

DTU Legislative Update

2020 Legislative Session

Week 1 - Day 4

January 17, 2020

The Teachers Are Coming ...

And boy did they ever! Teachers, along with education staff professionals, retirees, parents, students and community partners, from Dade to Escambia, on 98 buses and more than 10,000 of our closest friends (including 600 educators from Polk County alone!) descended on Tallahassee Monday to tell legislators to Fund Our Future.

Now the real work begins. We have 56 days to convince lawmakers that new and veteran teachers, including prekindergarten teachers, in addition to support personnel (Paraprofessionals and UOPD) deserve meaningful salary increases. Salary proposals put forth by the legislature need to be fair, equitable, and sustainable and do not violate local control and the constitutional right of collective bargaining. Most importantly – that funds are appropriated for salaries NOT BONUSES.

Fund Our Future

The House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee met Thursday morning to provide their recommendations on the Speaker's request to reprioritize \$520 million in the education budget. Chair Chris Latvala (R-Clearwater) presented the committee's recommendations. We thank Chair Latvala for his reprioritizing all of the Best & Brightest Bonus funds (\$284.5 million) plus other funds and redirecting a total of **\$462.6 million into the Base Student Allocation (BSA)** – for the purposes of boosting salaries for educators. The committee will present their recommendation to Budget Chair Travis Cummings (R-Orange Park) this week. Chair Latvala and Speaker Oliva should be commended for their recommendation.

Thanks to the work of FEA leaders and members talking to their legislators, the House went from \$0.47 increase in the BSA two years ago, an increase in BSA by \$75 last year, and on day 4 of the session we're

seeing recommendations to raise the BSA – for the express purpose of providing salary increases – by substantial levels.

But we still have a LONG way to go. We must ensure that the Senate also includes a sizable increase in BSA for salary increases and the House Budget chairman honors the request of the PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee. We must also ensure any policy that accompanies the budget regarding salaries is fair and equitable to not only teachers but education staff professionals. It needs to be sustainable (salaries NOT BONUSSES), and honors local control and the constitutional right to bargain.

Senate Education

On Monday, while thousands of us rallied for public education outside the capitol, the Senate Education committee was meeting to discuss multiple education bills, including SB 1088 by Chair Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens). This legislation will likely become the Senate’s salary proposal bill. While the bill is simply a “shell”, a current placeholder, while the funding is worked out in the Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, there was plenty of good discussion about what should, and should not, be included in the bill.

Chair Diaz recognized that increasing teacher salaries is a complex issue with many areas that need to be addressed. What surprised us was that he was clear that the legislature had to recognize collective bargaining as well as the right of local school boards to set salary, benefits and working terms & conditions at the local level. Diaz went on to state that this bill would allow lawmakers to have the conversation to determine the best approach to increasing teacher salaries while they work with the appropriations committee to determine how much will be available.

We thank Senators Berman (D-Boynton Beach), Cruz (D-Tampa) and Montford (D-Tallahassee), for addressing that a salary proposal must be for salaries and NOT BONUSSES. We wish to thank the speakers who testified about the need to include prekindergarten teachers and all educators, not just classroom teachers. Increases need to be equitable for all, not just those newly entering the profession.

Bills

Something we are commonly asked is what bills public school advocates tracking. It's a great question, but also an ever-changing one. This is especially true in the first few weeks of session.

So rather, than providing you with a static list of bills in this email, we encourage you to check out the completely redesigned 2020 Legislative Session page on our website:

<https://feaweb.org/issues-action/legislative-session/>

You can use this link throughout the session to track important bills and get talking points on them as well.

