



## Florida School Boards Association

*The voice of education in Florida.*

### **PreK-12 Education Conference Committee Report**

*Prepared Sunday, March 8, 2020*

The PreK-12 Budget Conference Committee met only twice over the weekend. Once at 6:15 Saturday evening where they organized and the House made their first offer and once Sunday evening at 6:30 where the Senate made their counter offer. Senate Offer #1 accepted a large number of small projects from House Offer #1.

On a larger scale, the Senate accepted the House offer to increase the Base Student Allocation for the VPK program. If the position prevails the increase will provide an increase of about \$10 million for VPK programs statewide.

In a surprising move, the Senate did not accept the House offer to set the total funds for the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation at \$500 million, which was the Senate's original proposal in their budget. Many assumed the amount for the Teacher Salary Enhancement would be closed out on Sunday since the House had acquiesced to the Senate's original budget. However, that was not the case. Instead, the Senate's Offer #1 on Sunday was for \$600 million. \$100 million more than their original offer.

The Senate proposed funding the additional \$100 million over the House's \$500 million offer by taking it out of the Base FEFP. So, where the House offered an increase in the BSA of \$50 per Equivalent Student, the Senate countered with an increase if only \$18.64 per Weighted Full Equivalent Student.

How the money will be distributed to teachers has still not been determined.

When asked about this surprising change in the Senate's budget, the Chair of the Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Kelli Stargel, indicated that the Senate was working to get closer to the Governor's requested amount.

Another significant area that many believe was agreed to was regarding the change to the District Cist Differential (DCD) formula. The House had proposed changing it this year but when making their first offer, the House seemed to indicate that they would agree with the Senate to not change it, but wanted a sort of hold harmless built into the current Compression Adjustment for districts negatively impacted by the current DCD. There was no explanation of the hold harmless at this time. Please note, we do not believe anything is agreed upon, including the DCD. Any provisions can be changed by leadership, even those agreed upon by the conference committees. It has happened in the past.

Unfortunately, there was no discussion during either Conference Committee meeting regarding any assistance for funding the FRS increase. However, Chair Kelli Stargel did make comments to the press following the Senate's offer that she believed that the \$18.64 per Weighted Full Equivalent Student increase in the BSA would be enough to pay for the FRS contribution.

The Pre-K-12 Education Appropriations Conference Committee Chair, Representative Chris Latvala, indicated that the conference committee would have another meeting. That meeting will be held Monday morning. All unresolved issues must be "bumped" to the Appropriations Committees Chairs, Senator Rob Bradley and Representative Travis Cummings by 1:00 P.M. Monday, March 9.