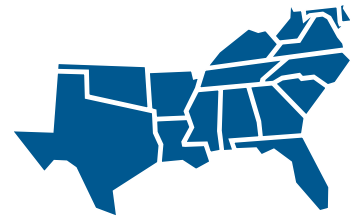


## Legislative Report #4 | August 2017

*Final actions in Alabama, Delaware, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas*

*Notes from other SREB states*



# SREB

# Legislative Report

## Final legislative and budget actions

*Alabama* (<http://www.legislature.state.al.us/>)

Alabama's 2017-18 general fund budget totals \$1.8 billion, down less than \$1 million from the 2016-17 total. This provides funding for state activities other than education. For 2017-18, the Education Trust Fund, which provides funding for all levels of education and other programs, totals \$6.4 billion, down 0.4 percent from 2016-17. The K-12 Foundation Program funding formula is up 0.5 percent to \$3.6 billion. Funding provided to districts for school transportation is up 1 percent to \$339.2 million, and funding for district information technology coordinators totals \$5.8 million, a 20.6 percent increase.

Funding for the Department of Early Childhood Education rises 19.9 percent to nearly \$79.8 million. Most of the increase and the department's budget is directed to the Office of School Readiness, which operates the First Class Pre-K program; funding totals \$77.5 million, up 20.2 percent. The program is slated to add 122 new classrooms for the 2017-18 school year, increasing enrollment to nearly 17,000 students — 28 percent of all Alabama four-year-olds. The Office of School Readiness also operates the Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI) program, funded at \$2.1 million, a 13.3 percent increase.

State college and university funding is flat for 2017-18, at \$1 billion overall, with the exception of \$250,000 in new funding for the Center for Law Enforcement Best Practices at Jacksonville State University. Community college funding overall is \$364.9 million, unchanged from the prior year except for \$5.3 million for grants to workforce training initiatives that help individuals obtain industry certifications, more than double the prior-year amount. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education receives a 19.5 percent increase to \$28.7 million, but most of that amount is from the nearly \$4.7 million provided for National Guard Scholarships (up from \$624,498 in the prior year).

Southern  
Regional  
Education  
Board

SREB.org

House Bill 89 requires the Alabama State Department of Education to develop and implement, by October 1, 2017, an electronic notification system, accessible by the department and the governor, for schools to provide and distribute information relating to school delays, early releases, shelter-in-place information, and other emergency-related information.

Senate Bill 32 requires, beginning with the 2018-19 school year, high school students to successfully pass a civics exam with questions drawn from the federal Citizenship and Immigration Services' naturalization test to complete the required high school government course. Students must correctly answer at least 60 of the 100 questions on the test and may retake it until they obtain a passing score.

Senate Bill 315 modifies the higher education benefits provided to military veterans who served during wartime or under extra-hazardous conditions, and to the children and spouses of veterans who were disabled or killed in the line of duty. Previously, the state entitled those individuals to attend state colleges and universities without paying for tuition, fees or books; for individuals who apply for these benefits on July 31, 2017 and afterwards, the benefit provided is reimbursement of tuition, fees and book costs. The combined reimbursement for books and fees is limited to \$1,000 per semester, per student. A child or spouse of a disabled or deceased veteran who applies for benefits on or after July 31, 2017 must first apply for and, if awarded, use all other federal, state, institutional and third-party scholarships and grants that are available before applying for veterans' benefits, and must maintain satisfactory academic progress to continue receiving the benefits.

For a tuition scholarship provided to a member of the Alabama National Guard, Senate Bill 315 specifies that the benefit provided may not exceed the average cost of tuition per semester at a state-supported Alabama four-year institution. The bill caps the maximum annual amount of benefits provided at \$10 million, requires a member receiving the benefits to maintain a 2.0 grade-point average and specifies that a member may receive a scholarship for a maximum of 120 academic hours.

## **Other legislation**

HB 381 provides legal immunity to local school board members and school system employees for acts or omissions as a result of providing the information that boards may distribute to parents and guardians of students regarding immunizations and infectious diseases.

SB 203 grants military recruiters of the United States Armed Forces and Department of Homeland Security the same information and access to students granted to prospective employers or postsecondary institutions.

## ***Delaware*** (<http://legis.delaware.gov/>)

Concluding a session dominated by a revenue shortfall, the Delaware General Assembly required extra time to complete its work, approving a 2017-18 budget agreement and adjourning in the early morning hours of July 2. The governor signed the budget the following day. The budget provides \$4.1 billion in general funds for 2017-18, up 0.6 percent from the prior year. Included in the appropriations for the Office of Management and Budget is \$1 million in general funds for up to 10 Opportunity Grants, which school districts and charter schools will use to provide services and supports to disadvantaged students.

Higher education funding is up 1.1 percent to \$237.1 million. This includes \$120.7 million for the University of Delaware (up 0.1 percent), \$35.1 million for Delaware State University (up 0.2 percent) and \$80.7 million (up 2.6 percent) for Delaware Technical and Community College.

Funding for the state Department of Education totals \$1.4 billion for 2017-18, a 2.8 percent increase, including nearly \$1.2 billion for school district operations, up 2.9 percent. This amount includes a reduction of \$26 million, effective July 1, for districts and charter schools. The reductions are allocated proportionately by enrollment, and districts and charter schools must submit plans specifying how they will achieve those reductions to the state Department of Education by October 31. Block grants and other pass-through programs receive \$111.8 million, up 7.5 percent, and funding for student transportation is up 1 percent to \$92.4 million.

General funds for Delaware Department of Education operations decrease 6.7 percent to \$48.7 million. The reduction includes elimination of funding for the state Board of Education. The merit-based SEED scholarship program for students at the University of Delaware and Delaware Technical and Community College receives level funding of nearly \$5.7 million while the merit-based Inspire program for Delaware State University students remains funded at \$1.6 million. General funds for other student financial aid programs decline 20 percent to \$2.5 million; all state student financial aid programs are administered through the Department of Education.

Early childhood initiatives, including the Delaware Stars for Early Success quality rating and improvement system, receive an increase of 26.9 percent for a total of over \$20.6 million.

House Bill 143 returns Delaware to a three-tiered teacher licensure system, eliminating the provisional license for teachers in their first year of teaching who have not yet received a passing score on the required performance assessment. The provisional license tier was enacted in 2016. Educators with no experience who are receiving their first license will now receive a four-year initial license, and have two school years to complete a performance assessment. For vocational trade and industry licensure applicants the bill eliminates the requirement to obtain a passing score on the Praxis I examination or another examination of general knowledge, and extends from five years to six years the period of an initial license.

