

General Information

This report contains pertinent information presented and discussed during the sixth interim committee week of the 2019 legislative session. Both the House and Senate held meetings in both chambers, which consisted of presentations and legislative bills that were heard in committees.

House Education Committee – Chair Representative Jennifer Sullivan

The House Education Committee held a meeting this week, which consist of a presentation and panel discussion on School Choice. Adam Miller, Executive Director of the Office of Independent Education and Parental Choice provided an overview of the School Choice program.

In his presentation, Mr. Miller provided on overview on the following topics:

- Home Education program
 - Enrollment in Home Education Program over the last 10 years (enrollment numbers have steadily increased)
- Charter School Enrollment from 1996-2019 enrollment numbers have steadily increased)
 - What is a Charter School?
- 2017-18 Charter, Traditional Public and All Schools Outcomes
- Controlled Open Enrollment
 - Current Controlled Open Enrollment Participation
 - 2017-18: 262,633
 - 2018-19: 273,377
- Reading Scholarship Program
 - Approximately 190,000 eligible students
 - Approximately 4,500 scholarships awarded
- K-12 Scholarship Programs
 - Hope Scholarship Program
 - Provides the opportunity to parents of a public school student who was subjected to an incident to transfer the student to another public school or to request a scholarship for the student to enroll in and attend an eligible private school
 - McKay Scholarship Program for Students with Disabilities
 - Scholarships for Students with Disabilities Program is established to provide the option to attend a public school other than the one to which assigned, or to provide a scholarship to a private school of choice, for students with disabilities for whom:
 - An individual educational plan has been written in accordance with rules of the State Board of Education; or
 - A 504 accommodation plan has been issued under s. 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program
 - Provides scholarships to low-income students to attend participating private school

- Scholarships funded through voluntary donations to non-profit scholarship funding organizations
- Corporations receive tax credit for donation
- Gardiner Scholarship Program
 - Provides the option for a parent to better meet the individual needs of his or her eligible child
 - Scholarship funds must be used to meet the individual educational needs of the student, and may include:
 - Instructional materials, curriculum, specialized services, tuition or fees at participating private school, contracted services provided by a public school, tutoring, specialized summer programs, and more
 - Students may not receive scholarship while in public school

To view the Florida [K-12 Educational Choice presentation](#), please click the highlighted web link.

PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee – Chair Representative Chris Latvala

The subcommittee met this to discuss a list of member appropriation projects and to hear an overview of the Governor's Fiscal Year Education Proposals by Chris Spencer, Policy Director from the Office of Policy.

The *Governor's Bold Vision for a Brighter Future* presentation provided an overview of the following:

- Best and Brightest Teacher and Principal Bonus Program
 - The new Best and Brightest program will replace the program that currently exists in statute.
 - In order for a teacher to qualify for the bonus, they must be rated "highly effective" and their school must also improve by at least 1% on their school grading system. Teachers can receive a bonus up to \$10,000.
 - If a Title 1 school improves by at least 1%, the Principal of that school can qualify for a bonus up to \$6,500.
 - If a non-Title 1 school improves by at least 1%, the Principal of that school can qualify for a bonus up to \$5,000.
- Best and Brightest Teacher Talent Pipeline
 - The Best and Brightest Teacher Talent Pipeline will ensure that Florida continues to attract the best and brightest teachers this state has to offer.
 - Qualified individuals who seek employment in an area of critical shortage can qualify for up to \$25,000 in loan or tuition forgiveness.
 - Participating individuals must teach in a critical shortage field for at least five years.
- Computer Science
 - The goal of the Computer Science Course Credit Substitution is to promote student participation in computer science in order for Florida to keep up with workforce demands

- Currently a high school student has to pass three science courses in order to graduate. All students must pass Biology I.
- Under the Governor's proposal, students would be able to substitute one science course for computer science. They may not substitute it for Biology I.
- The Bold Vision for a Brighter Future Budget included \$10 million to establish a program to cover the cost of training teachers to earn educator certificates or industry certifications in computer science. The program also provides bonuses for teachers who hold computer science certificates and teach a computer science course.
- Equal Opportunity Scholarship Program
 - The Equal Opportunity Scholarship Program, an initiative funded in the FEFP, allows students of all backgrounds a chance to receive the best education possible according to their needs
 - In order to be eligible for the scholarship, a family's household income must be under 265% of the federal poverty level.
 - They must have also attended a public school the previous year unless the child is entering Kindergarten
 - Participation is capped for the first year at 0.5% of statewide public school enrollment in the prior school year. Each year thereafter, the maximum number of students shall increase by 1% of statewide public school enrollment in the prior school year.
- Workforce Initiatives
 - Governor Desantis is proud to unveil his workforce initiatives: the Last Mile Scholarship, the Reverse Transfer Initiative, and the Florida Pathways to Career Opportunity Grant Program.
 - The Last Mile Scholarship encourages adults who were just shy of earning their diploma to go back to school to earn their degree. Governor Desantis recommended \$1.5 million for this initiative.
 - The Reverse Transfer Initiative allows students to earn an Associate of Arts degree once they have earned 60 credit hours.
 - The Florida Pathways to Career Opportunity Grant Program gives students an opportunity to earn industry certifications, college credit or an Associate of Arts Degree, and valuable work experience. Governor Desantis recommended \$10 million for this initiative.
 - The Governor also recommended \$26 million for the Work Florida Program in his recommended budget.

