


MEMORANDUM

March 22, 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 – WEEK 2, MARCH 13-17, 2017

The Florida Legislature completed its second week of the 2017 legislative session. There have been 2,987 bills filed for the 2017 session.

In the Senate, SB 78, sponsored by Senator Anitere Flores and requiring 100 minutes a week or 20 minutes daily, of supervised, unstructured play for students in grades K-5, passed its last committee in the Florida Senate and has been placed on the Senate calendar for final action. Its House companion, HB 67, has not been heard at this time.

SB 436, sponsored by Senator Dennis Baxley and related to religious freedom in public schools, also passed its last committee of reference and has been placed on the Senate calendar for final action by that chamber. The bill, coined the "Florida Student and School Personnel Religious Liberties Act," prohibits a school district from discriminating against students, parents, or school personnel on the basis of religious viewpoints or expressions. Further, the bill prohibits penalty or reward for a student's religious expression in coursework, artwork, or other specified assignments and requires a school district to comply with the federal requirements in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The House companion is HB 303, sponsored by Representative Patricia H. Williams.

HB 773, sponsored by Representative Manny Diaz, was heard in the House PreK-12 Quality Subcommittee. The bill would reduce district testing windows to three weeks without eliminating any exams or any computer-based testing requirements mandated by the state. The Senate companion, SB 926, is sponsored by Senator Anitere Flores.

SB 392, sponsored by Senator Dorothy L. Hukill, modifies high school graduation requirements by revising the required credits for a standard high school diploma to include one-half credit of instruction in personal financial literacy and money, eliminating one-half credit from electives. This bill has been heard in the Senate in two committees of reference thus far. The House companion, HB 955, sponsored by Representative Larry Ahern, has not had a hearing yet.

Budget Development

The Office of Economic and Demographic Research held a General Revenue Estimating Conference last week. Although the state's revenue projections for 2017-2018 were increased by \$115.2 million, this increase did little to change the overall financial outlook. This slight bump in projections is not anticipated to impact how lawmakers shape the 2017-2018 budget. To recap, lawmakers are not facing a budget shortfall for the

upcoming fiscal year 2017-2018, but they are facing shortfalls of \$1.3 billion for fiscal year 2018-2019 and \$1.9 billion for 2019-2020.

Upcoming

The Senate is holding appropriations committee meetings every day during the third week of session. The Florida School Boards Association will be hosting its days in the capital on March 29-31, 2017. The Greater Florida Consortium of School Boards will be hosting its advocacy days concurrently on March 29-30, 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