House Bill 15 requires all public high schools, including charter schools, to offer at least one computer science course, and directs the state Department of Education to develop standards for computer science. Beginning with the 2018-19 school year, a student may use a computer science course to satisfy a mathematics graduation credit requirement, except for Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II or equivalent courses.

Delaware law mandates school attendance for all children between the ages of five and 16. House Bill 23 specifies that a child over the age of 16 who has not graduated may withdraw from school only with written consent from the child's parent or guardian and after completing an exit interview that provides information regarding the detrimental impacts of early withdrawal, the likelihood of diminished earning potential and the increased likelihood of unemployment.

## **Other legislation**

HB 70 requires every public elementary school to teach cursive writing by the end of grade four as a component of English language arts, beginning with the 2018-19 school year.

HB 142 requires school resource officers — law enforcement officers who are not considered public school personnel — to receive annual training regarding interactions with students with disabilities, including best practices for de-escalation techniques and information on intervention decisions and techniques used by school personnel.

HCR 39 creates a task force to study school district consolidation.

HJR 4 requires the state Department of Education to develop a certificate of multi-literacy for Delaware high school students who have attained high levels of proficiency in one or more world languages in addition to English.

SB 102 consolidates several provisions on required training for school personnel regarding child abuse, child sexual abuse training and detection, suicide prevention, bullying, criminal youth gang detection, and teen dating violence and sexual assault, and establishes the required hours of training in each area that each school employee must receive every three years.

## *Florida* (<http://www.leg.state.fl.us/>)

While legislators came to a budget agreement at the end of the regular session in early May, the governor vetoed formula funding provided to school districts, and called legislators back for a special session in early June to appropriate a greater amount for K-12 education. After gubernatorial vetoes, the statewide general fund budget for 2017-18 totals \$30.8 billion, up 2.1 percent from the post-veto 2016-17 budget.

General funds for formula funding to K-12 schools through the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) total just under \$8 billion, up 3.5 percent; general funds for class size reduction are up 0.8 percent to \$2.9 billion. Additional funding for FEFP derived from lottery revenues is up 46.2 percent to \$404.6 million, while lottery funds for class size reduction and the School Recognition Program remain level at \$103.8 million and \$134.6 million, respectively.

General funding for school readiness rises 2.6 percent to \$140.6 million, while the statewide voluntary prekindergarten program receives \$396.8 million, up 0.4 percent. General funds to the Gardiner Scholarship Program, which allows disabled students to obtain educational services or products, rise 3 percent to \$73.3 million.

State colleges receive \$965.3 million in general funds, up 1.1 percent, while universities receive \$12.2 billion for education and general activities, a 12.2 percent increase. Lottery funds are down 15.4 percent to \$231.8 million for state colleges, and fall 16.9 percent to \$229.3 million for universities.

The merit-based Benacquisto Scholarship Program for students who achieve recognition as National Merit Scholars receives nearly \$14.3 million, up 10.5 percent. Lottery funds for Bright Futures scholarships rise 82.8 percent to \$397.3 million. While lottery funds for need-based Florida Student Assistance Grant (FSAG) awards to full- and part-time students at public colleges and universities decline 8.4 percent to \$59.4 million, general funds for the program nearly triple to \$148.6 million. The increased funding is expected to provide awards to over 200,000 students in 2017-18, more than double the prior year.

Legislators approved many education measures through House Bill 7069. Under the bill, districts must offer statewide English and mathematics assessments for grades three through six in paper format only and must provide the results for all statewide English and mathematics assessments in an easily understandable format. The commissioner of education is required to contract for an independent study of whether the SAT and ACT may be administered in lieu of high school level English and mathematics assessments. Relative to school accountability, the bill frees schools with grades of D or F in the state accountability system from personnel contract restrictions and requires a district to annually approve an improvement plan for all schools with D and F grades. Districts must provide the state Department of Education with a district-managed turnaround plan for any school that earns a D or F grade for two consecutive years. The bill also expands the system that provides early warning for students at risk of failure in grades six through eight to cover students in kindergarten through grade eight.

House Bill 7069 establishes the Schools of Excellence Program, which provides flexibility to schools that perform in the 80th percentile or better of similar-level schools in the state accountability system for two out of three years. Schools of Excellence are exempt from minimum reading instruction time requirements and district requirements for the start or finish time of the instructional day, and may satisfy class size requirements based on the average number of students at the school rather than actual classroom counts. The Schools of Hope program allows a nonprofit organization to establish, through a performance-based agreement with a local school board, a school that serves and is designed to improve the academic performance of students at persistently low-performing schools. A School of Hope is exempt from local school board policies and from state education statutes, with the exception of statutes regarding student assessment and school grades, student progression and graduation, services for disabled students, civil rights, student health and safety, public meetings and records requirements, and ethics requirements. Schools of Hope receive funding in the same manner as charter schools, and the bill establishes a loan program for facilities and startup funding needs.

House Bill 7069 permits a high-performing charter school to establish a second school campus anywhere in the state if the new campus is established in the attendance area of a persistently low-performing school. A high-performing charter school system may apply to the state Board of Education to establish a school in any district in the state.

The bill modifies the Florida Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program, established in 2015 to provide awards to teachers who achieve a score in the 80th percentile or higher on the ACT or SAT and who have been rated as highly effective. The bill sets the award amount at \$6,000 (previously up to \$10,000). It provides that, beginning in 2020-21, to receive an award a teacher must have achieved a score in the 77th percentile or higher (or, if he or she was a cum laude or better bachelor's degree graduate, 71st percentile or higher) on the SAT, ACT, GRE, LSAT, GMAT or MCAT. The bill also establishes the Florida Best and Brightest Principal Scholarship Program for principals at schools with the highest percentages of teachers who are Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship recipients; principals receiving awards who serve at Title I schools will receive \$5,000, while principals at other schools will receive \$4,000. The bill also requires school districts to give principals receiving awards the same administrative flexibilities provided under the Principal Autonomy Pilot Program Initiative, established in 2016.

House Bill 7069 authorizes charter schools and charter management organizations to provide competency-based teacher certification programs, and requires all teacher preparation programs to include scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies. Schools must ensure that kindergarten through third-grade students with substantial reading deficiencies have an Individualized Education Plan or an individualized progress monitoring plan, and must provide, for those who are retained in grade three due to a reading deficiency, at least 90 minutes daily of uninterrupted, evidence-based, explicit, systematic, and multisensory reading instruction. The bill eliminates the requirement that each school district adopt a digital classroom plan.