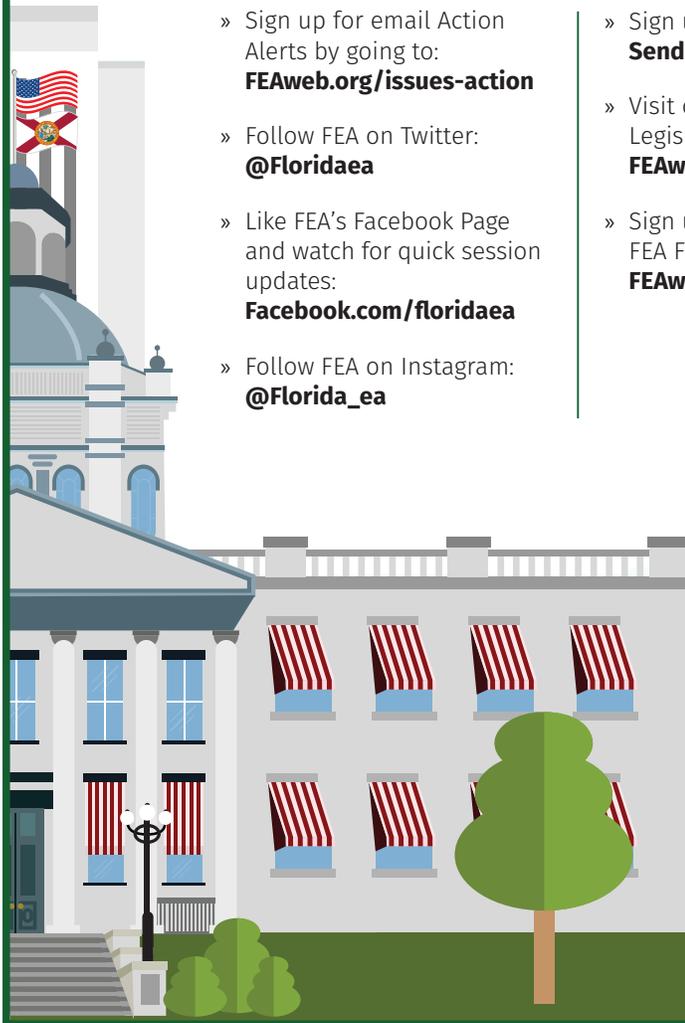
Also, on the site you can easily find your Legislators by entering your home address. We hope that you'll find the website a useful tool in your advocacy throughout the rest of the session and beyond.

For additional information regarding the 2020 session, please refer to the flyer below.

Stay Up-to-Date This Legislative Session

Lots of decisions will be made in Tallahassee during the legislative session that can impact your job, your retirement, your students and your school. DTU will email you weekly legislative updates, but to stay on top of the issues you can also:

- » Sign up for email Action Alerts by going to: **FEAweb.org/issues-action**
- » Follow FEA on Twitter: **@Floridaea**
- » Like FEA's Facebook Page and watch for quick session updates: **Facebook.com/floridaea**
- » Follow FEA on Instagram: **@Florida_ea**
- » Sign up for Action Alert texts: **Send feaactivist to 31996**
- » Visit our redesigned 2020 Legislative Session webpage: **FEAweb.org/session**
- » Sign up to receive the weekly FEA Frontline Report: **FEAweb.org/frontline-subscribe**



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Florida Education Association
MEMBER NBEA, NEA, AFT, AEA, CIO

Are you coming to Tallahassee?

Again this session we are working closely with the AFL-CIO Working Families Lobby Corps to lobby legislators in Tallahassee on pro-public education issues and against anti-union legislation. If you haven't already, be sure to let us know when to expect you via [AFL-CIO Working Families Lobby Corps "I'm coming"](#) tab, and book your hotels ASAP.

If you have any questions about coming to Tallahassee please don't hesitate to contact Tina Dunbar at Tina.Dunbar@floridaea.org. Remember that your visit to Tallahassee should include proper capitol attire – suits or slacks and button up shirts and ties for the men; dresses or slacks and blouses for the ladies; and especially comfortable dress shoes for everyone. We also recommend you bring a light jacket or sweater, and an umbrella. Tallahassee weather is notoriously unpredictable for winter, not to mention committee room temperatures!

Questions? Call PPA at 850-224-2078.

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