

February 28, 2017

John T. Selover
Executive Director

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Office of Governor Rick Scott
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor Scott:

On behalf of the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC), I want to thank you for the work that you completed in forwarding your 2017-2018 Governor's Budget Recommendation. This budget is strong for public education, matching established needs with adequate resources. Passing these important elements into the final legislative budget will be important for improving and strengthening public education for the benefit of students, families, communities and taxpayers. Successful economic growth in this state for the long-term future will depend upon having the highly educated workforce needed. Your budget helps in so many ways.

I want to thank you for:

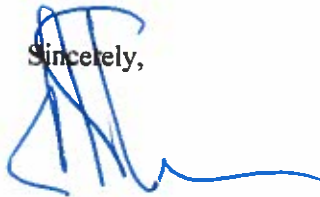
- Providing a 3.0% per student increase in funding (*closely matching inflation*) that will allow for performance pay, instructional materials, technology and other students resources needed for a high quality system of free public schools;
- Recommending full funding for Sparsity that will ensure equity for students in small, rural districts;
- Increasing Safe Schools funding and also increasing the base per district that will help small, rural districts to dramatically increase services for students designed to promote school safety and improved school culture;
- Redesigning teacher recruitment and retention as is proposed by your budget that would avoid some of the known problems with the current state bonus program;
- Proposing \$5.9 million in Bright Futures Rural Teacher Supplement, which would help quickly build a pipeline of future teachers to serve the needs of small, rural districts in the places where these new teaching candidates grew up and spent their lives. Utilizing Florida's regional education consortia to implement the teacher collegiate academies and distribute student scholarships makes appropriate use of existing structures for support of rural school districts;

Advancing Schools and Communities for Student Success

- Restoring Regional Consortia Funding to \$1.75 million that will support expansion of shared services and resources for our districts and special schools promoting efficiencies;
- Endorsing \$1 million for rural STEM Initiative that will support the pipeline of STEM trained students who are ready to tackle postsecondary programs in the fields or move directly into jobs to support the economies of small, rural districts and the state;
- Continued support of Special Facilities Projects, enabling small, rural districts to provide safe and modern facilities for students; and,
- Increased funding for Early Learning services, a critical element in improving student performance.

Your budget proposal is full of resources addressing known concerns within our region. We stand ready to assist and promote your efforts to get a significant public education budget passed in the 2017 legislative session. Thank you for your consistent work in this regard. Please do not hesitate to call on me if there is anything that the Panhandle Area Educational Consortium (PAEC) or I can do to assist you in this important work.

Sincerely,



John T. Selover
Executive Director

Copy: Pam Stewart, Commissioner of Education
Kim McDougal, Governor's Chief of Staff
Ashley Spicola, Director, Education Policy Unit, Governor's Office
PAEC Superintendents
Sen. David Simmons, Chair, Senate PreK-12 Education Subcommittee
Rep. Manny Diaz, Chair, House PreK-12 Education Subcommittee
Bob Harris, PAEC General Counsel