

## SRPE January 2016 Legislative Update

Florida's 2016 legislative session convenes January 12 with March 11<sup>th</sup> being the end of the regular session. During this 60 day period many decisions impacting your profession will be determined. Our scope of legislative tracking includes, but is not limited to funding, pensions and bonuses, workplace environment and classroom instruction responsibilities, certification requirements, and it goes without mention meeting student educational needs. Many times these issues are overlapping in their nature. The Education Committee and its subcommittees have been very busy moving along, finalizing, and/ or discarding proposed bills and/or amending existing state statutes prior to the opening of this session. Basically, committees explore, analyze and fine tuning proposals for a smooth and cohesive session.

Here are some of the highlights. Please keep in mind these highlights are not finalized and do not contain all of the legislative language.

**FRS Florida Retirement System**, You'll be pleased to know that both the House and Senate have proposed identical changes to your pension. **HB 881 and SB 7014** propose an employer contribution increase towards your Florida retirement. A rate adjustment increase of .18% for currently employed-not retired (has not entered DROP) regular class personnel. Additional increases are proposed within these bills.

**Innovative Schools of Technology, SB1136** allows the school districts to increase the number of innovative schools within the district. The school district will have full access to the charter schools' records, files, reports, and documents at the district's discretion. The district is authorized to audit and investigate at will.

**Principal Autotomy Pilot Program, HB 287** Qualifying principals within school districts with 3 or more middle or high schools with 3 consecutive years of Ds or Fs as school grades may pilot a school while being given greater flexibility for the purpose of improving school grades.

**Blended Learning HB 4013** removes the requirement that online virtual instruction must take place in a brick and mortar setting. The removal of this requirement allows for the expansion of blended learning models available to districts.

Higher Education- only 31% of students who enrolled in a 4 year institution graduate within 4 years. We are moving towards digital learning as a means to cut cost for students and the institution.

Alternative means and expedient paths for teacher certification are being explored. **HB 189 Professional Pathways to Teacher Certification** requires only 15 semester hours in preparation courses and a passing score on our Professional Education exam.

**Legislative tracking** is encouraged. <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Bills/bills.aspx>  
You can customize your tracking to fit your interests and schedules.

This update has been prepared by your SRPE-PC.

