

FSBA

BOARDER-LINE

Official Legislative Bulletin of the
Florida School Boards Association

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***** IMPORTANT *** IMPORTANT *** IMPORTANT *****

This is the LAST issue of Boarder-Line that will be mailed to our members

Future issues of Boarder-Line will be posted each week on the FSBA website at www.fsba.org. This change will allow us to provide you with legislative updates and other important information in a more timely and comprehensive manner and also will reduce costs and paperwork. Please be sure to check the FSBA website regularly so that you stay informed of legislative issues.

This issue of Boarder-Line is intended to bring you up to date on a variety of legislative issues and activities that have occurred during the past several months. The legislature is in the midst of Interim Legislative Committee Meetings that lay the groundwork for the 2006 Legislative Session which will convene on Tuesday, March 7, 2006. The Legislature also met in a Special Legislative Session in December 2005 to address a number of issues that effect public education.

December 2005 Special Session

During the Special Session, the Legislature passed two bills that impact education and our ability to advocate. HB 1B implements Article X, Section 23 of the Florida Constitution relating to slot machine gaming. The bill authorizes slot machines and slot machine gaming within certain pari-mutuel facilities located in Miami-Dade and Broward Counties upon approval by local referendum. The tax rate on slot machine revenues at each facility is set at 50 percent. These tax revenues, and any interest earnings on these revenues, will be deposited into the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund. The funds must be used to supplement public education funding statewide and must **not** be used for recurring appropriations. The bill does not specify a distribution formula for the funds.

The Legislature also passed SB 6B relating to lobbying. The bill sets forth extensive reporting requirements for lobbyists, including the requirement that lobbyists report their income derived from lobbying activities. The bill also prohibits the governor, legislators, and their staff from accepting gifts, including food and beverages, from lobbyists. The bill has generated a great number of questions and concerns from lobbyists and elected officials. In response to some of these questions, Senate President Lee and Speaker of the House Bense have issued Interim Lobbying Guidelines (the guidelines may be accessed at www.flsenate.gov/data/lobbyist/expenditures_guidelines.pdf). Unfortunately, many questions remain. FSBA is in the process of obtaining further guidance on this legislation as it relates to local school boards and will provide that information to you as soon as it is available.

Updates on Key FSBA Issues

- **Co-teaching** – The FSBA membership has adopted its 2006 Legislative Platform which includes, as a legislative priority, the goal of amending section 1003.03(3), F.S., to add co-teaching to the tool box of options for achieving class size reduction. In addition, FSBA has been given authority to file a lawsuit to block the implementation of the policy prohibiting the use of co-teaching as a class size reduction strategy. However, bills have been filed in both the House and Senate that would restore co-teaching as an acceptable class size reduction tool (HB 203 and SB 668). In addition, recent discussions with key legislators indicate that this issue will be resolved to FSBA’s satisfaction during the 2006 regular legislative session. Since litigation may not be necessary, FSBA has chosen to delay any legal action until after the conclusion of the session. (For more information, please see the FSBA Issue Brief on Co-teaching posted on the FSBA website at www.fsba.org)

- **Class Size Reduction and the “65 Percent Solution”** – The FSBA 2006 Legislative Platform includes, as a priority, support for an amendment to the constitutional provisions relating to class size that would allow the class size calculation to be based on a district-wide average, providing that the total number of students assigned to each teacher who is teaching in a public school classroom must not exceed the established class size limits by more than five students. Bills have been filed in both the House and Senate (HB 447 and SB 1150) that would place this amendment on the November 2006 ballot. These bills would further require that, by the 2009-2010 school year, at least sixty-five percent of total funds, as defined by law, received by school districts for operational expenditures must be expended for purposes directly related to classroom instruction, as defined by law. This 65% expenditure requirement is modeled after a nationwide initiative to require all 50 states and the District of Columbia to enact similar provisions. Although this so called “65 Percent Solution” raises a number of concerns, FSBA has voted not to oppose it with the assurance from key legislators that the Legislature will adopt acceptable definitions of “total funds” and “classroom instruction” that will recognize and incorporate prevailing legislative policies relating to appropriate and necessary class room expenditures in Florida’s schools. (For more information, please see the FSBA Issue Brief on the 65% Solution posted on the FSBA website at www.fsba.org)

