

“Let’s get to work.”



NEW EDUCATION FOR  
A NEW ECONOMY:

*An Innovative, Student-Centered  
Approach to Preparing  
A New Workforce.*



[www.RickScottForFlorida.com](http://www.RickScottForFlorida.com)



Paid for and approved by Rick Scott, Republican, for Governor.



“Our Children  
Deserve the Best.”

I believe the only measure of success for Florida’s education model should be based on learning gains by our children and the readiness of students to enter institutions of higher education or the workforce.

As a successful businessman, I know the importance of education in growing the economy. For Florida to attract business, compete effectively in the global economy and create 21st century jobs, we must have an educated workforce. It is time we renew our commitment to the positive educational outcome Floridians deserve and have a right to expect. It is time we recognize that changes in society and technology are driving a need to modernize our public education system and transform it into one where our students are center stage. It is time to create an educational framework that is customized so that each student can reach his or her potential and help get Florida back to work. The key ingredients we need to do this include:

- Measuring and Improving Student Readiness
- Expanding School Choice
- Virtual and Online Education
- Mentoring Programs
- Preparing A New Workforce

Florida has made great strides in education this decade. Our education system was ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the nation by Education Week’s 2009 Quality Counts report, up from 31<sup>st</sup> in the nation just two years ago. Our state has also been recognized as one of the top states in closing the achievement gap for low-income and minority students, an accomplishment we must continue to improve upon. However, there is still much work to be done. Though we rank 10<sup>th</sup> in overall education, the very same report graded Florida with an F when it came to college readiness.

I believe the only measure of success for Florida’s education model should be based on learning gains by our children and the readiness of students to enter institutions of higher education or the workforce. To be successful, we need to empower students, parents and educators. Simply throwing more taxpayer dollars at an outdated system like my opponent wants to do is not enough. It is my belief that taxpayer dollars appropriated to education should follow the student and be invested in rewarding teacher performance and modernizing the learning process through the use of enabling technologies. The very notion of the traditional classroom must be challenged with the programmatic expansion of virtual schooling.

There is no debate about the difference an effective teacher makes in the educational and personal development of their students, yet we do very little to reward effective teachers.

I support school choice, accountability in education, rewarding excellence in teaching, and in raising the bar to better prepare Floridians for higher education or the workforce. It is time to usher in a new era for education in Florida – one based on the foundation that education should be 100% about the students, not the system. I want to build an education framework that is student-centered, allowing education to be customized to fit the unique needs of each student and family. I also believe that strong partnerships between academia, the private sector and our workforce community will be critical to our future economic growth, as will the proactive support of public and private sector student mentoring initiatives.

I have a plan to build upon the improvements already made in our education system while revolutionizing how we look at education from preschool through higher education and into the workforce. I want to create the right learning environment for each student, not the bureaucracy.

Florida is fortunate to already be leading the nation in education gains, but to realize our full potential, we must adapt to more innovative methods of ensuring better educational outcomes for our students - without politics getting in the way of providing our children with a world class education. There is no one silver bullet, but I believe it is possible to transform the current system while empowering students, parents, and educators to ensure a better quality of life for all Floridians.

We can do this together.  
Let’s get to work!



# The

## What is best for MY child? Measuring and Improving Student Readiness

success in middle school begins in elementary school, success in high school begins in middle school, and success in college begins in high school.

According to the Foundation for Excellence in Education, 'Research pioneered a decade ago found that students of the most effective teachers learn almost four times more than students of the least effective teachers and these effects can be seen for at least three years. Subsequent studies show that the impact of teacher effectiveness may persist even longer, especially among young elementary students.'

While there have been many conversations related to the connection between elementary, middle, high school and higher education in our state, generally, our state has not effectively connected the lifelong learning process for Floridians. Generationally, if our students are to progress from one level to the next, the requirement for success at each level must be integrated in performance rubrics implemented in the preceding level.

