

The Herald | [heraldonline.com](http://heraldonline.com)

[print](#) | [close window](#)

Senate panel weighs school-funding revisions  
Fast-growing districts seek legislation overhaul  
By Shawn Cetrone · [scetrone@heraldonline.com](mailto:scetrone@heraldonline.com)  
Updated 08/22/08 - 8:19 AM |

 [Comment on this story](#)

A state Senate committee charged with evaluating the way South Carolina's public schools are funded could by year's end recommend sweeping changes, said committee member Sen. Wes Hayes.

The Senate Education Funding Study Committee met Thursday to "get caught up with what the House is doing," said the Rock Hill Republican.

Members heard from S.C. Rep. Jeff Duncan, who is leading the House's efforts to help funding in the state's fastest-growing school districts. Duncan told members that change is at the top of his group's efforts, and that more money should be tied to students and not the schools they attend.

The Clinton Republican also said the state Legislature needs to get rid of a 1977 formula tied to a penny-on-the-dollar state sales tax because it no longer works.

The House and Senate are trying to address school funding problems tied to that formula and legislation from two years ago that cut homeowner property taxes that go to schools. Lawmakers upped the state sales tax by a penny, ostensibly to make up the difference. Sales tax proceeds are split among districts based on the state's average population growth rate of about 2 percent.

Fast-growing districts such as Fort Mill, Rock Hill and Clover, which have much higher growth rates, say the combination leaves them short on cash.

Thursday's meeting coincided with state Superintendent of Education Jim Rex's weeklong statewide tour, in which he is stressing the need for radical funding changes. Rex touts the "student-centered funding" that Duncan discussed.

The study committee is scheduled to meet with Rex in September. Progress should pick up after that, Hayes said.

"I think that it's likely that sometime before January we'd come up with a report recommending a pretty major shift in the way

money is distributed to school districts," Hayes said.

"The biggest sense of urgency I feel is in the fast-growing districts," Hayes said. "The quality of education will suffer if we don't find another way to fund schools."

The Associated Press contributed

All rights reserved. This copyrighted material may not be published, broadcast or redistributed in any manner.

[Online Master's Degree](#)

Full Sail Graduate Degree in Entertainment Business online.  
www.FullSail.edu

[I.T. Degree Programs Online](#)

Get ahead with an affordable online I.T. degree. Get info today. Information

[Considering Online education?](#)

Find out if studying online is right for you and see schools  
LearnAndBecome.com

Ads by Yahoo!