

STATEHOUSE REPORT



STARTER HOUSE

Kathy Maness

Executive Director

Craig King

Director of Governmental Affairs

Palmetto State Teachers Association

220 State Street

West Columbia, SC 29169

803.256.2065 - 800.849.7782

www.palmettoteachers.org

The House of Representatives and Senate adopted the conference report for the 2019-2020 budget on Tuesday, May 21, 2019. They are scheduled to reconvene in January 2020 but could return in the next few weeks to address the vetoes issued by the Governor. Once the Governor issues his vetoes, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate will decide when they will meet to consider the Governor's vetoes. Below are the highlights from public education:

- \$159 million to raise teachers' salaries 4%
- \$15 million towards the Base Student Cost
- \$49.7 million for the State Health Plan
- \$4.2 million for 1% employer retirement contribution (General Funds)
- \$32.4 million to cover the 1% employer retirement contribution (EIA Funds)
- \$2.2 million to the Department of Mental Health for school mental health services
- \$10 million for School Resource Officers
- \$20 million for instructional materials
- \$19.3 million for school buses
- \$2.8 million for SCDE Innovation Grants
- \$65 million to the Department of Commerce for the Rural School District and Economic Closing Fund
- \$50 million to the Department of Education for School Capital Improvements

Provisos that Passed:

1.25: School Districts and Special Schools Flexibility: Deletes the suspension of the professional staffing ratios and requires all school districts to report the student teacher ratio for every classroom to the Department of Education at the ninety and one-hundred-and-eighty-day mark. The department shall report this information to the General Assembly.

1.61: Reading/Literacy Coaches: Specifies that a district can request and receive a waiver from the Department of Education to expend the funds on interventionists who spend more than fifty percent of their time providing direct support to struggling readers in grades kindergarten through grade five. Also specifies that the Department of Education shall screen and approve the hiring of any reading/literacy coach serving in a school in which one third or more of its third-grade students scoring at the lowest achievement level on the statewide summative English/language arts assessment. No funds shall be disbursed to the district to fund the reading/literacy coach until the department has screened and approved the coach. Schools in which at least sixty percent of students scored at meets or exceeds expectations on the state summative assessment in English/language arts may submit, as part of their reading plan, a request to the department for flexibility to utilize their allocation to provide literacy support to students, which may include, but is not limited to: a reading coach, a literacy interventionist, or other supplemental services directed to students in need of interventions. This plan must be approved by the department annually as part of the district reading plan.

1.70: Technology Technical Assistance: Authorizes the SDE to withhold \$350,000 to develop a statewide technology plan for schools and districts. The plan must address, at a minimum, infrastructure and connectivity needs, online testing requirements, equipment, educational technology, digital literacy and a statewide learning management system to connect teachers and students. The plan must consider the need for some districts to utilize a regional approach to services that may include, but is not limited to, purchasing, training and support services. This plan, including cost projections, shall be presented to the Governor, the Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and the Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee by February 1, 2020. Remaining funds shall be used to provide technology technical assistance to school districts.

1.80: Retired Educators Employment: For the current fiscal year school districts may notify retired educators of employment in writing on or before May 1. School districts employing retired educators pursuant to Section 9-1-1795 of the 1976 Code shall provide documentation of compliance with the earnings limitation exemptions to the department. The department shall verify the compliance and send the verification to the Public Employee Benefit Authority.

1.94: Standards-Based Assessments Suspended: Specifies that the provisions of Section 59-18- 325(C)(3) requiring science standards-based assessments of students in grade eight and social studies standards-based assessments of students in grades five and seven are suspended. Of the funds available due to the suspension of these assessments, \$500,000 must be used by the Department of Education to fund educator professional development regarding the South Carolina Computer Science and Digital Literacy Standards. The remainder of the funds shall be used to pay for industry certification/credentials as approved to measure College/Career Readiness for purposes of the state accountability system.

117.170: Early Childhood Education Study Committee: Establishes a study committee to make recommendations to the General Assembly regarding the best structure for coordinated early 8 childhood services provided to children from birth to age 5 currently operating across multiple systems and funding streams for the purpose of improving the delivery of services, maximizing the number of children served, ensuring that all children are ready to enter school, and delivering cohesive high quality early childhood education, care and parental support to all children in South Carolina.

Provisos that were DELETED:

1A.87: Formative Assessments – DELETED - Specifies that state funds received for formative assessments could be used to administer one assessment per grade.

1A.88: Value-Added Assessment System – DELETED – Specified that the EOC would procure a value added assessment system that would replace any award already made.

108.16: Returned to Covered Employment – DELETED – Allowed state employees to return to work without being subject to the earnings limitation.

Bills that passed legislative session:

Senate Bill 168 by Sen. Hembree and others: The State Department of Education shall develop recommendations for reducing and streamlining the amount of paperwork and reporting requirements of teachers, schools, and school districts. This bill was signed into law on February 21, 2019.

House Bill 3929 by Reps. Anderson and others: This bill specifies that local school districts may waive makeup days in addition to the three days forgiven pursuant to Section 59-1-425 by the local school district for any days missed during the 2018-2019 school year because of snow, extreme weather conditions, or other disruptions requiring schools to be closed. This bill was signed into law on April 26, 2019.

Bills that DID NOT pass this legislative session:

House Bill 3759 by Reps. Lucas and others: This bill is called the South Carolina Career Opportunity and Access for All Act. This bill will provide a statewide college and career readiness goal by 2030.

Senate Bill 419 by Senators Hembree and others: This was the Senate version of House Bill 3759.

House Bill 3620 by Reps. Pope and others: Removes the pay limitation for all state retirees who certify that he has not been engaged to perform services for the participating employer in the state system for compensation as an employee, independent contractor, leased employee, joint employee for other classification of worker for a period of at least 12 consecutive months subsequent to retirement.