

FSBA

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Education Budget Update

The budget conference process is underway. House members on the K-12 Budget Conference Committee include Representatives Joe Pickens (Chair), Trey Traviesa, Thad Altman, Marti Coley, Anitere Flores, John Legg, Seth McKeel, David Meador, Bill Proctor, David Simmons, Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Bill Heller, Martin Kiar, Janet Long, Curtis Richardson, Shelley Vana, and Jim Waldman. Senate members include Senators Stephen Wise (Chair), Larcenia Bullard, Lee Constantine, Paula Dockery, Rudy Garcia, and Gary Siplin. The Conference Committee is expected to work through this weekend, with the goal of resolving most, if not all, budget differences by the beginning of next week.

Property Tax Update

Illustrating their unified support for their plan, the Senate passed its property tax relief plan unanimously after only a very brief floor debate. A Conference Committee has been named to begin hammering out a compromise between the House and Senate Property Tax proposals. House members on the Property Tax Conference Committee include Representatives Dean Cannon (Chair), Thad Altman, Frank Attkisson, Ellyn Bogdanoff, Don Brown, Joyce Cusack, Anitere Flores, Luis Garcia, Dan Gelber, Michael Grant, Carlos Lopez-Cantera, Dave Murzin, Michael Scionti, Jack Seiler, and Will Weatherford. Senate members include Senators Mike Haridopolos (Chair), Jeff Atwater, Lisa Carlton, Ted Deutch, Steven Geller, Ronda Storms, and Daniel Webster. This Conference Committee is expected to begin work early next week.

Although there are substantial differences among the two House plans and the Senate plan, there are some common themes. All of the plans call for a tax roll-back, for a tax cap going forward from the base year, and for a tangible personal property tax exemption for businesses. It is expected that, at least these three elements will be part of the final tax relief package. However, the Senate's opposition to the House plan that would eventually eliminate all property taxes and replace that revenue with an increase in sales tax makes it unlikely that this idea will move forward. Meanwhile several other issues remain that may be included in the final package, including proposals relating to Save Our Homes portability, affordable housing, and property assessment criteria. Overall, the Senate plan would deliver about \$12.3 billion in relief over five years, while the House plans would cut taxes by \$25 - \$35 billion, depending upon which elements of the two House plans might be adopted. Attached is a comparison of the major components of the two House plans and Senate plan along with a glossary and some background information.

Bill Action This Week

SB 108 – Minority/Underrepresented Students by Hill (HB 403 by Reed)

The bill establishes the Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement Council to recruit students for AP courses, identify each minority or underrepresented student who is eligible to take AP courses, and examine existing best practices for narrowing the achievement gap between minority or underrepresented students and non-minority students. The bill provides for the Council's duties and requires an annual report, and requires DOE to provide the Council with administrative support. School districts are also required to annually discuss at a school board meeting the number of students who have taken at least two AP courses by 11th grade by ethnicity, gender, and zip code.

STATUS: Passed Education Pre-K - 12 as a CS (HB 403 on Calendar)

SB 574 & 1228 – School Districts by Bennett

The bill provides for designating academically high-performing school districts. In order to qualify, a school district must earn a grade of "A" for two consecutive years, have no district-operated school that earns a grade of "F", comply with all class size requirements, and have no material weaknesses or instances of material noncompliance noted in the annual financial audit. The designation may be retained for 3 years, if the district complies with all the initial eligibility criteria and earns at least a grade of "A" for 2 years within a 3-year period. However, a district may not retain the designation if a district-operated school earns a grade of "F" during the 3-year period. An academically high-performing school district shall be exempt from provisions of chapters 1000 to 1003, except for those enumerated for compliance in the bill. The bill specifically provides for exemptions relating to program expenditure levels in the FEFP for kindergarten through grade 12, annual K-12 comprehensive reading plans, requirements for covered walkways for portables, the use of portables, procurement of instructional materials, and the use of the instructional materials allocation. The bill also provides that discretionary capital improvement millage may be used for payment of premiums for property and casualty insurance for the purpose of insuring the educational and ancillary plant and the purchase, lease-purchase, or lease of certain motor vehicles. Operating revenues that are made available through the payment of property and casualty insurance premiums may be used only for nonrecurring operational expenditures of the school district.

