



## Legislative Update

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Week 9 – Day 58

May 1, 2019

### Session Won't End on Time:

House and Senate Appropriations chairmen agreed late Tuesday to a proposed budget for fiscal year 2019-20 of approximately \$90 billion. While the top line numbers are published, the budget details and the final bill were not distributed, and lawmakers **will not end the 2019 legislative session on time on Friday.**

### Budget:

The budget needed to be on members' desks by Tuesday to meet the scheduled end of the session. That is because of a mandatory 72-hour "cooling off" period before lawmakers can vote on the budget. House Speaker Jose Oliva confirmed the need for additional time, saying, "We're probably going to spill into Saturday on the budget, hopefully [finishing] about midday, maybe early afternoon."

We will continue to advocate our members' interests until sine die, the final adjournment. We have also begun work on an in-depth analysis of what has been lobbied and the results of the Legislature's work.

Here are a few highlights in the K-12 budget:

- The base student allocation (BSA) has increased by \$75.07 for a total of \$4,279.49.
- Total FEFP funds per student has increased by \$242.60 for a total of \$7,672.02.
- The Best & Brightest Teachers and Principals Allocation (bonuses) has been set at \$284,500,000. While this is not the amount requested by the governor, it is an increase from the previous amount, growing another \$50,000,000. Bonus amounts for each individual receiving the recruitment, retention and recognition awards have not been finalized.
- The Safe Schools allocation has been increased by about \$18 million for a total of \$180,000,000.
- The Mental Health Assistance allocation has been increased by about \$5.7 million for a total of \$75,000,000.
- The Funding Compression allocation has been retained at \$54,190,616, down \$2.6 million
- A new Turnaround Supplemental Services allocation has been created as part of SB 7070, allocated at \$45,473.810. These funds will be for wrap-around services for community school programs and will replace the one-year grants for up to 25 public schools through the "Schools of Hope" funding.
- No changes have been made to the district cost differential (DCD). The Office of Economic and Demographic Research (EDR) is directed to develop methodology for calculating each school district's wage level index, compare that to the current price level index and provide a transition plan that minimizes negative impacts on school districts. EDR must present a plan to the Legislature by October 2019.
- No general state PECO funds are provided to public schools, but more than \$158,000,000 is provided for charter schools. This allocation to charter schools avoids triggering the requirement for districts to share the 1.5 mill capital outlay funds levy. PECO funds will support the Special Facilities Construction Account helping Liberty, Jackson and Gilchrist Counties build schools.

To be clear, while the per FTE student funding seems high (and, to be fair, it is the highest it has been over the past five budget cycles), don't be fooled into believing that this is all unencumbered funds to be used for things like much-needed salary and benefits for educators, or funds for districts to buy school supplies or fix broken roofs and air conditioners that are so badly needed in our neighborhood public schools. As we've stated previously, Best & Brightest bonus funds that were previously located *outside* the FEFP (for example, like PECO funding is outside the FEFP) are now a categorical, which artificially boosts the per-FTE funding.

Make no mistake about it, the base student allocation is real and will result in real funds for school districts to negotiate salaries and benefits, and is a good first step towards moving Florida's teachers out of 46<sup>th</sup> in the nation, and all other educators out of the bottom 10 states in the nation in wages.

### **Quick Update**

- [SB 7070](#), the big education package that we've been reporting on weekly, passed the Senate [23-17](#) and passed the House [76-39](#).
- The school safety package, [SB 7030](#), passed the Senate [22-17](#). The House is scheduled to vote on the bill today. Look for a more detailed update next week that will highlight bills and budget.

We want to draw your attention to two quick items that you may be hearing about soon. The first is the changes in teacher certification requirements, and the second is the issue of sharing millage with charter schools through voter-approved referenda.

- ***Teacher Certification:***  
Passed as part of SB 7070, but getting significantly less attention, are changes to the educator certification requirements. The bill removes the requirement that a teacher who is issued a temporary certificate must demonstrate mastery of the general knowledge (GK) exam by achieving passing scores on all subtests within one calendar year of the date of employment. The bill also removes the prohibition of a school district from continuing employment beyond one year for a teacher with a temporary certificate who has not mastered the GK. It also extends the time for a teacher to be issued a professional certificate by an additional two years if the certificate holder is rated highly effective in the immediate prior year's evaluation, or if they have completed a two-year mentorship program. Lastly, the GK exam is only required for classroom teachers and is no longer required for all instructional personnel. However, mastery of the subject areas still will be required for instructional personnel. For school districts employing classroom teachers who do not achieve passing scores on any subtest of the GK exam, the bill requires that those districts provide information regarding available state- and district-level support and instruction to assist a teacher with passing the GK exam.
- ***Voter approved referenda millage sharing:***  
As reported previously, [HB 7123](#) requires that school funds generated by any voter-approved millage referendum be shared with charter schools, regardless of whether the referendum language specified that the money would be only for neighborhood public schools. HB 7123 has passed the House and is in the Senate. We continue to fight the bill until sine die.

**Questions? Call PPA at 850-224-2078**