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**Senate Committee on  
Education Pre-K – 12 Appropriations**

**HB 7067 — Virtual Education**

by Schools and Learning Council and Rep. Pickens and others (CS/SB 1752 by Education Pre-K – 12 Appropriations Committee and Senators Wise and Lynn)

This bill authorizes school district virtual instruction programs for funding through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP). The bill:

- Designates school district virtual instruction programs as components of public K-12 schools, lists them as educational choice options and as open enrollment options;
- Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, requires school districts to provide students with the option of participating in school district virtual instruction programs;
- Provides that school district virtual instruction programs shall use online and distance learning technology for students in grades K to 8 on a full-time basis and for high school students on a part-time or full-time basis;
- Provides that a school district program may consist of one or more schools operated by the district, by contracted providers approved by the Department of Education (DOE), or through multi-district contractual agreements;
- Provides that charter schools may enter into joint agreements with the district to participate in a program;
- Authorizes the DOE to approve eligible providers by March 1 of each year;
- Establishes provider qualifications, including state-located administrative offices and staff, certified teachers, and appropriate accreditation;
- Grandfathers in the existing K-8 Virtual School providers and exempts them from new provider qualifications;
- Establishes program requirements to include the use of certified teachers, alignment with Sunshine State Standards, background screening of employees, provision of instructional materials, equipment and internet access, when appropriate, for full-time students in households, and no tuition or fees;
- Beginning in 2010-2011, does not allow growth in enrollment if the program earns less than a grade of "C" in the prior year;
- Limits enrollment to students who, in the prior year, were enrolled in a public school or in a school district virtual instruction program, or who are dependents of a member of the armed services;

- Requires school districts to report virtual instruction students as full-time equivalents in basic programs for grades K to 8 who complete the coursework and are promoted to the next grade level, and in basic or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs for high school students in Department of Juvenile Justice or dropout prevention programs who earn six credit completions for funding in the FEFP;
- For 2008-2009, provides that a school district may offer its own district virtual instruction program or contract with K-8 providers under s. 1002.415, F.S., or for grades 9 to 12, with providers who contracted with a regional consortium for 2007-2008 for students in Department of Juvenile Justice and dropout prevention programs;
- Requires school district virtual instruction programs, not including the Florida Virtual School, to be included in the state assessment and accountability system and to receive a school grade;
- Requires school district programs to be terminated if they receive a "D" or an "F" for two of any four consecutive years and requires the DOE to select a new provider;
- Clarifies that digital or online content providers that are used to supplement instruction in regular district (seat-time) schools are exempt from the requirements of the bill; and
- Exempts the school district virtual instruction programs, the Florida Virtual School, and the K-8 Virtual Schools from class size requirements by amending the "core-curricula courses" definition.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

*Vote: Senate 40-0; House 118-0*

### **HB 5083 — Education**

by Policy and Budget Council and Rep. Sansom (CS/SB 1746 by Education Pre-K – 12 Appropriations Committee and Senator Wise)

This bill revises public school funding statutes to conform them to the General Appropriations Act (GAA). The bill:

- Removes the requirement for the norm-referenced portion of the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT);
- Allows for pro-ration of the regional consortia state supplement;
- Prohibits districts from withholding a portion of the Merit Award Program payment from charter schools;
- Clarifies the Full Time Equivalent (FTE) reporting requirement for dual enrollment courses;

- Makes the FTE bonus for Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced International Certificate of Education programs twice the level of funding for the course;
- Removes the middle school Algebra I bonus from the funding formula;
- Limits the industry certification bonus to students who earn a high school diploma, to .3 FTE per student, and to \$15 million annually;
- Makes the fourth calculation of the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) the final calculation of the Required Local Effort for the fiscal year;
- Makes the Declining Enrollment funding percentage an amount to be determined in the GAA;
- Provides school districts with additional fiscal flexibility by allowing categorical program funds, including the reading allocation and instructional materials, to be spent for classroom instruction in certain limited cases, for 2008-09 only;
- Continues the school-level compliance standard for class size reduction for 2008-09;
- Provides a shift of 0.25 mills from the 2 mill capital outlay discretionary levy to the Required Local Effort of the FEFP and provides a protection for the issuance of certificates of participation;
- Allows school districts, if they certify that they have met class size reduction requirements and have met all instructional space capital outlay needs for the next five years with expected capital outlay funding, to use up to \$65 per FTE of capital millage revenue for purchase/lease-purchase of certain vehicles or payment of casualty and property insurance premiums for 2008-09 only;
- Allows school districts to submit Merit Award Program plans for 2008-09 by October 1, 2008;
- Requires prototype design and construction when a school district is building multiple schools in a 5-year period;
- For the Excellent Teaching Program, maintains the payments for the teacher certification bonuses; removes the requirement for funding the application and portfolio fees and the FRS contribution payment; limits bonuses to one 10-year period; and retains the mentoring bonus, if funds are provided.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2008.

*Vote: Senate 28-9; House 76-43*