- **Jessica Lunsford Act** – Passed during the 2005 Legislative Session, the Jessica Lunsford Act contains a provision that requires noninstructional contractual personnel who are permitted access to school grounds while students are present to meet Level 2 screening requirements. This well intended legislation presents innumerable logistical and procedural obstacles for school districts and for effected contractual personnel. FSBA has been involved in ongoing negotiations with key legislators and law enforcement personnel in an effort to amend this provision in a manner that removes or mitigates these obstacles without compromising on the intent of the legislation. The House Criminal Justice Committee drafted a proposed committee bill (PCB CRJU 06-03) that shows progress in the effort to address some of our concerns. The PCB was the subject of a recent committee workshop in which legislators heard compelling testimony from all of the effected parties. It is expected that the proposed legislation will be further amended to incorporate some of the suggestions made during the workshop. Since this proposed bill is still in the preliminary stage, and to avoid confusion, we will provide you with a complete analysis of the bill once these changes are incorporated.

Advocacy Tools and Events

- We have attached a copy of “Education Fast Facts” containing bulleted information about Florida’s public schools as a quick reference tool. If you have not done so already, you may also wish to use this as a template to create a similar set of Fast Facts that are specific to your school district. (These Fast Facts are also posted on the FSBA website at www.fsba.org.)
- We have attached a list of legislative committees that we will be closely monitoring during the upcoming Legislative Session. We urge you to contact these legislators, as well as all of the legislators that represent your school district, to discuss the 2006 FSBA Legislative Platform, FSBA Positions on Issues of Continuing Concern, and any other issues of interest and concern to your school board. (The 2006 FSBA Legislative Platform and FSBA Positions on Issues of Continuing Concern are posted on the FSBA website at www.fsba.org.)
- A number of education related bills have been filed for consideration in the upcoming session. We have posted a selected list of bills that are of particular interest to school boards on the FSBA website at www.fsba.org where you may access the complete text, legislative action, analysis, and other information about these bills. Also, you may find more information on these bills at the Senate and House web sites at www.flsenate.gov and www.myfloridahouse.com.
- **FSBA Day In the Legislature Conference is scheduled for March 22 - 24, 2006.** The conference agenda will include a briefing on active legislative issues, a comprehensive analysis of available education budget information, and advocacy training so you will feel well prepared to discuss the hot topics of the day with your legislators. Please mark your calendar and plan on attending this important and informative conference.

***** IMPORTANT REMINDER *****

The next issue of Boarder-Line **will not** be mailed to you, but it **will** be posted on the FSBA website on Friday afternoon, February 17, 2006.

Here are just a few of the issues that will be covered in the NEXT ISSUE of Boarder-Line:

- Highlights of Governor Bush's education budget proposal
- Analyses of proposed "A++" legislation
- The report and recommendations of the Impact Fee Task Force
- Federal Relations Network Conference wrap-up, including highlights of President Bush's education budget proposal

Don't miss out on this important information! GET IT ALL AT:

www.fsba.org

Important Legislative Dates

(Please mark these events on your calendar)

February 5 - 7, 2006	NSBA FRN Conference, Washington, DC
February 6 - 10, 2006	Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
February 13 - 17, 2006	Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
February 20 - 24, 2005	Legislative Interim Committee Meetings
March 7, 2006	2006 Legislative Session Convenes
March 22 - 24, 2006	FSBA Day In the Legislature Conference
April 8 - 11, 2006	66 th Annual NSBA Conference, Chicago
May 5, 2006	2006 Legislative Session Adjourns

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FLORIDA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Sheila Costigan, Chairman
Candace Lankford, Vice Chairman
FSBA Legislative Committee

Dr. Wayne Blanton, Executive Director
blanton@fsba.org

Ruth Melton, Director of Legislative Relations
melton@fsba.org

203 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Phone 850/414-2578 Fax 850/414-2585
www.fsba.org

