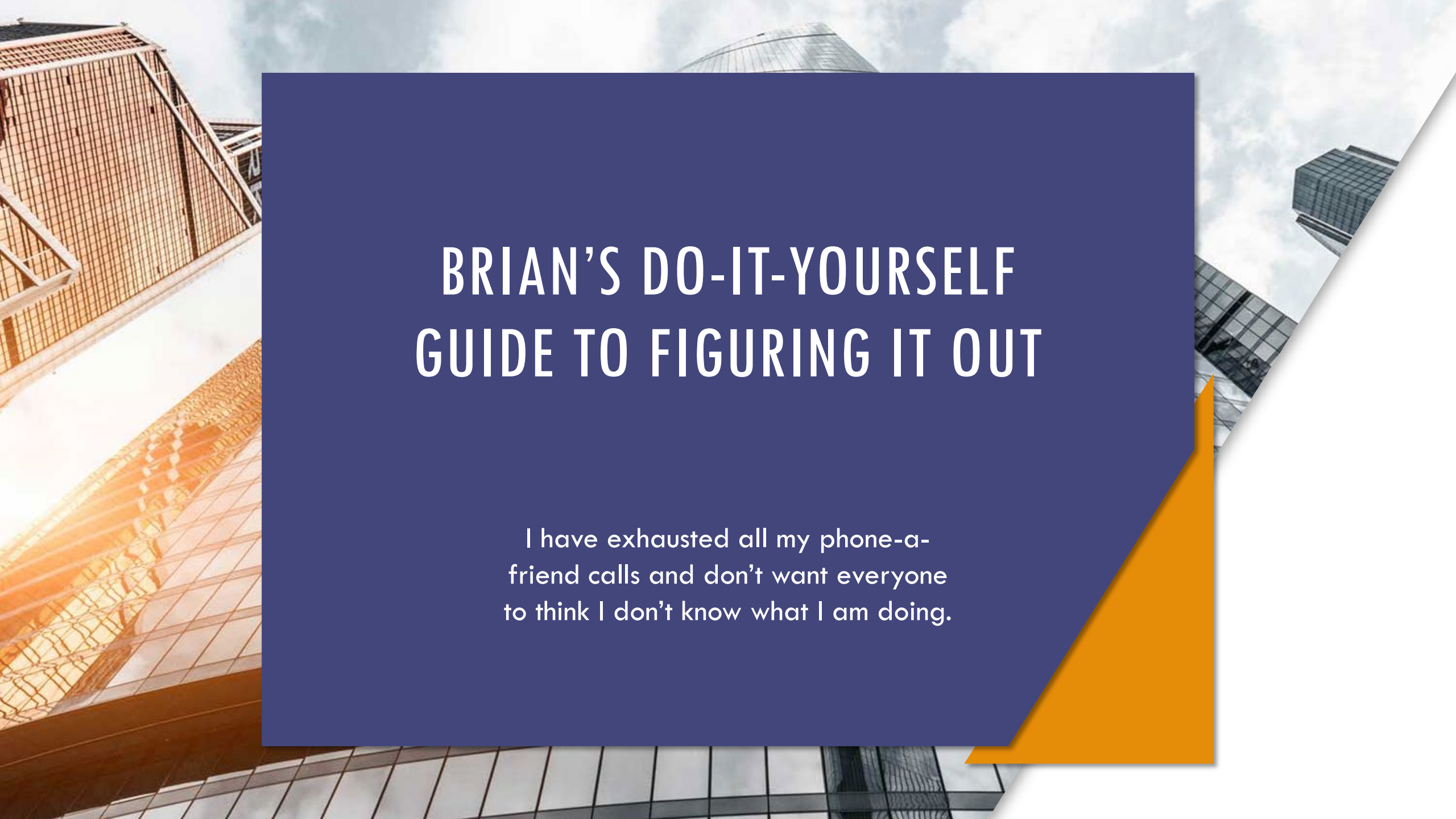

BRIAN'S DO-IT-YOURSELF GUIDE TO FIGURING IT OUT

I have exhausted all my phone-a-friend calls and don't want everyone to think I don't know what I am doing.

SOME BASIC LEGAL KNOWLEDGE

PRIMARY SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Who wields the biggest board with a nail in it?

- US Constitution
- US Law
- US Regulations (e.g., 34 CFR 99.31)
- Florida Constitution
- Florida Law
- State Board of Education Rule
- School Board Policy/Rule
- Local Procedures



PRIMARY SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Where do I look for the real deal?

- Florida Constitution
- Florida Statutes
- Florida Laws (The bills that passed and were signed into law)
- State Board of Education Rule
- Other Agency Rules (flrules.org)
- School Board Policy/Rule (Should be an easy link from the district's home page or the main School Board page)
- Local Procedures (someone's desk drawer)

PRIMARY SOURCES OF AUTHORITY

Where do I look to chase down rumors and hazy memories?