STATUS: Placed on Calendar

SB 680 – Growth Management by Dockery (HB 645 by Hays)

This bill amends criteria for participation in the High Growth District Capital Outlay Assistance Grant Program. In order to qualify for the program, a district must have equaled or exceeded three times the statewide average of growth in capital outlay FTE students. The allocation formula is revised, and a stipulation included that prohibits a change, correction, or re-computation of data authorized for two years following the initial annual allocation. The bill appropriates \$30 million to the PECO that may only be used to construct new student stations.

STATUS: Placed on Calendar (HB 645 passed Policy & Budget Council)

SB 1212 – Corporate Income Tax Credit Scholarship by Wise (HB 465 by Legg)

This bill expands the eligibility criteria for the Corporate Tax Credit (CTC) program to add students who were counted as full-time equivalent students at any time during the previous state fiscal year in a Department of Juvenile Justice educational program and students who have been placed in foster care. For the purpose of continued participation in the CTC program, the bill defines family income for a foster care student as the income that is considered in determining whether the student qualifies for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Act.

STATUS: Passed Children, Families, and Elder Affairs (HB 465 on Calendar)

SB 2088 – Kautz Student Safety Sponsors by Aronberg *(HB 187 by Vana)*

The bill authorizes a district school board to adopt policies providing for private sponsorship for the installation of Type 2 seat belts on newly purchased school buses. The bill provides that any person or business entity may be a sponsor by paying a fee prescribed by local school board policy. Of the proceeds collected from the fee, up to 5% may be used for the cost of an advertising agent, up to 45 percent may be used for the cost of the seat belt assemblies and installation, and the remaining funds must be deposited into the state General Revenue Fund to be used for transportation services. Upon request of the sponsor, the school board must place signage on the school bus acknowledging the sponsor. The bill specifies that no liability may accrue to any person or business entity because that person or entity is a sponsor of seat belt assemblies.

STATUS: Passed Education PreK - 12 *(HB 187 on Calendar)*

SB 2092 – Charter School Districts/Pilot Program Deutch

Currently, there are four school districts (Palm Beach, Hillsborough, Orange, and Volusia) that operate as pilot charter school districts. The bill postpones the termination dates for Orange County and Palm Beach County charter school districts until July 1, 2008.

STATUS: In Messages to the House

SB 2130 – Exceptional Students/OPPAGA Study Constantine

This bill requires the OPPAGA to evaluate the practices of agencies and district school boards in providing educational services to exceptional students with disabilities when they place them in a private residential care facility. OPPAGA must submit a report and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2007.

STATUS: Placed on Calendar

SB 2200 – High School Athletics/Drug Testing by Villalobos *(HB 461 by Llorente)*

This bill establishes a one-year, random, anabolic steroids testing program for students in grades 9 through 12, who participate in football, baseball, and weightlifting. The program is to be administered by FHSAA during the 2007-2008 school year. Public and private schools must participate in the program as a prerequisite to FHSAA membership. FHSAA must submit an annual report to the Legislature.

STATUS: Passed Judiciary as a CS *(HB 461 on Calendar)*

SB 2226 – Child Care/Quality Rating System by Rich *(HB 1107 by Ausley)*

This bill requires AWI to establish the Sunshine State Stars Quality Rating System (QRS), which assesses and communicates to parents the quality of early childhood education and child care programs provided by licensed child care facilities and facilities participating in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education (VPK) Program. The QRS must be voluntary for facilities and must be based on an assessment of a facility's learning environment; curricula, screening, and assessment; staff qualifications; professional development; business practices; and family involvement. The bill creates a 2-year voluntary pilot program to implement the QRS in eight Florida counties. The bill specifies that centers and programs rated as Tier 1, 2, or 3 are eligible for grants and awards to improve quality, and those rated as Tier 4 or 5 are eligible for merit awards to maintain high quality.