Success in middle school begins in elementary school, success in high school begins in middle school, and success in college begins in high school. Our schools are failing when it comes to connecting multilevel outcomes and our students are not properly prepared in term of performance requirements, learning strategies and the developmental requirements necessary to succeed at the next level.

Ultimately, as Floridians fail in the educational system, our state fails as a competitor in the market to attract the companies and jobs necessary to build a better economy for our state. We must do a better job of ensuring our schools educate with a purpose and are held accountable for the results. Performance must not only be measured in the students' current grade or school but as they transition to the next level.

As Governor, I will promote reforms that reward effective teachers, instituting a system that evaluates and compensates teachers based on more than just years served. When students learn more, teachers should earn more. Every Florida student enrolled in our school system should receive at least a year's worth of learning in a year's time and with a rate of return for every dollar invested in the system. The only way to ensure increasing levels of performance in our schools is by measuring outcomes using objective, data driven criteria in a fully transparent environment and more importantly to use that measurement and information to develop plans for improvement.



# We

can and should do more in developing aspiring talent. If we want to recruit and retain the brightest and best teachers to educate our children, we must provide them an incentive to teach and succeed in Florida.

My plan for new education is based on the ideas that:

- Student performance should be measured and a cause/effect analysis relating teacher quality and other demographic conditions should be used to evaluate performance.
- The assessment of teacher quality must include the incorporation of change in the classroom. The incorporation of technology, new delivery media, societal change all impact learning styles and ultimately the ability of our students to meet the ever changing requirements in the workforce.
- We should always focus on refining and improving the measurement and accountability system so that we clearly justify the investment that the taxpayers of Florida make in their educational system, restore confidence, and lead to continuous process/performance improvement.
- We should communicate directly with parents and taxpayers about how well or not so well our schools are performing. We believe that it is more than just a school grade. Our schools should provide to all parents a concise easy to understand financial statement about how much resources the school received and how the money was spent and what the academic outcomes were for the year. To make it even more relevant the data will be compared with other schools in the district and with other schools across the state.
- Teachers play an important role in the education of our children and their ideas and vision must be integrated into this new education.

I recognize that a one size fits all solution will not adequately measure all professionals in an industry as diverse as education. For instance, teachers of special needs students are often very effective; however their students may not perform well on standardized tests. I will work with students, parents and educators to institute reforms creating a fair system to evaluate, compensate, and reward effective teachers.

Paying for performance is just one piece of a comprehensive plan to improve student and teacher performance. We can and should do more in developing aspiring talent. If we want to recruit and retain the brightest and best teachers to educate our children, we must provide them an incentive to teach and succeed in Florida.

I believe we should utilize alternative paths such as the Teach for America model to attract high performing individuals from the private sector and tear down barriers and other obstacles to getting the right people into the classroom. As Governor I will work to attract individuals from the private sector with the skills in foundational subjects, such as math and science, by creating an expedited accreditation process and removing barriers to recruitment. Further, I believe we should re-engineer our colleges of education to place equal importance on content knowledge and pedagogy.

I want to create an education program that will allow parents to get creative in how to meet the distinctive needs of their children.

## Expanding School Choice

Florida has more parental choice than any state in the country. Of the 2.7 million children in the Pre-K to 12 educational system, roughly 400,000 attend a school chosen by their parents, including 171,000 who attend private schools. I want to expand our commitment to choice. I believe we should be using taxpayer dollars spent on education in a way that meets the unique needs of each child to ensure their success. Every parent should have the choice to decide which delivery method and what provider is best to meet the needs and learning abilities of their children. Simply stated, parental choice is a crucial element of this new era in education. It is a catalyst to help all other reform measures work more effectively.

Parents – not politicians, unions or bureaucracies – should have the right to choose among a combination of different educational delivery methods to best suit their child’s learning needs. My opponent does not mention choice in her education plan. As part of my plan, I want to offer parents a menu of options for their children, including but not limited to charter schools, private schools, homeschooling and virtual schools. I want to create an education program that will allow parents to get creative in how to meet the distinctive needs of their children. I do not believe every child should be forced into just one method of being educated if that method is not working. From the early stages of educational development through higher education, I want parents to know there is a seamless path to success that is right for their child.

