



2019 Legislative Update

Fourth Committee Week: February 8, 2019

Wasting No Time

It feels like only yesterday that we were in session dealing with budgets and bills about guns. But alas, here we are again this week dealing with budgets and bills about guns. Throw in some other ideas like smoke-able medical marijuana, abolishing the Constitutional Revision Commission and financial literacy graduation requirements for high school students (again), and there's the fourth committee week in Tallahassee.

Dollars ... \$91.3 Billion of Them Actually

On February 1, as required by law, Gov. Ron DeSantis released his budget proposal — a whopping \$91.3 billion annual budget full of some pretty radical funding ideas. You might remember that the current fiscal year budget is actually about \$2.5 billion (give or take) less than what is being proposed for the spending package for next year. The governor's budget package includes the following:

- Increases per-student funding by \$224.40
- Of that increase, \$50 is Base Student Allocation (compared to 47 cents from last year)
- \$422 million allocation in the FEFP (the main education budget) for teachers and principals (no program details yet, so no delineation on bonuses versus actual salary increases)
- Teacher classroom supply allocation remains the same as last year
- The funding compression allocation is removed (which mainly rewarded small counties by taking funding from big counties)
- Mental health allocation increases by \$10 million
- Safe schools allocation increases by \$50 million

Now some of the bad news: Construction and maintenance dollars for charter schools are more than what is allocated for neighborhood public schools, colleges and universities combined. Not to mention that instead of capturing the tax on construction of new homes as well as the increased property values of homes and businesses (which the revenue estimating conference projects would be \$514 million this year alone), DeSantis is rolling back the mileage rate, capping how much tax can be collected off the natural growth in property values. This is consistent with the stance Speaker Corcoran and the Florida House took through the 2017 and 2018 sessions and won in the mileage battle with the Senate.

Remember we have a LONG way to go in this budget process. So, don't get too excited about that \$422 million teachers and principals allocation. The first step is that the governor RECOMMENDS a budget. The second step is that the Legislature CREATES and passes a budget. Then the governor gets to decide whether what he proposed is more important than what the Legislature passed and sent to him. That's when the true rubber meets the road.

Is the Senate Really Ready to Have the Arming Teachers Fight ... Again?

The legislature wasted little time introducing legislation after two committee weeks of hearings about the implementation of SB 7026 – the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Public Safety Act passed last session – and the MSD Public Safety Commission's 99 recommendations for improving the legislation.

This week the [Senate Education Committee](#), chaired by Sen. Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens) released [SPB 7030](#), a proposed committee bill that will allow for classroom teachers to be armed.

[SPB 7030](#) will be heard by the [Senate Education Committee](#) at 4 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 12. We know the committee room will be packed. The Moms Demand Action Group was busy this week in the halls talking to lawmakers, and they are standing with FEA – only trained law enforcement should be carrying weapons on campus. We expect the Senate Education Committee to be a sea of red shirts Tuesday.

We encourage you to take a look at the members on the [Senate Education Committee](#) and, if your senator is on this committee, please call their office at home or in Tallahassee. Tell the aide who answers the phone that you support only trained law enforcement personnel carrying weapons on campus. Classroom teachers and education support professionals are hired to educate, not carry weapons.

FEA will be meeting with senators before the committee hearing, but senators need to hear from their constituents, too.



Remembering the Fallen Eagles

On Thursday, Feb. 14, our brothers and sisters in Broward and across Florida will remember the senseless tragedy that shook a nation and took the lives of 17 students, teachers and staff at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland.

We are reminded that students and faculty at MSD likely started their day with hope and love. Let's keep that hope and love alive, especially for the fallen Eagles, by engaging in simple acts of kindness this Feb. 14.

Need suggestions? Volunteer in your community Thursday after school or on the weekend. Change your profile picture on social media to the one here. Use the hashtag: **#MSDStrong** and take a selfie — post it on social media with a message letting the Parkland families know you are with them. Above all else, make sure those closest to you know that you love them – today and every day. In this world where violence and hate have become the new norm, where it's easier to let things divide us rather than unite us, let's at least for one day remember that a kind word, a smile or a hug can make a world of difference.

Are you coming to Tallahassee?

It's time to start thinking about when you are coming to Tallahassee between March 5 and May 3, as hotels are filling up fast! You'll want to secure your rooms now, or you'll be commuting from Quincy. If you have any questions about coming to Tallahassee, please contact Tina Dunbar at Tina.Dunbar@floridaea.org. Remember that your visit should include proper Capitol attire – suits, slacks, button-up shirts and/or ties for the men; dresses or slacks and blouses for women; and comfortable dress shoes for everyone. We also recommend you bring a light jacket or sweater along with an umbrella. Tallahassee weather is notoriously unpredictable this time of year, as are committee room temperatures.

But first: Have you done your homework to meet with legislators or legislative aides in-district BEFORE you come to Tallahassee? Building your relationships at home allows us to work more closely with legislators while they are in the capital and builds your influence with legislators in general. Be sure to share your meeting outcomes (or for some of you, if you requested and were denied a meeting at home) with your PPA contact. Don't know who it is? Email Stephanie Kunkel at Stephanie.Kunkel@floridaea.org, and she will be sure it gets to the PPA staff who works with that legislator.