House Bill 7069 appropriates \$413.9 million in general funds to finance the various provisions. \$233.9 million is directed to the Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship and Principal Scholarship programs (the Best and Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program received \$49 million in 2016-17), while \$30 million is provided for the Gardiner Scholarship Program. Provisions in the bill relating to statewide student assessments are funded with \$10 million (plus \$5 million in non-recurring funds), while the remaining \$140 million is designated to implement the remaining bill provisions including Schools of Hope and the related loan program.



To protect students and school personnel from discrimination based on their religious beliefs and expression, legislators approved Senate Bill 436, the Florida Student and School Personnel Religious Liberties Act. The act prohibits school districts from discriminating against students, parents or school personnel based on their religious viewpoints and specifies that students may express their religious beliefs in coursework and assignments. School districts must provide religious groups with access to school facilities in the same manner as provided to secular groups.

House Bill 989 requires each school board to maintain an online list of current instructional materials by grade level and permits a resident of the county in which a school board is located to object to the use of any specific materials. A school board must conduct a public hearing in response to an objection to an adopted instructional material and allow the resident to offer evidence that it contains inappropriate or prohibited content. In addition, the bill eliminates the requirement that a school district use at least 50 percent of its state instructional material allocation to purchase electronic materials.

### **Other legislation**

HB 15 expands Gardiner Scholarship Program eligibility to students who suffer from anaphylaxis and rare diseases as well as sensory impaired, traumatic brain injured, hospital-bound and homebound students.

HB 293 requires the state Department of Education to contract with an outside entity to conduct a study of states with high-performing students in grades six through eight. The study must include information on academic expectations, instructional strategies, attendance policies, teacher quality, administrator leadership and performance, and parent and community involvement in the identified states.

### ***Louisiana*** (<http://www.legis.la.gov/>)

Recognizing that legislators likely would require extra time to complete a budget agreement for 2017-18, the governor at the end of May issued his call for a special session — beginning 30 minutes after regular session adjournment — one week prior to the end of the regular session. Legislators subsequently approved, in mid-June, a \$13.6 billion state-funded budget for 2017-18, up 0.6 percent from the original 2016-17 appropriation. This includes \$9.6 billion in general funds, up 0.2 percent. A \$304 million budget shortfall for 2016-17 required legislators to meet in a special session in February, which resulted in an agreement to lower spending and transfer funds; the analysis below reflects changes from the original 2016-17 appropriations levels.

General funds for K-12 education rise 2.2 percent to \$3.6 billion, of which nearly \$3.5 billion (also up 2.2 percent) is directed to Minimum Foundation Program formula funding to school districts. General funds to the Louisiana Scholarship Program, which provides scholarships for children from low-income families to attend nonpublic schools, total \$39.9 million, up 10.4 percent. State general fund assistance to nonpublic schools — primarily to cover the costs of maintaining and reporting education data, provide salary supplements for lunchroom employees and help defray the cost of books and instructional materials — is down 2 percent to just under \$19 million.

State funds for higher education total under \$1.2 billion, up 5.4 percent, including just over \$1 billion in general funds, a 9 percent increase. Previously, the Legislature appropriated operating funds to the state's three university systems and Louisiana Community and Technical College System; for 2017-18, those funds are provided to the Louisiana Board of Regents, which will in turn distribute the funds to each postsecondary system according to its outcome-based funding formula. General funds for the merit-based TOPS scholarship program rise 0.8 percent to \$81.9 million.

To assist policymakers and the public in assessing the extent to which students have access to a quality public education, House Bill 517 requires the state superintendent of education to annually prepare a report that provides information for each school. Under the bill, the report must contain information by school on the percentage of students who: are economically disadvantaged; have an Individualized Education Program or Individual Accommodation Plan; are racial or ethnic minorities; are English-language learners; complete Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or dual enrollment courses; complete industry certifications; have access to instruction in visual and performing arts; and have received out-of-school suspensions or been expelled. The report also must include for each school information on the result of state assessments in grades three through 12, the percentage of teachers determined to be highly effective and the number of teacher absences.

Louisiana's teacher evaluation system considers certain factors when determining student growth, such as student attendance and discipline or whether a student receives special education services. Previously, one of those factors was whether a student receives free or reduced-price lunch; in place of this, House Bill 130 establishes as a factor whether a student is economically disadvantaged. The definition of an economically disadvantaged student under the legislation includes those whose families qualify for certain food or financial assistance programs, or healthcare programs for families with limited resources, those who qualify for reduced-price meals, and English-language learners.

Leaders in several states have expressed concern over the amount of classroom time that students spend taking standards-based assessments. House Bill 616 specifies that no more than two percent of students' instructional time in an academic year may be used to take these assessments; the restriction does not apply to examinations for college entrance or credit, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate or industry-based credentials.

In response to the disruptions caused by natural disasters that occurred over the previous school year as well as the possibility of such disruptions in the future, legislators approved House Bill 20, which waives requirements for the minimum length of each school day and school year for any public school that temporarily shared facilities with another school because of a natural disaster or emergency. In addition, Senate Bill 170 permits the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to make allowances in calculating school and district performance scores for 2016-17 for schools that were in declared disaster areas.

House Bill 688 prohibits state colleges and universities from asking on their admissions applications questions regarding an applicant's criminal history, except for convictions for stalking, cyberstalking, rape or sexual battery. If an institution denies an application based on a conviction for one of those crimes, it must notify the applicant and allow the individual to appeal the decision. Colleges and universities are permitted to inquire, once a student has been admitted, regarding convictions for crimes other than the above for purposes of determining whether that student's participation in campus life should be limited when the student's criminal conduct bears a direct relationship on that participation.

In 2015, the Legislature provided the management boards of state colleges and universities with the authority to establish and increase student fees without legislative approval through the 2016-17 academic year. House Bill 113 extends that authority through the 2019-20 academic year.

## **Other legislation**

HB 4 permits the reemployment of retired school nurses.

HB 31 permits the reemployment of retired school psychologists in critical shortage areas.

HB 79 prohibits a school from administering corporal punishment to a disabled student, but specifies that seclusion and restraint are not considered corporal punishment.

HB 178 establishes that an educator preparation program approved by BESE is not a proprietary school and not subject to regulation by the Louisiana Board of Regents.