I will work to break down barriers that may be limiting the effectiveness of choice options while ensuring accountability and transparency. To accomplish this vision, we must

- Consider all options available to effectively educate Floridians and put parents in charge of choosing the most effective means to educate their children. We will arm parents with knowledge and information about choices and options and give them a direct say in choosing what works best for their children. When implementing school choice options, we will establish fundamental principles for success such as high expectations, accountability and an environment conducive to learning.

### Voluntary Pre-K Program

The Florida Legislature created the Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK) Education Program in 2004, and it is the largest voucher program in the state. Of the 148,289 children served in the 2009-10 school year, nearly 125,000 attended a private school or center. Of those, about 27,000 attended a faith-based provider. The program is free to all 4-year-olds and parental choice is a priority. VPK providers have flexibility in structuring the hours per day and days per week to meet required instructional hours. Last year, nearly 6,000 providers served children in the VPK program. About 82 percent of those providers were private and/or faith-based. I want to ensure that parents continue to have these choices of providers.

### Home Schooling

Home schooling is a growing and vital part of the parental choice mix in Florida. Last year, just over 60,000 children were home schooled in Florida and many parents are now combining home schooling with virtual offerings or with dual enrollment at colleges and community colleges. As Governor, I look forward to working with the homeschooling community to ensure they have the flexibility and tools needed to preserve this as a thriving option for parents who feel this is the best path to success for their children.

### Charter Schools

Florida has been a pioneer in education reform since the late 1990s and charter schools have been at the forefront of the movement. The cornerstone of Florida’s reform efforts has been giving parents educational choices, injecting competition into school systems and a laser focus on what works by providing clear measurements of success and being accountable for failure. Since the first charter school was founded in Florida, we have been on a remarkable trajectory. In 14 years, Florida has gone from no charter schools to 410, serving 137,196 students and the popularity of charter schools is at an all-time high. Parental satisfaction has exceeded 90 percent in virtually all surveys over the last five years. Academic progress has been strong and outpacing traditional neighborhood public schools.

I support school choice and I strongly support scholarships.

## Magnet Schools

Some public school districts do a good job of trying to give options to parents and children. These options include limited open enrollment where parents can choose a school different than the one they are zoned for. Magnet schools are specialized schools run by the district, such as performing arts schools or vocational programs (e.g. a veterinary science programs). Over 500,000 children attend such schools today and I want to expand these options.

- Encourage the replication of high performing charter schools and get government out of their way. We would propose legislation to develop a new classification of differentiated charter schools: High Performing Charter Schools. These would be charter schools that have excelled both academically and operationally. We would provide greater operational flexibility, expedited approval processes and flexibility in enrolling students.
- Recognize private schools as an important part of our education landscape in Florida. They have existing infrastructure, talent and resources. The public education system does not have the sole and exclusive responsibility for educating our children. The Corporate Tax Credit and McKay scholarship programs are an integral part of Florida’s education system. I fully support publicly financed private education choices and will strive to remove barriers to access while also ensuring accountability and transparency.
- Start at the drawing board and consider successful programmatic change in other countries and US jurisdictions.
- Support scholarships for families in need (Currently known as Tax Credit Scholarships)

This fall, 32,500 children enrolled in over 1000 private schools using the tax credit scholarship program which is tied to the corporate income tax. Roughly forty percent of the children are African American, and thirty percent are Hispanic. With an average family household income of \$25,000, parents pay out of pocket on average over \$1,000 per pupil to participate. Children on this program must take a standardized such as the FCAT. All test scores are reported to the University of Florida, who annually releases a report on student learning gains.

In my 7-7-7 plan, I propose eventually eliminating the corporate income tax. I believe we can turn Florida around by making Florida the job creating model for the nation. At the same time, we must create the best workforce we can and we do that through education.

