



# FLORIDA DEMOCRATS

*Putting Floridians First Because Security Begins At Home*

## **FLORIDA DEMOCRATS ON EDUCATION**

**Democrats Unite for Smaller Classes.** We know a smaller class means a better educational environment, increased discipline, and more individual attention for students. For the past decade, Republicans have opposed efforts to reduce classroom size, and since 2002, have been trying to overturn the Class Size Initiative. We believe every child has a right to learn in a safe, high-quality neighborhood school, which is why Democrats have consistently fought for smaller classes, and continue to lead bipartisan coalitions to preserve the Class Size Amendment.

*For more information on this issue, visit [www.FloridaWantsSmallerClasses.com](http://www.FloridaWantsSmallerClasses.com).*

**Democrats Propose a Better FCAT.** We support high academic standards and increased accountability, and we believe standardized testing is an important tool to help parents and teachers work with each individual student to identify areas that need improvement. For the past decade, Republicans have used the FCAT as a hammer to punish students, parents and teachers. They even blocked our efforts to increase tutoring, summer and after-school programs, as well as our attempts to unlock the mystery of the FCAT's relationship to school funding priorities.

**Democrats Support Improving Low-Performing Schools.** We believe that every child in Florida should have the opportunity to succeed in a public school in their neighborhood, which is why we support investing in proven strategies to help struggling schools, not siphoning money away to pay for private school vouchers. Republican-led voucher programs offer little accountability, have been poorly run, and lack the high-standards of our public schools. We support increasing our investment in public education, not draining money away to pay for risky experiments like vouchers.

**Democrats Support Better Pay for Teachers.** We believe that every child deserves an education provided by world-class teachers, which is why we support initiatives to pay teachers the professional salaries they deserve. For the past decade, Republicans have consistently opposed our efforts to improve teacher pay in Florida. Today, Florida's teachers earn \$6,000 *less* than the national average and less than our neighbors to the north, Georgia and Alabama. Our teachers are everyday heroes and they deserve to be paid like the professionals they are. Even this year, despite a budget flush with cash, Republicans have once again decreased the education share of the budget, rather than working with us to give teachers their well-deserved raise.