SB 215 permits a charter school to enroll the child of one of its faculty members and permits a charter school with a foreign immersion mission to enroll the child of a foreign consular officer who resides in the state; in either case, the student's enrollment does not count against the maximum student capacity of any program, class, grade level or school.

SB 233 requires BESE to award points, in its school and district accountability system, on a school's annual performance score for any school with a foreign language immersion program.

### *Mississippi* (<http://www.legislature.ms.gov/>)

The Legislature adjourned in late March, but returned to Jackson in early June to complete work on proposals to fund the Attorney General's office and the Department of Transportation. Overall, the 2017-18 budget totals \$6 billion in state funds, \$5.5 billion of which is general funds. That represents a 3.4 percent decrease from the 2016-17 budget as reduced during the year. The 2016-17 figures in this summary reflect four mid-year budget reductions made between September 2016 and March 2017. K-12 funding for 2017-18 totals \$2.4 billion, a decrease of 0.4 percent from the 2016-17 reduced level. This amount includes a 4.7 percent increase for vocational education funding, bringing that program's funding to \$81.8 million. It also includes Mississippi Adequate Education Program formula funding of \$2.2 billion (down 0.9 percent.).

Institutions of higher education receive a total of \$666.8 million in funding representing a 7.5 percent decrease from the 2016-17 budget as reduced. Student financial assistance programs were funded at \$37.6 million, down 2.8 percent. Community and junior college funding for 2017-18 is \$237.2 million, a decrease of 7.8 percent.

While Mississippi previously enacted an anti-bullying law, House Bill 263 specifies that each school district is required to include prohibitions in its personnel policies, discipline policies, and code of student conduct against the bullying of a student or retaliation against any person who in good faith provides information concerning an incident of bullying. Districts must also establish a procedure for notifying the parent or guardian of both the victim and bully within a reasonable amount of time, establish the actions a student should take to get assistance or intervention in response to bullying, set out counseling options, set out reporting procedures, and prohibit the imposition of disciplinary measures on a victim who uses reasonable self-defense in response to bullying. Additionally, the district must post on its website the procedure for reporting bullying. House Bill 263 also directs school districts to adopt a policy on student suicide prevention and requires that all school district employees receive suicide prevention education.

The Mississippi Dyslexia Therapy Scholarship for Students with Dyslexia program, established in 2012, provides scholarships to a nonpublic school of choice for students to receive comprehensive multisensory dyslexia therapy. Previously, the program was limited to students in grades one through six; House Bill 1046 expands the program through grade 12.

Previously, to serve as a school superintendent an individual was required to have at least four years of classroom or administrative experience. Senate Bill 2398 revises those requirements, mandating classroom or administrative experience of not less than six years, including at least three years of administrative experi-



ence as a school building principal in a school with an A or B accountability rating, a school that increased its accountability rating by a letter grade during the period in which the principal was employed as principal, or a school with a comparable accountability rating in another state (as verified by the Mississippi Department of Education). The state Board of Education is directed to issue regulations with an alternative set of qualifications by January 1, 2018, that include minimum credentials, educational prerequisites, and relevant best practice experience requirements that will qualify a person to serve as a superintendent.

Two pieces of legislation make changes to Mississippi's school accountability system. Senate Bill 2431 authorizes the state Board of Education to place failing school districts into district transformation status. Conservator districts are now districts of transformation, while conservators are replaced with interim superintendents, signaling those individuals' role of focusing on academic instruction along with resolving any accreditation violations. The interim superintendent will remain in place until the district has achieved a district grade of C or better on Mississippi's accountability rubric for five consecutive years, at which point the district returns to local control; under prior law, there was no specific timeline for a district to return to local control. House Bill 347 repeals the existing New Start School program, which required schools rated as failing for three consecutive years to enter a school transformation process that included terminating the employment of the principal and all licensed and non-licensed employees.

### **Other legislation**

HB 1413 specifies that a student who is suspended for more than 10 days has the right to a hearing, with the right to have legal counsel, present evidence, and cross-examine witnesses at that hearing. A student also has the right to an appeal.

SB 2273 directs the Board of Education to include cursive reading (in addition to cursive writing) as an elementary curriculum standard, implemented across the curriculum.

SB 2432 specifies that the special Mississippi Occupational Diploma for students with disabilities is no longer available to any student entering the ninth grade in the 2017-2018 school year or thereafter, pending state Board of Education approval of new graduation options.

### ***North Carolina*** (<http://www.ncleg.net/>)

Meeting in the long session, legislators approved a budget for the 2017-19 biennium that provides just under \$23 billion in general funds statewide for 2017-18 (up 3 percent from the revised 2016-17 total), and \$23.6 billion in 2018-19 (up 2.9 percent). Community colleges receive over \$1.1 billion in each year of the biennium, with funds increasing 2.4 percent in 2017-18 and a further 1.8 percent in 2018-19. State universities receive nearly \$2.9 billion in the first year of the biennium (up 1.5 percent), and under \$3 billion in the second year (a 2.6 percent increase).

General funds for K-12 education through the Department of Public Instruction rise 3.6 percent in 2017-18 to \$9 billion, and by 4.2 percent in 2018-19 to \$9.4 billion. Funds directed to classroom instruction are up to nearly \$6.8 billion in the first year of a biennium, a 3.6 percent increase. However, this declines 0.5 percent in the second year to \$6.7 billion.

Appropriations for K-12 education include funding to raise teacher pay by an average 10 percent over the biennium while assistant principals and principals will see average pay increases of 13 percent and 9 percent respectively. In addition, teachers with 25 or more years of experience will receive a \$385 bonus in each

year of the biennium, while non-certified and central office staff will receive \$1,000 raises. The budget also renames the Third Grade Reading Teacher Performance Pilot Program as the Third Grade Read to Achieve Teacher Bonus Program and allocates \$5 million in each year of the biennium to provide bonuses of up to \$3,500 to teachers whose student growth index score for third grade reading is in the top 25 percent in the state or the top 25 percent in their school districts.

The budget provides \$6 million in each year to provide grants to nonprofit organizations, working independently or with school districts, to provide high-quality, evidence-based extended learning and student support programs to improve the academic outcomes of at-risk students. Proviso language requires each school district to provide at least two work-based learning opportunities related to career and technical instruction, and establishes a B-3 Interagency Council to establish a vision and accountability model for a birth through grade three system of early education.

