

## STATEHOUSE REPORT



# S T A R T E P H O R U S E

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The first session of the 122<sup>nd</sup> South Carolina General Assembly began on January 8, 2019. PSTA is working hard to make sure public education takes priority during this session.

**The House Ways and Means Committee finished work on the budget on February 21, 2019. The budget bill will now head to the House of Representatives for debate. Highlights for public education include:**

- Beginning teacher salary increased to \$35,000
- State Aid to Classrooms: \$3,846 per pupil (Combined Base Student Cost and Fringe Benefit lines)
- An average 6% - 10% salary increase for teachers with 0-4 years' experience
- An average 4% salary increase for teachers with 5-23+ years' experience
  - 0-4 years had to have higher percentages to make sure the salaries on those cells are higher than the new beginning teacher salary of \$35,000.
  - PSTA has asked for a 10% across the board increase for all educators. We will continue to advocate for that.
- \$4.2 million for the required 1% retirement contribution increase
- \$12 million for technology
- \$10 million for School Resource Officers
- \$137 million for the Department of Commerce to use for capital school improvements for rural schools

**Highlights from the budget requests from the Department of Education's budget requests to the Senate Education K-12 Finance Subcommittee include:**

- 5% pay increase across the board for teachers
- Increasing the Base Student Cost by \$162 bringing it to \$2,647 (\$47 of this increase will be used for school safety, school resource officers, mental health counselors and social workers in schools)
- \$40 million nonrecurring funds for school bus purchases, \$24 million of which could come from the Volkswagen settlement funds
  - These funds would be used to purchase new school buses that are fitted to allow for the addition of seatbelts.
- \$2.45 million recurring funds for industry certifications and credentials
- \$60 million nonrecurring funds for instructional materials

### ***Bills to watch:***

**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. The House of Representatives gave third reading to the bill and it now heads to the Senate. Highlights from amendments made are the following:

- Adds language that the goal of the bill is consistent with the Profile of the SC Graduate
- Zero to Twenty Committee has been changed to (SCORE) Special Council on Revitalizing Education
- Adds the Teacher Bill of Rights
- 30 minute planning period for teachers
- The term of the student member to the State Board of Education is reduced from two to one year.
- South Carolina Teacher of the Year is added as a non-voting member
- The term Education Tsar is replaced with Executive Director
- At least two teachers must be appointed to the Committee
- Deletes the United States History end of course examination

- Clarifies the use of literacy screeners should be given more than once in grades kindergarten through third if, and only if, the student demonstrates deficiencies
- **Read to Succeed Amendments:**
  - o Require districts provide appropriate in-class intervention until all students are at grade level
  - o Teacher observations are reinstated along with screenings and diagnostic assessments
  - o Parental appeal of retention is reinstated
  - o The requirement that reading coaches are employed in each elementary school is reinstated.
  - o Professional development required for compliance with Read to Succeed must be offered at no cost to districts and teachers.
- Removes the ability for traditional public schools to have up to 25% of their teaching faculty be non-certified
- The pay band study required of the State Department of Education is deleted
- When the Superintendent decides to reconstitute an unsatisfactory school, the requirement that all school employees must be dismissed is removed. Instead, the Superintendent has the authority to hire and fire personnel

**Senate Bill 419** by Senators Hembree and others: This bill is similar to House Bill 3759. This bill is in the Senate Education K-12 Subcommittee. The subcommittee is taking their time and debating chunks of the bill each week. The bill was amended on February 20<sup>th</sup> to remove the section asking the State Board of Education to adopt a model code of ethics for local school boards. The subcommittee heard testimony on the Read to Succeed sections of the bill on February 27<sup>th</sup> and sections affecting teachers on March 6<sup>th</sup>. Some amendments to the Senate bill include:

- Deletes the Student Bill of Rights
- Deletes the Zero to Twenty Committee
- Beginning in 2021, the Education and Economic Development Act Coordinating Council, the State Superintendent of Education, and the State Board of Education will provide a comprehensive report that identifies benchmarks within the 0-20 education and workforce pipeline.
- Mandates that computer science be taught in all schools
- Deletes social studies assessments in grades 3-8 and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade science assessment

View amendment by visiting <http://tinyurl.com/419amendment>

The Senate Education Subcommittee has scheduled and confirmed the four public input hearing across the state on the education reform bill.

### **S. 419 (SC Career Opportunity and Access for All Ac) Public Hearings**

**March 4, 2019: McCormick Middle School Gym – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**March 11, 2019: Coker College – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**March 18, 2019: Gaffney High School – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**March 21, 2019: Georgetown High School – 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm**

**House Bill 168** by Senators Hembree and others: This is joint resolution mandates that the State Department of Education will develop recommendations for reducing and streamlining the amount of paperwork and reporting requirements of teachers, schools, and school districts. Director of Governmental Affairs, Craig King testified in support of this bill. The bill received third reading in the House and as enrolled for ratification on February 13, 2019.

**House Bill 3094** by Reps. Wooten and others: This bill enact the Teacher Bill of Rights and outline the basic rights of all certified public-school teachers in South Carolina. This bill is in the House Education and Public Works K-12 Subcommittee.