

# **Emergent Design and Development**

## **Legislative Update**

### **February 27, 2015**

We have concluded the final Legislative Committee Week prior to the official start of the Legislative session, which begins on Tuesday March 3, 2015. The session is scheduled to end on May 1, 2015.

We now have 194 bills that address education either directly or indirectly. As a result, we have a fairly accurate idea of the areas that the Education Committees, and ultimately the House and Senate, will address in this session. We will report on all bills that impact education

### **FEDERAL UPDATE**

At the same time that Florida is approaching the Legislative session, the Federal Government is wrestling with the reauthorization of ESEA (usually referred to as “No Child Left Behind”). Areas receiving the most action in the ESEA rewrite are: addressing the needs of Early Childhood Education, portability of allocations (only in the House of Representatives, not the Senate), and teacher preparation and training.

Over the next couple of weeks, Senators Lamar Alexander and Patty Murray will try to generate a bipartisan bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), including a possible rewrite to Title II, which focuses on educator quality.

The House is set to clear a rewrite of the No Child Left Behind Act next Friday, Education Week reports. A new schedule laid out Thursday afternoon would send the Republican-backed bill, which the education committee passed on a party-line vote Feb. 11, to the floor for debate Wednesday and Thursday, with a final vote scheduled for Friday morning. The House Rules Committee set a deadline of today at 3 PM to file any amendments to HR 5 that would be considered on the floor.

At the very least, states should be required to have a teacher evaluation system and report on the measures used in it, including whether they have a strategy to look into the validity and reliability of each and of the system as a whole. Some states currently investigate the accuracy and consistency of data from new evaluation systems but that is not enough. In fact, only a handful of states have a comprehensive strategy for continuing to monitor their systems’ effectiveness. For instance, states should be required to report whether they ensure initial and ongoing evaluator training or certification and allow for multiple classroom observers per teacher to improve their systems. The use of multiple observers has several benefits, including making evaluation systems more reliable and providing educators with more nuanced feedback on their practice. But their use is uncommon, as few states require multiple evaluators.

In addition, states should be required to report whether the data from teacher evaluation systems are being used to support targeted, ongoing learning opportunities for all teachers.  
<http://www.edcentral.org/professional-learning-esea/>

## Florida Update

### Major Areas of Legislative Concern by Education Committees

1. Assessment
2. Teacher Evaluation
3. Bullying
4. School and Student Safety (includes walking conditions, texting, guns on campus, etc.)
5. Charters, Voucher, and Choice
6. Areas requiring additional instruction (CPR, Financial Literacy, Patriotism, 9/11 attacks)
7. Voluntary Contributions to Public School Facilities
8. Pre-K and Early Learning
9. Re-employment after Retirement
10. The impact and role of the Florida High School Athletic Association (F.H.S.A.A)

### The Governor's Budget Recommendations

The Governor's Budget proposal is available for your information under two titles: **"It's Your Money, Tax Cut Budget"** and **"Keep Florida Working"**. I think that the easiest way to access the budget is: Tax Cut Budget <http://www.flgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/IYMTCB.pdf> If you have trouble with this link, go to "Online Sunshine", click on the Senate, Click on Committees, Click on Appropriations, click on "2015 meeting records, scroll to February 4, meeting record, and just scroll down to the "Keep Florida Working Budget".

The Governor's request for total Education is \$23 Billion dollars and reflects the highest per FTE amount in history (\$7,176). This budget would keep the local millage rate at 5.089 mills.

### FEFP Runs Based upon the Governor's Request

This seven page document will give you a breakdown of the Governor's request. Of interest to most districts is the percentage and actual increase in total funds. You can also see major categoricals. The caution is that this is a request. The Senate and the House develop the actual budget which they usually pass during the last week. Law requires that the final budget is available 72 hours prior to adjournment. If, you look on page 7 of the document, you can identify the amount of local funding and amount of state funding. Many districts have a higher requirement of local funding than they receive in state funding. <http://www.keepfloridaworking.com/content/Current/reports/Education-Choice-Fund-Summary.pdf>

### Medicaid Issue

It appears that Florida and the Federal Government are at odds over the likely loss of \$1.3 billion in Federal funding which the state has been receiving to pay hospitals that treat the poor and uninsured.

Legislators could piece together a way to replace the money, but that may make it hard to go along with other items on Governor Scott's requests for tax cuts.

## **E-Rate Filing Window Open**

School districts that are hoping to tap into the expanded pool of E-rate money which is available for broadband and Wi-Fi equipment and services, can now submit their applications.

The filing window for the federal program, which is overseen by the Federal Communications Commission and administered by the Universal Service Administrative Co., opened Jan. 14. It closes March 26. Among the resources USAC has made available are an online "learning library," and an online landing page curating a variety of resources explaining the FCC's efforts to bring the E-rate up to date.

## **Blended Learning**

Blended Learning seems to be an issue that is receiving accolades from teachers, all across the United States. Some teachers use it as a backup and reinforcement to their lessons, while others use it "flipped", to introduce and begin the lesson. Here is a series of articles that may be of interest on Blended Learning.

<http://www.christenseninstitute.org/publications/hybrids/>

<http://www.blendmylearning.com/2014/10/30/blended-learning-is-not-enough/>

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/michaelhorn/2014/11/13/how-to-get-blended-learning-right/>

<https://blended.online.ucf.edu/about/what-is-blended-learning/>

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arlene-karidis/blended-learning-part-2-p\\_b\\_6658218.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arlene-karidis/blended-learning-part-2-p_b_6658218.html)

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/k12/in-flipped-classrooms-teachers-lecture-online-use-class-for-practice/2218710>

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/marketplace/products/spotlight-on-blended-learning.html?cmp=EB-SPT-022115>

## **Broadband at Home**

Since there is an increase of the use of technology for instruction, there have been several studies on the issue of broadband access at home. Here are the published results on availability by ethnicity, from the PEW research Internet Project. Broadband availability in the home; Hispanic 53%, African American 54%, Caucasian 74%, and those with a family income below \$30,000. 54%.