Proviso language in the budget establishes the North Carolina Personal Education Savings Accounts Program, which will provide up to \$9,000 per year to each participating disabled student for education and therapeutic expenses, including private school tuition. Legislators appropriated \$3.4 million for the first year of the program (2018-19), which is administered through the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. Legislators used budget proviso language to move the ApprenticeshipNC program — which works with employers to develop apprenticeship agreements and programs — from the state Department of Commerce to the North Carolina Community Colleges System, and to establish the Board of Postsecondary Education Credentials. The board will make recommendations for the development of a statewide system to link industry and businesses with educators, government and community organizations to identify needed workforce skills and training and to ensure the availability of courses of study and vocational training to meet those needs.

Budget language also addresses college- and career-ready reading and literacy skills. For a student to receive a college and career ready endorsement on his or her high school diploma, the student must receive on a nationally normed college admissions test a benchmark score that represents the achievement required to have a 50 percent chance of receiving a B or higher or a 75 percent chance of receiving a C or higher in a corresponding first-year, credit bearing postsecondary course. The Superintendent of Public Instruction may utilize up to \$200,000 to support the Reading Improvement Commission, which is charged with making recommendations to improve reading comprehension and literacy skills for students in grades four through 12.

House Bill 527, concerning free speech on college campuses, requires the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina to adopt a policy on free expression that prohibits universities under the board's management from requiring students or faculty to express a particular point of view but requires those institutions to implement disciplinary sanctions against anyone under their jurisdiction who substantially interferes with the free expression of others. The institutions also must provide information on the policies regarding free expression in their freshman orientation programs.

To improve the teaching profession, legislators approved Senate Bill 599, Excellent Educators in Every Classroom, which establishes the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission to ensure high standards for educators. The commission is required to develop and recommend to the state Board of Education rules related to all aspects of teacher preparation programs. The legislation repeals prior statutes that governed educator preparation programs and establishes a new set of provisions, including requiring the state Board of Education to develop performance measures for these programs. Under the bill's provisions, educator preparation programs will submit annual performance reports based on those measures. The bill also establishes sanctions for programs that do not meet performance standards, including probationary status and the revocation of program certification.

Senate Bill 448 allows a local board of education to employ a higher education faculty member as an adjunct instructor in a core academic subject. Under the bill, adjunct instructors may be employed for up to 20 hours per week for up to six consecutive months.

Current law caps class sizes at 18 students in kindergarten, 16 students in grade one, and 17 students in grades two and three. House Bill 13 permits, for 2017-18 only, a maximum average class size of 20 students in kindergarten through grade three, and specifies that no individual class may have more than 33 students.

## **Other legislation**

HB 135, which primarily makes technical changes to education statutes, requires the state Board of Education to require students to complete instruction in CPR and obtain a passing grade in a course on the founding principles of the United States of America and the State of North Carolina to graduate from high school.

HB 149 requires the state Board of Education to ensure that that teachers and school personnel are provided professional development opportunities on the identification of and intervention strategies for students with dyslexia, dyscalculia, or other specific learning disabilities.

HB 486 requires the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina and the State Board of Community Colleges each to adopt a policy that any National Guard service member placed into active duty is provided an excused absence.

HB 532 expands, from eight to nine, the number of laboratory schools under the University of North Carolina Laboratory Schools program.

HB 704 establishes the Joint Legislative Study Committee on the Division of Local School Administrative Units to determine whether it is feasible and advisable to enact legislation that would permit two previously consolidated school districts to be divided into separate school districts.

HB 800 permits a charter school to serve as a program site under the statewide prekindergarten program.

SB 78 requires the Department of Public Instruction to study and report on the cost to local school districts of complying with federal education funding mandates.

## ***Oklahoma*** (<http://www.oklegislature.gov/>)

Legislators approved, and the governor signed, a 2017-18 budget bill that appropriates \$6.8 billion in state funds — up 1.2 percent from the originally approved 2016-17 budget. However, the budget imposes a 4.2 percent reduction from the original 2016-17 appropriation on most agencies and programs. The Oklahoma Supreme Court recently ruled a \$1.50-per-pack cigarette fee unconstitutional; revenue generated by the fee was intended for a Health Care Enhancement Fund supporting health and social programs. This will require budget cuts of \$214 million to those programs if not addressed by the Legislature.

Funding for career and technical education is down 4.9 percent to \$112.5 million, and the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability receives \$1.6 million, down 3.4 percent. Funding for state institutions of higher education is down 4.5 percent to \$773.6 million. State funds for elementary and secondary education are up 0.9 percent to over \$2.4 billion; this includes \$51 million in reserve funds.

Several bills addressed school funding. In addition to House Bill 2360 and Senate Bill 852, which provided reserve funding, House Bill 1578, the School Finance Review Commission Act, establishes a task force to study and make recommendations to the Legislature by December 31, 2018 on how to improve the state education aid formula. House Bill 1837 modifies the distribution of lottery funds. Rather than requiring the Lottery Commission to transfer at least 35 percent of net proceeds to the Oklahoma Education Lottery Trust Fund, the bill requires the commission to transfer \$50 million of each fiscal year's net proceeds. Lottery proceeds over \$50 million deposited into the fund will be appropriated by the Legislature for allocation to public schools.

Senate Bill 514 creates a task force to study and make recommendations to the Legislature on eliminating administrative overhead costs and improving efficiency in school district operations. The task force will consider the relative enrollment sizes of school districts, as well as their respective stability and student performance on statewide assessments. The task force must submit a report of its findings and recommendations to the governor and Legislature by August 1, 2018.

House Bill 1693 establishes the components of a new A-F school grading system that brings Oklahoma into compliance with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act. Each school will receive a grade for each component, as well as a summative grade. Components include statewide assessments, graduation rates for high schools, and English language proficiency. The bill allows the state board to adopt alternative systems of accountability for schools serving only prekindergarten or kindergarten through second grade.

Several pieces of legislation modify the Reading Sufficiency Act, designed to ensure that students can read by the end of the third grade and that students with significant reading deficiencies are not automatically promoted to the fourth grade. House Bill 1760 and Senate Bill 84 add students who score at the unsatisfactory level to the students who must be evaluated for probationary promotion by a school's Student Reading Proficiency Team. Another bill addressing reading instruction, House Bill 1789, requires that prospective teachers be provided with quality education on research-based strategies for literacy development instruction, assessment and intervention for all students. Institutions within the Oklahoma State System of Higher Education offering elementary, early childhood education or special education programs must require teacher candidates to study strategies including reading instruction that is explicitly taught, sequenced, multimodal, multidisciplinary, and reflective to adapt to individual learners.

