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**TEACHFORAMERICA** | Florida

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## **Teach For America Jacksonville Shares its Support of the Half-Penny Sales Tax for Public Schools**

*Duval County Voters to Decide on Ballot Measure during 2020 General Election*

**Jacksonville, Florida - [Monday, October 19th, 2020]**—Teach For America Jacksonville strongly endorses the Half-Penny sales tax initiative to transform schools in Duval County. LaKeisha Palmer, Teach For America Jacksonville & Central Florida’s Executive Director, noted “Now more than ever, our students rely on having a safe and comfortable place to learn. Public schools are foundational to our students and we’re committed to supporting this opportunity to move public education forward and provide an economic stimulus for our local economy. Teach For America believes that public schools are a top priority in Jacksonville, and we encourage our constituents, as well as the rest of the community, to support the half-penny.”

According to the Duval County Public Schools [website](#), the Half-Penny sales tax is a necessary community improvement mechanism for the following reasons:

1. Duval County houses the oldest schools in the state;
2. Duval County schools are operating minimally or below student capacity;
3. The Half-Penny Sales Tax ensures all Duval County schools will receive needed safety and security upgrades;
4. New school structures developed through sales tax funds would eliminate the need for portables; and
5. Research shows quality learning environments improve student achievement.

Duval County remains the only urban district in the state of Florida without new revenue sources for education funding. According to the Jacksonville Public Education Fund, “since 2008, the state has cut funding for school maintenance by 24%. [As a result, Duval County] now has a maintenance shortfall of \$243 million. Without the half-penny, that shortfall is expected to grow to \$1 billion in five years.” Duval County voters will decide on the Half-Penny for public schools in the upcoming general election on or before November 3rd. If the proposal passes, the Half-Penny sales tax would be funded by constituents and visitors who purchase taxable goods in Duval County for the next 15 years **beginning January 1, 2021**, and **sunsetting on December 31, 2036**. For more information, please visit [www.jaxpef.org](http://www.jaxpef.org) or [www.ourduvalschools.org](http://www.ourduvalschools.org).

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### **About Teach For America Florida**

Teach For America Florida works in partnership with urban and rural communities in Miami-Dade, Jacksonville, and Central Florida to expand educational opportunity for children. Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding leaders to make a commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today Teach For America Florida is a force of over 1,700 alumni and corps members committed to profound systemic change. From classrooms to districts to state houses across America, they’re reimagining education to realize the day when every child has an equal opportunity to learn, to grow, to influence and to lead. Teach For America is a proud member of the AmeriCorps national service network. For more information, visit [www.teachforamerica.org](http://www.teachforamerica.org) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).