

Legislative Update

Mary Gilbert, Legislative Liaison

SPPS Committee of the Board Meeting
February 9th, 2016



Important Dates

- Legislature Reconvenes – **March 8th**
- February Forecast released – **February 26th**
- Governor issues supplemental budget based on February forecast— **early March**
- Committee Deadlines:
 - First Policy Committee—**April 1st**
 - Second Policy Committee – **April 8th**
 - Third Finance Committee – **April 28th**
- Sine Die – **May 23rd**



Even Year Sessions

- 2016 Non-Budget Year, so focus on bonding
- Tax and transportation bills are still on table
- All members up for Re-Election in 2016. Many retirements already announced
- House focus is on tax relief and transportation
- House indicating ZERO target for K-12 and HHS
- Senate focus is on transportation, reserve, and modest spending to account for inflation not included in forecast for FY18/19 (\$1.7 billion)



SPPS Legislative Agenda - Focus Is Key

- Voluntary PreK
- Special Education
- Teacher Development and Evaluation



PreK Funding

- Fund voluntary school-based half-day and full-day four year-old programs on a per pupil basis
- Currently serving:
 - 1,708 in PreK and 289 Montessori PreK.
 - 70% free/reduced lunch, 50% ELL, 7-8% Sped
 - Nearly 600 on waiting list. Largest demand is for full day.
- Actions thus far:
 - *Met with stake holders and legislative leaders*
 - *Senate draft proposal –funds half-day program*
 - *Governor/MDE haven't released their PreK proposal*



Reduce Special Education Cross Subsidy

- The SPPS cross subsidy for special education is over \$900 per pupil.
- The statewide cross subsidy is estimated to rise to \$656 million in FY19
- Regular and excess cost formula must better recognize the cost and concentration of special education students and tuition billing costs
- Actions thus far:
 - *Bill introduced to increase excess cost aid and create tuition account at State level*
 - *Continue work with MDE and DHS regarding MA billing/free care rule*



Supporting Teachers and Teacher Development

- Provide ongoing Teacher Development Revenue for non-QComp districts.
 - *Met with stakeholders. Bill drafted.*
- Revenue to support SPPS students, EA's, and TA's to obtain teacher license, especially in high need areas, using tuition assistance and/or stipends.
 - *Bill drafted. EDMN also has bills.*
- Support policies and programs to maintain and expand College in School (CIS) teachers.
 - *Is in several bills including tax credits*



Testing

Require state to :

- Pay directly for annual administration of ACT test
- Repeal requirement for new high school writing test
- Provide flexibility for districts to administer assessments in the way that is most efficient for them (e.g. paper and pencil, online)
- Continue use of multiple measures (e.g. attendance, graduation) including growth models
- Provide resources to support district use of formative assessments



Metro Transit Sales Tax

- Support Metro Transit dedicated ½ cent sales tax.
- Actions thus far:
 - *Met Council indicated no expansion of transit for high schools without access to additional revenue*
 - *Transportation bill is in conference committee*
 - *House favors cash approach*
 - *Senate and Governor want long term strategy with multiple sources of funding for roads, bridges, and transit*
 - *New tax is a hard sell in election year. Local taxing ability does not guarantee funding (JPTAC)*



Pension Issues

- Pension—TRA and SPTRFA propose increase in contribution rates for employers to address new mortality tables.
- TRA Proposing 1% increase in employer contribution rates. Ed organizations support this if State picks up contribution and not from E-12 target.
- SPTRFA currently phasing in contribution increases from 2013 pension legislation (.25% in FY17 & FY18)
- SPTRFA requesting 1.5% increase (could be phased in) to reach 8% (in addition to 3.84% supplemental and \$800,000 annual payment)



Pension Continued

- Education stake holder groups testified that 1% increase for employers should be funded by state. Oppose unless state provides aid or levy authority for increase.
- State funding request for 1% increase should include SPTRFA
- Recommend continued phase in at 0.25% to reach 7%



Other Issues

- Data privacy—ensure change enacted last year to issue library cards is not modified
- Elections—allow boards to appoint interim members. Current law requires election. MSBA resolution of support, they are lead.
- Data Back Pack bill—our team meeting with supporters next week regarding goals and local costs.



Questions?