House Bill 2155 requires the state Board of Education to adopt a statewide system of college and career planning tools. Each high school student will have an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) developed by the student and the student's parent or guardian in collaboration with school counselors, teachers, administrators and other school personnel, and updated annually. The ICAP will be used to establish personalized academic and career goals, explore postsecondary career and educational opportunities, align coursework and curriculum, apply to postsecondary institutions, secure financial aid and enter the workforce. Students entering the ninth grade in the 2019-20 school year will be required to complete an ICAP to graduate from a public high school with a standard diploma.

Senate Bill 529 modifies the Oklahoma Higher Learning Access Program by: stipulating that to continue receiving a reward, a student must meet retention and degree completion requirements established by the institution rather than previous grade point average requirements; prohibiting the use of award monies to pay for remedial coursework beginning in the 2018-19 school year; and increasing the parental income cap for students who apply in the eighth, ninth or tenth grade.

## Other legislation

HB 1201 modifies the School District Transparency Act, which directs state Department of Education to make school district expenditure available on its website. It deletes the requirement for including copies of all credit card statements and specifies that the calculation of per-pupil expenditure is derived by dividing total current expenditures by the total number of students enrolled for each school year.

HB 1202 defines “per-pupil” and specifies that aggregate current expenditures does not include adult and community education, facilities acquisition and construction services, debt services, property and other expenditures not related to day-to-day operations.

HB 1576 requires the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability to adopt rules requiring educator preparation programs to provide coursework or training in the use of digital and other instructional technologies, and specifies that educator professional development must include digital teaching and learning standards.

HB 1623 prohibits school district personnel from using corporal punishment on students with the most significant cognitive disabilities unless the use of corporal punishment is addressed in the student’s IEP.

HB 1790 allows school districts to offer a remediation course for high school students who score below a nineteen on the ACT or below an equivalent score on the SAT.

HB 1952 stipulates that school districts cannot prohibit a teacher from, or take disciplinary action against a teacher for, disclosing publicly or reporting a violation of state or federal law, or a rule promulgated pursuant to law. A copy of this law must be posted in a conspicuous place for all teachers to see.

HB 2156 changes the computer education requirement in the state subject matter standards so that it may be satisfied by a unit or set of competencies in a foreign language.

SB 15 provides for the development and implementation of teacher recruitment programs by the state Department of Education and the Board of Regents, subject to the availability of funds, and establishes the Oklahoma Teacher Recruitment Revolving Fund that will receive each \$20 license plate fee generated by the Oklahoma License to Education license plates.

SB 45 authorizes the state Department of Education to contract directly with educators who are current or retired employees of Oklahoma public school districts to assist the department with services that require the expertise and qualifications of an Oklahoma certified educator.

SB 244 requires each virtual charter school approved and sponsored by the Statewide Virtual Charter School Board to keep full and complete student attendance records in one of the student information systems approved by the state Department of Education and requires, by July 1, the governing body of each virtual charter school to adopt an attendance policy.

## *South Carolina* (<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/>)

After concluding the regular session without a budget agreement for 2017-18, legislators returned to Columbia and approved the final budget in early June. Statewide general funds are up 4.9 percent over the originally approved 2016-17 budget to over \$7.9 billion. General funds to universities rise 6.3 percent to \$413.2 million, while comprehensive and technical education institutions receive \$149 million, up 6.1 percent. Statewide funding for K-12 education is up 3.4 percent to nearly \$2.8 billion, including nearly \$1.8 billion in



state aid to school districts, a 2.9 percent increase. Education Improvement Act funding, from an earmarked 1 percent sales tax, is projected to total \$797.5 million, up 6.1 percent; legislators directed \$100.6 million of those funds to the statewide South Carolina Public Charter School District, up 24 percent.

Senate Bill 462 requires schools and school districts to provide each student with a personalized high school diploma pathway that allows the student to earn endorsements based on their course of study. The state Board of Education is required to outline procedures for personalizing pathways based on students' postsecondary plans. The state board is also required to develop, in collaboration with the Vocational Rehabilitation Department, the Department of Employment and Workforce, businesses, and stakeholders, a uniform employability credential for students with disabilities for whom (as determined by their Individualized Education Program teams) a standard diploma pathway would not be appropriate.

To promote the fiscal integrity of school districts, legislators approved House Bill 3221, which requires the state Department of Education to work with district superintendents and finance officers to develop a statewide program that establishes three levels of fiscal and budgetary concern — fiscal watch, fiscal caution and fiscal emergency. If the state superintendent of education declares a district under fiscal watch, the district board is required to submit a financial recovery plan to the state department within 60 days. The state superintendent may modify the submitted plan while the department will provide technical assistance to the district. A district may be released from fiscal watch in the fiscal year after the one in which watch status was declared if the superintendent determines that corrective actions have been successfully implemented.

The state superintendent is required to declare a district to be in a state of fiscal caution if there are specific audit-related deficiencies or there is an ongoing investigation into the district's finances or its board. Under fiscal caution, state department staff are required to visit and inspect the district and provide technical assistance, and may order a performance audit of the district at the district's expense. The district is required to submit proposals to correct the practices and conditions that led to the fiscal caution declaration. The district may be released from fiscal caution status in the fiscal year after the one in which caution status was declared. However, the state superintendent (with state Board of Education approval) may instead place the district in fiscal emergency status if the local board does not make reasonable proposals or act to correct the identified issues.

If the state superintendent places a district under fiscal emergency status — which the superintendent may declare if a district does not submit a plan of corrective action or make sufficient progress under such a plan, is at risk of defaulting on debt, or has been under either (or both) fiscal watch or caution status for three years — the state department may take over the financial operations of the district and continue performing that duty until the district is released from fiscal emergency status. In addition to the above provisions, the legislation requires the state auditor to adopt the fiscal integrity program adopted by the state Department of Education. The state auditor may order the state Department of Education to immediately assume emergency management of a school district following a declaration of either fiscal caution or fiscal emergency in the district.

## **Other legislation**

HB 3220 establishes the South Carolina Education and Economic Development Coordinating Council to report annually on progress toward implementing career pathways and the ability of those pathways to provide a better prepared workforce and student success in postsecondary education, and to make recommendations for a communication and marketing plan to promote career pathways. The council membership includes the state superintendent of education, the executive director of the State Board for Technical and

Comprehensive Education, the chairman of the Education Oversight Committee and the chairman of the Commission on Higher Education.

