

MIXON AND ASSOCIATES BUDGET CONFERENCE REPORT TWO

The work of the House and Senate Pre-K-12 Education Appropriations Conference Committees for the 2010 budget was completed at 9:30 A.M. It is too soon to send a report of everything that has been completed because even for items that are closed, the specific wording of the budget or the conforming bills has not been completed. Here are the most significant things we know have been completed.

1. Agreement has been reached on the total funding for fiscal year 2010-2011.
2. The specific distribution of the funds is not settled because some of the issues that have not been resolved will impact the distribution. The numbers presented below will probably change, but we expect any change to be small.
3. Total statewide funding is about \$18.02 billion. This is slightly more than this year due to student enrollment increases. The base student allocation is about \$3,622. The statewide average funding per student is about \$6,842, about the same as this year.

A few major policy issues have been decided and others have been “bumped” to the Appropriations Chairs. Items of interest we know are settled include the following.

1. School board members’ salaries will remain at this year’s level, which is the starting ten-month bachelor degree-holding teacher’s salary.
2. Superintendents’ salaries revert to the contracted or statutory level.
3. The language in the original House budget requiring a 20% reduction in administrators or administrators’ salaries before reducing instructional personnel has been removed from consideration.
4. Prior to adopting the 2010-2011 budget School Boards are required to hold public hearings and inform parents via the Internet or by print of the district’s strategies to comply with the current class size requirements.
5. Class size reduction compliance will be determined in the October F.T.E. student count and will be measured against the current Constitutional requirement.
6. Districts that fail to comply will lose the applicable value of the class size reduction categorical and 50% of the B.S.A. times the district D.C.D. for each out of compliance full time equivalent student.
7. Funds from the penalty will be redistributed to school districts. First districts in compliance will receive an adjustment based on the number of students in the district up to an amount equal to five percent of the districts base F.E.F.P. allocation.

8. If there are funds available after this distribution the balance of the funds will be redistributed back to the districts that are out of compliance contingent upon the Commissioner of Education approving a district's plan to come into compliance.

9. If the Constitutional amendment passes, the compliance penalty remains the same, and is applied to the new requirement.

10. The House proposal to report on programs for the gifted has been dropped.

11. Districts will be given increased flexibility to use instructional materials funds to purchase electronic materials. Boards will also be permitted to use local discretionary capital outlay funds to buy the hardware needed to access content electronically.

13. The proposal to reduce the extra weighted funding for I.B., A.P. and A.I.C.E. was not accepted and the funding will remain the same.

14. The authority for the charter district waivers related to facilities was extended for another year for Hillsborough, Volusia, and Palm Beach County Public Schools.

Several major items have not been settled and were bumped to the overall appropriations chairs. (We call them "the big chairs.") These issues will be decided in meetings that will be held through the night tonight and into the weekend, Any issues not decided by the "big chairs" will be sent to the presiding officers.

Major "bump" issues include the following items and will be worked this weekend.

1. The issue of using 95% or 96% of the school taxable value to establish funding.
2. The issue of limiting the school district administrative fee to 5% of the first 250 rather than the first 500 students.
3. Issues related to repealing the .114 bonus funding for the Florida Virtual School.
4. Issues related to repealing the advanced payment of F.E.F.P. funds to school districts that have 60% or more of their funds derived from local sources.
5. The issue of allowing charter schools to use virtual instructional providers.
6. The elimination of the referendum requirement for the .25 critical needs millage.