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/08/26/home-broadband-2013/>

## Possible Changes in Florida Assessment Requirements

There have been many educator and parent concerns expressed over the amount of testing and the interruption to the instructional program. On Wednesday February 18<sup>th</sup>, the Commissioner and Governor seemed to agree with the educators and parents on this issue.

"As I have traveled the state, I have heard from parents and teachers that there are too many tests and I agree," Scott said in a statement.

Education Commissioner Pam Stewart's 28 pages of recommendations came in a report requested by Governor Scott several months ago.

Commissioner Stewart urged Scott to sign an executive order to do away with the new writing and reading exam to prevent more than 175,000 high-school juniors from taking it next month. An executive order could take effect earlier than any law passed in the legislative session that starts March 3. **(In an announcement aired on Feb. 24<sup>th</sup>, the Governor, by executive order, eliminated the requirement for students to take this exam.)** <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/features/education/school-zone/os-scott-suspends-test-11th-grade-post.html> The Commissioner also said the state should eliminate requirements for so many "progress monitoring" exams and suggested districts should be able to stop giving their own final exams in subjects covered by state end-of-course subjects. The complete report is available.

<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/12003/urlt/CommAssessmentInvestigationReport.pdf>

The report defends Florida's test-based accountability system, saying in the past 15 years it had led to more students gaining critical math and reading skills. Now Florida should move ahead with fewer but better assessments.

## Opening Day of School for Students

The Legislature is considering allowing School Boards to set the opening day for students at 21 days before Labor Day. Current law states 14 days before Labor Day as the earliest that schools may start. This is an issue that is supported by many School Boards and Superintendents.

## Possible New Area of Attack on Public Schools

Recently there have been a number of articles from industry focusing on a weakness in job applicants, in the area of "soft skills". Some, of course feel that it should be the responsibility of the schools. These articles will help explain the issue. Whether or not, it is "our" issue, remains to be seen.

<http://www5.cbia.com/hr/article/lack-of-soft-skills-negatively-impacts-u-s-workforce/>

<http://www.foxbusiness.com/personal-finance/2014/01/30/skills-employers-wish-college-grads-had/>

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/pa/article-2909129/Many-workers-lack-soft-skills.html>

<http://www.futureeducators.org/goteach/2014/11/12/teaching-the-soft-skills-three-students-break-it-down/>

## Keep Florida Learning Committee

This Committee is being established to review further deregulation opportunities for school districts; review the instructional material review processes of text selection; identify strategies to increase parental involvement; and review the implementation of the Florida Standards and the Florida Standards Assessment. The Committee will be comprised of 11 members, including the Commissioner of Education, legislators, teachers, superintendents, school board members, higher education representatives, and members of the public. Over 2600 applications were submitted. The Committee members were announced on February 24<sup>th</sup> and are:

- Education Commissioner Pam Stewart
- 2015 Florida Teacher of the Year: Christie Bassett, Polk County
- Legislator: Representative Manny Díaz, Jr.
- Principal: Dr. Margaret Fahringer, Miami-Dade County
- Teacher: Doris Garcia, Orange County
- Parent: Julia Hendricks, Pasco County
- School Board Member: Patty Hightower, Escambia County
- Higher Education Participant: Joe Pickens, Putnam County
- Superintendent: Dr. Owen Roberts, Alachua County
- Legislator: Senator Kelli Stargel
- Parent: Laura Zorc, Indian River County

## U.S. High School Graduation Rate Hits New Record High

U.S. students are graduating from high school at a higher rate than ever before, according to new data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics. The nation's high school graduation rate hit **81 percent in 2012-13**, the highest level since states adopted a new uniform way of calculating graduation rates five years ago. Florida's high school graduation rate increased by 0.5 percentage points over the last year and has increased significantly during the past ten years. The rate rose from 59.2 percent in 2003-04 **to 76.1 percent in 2013-14.**

## **Dropout Information**

National Center for Education Statistics reports in a new brief that 2.7 percent of ninth graders in 2009 dropped out of high school by 2012. The data is pulled from the High School Longitudinal Study of 2009, a study of about 23,000 high school freshmen. Dropout rates for black students were highest at 4.3 percent. Hispanic students dropped out at a rate of 3.5 percent, white students 2.1 percent and Asian students 0.3 percent: <http://1.usa.gov/1Ab6KxV>; Politico Morning Ed

## **Stem Teachers Loan Forgiveness Proposal**

Two lawmakers have proposed bills that would create a loan-forgiveness program for "STEM" teachers. **SB 1156 and HB 6312** would allow the state to make loan payments up to \$16,000, for educators that teach STEM related courses, for eight years at public schools.

## **Americans are Confused about the Common Core Standards**

According to a new poll that finds widespread misperceptions that the academic standards - which cover only math and reading , extend to topics such as sex education, evolution, global warming and the American Revolution. A 55 percent majority said the Common Core covers at least two subjects that it does not, according to the survey that Fairleigh Dickinson University conducted and funded. Misperceptions were widespread, the Washington Post reports, including among both supporters and opponents of the program and peaking among those who say they are paying the most attention to the standards.