

FY 2018-19 Budget continued....

Legislators have agreed on how much to spend overall and it appears the House and Senate have agreed to set aside about \$80 million for tax cuts.

Meanwhile, House and Senate leaders say there has been significant movement and some are calling a budget agreement “very close”. House and Senate Budget subcommittees have held extensive meetings seeking a consensus on numbers.

As for Education, both sides now seem to support “teacher bonuses”, increasing per student funding by \$104, \$350 stipend for supplies and holding the line on property taxes for education except in cases for new construction.

In Higher Education, the House went from a \$600 million gap to a \$40 million difference from the Senate increasing their funding for universities, colleges as well as increasing financial aid under the Senate’s Excellence in Higher Education Act, [S 4](#).

Other budget subcommittee chairs have declared their differences as minimal.

However there were some budget areas that went into negotiations with less money than expected. With hundreds of millions of dollars now going into the school safety plan, allocations have shifted.

Funding for hurricane recovery is also evolving whereby the Senate explored Community Development Block Grants to draw down federal money, and the House is considering Housing Trust Fund monies for hurricane relief.

The new state budget will now include nearly \$400 million that will go to reinforce safety at schools and to provide mental health services in schools. **Gov Rick Scott** has stated he’s willing to forgo tax cuts to finance his plan to staff each public school with a police officer and enhance mental health programs. **House Speaker Richard Corcoran** championed Scott to increase school safety. “We’re going to have to give up on local projects,” and some reserves.

[Click here](#) to see some of the Volusia County allocations.

More news to come.