

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE UPDATE
APRIL 26, 2019

The Pre-K-12 Education Conference Committee met at 9:30 AM April 26, 2019. The House presented its Offer Number Two for the Budget, and the Senate presented its Offer Number Two for Implementing Bill language and Proviso and "Back of the Bill Language." This was the final meeting of this conference committee. All items remaining open after the meeting were "bumped" to the Appropriations Committee chairs. Below are the items of greatest interest that were resolved and that were "bumped."

In the conference committee meeting on April 26 the following items were accepted and closed by the conference chairs, in addition to the other items shown as closed on the respective spreadsheets based on similarities between the original bills or agreements reached in previous conference committee meetings.

Senate accepted House Offer Two for Non-FEFP projects for line items 29a, which increased funding for local Education Foundations from \$4 million to \$5 million, 61b for \$557,000 for the Safe Schools Assessment tool, and 69a which reduced funding for Reading Scholarships from \$10 million to \$7.6 million. They also closed line items 17b and 25a for the Department of Education. All other non-closed items for Non-FEFP projects were bumped.

There were very few budget spreadsheet line items that were bumped. Only three projects in the Early Childhood section were bumped, with a total value of about \$250,000.

In the Non-FEFP projects section about thirty line items from the several hundred on the spreadsheets were bumped. Almost all of these line items are small projects of very specific, limited interest and impact. The projects that are of wider interest include the following:

Line item 57b Computer Science Certification: The Senate appropriated no funds and the House appropriated \$17 million.

Line item 65b the Gardiner Scholarships: The Senate appropriated an additional \$25,536,168 for workload increases and the wait list. The House appropriated \$18,589,758 for the same purposes.

Line item 76b Community School Grants: The Senate appropriated \$11,914,184 and the House appropriated \$6,470,306.

All of the line items in the Federal Grants K-12 Programs Section are closed.

All State Board of Education items except items 41a and 41b and 44b related to state data centers are closed.

The FEFP section of the appropriations spreadsheet are not closed. The Senate and House positions arrive at the same totals for FEFP funds. However, the calculations used to determine the workload increases on lines 1f,1g,1h,1i are not the same for the Senate and the House. The FEFP is also impacted by the "conforming" language contained in SB 7030 and SB 7070 and the related House bills. It is unlikely that the FEFP will close before those bills are resolved.

The "Back of the Bill" contains appropriations items that address unique issues, including items related to the reversion of unexpended revenue, and ones that refer to prior year appropriations issues. The "Back of the Bill" items addressed in this meeting included the following.

The Senate offer for line item 525 that accepted the alternate compliance calculation for Class Size Reduction was accepted by the House and closed out.

The Senate accepted the House Offers for line items 527 and 528 that maintained the House position to reject the Senate position to revert the unexpended revenue in the previous Schools of Hope appropriations. Therefore, the unexpended Schools of Hope revenue continue to be carried forward.

Line item 529 was not closed and was bumped to the Appropriations Chairs. The Senate maintained its position to revert any unexpended funds from the Coach Aaron Feis Guardian Program and appropriated it for the same purpose for FY 2019-2020.

The Senate accepted the House position for line item 532 to appropriate \$7,520,000 in non-recurring funds from the Federal Grants Trust Funds for the Preschool Development Birth to Five Grant Program.

The Senate accepted the House position for line item 533 to revert the sum of \$22,658,325 appropriated to Specific Appropriation 92 of Chapter 2018-9, Laws of Florida for the Florida Education Finance Program to the General Revenue Fund. The section would take effect upon becoming law.

The differences between the Implementing Bills of the Senate (SB 2502) and the House (HB 5003) were addressed at this conference as well.

The Senate accepted the House Offer to eliminate language in SB 2502 was eliminating the authority to carry forward Schools of Hope Funds for five years. The House accepted the Senate concession.

Line Items 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 were all bumped to the Appropriations Chairs. The items related to district school eligibility for Schools of Hope funds, the Community Schools program, the district managed Turnaround Plan, the Best and Brightest program, removal of the proration requirement for Federally Connected students, the change in the formula for distributing Safe Schools revenue, maintaining the Funding Compression Allocation, adding the Best and Brightest FEFP categorical, and adding the Turnaround Allocation to the FEFP. These items are all related to major policy bills that contain "permanent" changes in the FEFP language to provide for the distribution of funds for Safe Schools, Best and Brightest and the Turnaround Schools program. The items were bumped pending action on SB 7030 and SB 7070.

We expect the Appropriations Chairs to meet over the weekend. Pre-K-12 Education and PECO issues historically have not been among the first items taken up by the Chairs. We do expect action by the close of business late Sunday night.