HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE BUDGET RELATED TO EDUCATION INCLUDE:

- FEFP total funds increase of $783 million or 3.72%
- FEFP increase in total funds per student of $242.60, from $7,429 to $7,672
- FEFP base funds (flexible $) increase of $363.9 million (2.8%; or per student of $75.07)
- Best and Brightest Teacher and Principal Allocation - $285 million - transfers program to the FEFP and modifies the performance requirements for personnel to receive the awards
- Safe Schools Allocation - $18 million increase for a total of $180 million
- Mental Health Assistance Allocation - $5.7 million increase for a total of $75 million
- Turnaround School Supplemental Services Allocation - $45.5 million

The legislature approved a $91.1 billion budget with education benefiting from the increase. The total Public Schools/K12 Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) funding is $21.9 billion ($12.5 billion state funds; $9.4 billion local funds).

OTHER STATE FUNDED PROGRAMS

- Increases total amount and eligibility for Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program. Now families with income levels of 260% of federal poverty level are eligible (previously 185%).
- Revises Schools of Hope Program: redefines persistently low-performing schools, eliminates awards for traditional public schools and expands the allowable use of funding (for costs associated with initial leasing of facility).

BEST AND BRIGHTEST TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL PROGRAMS

- The Best and Brightest Teacher Program is revised to authorize three types of awards – recruitment, retention and recognition – each with distinct criteria for determining eligibility.
- The bill removes a teacher’s performance on the SAT or ACT as an eligibility factor.
- Principals are eligible for an award based on longevity and school performance.
- Now includes funding for this program in the FEFP.

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

- Modifies requirements of General Knowledge exam so that it applies only to classroom teachers.
- Eliminates the requirement that individuals teaching under a temporary certificate must pass exam within 1 year of employment.
- Allows a 2-year extension of temporary certificate for teachers who have not passed the General Knowledge exam within first three years if teacher is rated as highly effective or completes a 2-year mentorship program.

COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

- Establishes the Community School Grant Program.
- Specifies that a community school model is a school service model developed by the Center for Community Schools at the University of Central Florida and defines necessary requirements.