


MEMORANDUM

December 23, 2016

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida

FROM: Alberto M. Carvalho, Superintendent of Schools 

SUBJECT: 2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION – COMMITTEE WEEK OF DECEMBER 12-16, 2016

The Florida Senate held its first set of interim committee meetings last week. Most of the committee meetings consisted of introductions of members and staff as well as briefings on major issues.

Budget

The state economy is recovering from the recession, but the state's financial outlook when comparing projected revenues and expenditures is less than rosy. While the forecast shows the economy continuing to grow, it will not be enough growth to escape impending budget woes the Florida Legislature faces ahead. Based on the Long-Range Financial Outlook by state economists, there is no budget gap for 2017-2018, but there is essentially no remaining General Revenue for discretionary projects. The 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 fiscal years both show projected budget shortfalls. Slower than anticipated growth in Medicaid and school enrollment may lighten two hefty costs in next year's state budget, but lawmakers will still face difficult decisions.

Some significant policy decisions with spending implications will have to be made by the Florida Legislature such as whether to hold property taxes flat or to allow increased funding for public schools by utilizing the increased value of the property tax roll to provide funding increases. As you may recall, the Legislature decided to impose a rollback rate last session so that property owners' taxes would not increase in the current budget year just because property values rose. According to state economists, continuing that policy next year could cost the state \$427.6 million. If the Legislature continues the policy of rolling back the tax rate so that taxpayers do not face paying more in property taxes, there will be very slim, if any, increases for K-12.

Testing

Senator David Simmons, Chair of Senate Education Budget Subcommittee, wants to reduce the amount of standardized testing in Florida schools. During the first meeting of the Senate PreK-12 Education Appropriations Subcommittee, Simmons framed over-testing as something that limits the state's ability to spend education funds wisely. Lawmakers made a concerted push to reduce the number of tests in 2015 amid an outcry from parents and the flawed launch of the state's Florida Standards Assessment. Chair Simmons outlined the committee's budget priorities which included teacher pay and extending the school day by one hour daily for the lowest-performing 300 elementary schools statewide.

Last week the Florida House of Representatives did not hold committee meetings but did hold training for new members. The Speaker announced committee membership. Key education committee assignments include:

Education Committee

Michael Bileca, Chair

Robert "Bob" Cortes, Vice Chair
Shevrin D. "Shev" Jones, Minority Ranking Member
Larry Ahern
Bruce Antone
Robert Asencio
Kamia L. Brown
Manny Diaz
Byron Donalds
Chris Latvala
Larry Lee, Jr.
Rene Plasencia
Mel Ponder
Elizabeth W. Porter
Jake Raburn
Barrington "Barry" Russell
Charlie Stone
Jennifer Sullivan

PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee

Chris Latvala, Chair

Jennifer Sullivan, Vice Chair
Joseph Abruzzo, Minority Ranking Member
Robert Asencio
Robert "Bob" Cortes
Jason Fischer
Bill Hager
Patricia Hawkins-Williams
Sam Killebrew
Larry Lee, Jr.
Thomas "Tom" Leek
Mel Ponder
Barrington "Barry" Russell
David Santiago
Ross Spano

PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee

Jake Raburn, Chair

Rene Plasencia, Vice Chair
Bruce Antone, Minority Ranking Member
Bryan Avila

Kamia Brown
Colleen Burton
Tracie Davis
Byron Donalds
Erin Grall
Don Hahnfeldt
Shrevrin D. "Shev" Jones
Mike La Rosa
Bobby Payne
Rick Roth
Matt Willhite

Post-Secondary Education Subcommittee

Elizabeth Porter, Chair

Larry Ahern, Vice Chair
Richard Stark, Minority Ranking Member
Ramon Alexander
Robert Asencio
Bryan Aliva
Charles Wesley "Chuck" Clemons
Robert "Bob" Cortes
Thomas "Tom" Leek
MaryLynn Magar
Amber Mariano
Mel Ponder
David Silvers
Carlos Guillermo Smith
Jay Trumbull

PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee

Manny Diaz, Chair

Jake Raburn, Vice Chair
Larry Lee, Jr., Minority Ranking Member
Bruce Antone
Kamia Brown
Byron Donalds
Randy Fine
Jason Fischer
Roy Hardemon
Chris Latvala
Ralph Massullo, Jr.
Stan McClain
Wengay "Newt" Newton
Paul Renner
Jennifer Sullivan

Higher Education Appropriations Subcommittee

Larry Ahern, Chair

Elizabeth Porter, Vice Chair

Larry Lee, Jr., Minority Ranking Member

Ramon Alexander

Robert "Bob" Cortes

Katie Edwards

Julio Gonzalez

James "J.W." Grant

Thomas "Tom" Leek

Amber Mariano

Alexandra "Alex" Miller

Mel Ponder

Ray Wesley Rodrigues

David Silvers

Carlos Guillermo Smith

Appropriations Committee

Carlos Trujillo, Chair

George R. Moraitis, Vice Chair

Jared Evan Moskowitz, Democratic Ranking Member

Larry Ahern

Ben Albritton

Lori Berman

Michael Bileca

Jason Brodeur

Janet Cruz

W. Travis Cummings

Jose Flex "Pepi" Diaz

Manny Diaz

Bobby DuBose

Katie A. Edwards

Bill Hager

Blaise Ingoglia

Clay Ingram

Shevrin D. "Shev" Jones

Kionne L. McGhee

Larry Metz

Jeanette M. Nunez

Jose Oliva

Elizabeth W. Porter

Holly Merrill Raschein

David Richardson

Ray Wesley Rodrigues

Chris Sprowls

Cynthia Stafford

Richard Stark
Charlie Stone

Upcoming Events

Interim Committee Weeks are scheduled as follows:

- January 9-13, 2017
- January 23-27, 2017
- February 6-10, 2017
- February 13-17, 2017
- February 20-24, 2017

The Board's advocacy trip is scheduled for February 22, 2017. The 2017 Legislative Session convenes on March 3, 2017, and is scheduled to conclude on May 5, 2017.

If you have any questions or need additional information please contact Ms. Iraida R. Mendez-Cartaya, Associate Superintendent, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration, and Community Engagement, at 305 995-1497.

AMC:ajo
M590

cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet