



The **State of Florida** has a paramount duty to provide a **uniform, efficient, safe, secure and high quality** system of **free public schools**.
Are our schools meeting these standards?

The law

In 1998, 71% of Florida voters approved an amendment to Article IX section 1(a) to the Florida Constitution, requiring the State to provide high quality education:

The education of children is a fundamental value of the people of the State of Florida. It is, therefore, a paramount duty of the state to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Adequate provision shall be made by law for a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality system of free public schools that allows students to obtain a high quality education.

The case

Southern Legal Counsel is representing concerned parents, underserved students, and engaged community members in a suit against the Florida State Board of Education, the presiding officers of Florida's Senate and House of Representatives, and the Florida Commissioner of Education for breaching their constitutional duty to provide a uniform, efficient, safe, secure, and high quality public education system for Florida's children.

The issues

HIGH QUALITY: While Florida has established aspirational standards for teachers, students and schools, we have not seen outcomes that indicate the State is meeting these standards. Florida has not conducted a cost analysis in order to determine the amount of funding required to provide the programs and services needed to ensure that students will be successful.

UNIFORM: Districts, schools, teachers, and students throughout the state are not receiving uniform levels of funding, programming or support, and this creates inequities in academic outcomes and capacity to achieve. Also, the State is funding a parallel voucher system that does not meet the state standards set for public schools.

EFFICIENT: Many of the State's reforms, including the accountability system, changes to the graduation requirements, retention and promotion requirements, teacher evaluations, charter schools and the voucher programs, have wasted millions of dollars without producing the desired effect of a high quality public school system, and are thus not efficient.

The goal

Southern Legal Counsel is asking the Court to declare that the State is not meeting its constitutional obligation to provide high quality free public education for all Florida's children. We also seek a cost study to determine what resources are needed to provide a high quality public education system. The current education system hurts our kids, frustrates teachers, and damages our community. We want to hold Florida's leaders accountable to their duty to Florida's children.