

Summary of 2018 Legislative Session

The 2018 legislative session has now ended. The final day was largely devoted to passing clean-up bills to correct issues with previously passed legislation. The JCTA/KEA lobbying team engaged actively on behalf of members to make certain harmful amendments to add charter school funding or tuition tax credits were not added at the last minute. To the legislature's credit, and despite a great deal of buzz on social media to the contrary, no such amendments were introduced today.

So, in the end, with unprecedented engagement by JCTA and KEA members, the final revenue and budget package included hundreds of millions in new revenue for public education, restoring most programs which the state's existing revenue streams were no longer sufficient to fund, fully funding the ARC for every public employee pension system for the next two years, increasing SEEK funding to its highest dollar level ever, significantly increasing Safe Schools funding, and fully funding health insurance for active and retired educators.

One piece of bad news is that the legislature failed to restore the retired income tax exemption from \$31,000 to \$41,000. Had this exemption been restored, the fix would have still been subject to a veto by the governor, which could not have been overridden. However, the fact that legislation to restore the \$41,000 was quickly passed by the House and appeared to have a good chance of being passed by the Senate, had a drafting error in the bill not interfered with its passage, offers a reason to be optimistic that it may be possible to restore the exemption in the next session of the General Assembly.

All in all, given the fiscally conservative composition of the General Assembly, the budget and revenue package was remarkably favorable to public education and public education employees and the Association would like to express its appreciation to the House and Senate Leadership and every legislator who voted in favor of the package, as urged by the JCTA and KEA.

This could not have happened without powerful engagement by JCTA/KEA members. Your lobbying team would like to thank every member who engaged in any way over the past six months, and we would especially like to thank those who engaged in multiple ways. We have demonstrated how much we can accomplish when we work together, even under remarkably challenging circumstances.