To view the [Governor's Bold Vision for a Brighter Future presentation](#), please click the highlighted web link.

Local, Federal & Veterans Affairs Subcommittee – Chair Representative Bobby Payne

HB 207 by Rep. Donalds related to Impact Fees

The bill prohibits a local government from requiring payment of impact fees prior to the issuance of a building permit.

The bill codifies the dual rational nexus test by requiring an impact fee to have a rational nexus both to the need for additional capital facilities and to the expenditure of funds collected and the benefits accruing to the new construction.

Local governments will be required to designate the funds collected by the impact fees for acquiring, constructing, or improving the capital facilities to benefit the new users. Impact fees collected by a local government may not be used to pay existing debt or pay for prior approved projects unless such expenditure has a rational nexus to the impact generated by the new construction. The bill provides express authority for a party challenging an impact who prevails against the governmental entity to recover attorney fees.

The bill further excludes fees imposed for connection to water or sewer service from being treated as impact fees. Finally, the bill makes conforming changes to s. 163.31801, F.S.

The bill passed the Local, Federal & Veteran Affairs Subcommittee favorably.

Senate Education Priorities

Senator Manny Diaz, Jr. (R-Hialeah Gardens), Chair of the Senate Committee on Education, Senator Kelli Stargel (R-Lakeland), Chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, and Senate President Pro Tempore David Simmons (R-Altamonte Springs) announced key components of legislation the Senate will consider during the 2019 Legislative Session.

The Senate Education Priorities are:

- Family Empowerment Scholarship
 - The Family Empowerment Scholarship will be available to low income families (up to 260 percent of the federal poverty level), and will require that the student have previously attended a traditional public school or be eligible to enroll in kindergarten. The scholarship will be funded through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) at 95 percent of the district average cost per student and capped at 15,000 students statewide, with the ability to grow as the overall public school student population grows.
- Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition Bonuses for Teachers and Principals
 - Senators also announced plans to file legislation to restructure the current Best and Brightest Teacher's Program, eliminating SAT/ACT requirements, and instead focusing on recruitment, retention, and recognition of Florida's top teachers and principals.
 - Specifically, the legislation will create a new recruitment bonus, a one-time award for newly hired teachers who are content expert in mathematics, science, computer science, reading, or civics. Legislation will also create a retention bonus for effective or highly effective teachers at schools that have demonstrated academic improvement, as well as a recognition bonus for highly effective teachers selected by the school principal, based on performance criteria and policies adopted by the district school board. The legislation will also retool the principal bonus around performance of schools demonstrating academic improvement.
- Remove Barriers to the Teacher Certification Process
 - Senate legislation will expand access to teacher certification exams and increase options for school districts to retain quality teachers. Specifically, to address concerns with the cost of certification exams, legislation will require the State Board of Education to establish examination fees for initial and retake registrations, and specify requirements to reduce retake fees. The legislation will also provide flexibility for teachers to meet the requirement to demonstrate mastery of general knowledge.

- Reduce Regulations that Impede School Construction and Facility Improvements
 - Senate legislation will also provide school districts with flexibility by no longer requiring an educational plant survey recommendation when only local funds, including ad valorem revenue, are used for facility construction. The legislation will also remove cost per student station restrictions when the school district uses only local funds for construction.
- Enhance Support for Community Wrap-Around Services
 - The legislation will also stabilize state support of neighborhood public schools with unique community needs. Leveraging the successful leadership of the Center for Community Schools, legislation will promote the expansion of, and encourage funding for, new Community Schools. Additionally, the legislation will secure Florida's investment in the success of public schools in, or exiting, district-managed turnaround status through sustained support for wrap-around services such as after-school programs, extended school day or school year, counseling, or other support services.
- Improve Safety and Security for Students and Schools
 - The Senators also discussed ongoing efforts to implement recommendations of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission. Last week the Committee on Education passed Senate Bill 7030 to implement the Commission's recommendations in the areas of school safety and security with key improvements to school security measures, enhancements to student safety, and by providing greater flexibility for school districts to transfer funds towards school safety expenditures. Additional legislation will address recommendations related to 911 Emergency Services, and duty to warn in threat situations (SB 7048), while the Senate's education budget will include funding to support and sustain school district investments in school safety and security enhancements.

To review the [2019 Senate Education Priorities](#), please click the web link below.

The 2019 regular legislative session begins Tuesday, March 5th.

I hope you find the information above helpful. If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me at (407) 317-3200 ext. 2002966 or Eileen Fernandez, Associate General Counsel at (407) 317-3411 ext. 2002945.