STATUS: Passed Education Pre-K - 12 as amended *(HB 1107 on Calendar)*

SB 2428 – Dividing School Districts by Wise *(HB 7093 by Schools & Learning Council)*

This bill proposes amending Section 4, Article IX of the State Constitution to allow a county to divide its school district into two or more smaller school districts upon a vote of the electors of the county pursuant to general law, provided that each subdivided school district has at least 25,000 students. A school district is not required to exercise its option to divide the school district pursuant to this subsection. School district taxes must be imposed countywide and the rate of school district taxes must be determined by a board consisting of an equal number of school board members from each school district.

STATUS: Failed in Education Pre-K - 12 *(HB 7093 has not been considered)*

SB 2512 – English for Speakers of Other Languages by Wise *(HB 1219 by Carroll)*

This bill revises in-service requirements for ESOL teachers. The bill specifies that a teacher providing ESOL instruction must comply with the following in-service requirements: for the primary English instructor (Basic ESOL) who is an English/Language Arts teacher, 300 inservice hours or the equivalent; for an instructor teaching the basic subject areas of reading, math, science, social studies or computer literacy, 60 inservice hours or the equivalent; and for an instructor teaching subject areas other than basic ESOL or basic subject areas, 18 inservice hours or the equivalent.

STATUS: Passed Education Pre-K - 12 as a CS *(HB 1219 on Calendar)*

SB 2598 – School for Science & Technology by Wise *(HB 1371 by Altman)*

This bill creates the Governor’s School for Science and Technology to provide accelerated science, math, and technology curriculum to qualified students in grades 9-12 and also provide summer training programs for teachers. The bill appropriates \$1 million as start-up costs for the school opening in the 2009-2010 academic year. The school would be located in Brevard County and be operated by the Florida Virtual School (FLVS). Enrolled students must reside on the campus. The bill exempts the school from Florida School Code requirements relating to curriculum and operations, with the exception of laws relating specifically to civil rights or student health, safety, and welfare. The FLVS serves as the fiscal agent and would be required to submit a legislative budget request annually.

STATUS: Passed Education Pre-K - 12 *(HB 1371 passed Schools & Learning Council)*

SB 2744 – Instructional Personnel/DROP by Alexander *(HB 1569 by McKeel)*

This bill authorizes charter school instructional personnel employed in grades PreL - 12 to participate in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) extension if they are funded through the FEFP, and the governing board of the charter school approves the extension. The bill also provides a DROP extension for prekindergarten instructional personnel in the public school system funded through the FEFP.

STATUS: Passed Governmental Operations *(HB 1569 on Calendar)*

SB 2746 – Physical Education by Constantine *(HB 967 by Weatherford)*

This bill requires the Commissioner to provide professional development in physical education for physical education teachers, elementary and secondary school teachers whose assignments include physical education courses, and developers of physical education curricula. The bill defines “physical education,” and requires each district school board to provide 150 minutes of physical education each week for students in kindergarten through grade 5. The bill specifies that this instruction may be provided by any instructional personnel as defined in s. 1012.01, regardless of certification, who are designated by the school principal. The bill requires the Department of Education to review and revise the Sunshine State Standards regarding physical education in 2007-08. The bill also requires each public school to have a defibrillator on the school grounds.

STATUS: Passed Health Policy as a CS *(HB 967 passed the House)*

HB 7141 – Improving Graduation Rates by Schools & Learning Council

The bill requires each student who has filed a formal declaration of intent to terminate school enrollment but has not yet attained the age of eighteen years to be informed of other possible educational programs at the exit interview. The bill creates the Transition Success Program for students in the sixth through ninth grade to ease the transition from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school, to reduce dropout rates, and to provide students with extensive self-awareness opportunities concerning career goals and interests. By the 2008-09 school year, DOE must develop criteria and standards, design model programs, and provide technical assistance to districts and schools developing such programs. The bill makes Transition Success Programs eligible for Florida School Recognition Program awards.

STATUS: In Messages to the Senate