



**As you prepare to advocate for Florida's Neighborhood Public Schools, please consider the following background information and talking points.**

### **Commissioner of Education Background:**

State law establishes the commissioner as Florida's "chief educational officer" and gives him administrative authority of the Florida Department of Education, the agency responsible for managing the state's K-20 educational programs. The commissioner's bailiwick includes elementary and secondary schools, as well as combination and adult schools.

The commissioner is required to organize the Department of Education and oversee its staff, act as custodian of the state's K-20 educational data warehouse, and assist the State Board of Education "in enforcing compliance with the mission and goals of the K-20 system."

Per the Florida Constitution, the commissioner is appointed by the Florida Board of Education, the state agency charged with establishing policy for the Florida's public education programs. Neither the constitution nor state law specifies a term for the commissioner, suggesting he serves at the board's pleasure. There are no specified qualifications for the position.

### **Commissioner of Education Talking Points:**

- Florida's current Commissioner of Education has served as a classroom teacher, school counselor, testing and research specialist, assistant principal and principal. She touts nearly 40 years of service in education. **Richard Corcoran has no work experience in education.**
- Previously, the state board conducted nationwide searches to fill this important position. Conducting a nationwide search to ensure Florida's schools have the support of the most qualified candidate for the position is a moral obligation. **This should NOT be a post used to placate or reward former politicians.**
- Our neighborhood public schools have suffered under the legislative priorities championed by Richard Corcoran.
  - Even as his agenda has promoted the expansion of charters and voucher programs, **he has FAILED to ensure that charters and private schools receiving public dollars are held to the same expectations and mandates as our neighborhood public schools.**
  - Moreover, he oversaw passage of a budget which included a reduction to the Base Student Allocation in 2017, helped pass legislation which stripped funds from the FEFP to establish a teacher performance bonus program, and lead the 2018 legislature to limit funds available to districts from increased home values as part of the local required effort. **Under his leadership, local districts have seen their funding circumvented, tied up in mandates, and siphoned off to charters and private schools.**
  - At the very least, his family's personal ties to a charter entity present a conflict of interest to this important role. The process of selecting leadership for the Florida Department of Education should instill confidence in public education, not leave students, parents and educators anxious about motives and/or personal agendas. **Let's stop playing politics with public education.**
  - The base of effective leadership in any organization is trust. Richard Corcoran's history of characterizing educators and the professional associations that represent them as antagonists in the realm of public education squarely undermines the trust that education professionals must place in Department of Education. **Please ensure that our public education employees can trust education leadership in Tallahassee.**