I support school choice and I strongly support these scholarships. I am committed to finding a solution that will continue to allow families more choice in where to send their child to school. Low income parents must be empowered to choose from the over 1,000 schools that are currently serving these children. These schools are an essential part of a new definition of public education. I want to create an education system that allows for more opportunities like those currently provided by these scholarships. As we phase out the corporate tax over seven years, I will work with the Legislature, business and parents to develop a more comprehensive program that will allow all of Florida’s children to have the best possible education experience that meets each child’s unique need.

**Long gone is the need to confine students to one building and one set of curriculum if they are not making sufficient learning gains.**

## Virtual and Online Education

The modern classroom looks much like it did fifty years ago. We have watched technology transform the way we do business, the way we communicate with family and friends and even how we get our news. People around the globe can now pay bills, send cards or watch live broadcasts around the clock. I want that same ability to communicate and learn to translate into our school system. There is no reason that students cannot be educated 24/7, 365 days of the year if they choose. The public education system in this country was built around brick and mortar schools, school buses and class schedules. My New Education for a New Economy plan calls for a very different method of delivering educational access to students. It is time we adapt to the many innovative solutions available to create a customized fit to match the needs of each student to ensure successful entry into a 21st century workforce.

Long gone is the need to confine students to one building and one set of curriculum if they are not making sufficient learning gains. The world has changed and the time is now for the education framework to be built around it.

Florida has a head start in utilizing technology to teach. This great state is known as the national leader in virtual education and is the model for other states to follow. The Florida Virtual School (FLVS) was founded in 1997 and was the country's first state-wide performance-based virtual public school. FLVS was created to provide additional public education options to Florida students and will directly serve more than 200,000 enrollments this year.

Unlike a traditional school, where students are either passed or failed at the end of a 180 day school year, teachers are able to work with students until the content is mastered. On the flip side, if a student can master content in less than 180 days, the student can move to the next subject. This innovative approach allows teachers to offer individualized and personalized instruction to each student. Also unlike traditional schools, this approach is completely student centered and is huge step forward in creating a more efficient and cost effective approach to delivery of education with better educational outcomes.



**We must continue to innovate and adapt. The possibility to transform the future of education in Florida through technology is at our doorstep.**

Florida must embrace the opportunity and fully explore the potential of virtual learning. We must continue to innovate and adapt. The possibility to transform the future of education in Florida through technology is at our doorstep.

I want to allow students to be able to complete courses based on mastery of content, not on an arbitrary school calendar. The flexibility for a child to learn at his/her own pace is very powerful and I will expand virtual education options for students, ensuring a better educational outcome for students and a better return on investment for taxpayers. I propose to:

- Ensure all students are afforded a choice to attend school virtually, full or part time - authorizing virtual charter schools and statewide virtual education programs with open enrollment for all Florida students with funding following the student
- Allow students to participate in programs offered by any school districts, essentially creating a statewide 68th school district
- Eliminate the prior public school attendance requirement for participation and other barriers for participation in a Florida virtual charter school or statewide approved virtual education program
- Create a centralized knowledge center to ensure teachers and students have access to the highest quality virtual content available, shared curriculum and best practices while maintaining consistency in delivery systems, instructional models, requirements, quality, funding and accountability
- Use the power of technology to promote the delivery of one to one, individualized and personalized instruction, allowing teachers to teach to each student's strength and weaknesses
- Allow students to advance to the next subject or grade level once an existing subject/grade has been mastered

Virtual Education is a critical component of the future of education, but is still just one piece of a comprehensive framework to raise student achievement. It can as much enhance a strong student's academic success allowing them greater flexibility to matriculate at a faster pace as assist in the development or remediation of skills of a student needing additional support. It has the power to transform the delivery of education as we know it and can be the great equalizer by providing each and every student in Florida, from rural to inner city, rich to poor, access to the same quality of education.

