

The first interim committee meetings were held the week of December 10-14. The House held trainings and therefore no committee meetings were held in the House. However, the full Senate Appropriations Committee held a meeting where a presentation on the adjusted Long-Range Financial Outlook was made, which took into account the results of several fall estimating conferences and recent events. The primary message was that the discretionary budget balance that previously existed is mostly, if not all, gone due to the impact of Hurricane Michael and other budget factors. Once again, changes to the RLE, if any, will have a major impact on budget decisions this year.

The Senate Education Appropriations Committee also held a brief meeting where the major components of the education budget were discussed. During this discussion it was announced that the Bright Futures program participation increased more than anticipated and also the increase of categories in the non-FEFP Program, which now include, Best and Brightest Program, Gardiner Scholarship, Schools of Hope, Reading Scholarship, Aaron Feis Guardianship Program, and the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind was discussed.

In addition, the transition team for Governor-elect DeSantis, relating to education met. The discussion of the team centered on choice but included discussions on transparency and accountability in choice programs. Individualized instruction was addressed as well as teacher shortage. They are scheduled to meet two additional times in December with recommendations going to the Governor-elect after completion of the meetings.

Finally, attached please find the committee assignments for both the House and Senate. I have highlighted the members of our delegation so that you are aware of what committees they will be serving on. If you should have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Codeye.

Thank you,

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