SB 213 creates a joint legislative screening commission to consider qualifications and make nominations to the general assembly for trustees to state-supported colleges, universities and schools.

## *Tennessee* (<http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>)

The Tennessee Legislature adjourned May 10, having completed work on the 2017-18 budget bill and other legislation. For 2017-18, the Basic Education Program receives \$4.6 billion, a 4.1 percent increase. Other education programs (including career and technical education and early childhood) receive \$321.1 million, an 8.1 percent increase.

State funding for higher education programs totals \$1.8 billion, a 5.5 percent increase. State-administered higher education programs (including all the state funded programs under the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation) get \$505.1 million of that amount, an 8.9 percent increase. The University of Tennessee receives \$527.5 million, a 6.3 percent increase, while the Tennessee Board of Regents systems receives \$771.8 million, a 2.8 percent increase.

The Legislature passed Senate Bill 1198, modifying existing provisions regarding school accountability. The bill specifies that the performance goals and measures the state Board of Education is required to establish for schools and districts must include, at a minimum, student achievement, student growth, and other appropriate indicators of performance. The state Department of Education must annually recommend, and the state board must approve, performance designations for districts. The districts obtaining the highest performance designation will be provided with increased funding flexibility. Districts receiving the lowest performance determination are required to create a plan for corrective action that includes a detailed analysis of student achievement results, and submit the plan to the commissioner for approval.

Schools identified as priority schools are those in the bottom 5 percent of schools in performance, all public high schools failing to graduate one-third or more of their students, and schools with chronically low-performing subgroups that have not improved after receiving additional targeted support. Priority schools are subject to district-led interventions or other improvement processes, and a comprehensive support and improvement plan — based on a school-level needs assessment that includes evidence-based interventions, a process for notifying parents of the school's status, and a plan for stakeholder engagement — must be established. After June 1, 2017, the commissioner may only assign priority schools to the Achievement School District (ASD). A school that has been removed from a local district and placed in the ASD will remain until the school is no longer identified as a priority school for two consecutive years, though no school may remain in the ASD for more than 10 years.

Several pieces of legislation addressed Tennessee's initiative to increase the number of adult residents with a college education to 55 percent by 2025. With passage of House Bill 531, starting in the 2018 fall semester, Tennessee Reconnect, which currently provides last-dollar scholarships to adults returning to colleges of applied technology to complete two-year degrees, will provide scholarships to all adults returning to college to earn two-year degrees at community colleges. To be eligible, a student must be a state resident for at least a year before applying, and must maintain a 2.0 GPA and at least part-time enrollment. The projected annual cost of the expanded program is \$10 million and will be funded by state lottery revenues. The Tennessee Support, Training and Renewal Opportunity for National Guard (STRONG) Act, Senate Bill 1216, replaces the Tennessee National Guard Tuition Assistance program and provides Tennessee National Guard members

with last-dollar assistance toward a first-time bachelor's degree. Senate Bill 720 creates the Tennessee Middle College Scholarship and expands eligibility for the Tennessee HOPE scholarship to students who complete middle college — a program operated by an eligible public two-year postsecondary institution in partnership with school district that permits students to enter the postsecondary institution in their junior year of high school and to earn both a high school diploma and an associate degree in two years.

The General Assembly enacted two bills dealing with charter schools. The Tennessee High Quality Charter High School Act (House Bill 310) redefines a charter agreement to mean a fixed-term renewable agreement between a public charter school and the chartering authority that outlines the responsibilities and performance expectations of each party. The legislation specifies that a charter agreement may be revoked for failure to meet the minimum performance requirements set out in the agreement. Adoption of national authorizing standards is required for all chartering authorities. A local board of education that authorizes charter schools may charge an annual fee to schools it has authorized, which ranges from 1 to 3 percent of each school's local and state per-student funding, depending on the number of charter schools the board oversees. House Bill 267 increases the application fee that a chartering authority may charge to a charter school sponsor from \$500 to \$2,500 per application; the fee applies only to an application for the creation of a new school.

House Bill 45 requires school districts to integrate physical activity into the school week in conjunction with (but not to replace) the school's current physical education program. For elementary school students, the amount is a minimum of 130 minutes of physical activity per full school week, and for middle and high school students a minimum of 90 minutes of physical activity per full school week and 15 minutes per day. Physical activity may include walking, jumping rope, playing volleyball, or other forms of physical activity that promote fitness and well-being.

House Bill 174 declares that educators have the right: to be treated with civility and respect; to have their professional judgement respected; to report student misbehavior; to provide a safe classroom and school environment; to defend themselves and their students from physical violence; to share a student information with parents or legal guardians unless doing so violates the federal Family Education Rights and Privacy Act; to review all instructional material or curricula before they are used for student instruction; and not to be required to use personal money to appropriately equip a classroom. In order to deter the filing of meritless litigation against educators or education entities, Senate Bill 729 establishes that an educational entity or employee is not liable for an action relating to the control, grading, suspension, expulsion, or discipline of student unless the action violates a law, rule or clearly articulated policy.

## **Other legislation**

HB 22 requires each school district to offer students in each of its high schools, beginning with the 2018-19 school year, the opportunity to take at least four postsecondary courses.

SB 232 requires the state Board of Education to create an endorsement in computer science for all teachers who demonstrate sufficient content knowledge in the course material.

SB 614 encourages teacher preparation programs to partner with stakeholders in the fields of neurological or brain science research to provide educators with knowledge of cognitive development and how emerging research in the brain sciences can inform educational practices and policies.

SB 1195 requires the state Department of Education to develop, and the state board to adopt, rules to ensure the education of students incarcerated in detention centers licensed by the Department of Children's

Services, provided by the school district in which the detention center is located. The rules must include, at a minimum, procedures allocating funding equal to the per-pupil state and local funds received by the school district in which the student was enrolled at the time of incarceration, and procedures for the prompt transfer of the incarcerated student's records.

SB 1232 requires state institutions of higher education to develop and implement uniform procedures for awarding academic credit through course equivalencies for military education training, experience and occupational specialties.

## *Texas* (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>)

The biennial regular session concluded on May 31, but the governor called legislators back into a special session that began in mid-July. Several education-related items on the governor's session call were approved with the passage of House Bill 21, which: establishes grants to help school districts offset financial hardships they experience due to changes to Foundation School Program formula funding or to statutes that equalize wealth differences between school districts; provides additional state aid to charter schools with acceptable performance ratings; modifies provisions that provide extra aid to districts with low student enrollment; and establishes the Texas Commission on Public School Finance. The bill transfers \$311 million in general funds from the state Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to the Texas Education Agency (TEA); of that, \$150 million is allocated to school district hardship grants, \$60 million to additional charter school aid, and \$41 million for aid to low-enrollment districts. The bill transfers \$212 million from HHSC to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas for the purpose of lowering premiums and deductibles during the 2018 and 2019 plan years.