## Mentoring Programs

Students who are mentored become great mentors and carry the practice throughout their careers. The exponential impact of a system-wide mentoring program will follow Floridians throughout their career and has the potential for major societal impact.

We must continue to engage the for-profit and non-profit private sector community in taking ownership and responsibility for the education of Floridians. Though the mentoring needs of elementary, middle, high, and post secondary students are connected, they are different. The creation of multilevel programs leveraging the mentoring capabilities of students, teachers, and citizens from the private sector must be facilitated by state government. Students should be able to satisfy their community service requirement by participating in mentoring initiatives enabling not only grade-level improvement but a more effective transition between elementary, middle, high, and post secondary schools.

Peer to peer student mentoring programs, non-profit mentoring initiatives which place volunteer student mentors inside inner city schools, and corporate based mentoring initiatives will be prioritized when considering funding and organizational requirements.

## I Preparing A New Workforce

believe in investing in technology and programs that create incentives to maximize student learning, achievement and performance.

It is time to usher in a new era for education in Florida – one based on the foundation that education should be 100% about the students, not the system. I have a plan to build upon the improvements already made in our education system while revolutionizing how we look at education from preschool through higher education and into the workforce. I want to create the right learning environment for each student, not the bureaucracy.

- School Funding - The way we go about funding education requires a paradigm shift away from the failed notion that throwing more money at a problem is a viable solution. Much like in business, it isn't just how much you invest that dictates your returns, it's what you are investing in. Rather than investing in the existing, outdated seat time based school funding model that stifles innovation in the delivery of instruction, I believe in investing in technology and programs that create incentives to maximize student learning, achievement and performance. We must create a new model that places more emphasis on learning, and less on seat time. We need to revolutionize the funding mechanism so that every dollar follows the student. By embracing emerging technology and changing the way we approach teaching our students we will create a more efficient and effective means of providing a quality education. These changes will reduce the cost of administration and the demand for new school buildings, making more money available to be reinvested into teacher salaries, better content, and smarter ways to deliver instruction.
- Class Size - Amendment 8 is a common sense solution to solving the "one size fits all" problem that our schools are faced with when implementing the class size amendment. Amendment 8 will empower our local officials to allocate resources in a manner that best serves their community, saving tax payers money while still achieving the goal of having smaller, more manageable classrooms.
- Continued High School Reform - The achievement gap in the United States is an ongoing threat to our nation's economic security. Researchers estimate if the United States had closed the achievement gap with higher performing nations, the 2008 gross domestic product could have been \$1.3 trillion to \$2.3 trillion higher. If we continue down this path, our nation is headed toward a permanent national recession. While Florida has made great strides in learning gains at the elementary level, there is much to be done to close the achievement gap in high school and beyond. As recently as 1995, America was tied for first in the world in college graduation rates. By 2006, the United States had fallen to 14th. In Florida, only 42 percent of high school students are reading at or above grade level and only 69 percent of high school students are performing math at or above grade. 55 percent of all entering students require remediation in math, reading or writing. In the 2005-2006 fiscal year, the total cost of postsecondary remediation was \$129.8 million – and the state paid more than half of these costs, totaling \$70 million. Due to a lack of post-secondary readiness, a Florida student can earn a high school diploma but still not meet the minimum requirements for admission to any of Florida's state universities. This is unacceptable. We are failing our children; the unstable workforce environment this creates deters new business from coming to our state.

We must provide greater opportunities for our high school students to excel by blurring the lines between secondary and postsecondary education by expanding opportunities for high school students to connect workforce requirements with the opportunity to earn college credit on their way toward graduation, thereby expanding opportunities for career-minded high school students to earn industry-certified and career readiness credentials.

