


MEMORANDUM

January 19, 2017

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 UPDATE – INTERIM COMMITTEE WEEK
JANUARY 9-13, 2017

The Florida Legislature met the week of January 9, 2017, for its second week of interim committee meetings prior to the official start date of the 2017 Legislative Session.

BUDGET

In response to the gloomy projected financial outlook for the state, the Florida House of Representatives is seeking to make some budget reductions. House Appropriations Committee Chair, Representative Carlos Trujillo, has directed Appropriations committees to provide recommendations for reductions in their respective committees. House members were also asked to identify possible tax cuts, including cuts to local property taxes. For the most part, local property taxes fund public education in Florida through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). Representative Trujillo's counterpart in the Senate, Senator Jack Latvala, has indicated he favors allowing school districts to capture tax revenues from rising property values – not increased tax rates – and not using state money in a "buy back" as the House proposes.

The **House PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee**, chaired by Representative Manny Diaz, presented an overview of the committee's jurisdiction and a review of PreK-12 Appropriations and education budgets, including the FEFP. The committee will conduct a budget reduction exercise that will be discussed in February. This subcommittee is requested to report findings and conclusions to the full Appropriations Committee the week of February 13, 2017.

Each Appropriations subcommittee was provided two target reduction scenarios by the full Appropriations Committee. The Pre K-12 Appropriations Subcommittee's target budget reductions are: \$232.7 million (\$164.8 million in recurring and \$68.0 million in nonrecurring) and \$485.0 million (\$417.0 million in recurring and \$68.0 million in nonrecurring funds). Budget reductions 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; or any combination of these strategies.

The **Senate Education Appropriations Subcommittee**, chaired by Senator David Simmons, held a meeting on K-12 Assessment Policy and Funding. A panel comprised of several superintendents discussed the current assessment system. Education Commissioner Pam Stewart also participated as a member of the panel. The

superintendents provided the committee members with information about the current assessment system and the impact it has on students, teachers, administrators, and school districts. The discussion focused on the need to reduce assessments, increase instructional time, and reduce the length of the testing windows. Several recommendations were made by the superintendents, 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;
- returning to paper/pencil administration of statewide assessments;
- providing more authority to local districts to design and administer evaluation systems for teachers;
- eliminating the Value Added Model (VAM); and
- authorizing the use of a nationally recognized assessments, such as the ACT, SAT, or another acceptable assessment, in lieu of the 10th grade assessment for English Language Arts.

OTHER COMMITTEE DISCUSSIONS

The **House Education Committee**, chaired by Representative Michael Bileca, heard presentations from education researchers and charter school providers on the purpose of education and how to close the opportunity gap. The **House PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee**, chaired by Representative Jake Raburn, heard presentations on sustaining effective teachers as well as a panel discussion on recruiting and retaining effective teachers for turnaround schools. Mr. Jose Dotres, Chief Human Capital Officer, M-DCPS' Office of Human Capital Management, was one of the presenters along with a teacher and principals. The **House PreK-12 Innovation Subcommittee**, chaired by Representative Chris Latvala, heard presentations on school choice, the McKay Scholarship Program, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and Gardiner Scholarships.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The next set of interim committee meetings is scheduled for the week of January 23-26, 2017. The School Board advocacy trip is scheduled for February 22, 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.

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cc: School Board Attorney
Superintendent's Cabinet