EDUCATION FAST FACTS

- There are more than 2,609,000 students in Florida's public schools, which makes Florida the 4th largest public school system in the country.
- Over the last 5 years, Florida's public school K-12 student population has grown by an average of more than 56,000 students each year.
- The statewide average teacher salary is approximately \$41,500. The average benefits package – which typically includes retirement, health insurance and supplements – adds about 25% to the average salary. Nationally, Florida ranks 30th in average teacher salary, with the U.S. average at \$46,726.
- There are about 171,000 teachers in Florida's public schools. Nationally, Florida ranks 42nd in student : teacher ratio with a ratio of 17.5 : 1 as compared to the U.S. average of 15.7 : 1.
- Florida has more than 340,000 full-time and part-time public school employees, making the Florida public school system one of the largest employers in the state.
- The 2004-2005 basic operating budget for K-12 public education – as provided through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) and major categorical allocations – is approximately \$15 billion. This provides an average of \$5,735 per student. Nationally, Florida ranks 41st in per pupil spending.
- Florida must spend approximately \$83,000,000 each school day to operate its public schools.
- The Florida Lottery is expected to generate about \$655,600,000 for K-12 public education, with \$442,137,000 for school operations and about \$212,900,000 for school construction debt service.
- A main source of state revenue is the sales tax. Each cent of sales tax generates about \$2.9 billion.
- Nationally, Florida ranks 23rd in per capita personal income, but 49th in the percent of personal income spent on K-12 education.
- According to 2005 FCAT results, 1,254 schools received a performance grade of A, 589 schools received a B, 619 schools received a C, 230 schools received a D, and 78 schools received an F.
- There are more than 3,400 public schools in Florida, including traditional public schools, charter schools, alternative schools, and other education centers.
- The average cost (*not* including land purchase) to build an elementary school is \$12 - 15 million, a middle school costs \$22 - 25 million, and a high school costs \$35 - 40 million. It takes 2-3 years to plan, design and construct a school.
- There are 67 school districts which match geographically to Florida's 67 counties. Each school district has an elected school board that consists of 5 to 9 members. Each school district also has a superintendent. Of the 67 superintendents, 24 are appointed by their school board, 43 are elected by their community.

FLORIDA SENATE

President: Tom Lee
Majority Leader: Alex Villalobos
Minority Leader: Les Miller

COMMITTEES OF INTEREST

Community Affairs Committee

Chair: Michael Bennett **Vice Chair:** Mike Haridopolos

Members:

Charlie Clary, Steve Geller, Anthony Hill, Al Lawson, Ken Pruitt, Alex Villalobos

Education Committee

Chair: Evelyn Lynn **Vice Chair:** Carey Baker

Members:

Larcenia Bullard, Jim King, Ron Klein, Daniel Webster, Frederica Wilson, Stephen Wise

Ethics and Elections Committee

Chair: Bill Posey **Vice Chair:** Nan Rich

Members:

Nancy Argenziano, Dennis Jones, Jim Sebesta

Children and Families Committee

Chair: Skip Campbell **Vice Chair:** Daniel Webster

Members:

Mike Fasano, Evelyn Lynn, Durell Peaden, Nan Rich

Banking and Insurance Committee

Chair: Rudy Garcia **Vice Chair:** Steve Geller

Members:

JD Alexander, Jeffrey Atwater, Carey Baker, Skip Campbell, Mike Fasano, Al Lawson, Les Miller, Bill Posey

Governmental Oversight and Productivity Committee

Chair: Nancy Argenziano **Vice Chair:** Al Lawson

Members:

Lee Constantine, Rudy Garcia, Gwen Margolis, Jim Sebesta

Education Appropriations Committee

Chair: JD Alexander **Vice Chair:** Jim King

Members:

Larcenia Bullard, Lee Constantine, Ron Klein, Evelyn Lynn, Les Miller, Stephen Wise

Ways and Means Committee

Chair: Lisa Carlton **Vice Chair:** Les Miller

Members:

JD Alexander, Jeffrey Atwater, Skip Campbell, Charlie Clary, Victor Crist, Mike Fasano, Jim King, Al Lawson, Gwen Margolis, Ken Pruitt, Burt Saunders, Rod Smith, Alex Villalobos

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Speaker: Allan Bense
Majority Leader: Andy Gardiner
Minority Leader: Chris Smith

COUNCILS & COMMITTEES OF INTEREST

(Note: House committees are organized under "umbrella" Councils. Council membership includes the chair and selected members from each committee in the Council.)