- Higher Education and A New Workforce - Florida is recognized as having the best Community College System in the Nation and the State University System (SUS) is uniquely poised to create a new Florida economy based on knowledge and innovation, the essence of the "New Florida" initiative as proposed by SUS Chancellor Frank Brogan. The "New Florida" report states this new economy is based on high technology, which demands a workforce and research efforts produced by partnerships among all postsecondary institutions.
- Independent Colleges and Universities - I appreciate the valuable role of the independent colleges and universities in creating access to higher education for a broad base of Florida's population, the impact they have in the production of badly needed degrees and their economic impact on our state and local communities. I also understand the importance of the Florida Resident Access Grant in creating access to a higher education for so many Floridians and hope to work with these schools to strengthen this long standing program and to also find ways to better expand the engagement of

support a very simple concept that when students learn more, teachers should earn more.

ICUF schools in our economic development efforts. Since almost 50% of the recipients of FRAG are the first in their families to attend college, I am committed to preserving how important this program is in creating access to success in Florida.

- Private Career Colleges - Private career colleges also play a vital role in getting Florida back to work now more than ever. Their ability to quickly develop high demand programs to meet local workforce needs is a valuable piece of Florida's educational framework and I am committed to ensuring strong partnerships between these schools and the state's workforce programs. Focus on a world class university system capable of balancing Florida's economy by increasing the state's human capital stock and enhancing the vibrancy of the state's current biotechnology cluster is of paramount importance. In order for research from universities to have a maximum impact on the state's economic development, it is crucial that the universities and the research created by the universities, are connected to the state's economic development process. In other words, the universities cannot be removed from the communities that surround them.

Nurturing new cutting edge technology clusters is part of my 7-7-7 Plan to get Floridians back to work and institutions of higher education play a vital role. The biotechnology cluster in Orlando is a great example - by conservative figures, it creates over \$7 in economic returns from every \$1 invested – a 7:1 return on investment. As part of my New Education plan, I want to

- Invest in university research, laboratories, business incubators, and technology transfer.
- Maximize the impact from university research on the economy by ensuring each Florida university – and the research conducted by our universities – are connected to the state's economic development process.
- Leverage the research strengths of our state's universities – such as recent investments made in medical colleges – to invest in new and emerging technologies that positively impact our economy.
- Florida has many unique clusters revolving around university specific research, such as the biotechnology cluster associated with the University of Florida. State economic development grants will always include partnerships with universities to develop research strengths into unique clusters.

There are many efforts and activities currently focused on positioning our states' institutions of higher education as enablers for Florida's new economy. State and local governments should partner with our postsecondary institutions to create regional innovation and incubator systems, which provide traditional start-up entrepreneurs with the support and environment to transfer research to new incubator companies.

- Florida should make every legal and practical effort to remove administrative obstacles to these innovation and incubator systems. In partnership with the private sector, the state should facilitate the venture capital process for entrepreneurs who take university driven research to market.
- Local, city, and county governments should create inter-government partnerships and with State University System institutions to jointly grow, retain, and attract high technology industry to their service areas. The State can assist through coordination efforts.

The Florida High Technology Corridor Council (FHTCC) is a recognized national and international model. FHTCC brings together the three largest universities in Florida to partner with regional workforce agencies, state colleges, community colleges, and private institutions to foster high technology industry in Central Florida. The Council encourages member and industry-focused research, provides support for workforce development programs in state and community colleges and brings together economic development entities to attract industry to the region. I support the State University System partnering with government and private industry to pursue advanced applications, production, and research in sustainable energy endeavor. Therefore, we will pursue additional programs such as the FHTCC throughout the state.

There are many complex issues that have a significant impact on the success of education in Florida. There is no one silver bullet, but I believe that if we focus on students when making tough decisions, we can continue to make gains. Unfortunately, my opponent has chosen the union over students. Her plan for education ignores choice and only focuses on limited ideas implemented into an old, antiquated education system. I want to transform our educational framework to be centered on the student, not the system. I want to change education in Florida to provide more parental choice, adapt to modern technology and to provide a customized learning experience for every student to prepare them for a 21st century workforce.

**“LET’S GET TO WORK!”**