

## STATEHOUSE REPORT

The regular session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina General Assembly convened on January 10, 2017. The 2017-2018 budget was passed into law and the highlights from public education include:

- Increasing the Base Student Cost to \$2425
- \$6 million for summer reading camps
- \$56 million for Abbeville Equity School Districts Capital Improvements
- \$19 million for Career and Technology (modernizing vocational equipment, Tech Prep, and High Schools that Work)
- \$12 million to aid districts with technology
- \$375,000 in teacher supplies
- \$20.5 million for school bus purchase

### *Provisos Passed*

**1.92 – Committee on Educator Retention and Recruitment** – This new proviso establishes a study committee to address the issue of educator recruitment and retention to include identification of the causes of teacher shortages and the state’s educational system’s future demand for teachers. Recommendations should, at a minimum, include building teacher recruitment, alternative certification, financial incentives, induction and mentorship, evaluation and feedback, and teacher leadership. The committee is composed of 19 members, including a representative from the Palmetto State Teachers Association.

### **Senate Version of National Board Certification Proviso**

**1A.80 – National Board Certification Incentive** – The Senate approved that June 30, 2018 will be the last day for eligible teachers to submit the initial application and fee to be eligible to receive the state supplement of \$5,000 upon receiving certification.

**1A.82. (SDE-EIA: School Districts Capital Improvements)** Eligible school districts include districts in the Abbeville lawsuit who will receive 70% of funds and all other school districts with a poverty index of 80% or higher will receive the remaining 30% of funds.

**1A.88. (SDE-EIA: Teacher Academy Pilot)** Of the funds appropriated to the Education Oversight Committee, \$100,000 shall be utilized to pilot a Teacher Academy project to improve teacher recruitment and retention. The Academy shall provide intensive professional development to beginning, novice, and struggling teachers during the summer prior to the current school year.

### *Bills Passed*

**House Bill 3726** by Rep. Herbkersman and others – The Retirement System Funding and Administration Act will make the following changes to the retirement system. Employee contributions will be capped at 9%. Employer contributions will increase to 13.56% this year and raised 1% until reaching 18.56% in fiscal year 2023. The assumed rate of return for investments will decrease from 7.5% to 7.25%. This bill was amended to state that when there is no longer an unfunded liability. The Conference Committee report was adopted by both the House and Senate and Governor McMaster signed the bill into law on April 27, 2017.

**House Bill 3969** by Reps. Allison and Felder – This bill would establish the Education Accountability Act and merge the state and federal accountability systems. The bill was amended to remove the (PISA) Program for International Student Assessment. The SDE will continue to administer the standards-based assessments of mathematics and English/language arts to students in grades three through eight. The department also shall procure and administer the standards-based assessment in science to students in grades four, six and eight, and the standards based assessment in social studies to students in grades five and seven. Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, the SDE will administer a career readiness assessment for students entering the eleventh grade. The SDE will administer formative assessments in English and mathematics. School ratings will include excellent, good, average, below average, and unsatisfactory. An amendment to

grade schools A-F was defeated 72-39 on the floor of the House of Representatives. This bill was signed by the Governor on June 10, 2017.

**Senate Bill 338** by Sen. Hembree and others - This joint resolution would allow the opening date for students for the 2017-2018 school year to be as early as Thursday, August 17, 2017. This joint resolution would only be good for the 2017-2018 and offer school districts flexibility in planning for the total solar eclipse expected to happen on Monday, August 21, 2017. This joint resolution was signed into law by the Governor on February 28, 2017.

### ***These Bills Did Not Pass***

**Senate Bill 389** by Sen. Matthews and others – This bill will create the Teachers of Tomorrow Certification Act, which would provide for an alternated route to teacher certification. Candidates for this alternative certification must have minimum of a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university or institution with a teacher education program. This is an online program and teachers in this program must successfully pass appropriate Praxis exam and complete the district’s induction program. This bill was carried over in Senate Education Committee.

**House Bill 3052** by Representative Putnam and others – This bill may allow public schools and public school district offices to authorized employees who hold a public school concealed weapons permit (PSCWP) to have a concealed firearm on school property. This bill is in the Judiciary Committee.

**Senate Bill 27** by Senator Campsen and others - This bill would provide for the appointment of the Superintendent of Education by the Governor with the consent of the Senate who will provide the term and qualifications. This bill received a favorable report in the Senate Education Committee. The amendment in the full Senate added that candidates have a master’s degree and substantive and broad based experience in public education. This bill received third reading in the Senate and is now in the House Judiciary Committee.

**House Bill 3146** by Rep. Delleney and others - This joint resolution would place a referendum which will appear on the ballot during the 2018 statewide election and the people of South Carolina will decide whether to continue electing the Superintendent of Education or have the Governor provide an appointment. If the people vote to have the Governor appoint, this would go into effect in January 2023 unless a vacancy in the office happens before that date. This bill passed the House and is now in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

**Senate Bill 137** by Sen. Campsen and others - This bill is similar to House Bill 3146. This bill received a favorable report in Senate Judiciary and is on the Senate calendar. Senator Johnson has placed his name on the bill.

**There are numerous committees meeting this fall that will impact public education. PSTA will be offering input during all of these meetings. The committees are the Teacher Salary Study Committee, Teacher Recruitment and Retention Study Committee, and the Senate School Equity Committee. If you have any input for any of these committees, please email Craig King at [govrelations@palmettoteachers.org](mailto:govrelations@palmettoteachers.org).**

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