

FRIDAY UPDATE

WEEK 1

MARCH 10, 2017

Session Begins:

LOCAL MILLAGE FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS: SB 376 has passed its second committee and is on the way to the full Senate Appropriations Committee. It mandates that school boards share some of the 1.5 mills levied for local capital outlay projects. An effort to balance the bill by authorizing a return to the optional millage from 1.5 to 2.0 mills was not successful. As the bill now stands, Pinellas would be required to distribute over \$3 million local dollars to charter schools. The House has not yet taken up the concept.

TESTING BILLS: Democrat Senator Bill Montford held a press conference introducing his comprehensive test revision legislation, SB 964. The bill has broad bipartisan support in the Senate as three speakers at the press conference were Republicans, including Senators Simmons, Lee, and Garcia. It is far more aligned with the Superintendents' and the Pinellas County School Board legislative program requests than the House bill that was recently filed. There has been no action yet on either bill.

EDUCATOR "BEST AND BRIGHTEST" REVISIONS: Both the House and Senate are considering revisions to the existing Best and Brightest payments to teachers. Currently the payments are based only on ACT and SAT scores and teacher assessment.

SENATE: The Senate is considering expanding to both classroom teachers and school based administrators in both traditional and charter schools. Eligibility would include:

- For classroom teachers or school administrators composite scores on the GRE, LSAT, GMAT, at or above a score calculated by the State Board of Education.
- Highly effective evaluation.
- Working in a low performing school for two years with a highly effective evaluation.
- Newly hired teachers are eligible for up to a \$10,000 bonus if they:
 - Are recipients of Prepaid Tuition Scholarship and a minimum 3.0 grade point average and who commit to teaching in Florida in a public school for three years, or
 - Have completed the college reach out program with a 3.0 GPA and commit to three years teaching in a Florida public school, or
 - Are a graduate of a Florida college or university graduate of a Florida teacher preparation program with a 3.0 GPA and commit to teaching in critical shortage area for three years.

HOUSE: Potential changes include:

- Teachers achieving a composite score at or above the 75th percentile, or if the teacher graduated cum laude or higher with a BA degree, the 70th percentile on the SAT, ACT, GRE, LSAT, GMAT, or the MCAT.
- Teachers evaluated as highly effective based on a Commissioner approved student learning growth formula.
- A school principal may receive the payment if he or she has served for two consecutive years and the school has a ratio of best and brightest teachers to other classroom teachers that is at the 80th percentile or higher for schools with the same grade group statewide including elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and schools with a combination of grade levels.

Senate Education Committee Actions: Bills that passed:

SB 360 Middle School Study: This bill requires the Commissioner of Education to conduct a study of states with high performing students in reading and math based on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The study is to include an examination of teacher quality, school leadership, parental involvement, student attendance and mobility, academic expectations, and instructional methods.

SB 392 Financial Literacy Mandate: This bill would decrease high school elective options from 8 to 7.5 and mandate a one-half credit requirement in financial literacy.

SB 463 Religious Expression in Public Schools: This bill allows that school districts may not discriminate against a student, parent or employee based on a religious viewpoint. It also requires the Department of Education to create a model policy that school districts would be required to adopt.

Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittee: Bills passed:

SB 78: Recess: The bill mandates 100 minutes per week and 20 minutes a day of recess, separate from the Physical Education mandate.

House Pre-K-12 Education Innovation Subcommittee:

HB 15 Education Options: This bill modifies and expands three “scholarship” programs. It also appropriates \$200 million in recurring funds.

- The Gardiner Scholarship Program:
 - Would now include rare diseases which for patients of fewer than 200,000 individuals.

- Removes the requirement that 3 and 4 year olds reach that birthday by September 1st
- Provides more flexibility in IEP dates.
- The Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program:
 - Increase transportation scholarship from \$500 to \$750
 - Increase the base funding from 82% of unweighted FTE to 88% for grades K-5, 92% for grades 6-8, and 96% for grades 9-12.
 - Makes technical changes on the transfer of funds.
- The McKay Scholarship Program:
 - Redefines “prior year” to mean a student must be enrolled and reported for funding in either the October or February FTE count.

HB 373: Annual Contract for Teachers: Clarifies that districts must award only annual contracts, and that the districts may not award annual contracts to instructional personnel on a contingency basis.

HB 833 Virtual Instruction: The bill:

- Clarifies the online requirement to graduate from high school.
- Provides that all students K-12 are eligible for all state or district virtual instruction programs. This includes home education and private school students.

House Pre-K-12 Education Quality Subcommittee:

PCB PKQ 17-01 Civic Education: This bill:

- Designates September as American Founders Month.
- Prepares students to become “civically engaged and knowledgeable adults who make positive contributions to their community”.
- Requires the Just Read, Florida! office to develop relevant curriculum.
- Beginning with the 2018-19 school year, students entering a FCS or SUS institution must demonstrate competency in civic responsibility.

Oversight, Transparency, and Administrative Subcommittee:

HB 11 Labor Organizations: This bill passed the committee. The staff analysis provides the following summary: The bill also requires an employee organization that has been certified as the bargaining agent for a unit whose dues-paying membership is less than 50 percent of the employees eligible for representation in that unit to petition the commission for recertification as the exclusive representative of all employees in the unit within one month after the date on which the organization applies for registration renewal. The certification of an employee organization that does not comply with this requirement is revoked. This requirement does not apply to an employee organization

that represents, or seeks to represent, employees who are law enforcement officers, correctional officers, or firefighters.