

By Commissioner Washington

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1                   A proposal to amend  
2           Section 1 of Article IX of the State Constitution to  
3           specify the purpose and intent of the state's public  
4           education system.

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6 Be It Proposed by the Constitution Revision Commission of  
7 Florida:

8  
9           Section 1 of Article IX of the State Constitution is  
10 amended to read:

11                                   ARTICLE IX

12   EDUCATION

13           SECTION 1. Public education.—

14           (a) The purpose of the public education system of Florida  
15 is to develop the intellect of the state's citizens, to  
16 contribute to the economy, to create an effective workforce, and  
17 to prepare students for a job. The education of children is a  
18 fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is,  
19 therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate  
20 provision for the education of all children residing within its  
21 borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform,  
22 efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public  
23 schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education  
24 and for the establishment, maintenance, and operation of  
25 institutions of higher learning and other public education  
26 programs that the needs of the people may require. To assure  
27 that children attending public schools obtain a high quality  
28 education, the legislature shall make adequate provision to  
29 ensure that, by the beginning of the 2010 school year, there are  
30 a sufficient number of classrooms so that:

31           (1) The maximum number of students who are assigned to each  
32 teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for

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33 prekindergarten through grade 3 does not exceed 18 students;

34 (2) The maximum number of students who are assigned to each  
35 teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for grades 4  
36 through 8 does not exceed 22 students; and

37 (3) The maximum number of students who are assigned to each  
38 teacher who is teaching in public school classrooms for grades 9  
39 through 12 does not exceed 25 students.

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41 The class size requirements of this subsection do not apply to  
42 extracurricular classes. Payment of the costs associated with  
43 reducing class size to meet these requirements is the  
44 responsibility of the state and not of local schools districts.  
45 Beginning with the 2003-2004 fiscal year, the legislature shall  
46 provide sufficient funds to reduce the average number of  
47 students in each classroom by at least two students per year  
48 until the maximum number of students per classroom does not  
49 exceed the requirements of this subsection.

50 (b) Every four-year old child in Florida shall be provided  
51 by the State a high quality pre-kindergarten learning  
52 opportunity in the form of an early childhood development and  
53 education program which shall be voluntary, high quality, free,  
54 and delivered according to professionally accepted standards. An  
55 early childhood development and education program means an  
56 organized program designed to address and enhance each child's  
57 ability to make age appropriate progress in an appropriate range  
58 of settings in the development of language and cognitive  
59 capabilities and emotional, social, regulatory and moral  
60 capacities through education in basic skills and such other  
61 skills as the Legislature may determine to be appropriate.

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62 (c) The early childhood education and development programs  
63 provided by reason of subsection ~~subparagraph~~ (b) shall be  
64 implemented no later than the beginning of the 2005 school year  
65 through funds generated in addition to those used for existing  
66 education, health, and development programs. Existing education,  
67 health, and development programs are those funded by the State  
68 as of January 1, 2002 that provided for child or adult  
69 education, health care, or development.

70 (d) In order to build Florida's talent pipeline for the  
71 careers of today and tomorrow and align the state's education,  
72 workforce, and economic development efforts, it is the intent of  
73 the people to provide high quality and affordable postsecondary  
74 education opportunities.