

January 13, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: District School Superintendents

FROM: Joy Frank

RE: Legislative Update – Interim Committee Meetings – January 9-12, 2017

The House and Senate held interim committee meetings this week. Most of the meetings consisted of presentations. Below is a summary of pertinent information.

The **Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittee** chaired by Senator Simmons held a meeting on K-12 Assessments Policy and Funding. A panel comprised of Superintendents Kurt Browning (Pasco), Mike Grego (Pinellas), Ken Kenworthy (Okeechobee), Walt Griffin (Seminole) and Tom Russell (Volusia) was asked to discuss the current assessment system. Commissioner Stewart was also on the panel. The Superintendents provided the committee members with information about the current assessment system and impact on students, teachers, administrators and school districts. They particularly focused on the need to reduce assessments, increase instructional time and closing the testing windows. The superintendents made several recommendations including:

- Increasing instructional time by reducing certain statewide standardized EOC assessments (Geometry, Algebra II, Civics and US History) and eliminating the 9th grade FSA in English Language Arts. The remaining required assessments would be aligned with the requirements of ESSA or the Every Student Succeeds Act.
- Increasing instructional time by authorizing the administration of statewide assessments by paper/pencil. This would increase instructional time by reducing testing windows.
- Returning the evaluation system to local districts to design and administer. VAM or the Value Added Model would be eliminated.
- Authorizing the use of a nationally recognized assessment such as the ACT, SAT or another acceptable assessment in lieu of the 10th grade assessment for English Language Arts.

The **PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee**, chaired by Rep. Manny Diaz, had an overview of the committee's jurisdiction and a review of PreK-12 Appropriations and education budgets including the FEFP.

The committee will be conducting a hypothetical budget reduction exercise. The budget reduction exercise will be conducted on February 9th. The subcommittee is requested to report findings and conclusions to the full Appropriations Committee the week of February 13th.

The budget exercise basically requires two budget reductions. The first totals \$232.7 million or \$164.8 in recurring and \$68 in nonrecurring. The second is an exercise in reducing the budget by a total of \$485.0 million or \$417.0 in recurring and \$68 in nonrecurring funds.

Guidelines for making the budget reductions are as follows.

- The total reduction amount allocated to the subcommittee must be achieved by:
 - reducing base appropriations,
 - reducing or eliminating items funded in the Long Range Financial Outlook,

- increasing state revenues,
 - redirecting recurring state trust funds to the General Revenue Fund. A one-time transfer (i.e., sweep) may be used to address the non-recurring portion of the reduction allocation,
 - any combination of the above.
- A recurring reduction may be used instead of a nonrecurring reduction to meet the target total but not vice versa.
 - Reductions cannot violate federal law, the U.S. or Florida constitution.
 - Agency administrative costs can be reduced but cannot be eliminated.
 - Reductions cannot be based upon unrealistic, future-year or assumption-laden savings.
 - Federal funds cannot be used to solve the recurring or non-recurring shortfall. Federal funding should be examined however and suggestions made for potential revisions or reductions
 - Trust fund reductions must provide information regarding the specific revenue source of the reduction. Reductions should include information regarding the specific budget entity and the program reduced.
 - Any revenue increase must include specific information regarding the fee or tax increased and must be within the subcommittee's jurisdiction. In addition to achieving the target reductions, subcommittee members may also recommend other reprioritizations of the base.

The **House Education Committee**, chaired by Representative Bileca, had presentations from education researcher and charter school providers on the purpose of education and closing the opportunity gap.

The **House PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee**, chaired by Representative Raburn, had presentations on effective teachers and a panel discussion on recruiting and retaining effective teachers for turnaround schools.

The **House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee**, chaired by Representative Latvala, has presentations on school choice, the McKay Scholarship Program, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program and Gardiner Scholarships.

The next set of interim committee meetings is scheduled for January 23-26.