For the 2018-19 biennium (which begins in September 2017), statewide general funds decline 2.5 percent to \$113.1 billion. While higher education funding rises 1.1 percent to \$17.8 billion, public education funding declines 1.5 percent to under \$41 billion for the biennium. However, despite the decline in general funds for public education, increased revenue from the property tax relief fund brings overall state funds for Foundation School Program formula funding to \$42.7 billion for the biennium, up 0.7 percent.

Relative to the statewide school accountability system, House Bill 22 consolidates the areas (known as domains) on which schools and school districts are evaluated from five domains to three — student achievement, school performance, and closing the gaps. The bill requires the commissioner of education to evaluate the performance of each school and district on an A-F grading scale in each of the three domains and overall.

In response to the removal of dual-credit enrollment limitations in 2015 and the subsequent growth in the number of students participating in dual enrollment programs, House Bill 1638 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to develop statewide goals for dual enrollment programs. The bill also requires a dual enrollment program agreement between a school district and a public college or university to include specific program goals, establish what credits may be earned under the program, describe the student supports and guidance that will be provided and state the sources of funding for courses in the program. Senate Bill 1091 restricts the courses that institutions may offer under a dual-credit enrollment program to courses in the core curriculum of the college or university providing college credit, a career or technical education course, or a course in foreign language.

Legislators approved House Bill 2087 to prohibit private website and software providers from using student information gathered for school purposes to target advertising at students or to create profiles of individual students. While private website and software providers are prohibited from renting or selling student

information, they are allowed to provide information, with parental consent, to help students obtain employment, postsecondary education or financial aid; they also may disclose student information for legal and regulatory compliance purposes or legitimate research purposes.

Senate Bill 179 includes cyberbullying in the definition of bullying, and permits school districts to establish bullying prevention and mediation policies. The legislation specifies that a school district or charter school may place a student in an alternative education program or expel the student if he or she engages in bullying that encourages the victim to commit suicide, incites violence against another student by a group, or involves the release of intimate visual material of another student. In addition, TEA is required to maintain online resources to assist school employees in working with students with mental health conditions.

Senate Bill 1839 requires TEA to provide state-gathered data on educator performance to educator preparation programs to help improve program design and the effectiveness of program graduates. It also permits the commissioner of education to exempt teachers certified in other states from examination requirements to earn a Texas teacher certification. In addition, the bill — along with House Bill 2039 — requires the state Board of Education to establish an early childhood certificate for educators that provides special training for teaching students in kindergarten through grade three.

To assist schools in obtaining instructional materials, House Bill 3526 requires the commissioner of education to establish a web portal with information on all state-adopted instructional materials, including a repository of open education resources that schools and districts may access at no cost. The bill also permits the commissioner to provide up to \$25 million annually for grants that allow school districts and charter schools to establish programs for lending learning technology to students. In addition, Senate Bill 810 requires THECB to provide up to \$200,000 in grants over the 2018-19 biennium to encourage college and university faculty to develop courses that only use open education resources.

In response to ongoing, nationwide concern over sexual assault on college campuses, the Legislature approved Senate Bill 968, which requires all public and private colleges and universities in the state to inform students of the protocol for reporting instances of campus sexual assault. Those institutions also are required to provide students and employees the means to electronically report instances of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking. Senate Bill 969 prohibits a public or private college or university from taking disciplinary action against a student who reports an instance of sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating violence or stalking.

## **Other legislation**

HB 674 permits school districts and charter schools to establish positive behavior programs as an alternative to out-of-school suspensions for students in kindergarten through grade two.

HB 728 requires the state Board of Education to establish a program that allows high school students to obtain an advanced mathematics or science credit by completing an advanced computer science course.

HB 1553 permits a school district that has failed to satisfy state accreditation criteria or academic or financial accountability standards to enter into an agreement with an institution of higher education to assist the district in improving its performance.

HB 1886 requires schools to screen students for dyslexia at the end of kindergarten and the first grade, and requires each regional education service center to employ a dyslexia specialist.



HB 2130 requires TEA to conduct a study of how the statewide student assessment program impacts students with disabilities and whether the administration of alternative assessments to those students complies with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

HB 2729 requires TEA to jointly develop with THECB and the Texas Workforce Commission an inventory of industry-recognized credentials and certificates that students may earn at public high schools through career and technology education programs.

SB 30, the Community Safety Education Act, requires the state Board of Education and the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to jointly develop instruction for students in grades nine through 12 on proper interaction with police officers during traffic stops and other encounters.

SB 587 permits dependent children of United States armed forces members who are deployed or transferred to Texas to enroll full-time in the state virtual school network.

SB 1882 exempts a public school campus, when it has failed to satisfy academic performance standards during its first two years of operations, from state-mandated interventions if the school district contracts with a charter school to operate the campus.

SB 2039 requires the commissioner of education to develop instruction on sexual abuse and sex trafficking for use in schools' health education curricula, and requires school districts and charter schools to adopt policies on sex trafficking prevention.

## Notes from other SREB states

The West Virginia Legislature, meeting in a special session to complete work on budget and revenue measures, approved in mid-June a \$4.2 billion general fund budget for 2017-18, up 0.9 percent from the original 2016-17 budget. While overall K-12 education funding rises 0.2 percent to over \$1.9 billion, the increase is due to a 1 percent rise in state aid to schools to a bit less than \$1.8 billion. K-12 funding to the state Department of Education declines 8.8 percent to \$140.4 million; much of the decline is due to the elimination of funding for Regional Education Service Agencies (\$3.5 million) and Innovation in Education grants (\$2.5 million) as well as a \$1 million reduction to 21st Century Assessment and Professional Development. Higher education funding is down 4.8 percent to \$378 million, including \$61.4 million for community and technical colleges (down 4.4 percent) and \$248.3 million to the college and university system (down 6 percent).

---

*This report was prepared by Jeffrey Grove, SREB research associate (Jeffrey.Grove@SREB.org); Gale Gaines, vice president, state services (Gale.Gaines@SREB.org); and Lee Posey, director of legislative services (Lee.Posey@SREB.org). All can be reached at (404) 875-9211.*