in our state's education system and secured \$480 million in teacher pay raises and additional funding to help teachers buy supplies. This year, the It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides record funding for education and maintains affordability in our systems of higher education. Once again, we are holding the line on tuition increases to ensure higher education affordability for Florida families. This budget provides critical educational investments to help Florida's children and grandchildren get the tools they need to pursue the American Dream."

The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget supports Governor Scott's principles for strengthening Florida's education system.

- **Historic Total and State K-12 Public School Funding:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides an historic \$10.6 billion in state funding for K-12 public schools, including \$40 million for digital classrooms. The Budget also includes \$7.9 million in new funding for principal training, \$134.6 million in continued funding for teacher training, \$23.1 million for mentoring programs, and a total of \$4.5 million for the school district matching grant program.
- **K-12 School Building Funds:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$75 million in funding for charter school facilities, \$50 million for maintenance at traditional K-12 public schools--which is in addition to the \$2.0 billion in local

funds traditional public schools receive from local sources and \$5.9 million for other education capital projects.

- **K-12 Rural School Districts Additional Investment:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$2.5 million in funding to assist rural school districts across the state. Funding is provided to three regional educational consortiums to create greater equity between larger and smaller districts by providing small districts access to resources and expertise they could not provide individually.
- **K-12 Rural School District Construction and Renovation:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$60.7 million for eight rural school districts' school and classroom projects in Glades, Washington, Madison, Levy, Calhoun, Holmes, Dixie, and Putnam counties.
- **Early Learning:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$396.1 million for the Voluntary Pre-K (VPK) program and increases funding by \$54 per student, and \$555.5 million for the School Readiness program, including an increase of \$3 million to further expand school readiness services. The Budget includes \$10.5 million for an early learning performance pilot program to award child care providers and instructors for improving quality.
- **Historic Total State College System Funding:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$32 million in new funding for state college operating costs, an increase of 2.9 percent over the current year. Total funding of nearly \$2 billion represents historic total funding for the Florida College System.
- **Historic Total State University System Funding:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$238.8 million in new funds for state university operating costs, an increase of 6.9 percent over current year. Total operating funding of \$3.7 billion represents historic total funding for the State University System. The Budget supports \$200 million for performance funding to reward universities' success in helping students obtain high paying jobs at an affordable price.
- **State College and University New Construction and Building Maintenance:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$106.7 million for Florida College System facilities and \$158 million for State University System facilities. The Budget also provides \$15 million for maintenance and repair for the Florida College System and \$57.6 million for maintenance and repair for the State University System.
- **Education Performance Funding:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget invests in performance funding for Florida's education systems. The Budget includes \$10.5 million for an early learning performance pilot program to support child care providers and instructors for improving quality. The Budget includes \$2.5 million for K-12 school districts that provided teacher salary increases based on performance results. The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget continues level

funding of \$5 million each for Workforce Education industry certifications and Florida College System industry certifications. The Budget supports \$200 million for performance funding to reward universities' success in helping students obtain high paying jobs at an affordable price.

- **Disability Services:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides \$18.3 million in new state funds to draw down additional federal dollars and eliminate the critical needs waitlist in the vocational rehabilitation program to help disabled individuals find jobs, for a total of \$45.4 million. In addition, \$272,400 is provided to support the disability jobs portal point of contact to connect Floridians with disabilities to employment opportunities.
- **Increasing College Affordability and Expanding Scholarships:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget holds the line on tuition increases. It also increases Florida Resident Access Grant (FRAG) awards, Access to Better Learning and Education Grant (ABLE) awards, and Rosewood Family Scholarships as outlined below:
  - FRAG: \$22.7 million for an award of \$3,000 per student (an increase of \$500 per student);
  - ABLE: \$2.4 million for an award of \$1,500 per student (an increase of \$339 per student); and
  - Rosewood: \$196,747 for an award of up to \$6,100 per student (an increase of \$2,100 per student and 25 awards).
- **Industry Certifications:** The It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget provides continued funding of \$5 million for the Florida College System and \$5 million for District Workforce Education programs. Colleges and school districts earn \$1,000 for each industry certification that a student attains in a targeted occupational area. It also includes an additional \$30 million for high school and middle school industry certifications.

**Florida Commissioner of Education Pam Stewart said,** "Governor Scott is an outstanding leader for education and we are grateful for his leadership to obtain historic levels of state and local education funding. This year's funding increase will allow Florida schools to better prepare Florida students for success in college, career and life."

**State Board of Education Chairman Gary Chartrand said,** "This is an exciting time for education in Florida. I applaud Governor Scott for his tremendous leadership, ensuring Florida's students have the resources and support necessary to help prepare them for success in college, career and beyond."

**Office of Early Learning Executive Director Shan Goff said,** "Florida leads the nation in access to pre-kindergarten. This year's funding increases in the It's Your Money Tax Cut Budget will allow us to ensure even more early learners enter kindergarten prepared for success, sparking a lifetime love of learning."

**Chancellor of the Florida College System Randy Hanna said,** “Giving Florida’s future workforce easy access to a high-quality education is a top priority in our state. Governor Scott and the Florida Legislature have sent this message loud and clear with increased affordability for our students.”

**VR Director Aleisa McKinley said,** “We would like to thank Governor Scott for his early support of VR’s budget, and the Florida Legislature for its support during the 2014 legislative session. They clearly recognized the need to improve employment opportunities for all Floridians, including those with disabilities, and providing VR the resources to help them achieve successful employment outcomes is greatly appreciated.”

**Chancellor Marshall Criser, State University System of Florida said,** “The historic levels of funding for the State University System will strengthen Florida’s workforce by allowing our universities to better prepare Florida’s next generation of workers and leaders.”

**Orange County Superintendent Barbara Jenkins said,** “Governor Scott and the Florida Legislature’s commitment to dedicating \$7.9 million of the state budget to training school leaders, and \$134.6 million to teacher training indicates a commitment to improve student learning.”

**2014 Florida Teacher of the Year Dorina Sackman said,** “Governor Scott’s efforts to secure teacher pay raises as a separate line item in the budget is to be commended. I’m very pleased that funds to maintain the Governor’s teacher pay raises were approved again this year. Governor Scott recognizes the hard work of our Florida educators and the important role each teacher plays in the success of our Florida children.”

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