Education Council

Chair: Dennis Baxley **Vice Chair:** Ralph Arza
Members: Lorraine Ausley, Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Larry Cretul, David Mealor, Pat Patterson, Joe Pickens, David Rivera, John Stargel

Choice and Innovation Committee

Chair: John Stargel **Vice Chair:** Bill Galvano
Members: Frank Attkisson, Dan Gelber, Susan Goldstein, John Legg, Eleanor Sobel

Community Colleges and Workforce Committee

Chair: Pat Patterson **Vice Chair:** Ed Jennings
Members: Gus Barreiro, Ron Greenstein, Paige Kreegel, Matt Meadows, John Quinones, Baxter Troutman

Pre-K - 12 Committee

Chair: Ralf Arza **Vice Chair:** Joe Pickens
Members: Lorraine Ausley, Ellyn Setnor Bogdanoff, Marti Coley, Frank Farkas, Kenneth Gottlieb, Stan Mayfield, Dave Murzin, Curtis Richardson, Anthony Traviesa

Fiscal Council

Chair: Joe Negron **Vice Chair:** Fred Brummer
Members: Lorraine Ausley, Gus Barreiro, Aaron Bean, Anna Benson, Kim Berfield, Don Brown, Don Davis, Nancy Detert, Ron Greenstein, Wilbert Holloway, Jeffrey Kottkamp, Stan Mayfield, Sheri McInvale, Joe Pickens, Juan-Carlos Planas, Curtis Richardson, Marco Rubio, John Seiler, David Simmons, Leslie Waters, Juan Zapata

Education Appropriations Committee

Chair: Joe Pickens **Vice Chair:** David Rivera
Members: Thad Altman, Bruce Antone, Ralph Arza, Frank Attkisson, Dennis Baxley, Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall, Larry Cretul, Faye Culp, Nancy Detert, Anitere Flores, Susan Goldstein, Ron Greenstein, Charlie Justice, David Mealor, William Proctor, David Simmons, Anthony Traviesa, Shelly Vana

Finance and Tax

Chair: Fred Brummer **Vice Chair:** John Stargel
Members: Don Brown, Jennifer Carroll, Carl Domino, Terry Fields, Ken Gottlieb, John Quinones, Tim Ryan

Commerce Council

Chair: Frank Farkas **Vice Chair:** Dick Kravitz

Insurance Committee

Chair: Dennis Ross **Vice Chair:** David Rivera

Members: Ralph Arza, Kim Berfield, Don Brown, Dean Cannon, Donna Clark, Carl Domino, Greg Evers, Terry Fields, Bill Galvano, Ann Gannon, Ed Homan, Ed Jennings, Dick Kravitz, Pat Patterson, Franklin Sands, Priscilla Taylor, Anthony Traviesa

Health and Families Council

Chair: Anna Benson **Vice Chair:** Ed Homan

Future of Florida's Families Committee

Chair: Bill Galvano **Vice Chair:** Aaron Bean

Members: Ralph Arza, Susan Bucher, Mike Davis, Richard Glorioso, Susan Goldstein, Will Kendrick

Local Government Council

Chair: Ken Sorenson **Vice Chair:** Julio Robaina

Members: Thomas Anderson, Mike Davis, Terry Fields, Alan Hays, Matthew Meadows, Yolly Roberson

State Administration Council

Chair: Don Brown **Vice Chair:** Ellyn Setnor Bogdanoff

Ethics and Elections Committee

Chair: Ron Reagan **Vice Chair:** Jennifer Carroll

Members: Ellyn Setnor Bogdanoff, Marsha Bowen, Susan Bucher, Anne Gannon, Arthenia Joyner, Joe Pickens, Dennis Ross, Tim Ryan, Leslie Waters

Governmental Operations Committee

Chair: David Rivera **Vice Chair:** David Mealar

Members: Frank Attkisson, Loranne Ausley, Holly Benson, Kenneth Gottlieb, Ray Sansom

State Infrastructure Council

Chair: David Russell **Vice Chair:** Adam Hasner

Growth Management Committee

Chair: Randy Johnson **Vice Chair:** Mike Davis

Members: Holly Benson, Jennifer Carroll, Alan Hays, Bob Henriquez, Carlos Lopez-Cantera, Ari Porth, William Proctor, Shelly Vana