- Florida House of Representatives
  - Bill Search
  - Budget Documents 2026 (This link will change every year but can be found on the main Flhouse.gov page)
- Florida Senate
  - Bill Search (link is for 2027 bills, but a pull-down menu is there to change the year and session)
  - Budget Documents 2026 (There is a pull-down menu to change the year here too)

TREASURE HUNT

TREASURE HUNT

Help me find a statute.

- Isn't there a law about letting voters decide to increase their property taxes for operational expenses? How would I find that?
- 1. Florida Statutes website.
- 2. Search Terms? "Millage"? "Operational Millage"? "School district tax"?
- 3. Sometimes the answer is in another statute. Search might lead you to §1011.73, which then references §1011.71(9), which might be the one you are seeking.



TREASURE HUNT

Help me find a rule.

- Isn't there a rule that has some exemptions for competitive solicitation? How do I find it?
- 1. FIrules.org
- 2. Browse for Agency Rules using the Table of Contents (Department of Education (6), State Board of Education (6A)).
- 3. Whoops, that is a lot of rules.
- 4. Can I search for it?
- 5. Search terms. Best option is to cite to law being implemented (§1010.04, F.S.). "Purchasing" may be too broad. "Competitive solicitation" may work as long as you are using the right phrasing.

TREASURE HUNT

Help me find a bill or bill language.

- I heard that the Legislature passed or is considering changing the minimum starting teacher pay to $65,000. Is that actually in a bill?
- 1. Take your pick – House or Senate?
- 2. Search. In this case, maybe search for minimum teacher salary. HB 727 looks promising.
  - A. Easiest search is when you know the statutory section
  - B. Search terms can be tricky if not exactly right.
- 3. So, did it pass? Is it moving? Is it going to move? (Hint, if there is a D next to it, there is a 95% chance it isn't going anywhere.)
- 4. Related Bills and Companion Bills. Follow the breadcrumbs.

TREASURE HUNT

Advanced Lesson.

- I heard that they changed the law about local governments accepting online payments. Aren't we always considered a "local government."
- 1. Definitions matter.
  - A. Chapter 120 vs. Chapter 287 – definition of an agency, but then see §287.055.
  - B. Start with the specific section. If no definitions, look at the broader chapter.
- 2. Local governments, political subdivisions, state agency, agency? What do they mean?
  - A. §1.01; §120.52; §287.012; §163.2514; but then §163.3164, F.S. (governing body v. local government)
  - B. My favorite definitions statute: §163.340, F.S. ("except a school district").
- 3. So how about those online payments?
  - A. §215.322, F.S.
  - B. Refers to state agencies and units of local government. Is that us this time?

DON’T GET TOO COMFORTABLE

DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE

What do you mean "Did I read the GAA?"

- You are a good person and a dedicated public servant. This year, you really want to help the district start bargaining as early as possible. You have read §1011.62(14), F.S., one hundred times, and now you know how much money the district is getting for teacher salary increases. You even remembered to subtract the charter school and FES portions of that amount. You are ready and hand a proposal to the CFO. Why is she laughing?
- §1011.62(14), F.S., says, "The Legislature shall annually apportion an amount of funds provided in the Florida Education Finance Program to assist school districts and charter schools in their compliance with the requirement that the minimum base salary for full-time classroom teachers, as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(a), and certified prekindergarten teachers funded in the Florida Education Finance Program is at least $47,500 or to provide salary increases to instructional personnel, as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(a)-(d), in a manner that best meets the needs of the school district or charter school."
- Simple enough. We already reached $47,500, so we can divide the $1 million we are getting between all instructional personnel, right?

DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE

What do you mean "Did I read the GAA?"

- Surprise! §1011.62(14), F.S., also says, "The amount ***and distribution methodology*** for the funding shall be specified in the General Appropriations Act."
- What does that mean? The law says we should distribute it to instructional personnel "in a manner that best meets the needs of the school district." Don't we determine the methodology?
- Have you forgotten childhood and the strings attached to every dollar your parents gave you and their inconsistent and hypocritical decisions?



DON'T GET TOO COMFORTABLE

What do you mean "Did I read the GAA?"

- GAA 2025: "$101,602,318 is provided for school districts and charter schools to use for ***increased personnel compensation costs*** ***or*** to provide salary increases to full-time classroom teachers and certified prekindergarten teachers funded in the Florida Education Finance Program with at least two years of full-time teaching experience in a Florida public school, ***and other instructional personnel.***"
- GAA 2026: "$201,388,752 is provided for school districts and charter schools to provide salary increases to full-time ***classroom teachers*** and certified prekindergarten teachers funded in the Florida Education Finance Program ***with at least ten years of full-time teaching experience in a Florida public school.*** The amount of such an increase may not exceed $3,000. ***If a school district has any funds remaining after providing the salary increases,*** the school district must use these funds to provide salary increases to instructional personnel or for increased costs related to personnel compensation and provide a report to the department by January 1, 2027, on the expenditure of such funds."

EXPRESS YOUR ANGER

EXPRESS YOUR ANGER

Yell at me or test me or try to fool me after putting you through this.



“WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT”



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