



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

STATE OF FLORIDA
Office of the Governor

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399-0001

December 14, 2011

Dr. W. Daniel Boyd, Jr.
Alachua County Schools
620 E. University Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32601-5448

Dear Dr. Boyd:

During recent weeks and months, I have had the privilege to sit with many teachers and school leaders to hear your concerns about education in our state and your ideas for how we can best prepare Florida's students for jobs in our 21st century economy. Parents of students in our schools and business leaders have also shared their ideas with me. Across the board, everyone has expressed concern about how much money Florida has invested in the education of our children and young people.

As we plan the budget for the 2012-13 school year, Florida is facing some significant challenges related to funding education. First, Florida is projected to gain 30,000+ more students, which will require almost \$200 million more in state funding. In addition, Florida's school districts will face a \$220-million reduction in ad valorem taxes due to declining property values and the loss of \$224 million in one-time state education funding.

As I have listened to the challenges described by teachers, parents and administrators during the past few months, all have urged me to increase the state's commitment to education. That is my plan, and I ask for your help in making that plan a reality for Florida's students.

Earlier this year, I unveiled what I called a "Jobs Budget" that plugged a \$4-billion budget hole while still reducing the financial burden on individuals and businesses. The budget I am proposing for next year could arguably be called an "Education Budget."

After listening to educators and parents, touring schools, and visiting with students, I have heard them tell me that in spite of the education shortfall we face, our top priority in this budget should be K-12 education.

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Every educator, student, parent and business leader should know: I will not sign a budget from the Legislature that does not significantly increase state funding for education. The budget I submitted to the Legislature includes:

- Over \$1 billion in new state funds for the K-12 formula.
- An increase in per student funding over current funding.
- The third-largest investment of state dollars in education in Florida history.
- A doubling of our investment in reading, the fundamental building block of all learning.
- A return to \$100 per student in school recognition dollars after four years of reduced funding for our improving and highest performing schools.

Our school districts are facing some tough budgetary challenges this year. Know that I am going to do everything I can to make sure we overcome some of those challenges as we plan the 2012-2013 budget. Please work with Education Commissioner Gerard Robinson and let him know what your school district needs.

If you support the budget I am proposing, please let your legislators know. Now that I have presented my budget recommendations, it's their turn to listen, just as I have done. Please join me in advocating for the children of our state and Florida's economic future.

Thank you for taking time to share your ideas with me. It has been very meaningful and important to me to listen to all of you and hear your concerns and priorities. Please consider sharing my letter with your principals, teachers and staff.

As educators, you have incredibly important jobs, and the future of our state literally depends on the work you do every day. Thank you for preparing Florida's children for the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "S".

Rick Scott
Governor