



OVERVIEW

In lieu of its fifth Interim Committee Week, the Legislature held a three-day Special Session called by the Governor to ban vaccination and mask mandates. The Legislature passed most of the Governor's requests by sending him four bills, which he signed on November 18, 2021. HB 1 - prohibits school districts from having masks or vaccination requirements or quarantining of healthy students; and allows students and parents to sue and recover costs from districts. Additionally, the following bills passed: HB 3 (Public Records), HB 5 (develop a proposal to create a state version of OSHA), and HB 7 (Removes authority of State Health Officer to order vaccination of individuals upon declaration of public health emergency).

The Governor also announced his Legislative Budget Request (LBR) for education. The LBR calls for an increase in the per-student funding to \$8,000 (state-wide average), an increase of \$205. He's also calling for an increase for teacher pay to support the minimum salary (\$47,500), and an increase for school safety (\$30M increase statewide) and Mental Health (\$20M increase statewide) allocation. The Legislature will consider the Governor's LBR during the legislative session, but ultimately, they will craft and approve their version of the budget. Historically, the final budget is lower than the Governor's LBR.

News from Washington D.C.: The new Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill makes some limited federal investments related to school operations, including \$5 billion for electric school buses, \$200 million for lead pipe removal in schools, eligibility for public building energy improvements, and low-income family subsidies for monthly internet bills.

Please find a summary of the bills below:

HB 1B – COVID-19 Mandates: Prohibits private employers from imposing COVID-19 vaccination mandate for certain employees; requires employer to exempt certain employees from vaccination; authorizes employee who is terminated to file complaint with DLA; requires AG to impose administrative fine for violations; specifies eligibility for reemployment assistance for unlawfully terminated employee; prohibits educational institutions & elected or appointed local officials from imposing COVID-19 vaccination mandates on students; provides right of action to obtain declaratory judgment & injunctive

relief for violations; prohibits educational institutions & governmental entities from imposing COVID-19 vaccination mandates for employees; declares null & void any ordinance, rule, or policy that imposes mandates; specifies eligibility for reemployment assistance for unlawfully terminated employee; prohibits mandating facial coverings or restricting certain activities for students based on quarantine policies; provides parents may allow their children to wear facial coverings; prohibits district school boards, district school superintendents, & elected or appointed local officials from prohibiting employees from returning to work or subjecting employees to restrictions or disparate treatment. Effective Date: 11/18/2021

CS/HB 3B – Public Records: Provides exemption from public records requirements for employee complaints alleging private employer's violation of state law regarding employer COVID-19 vaccination policies or practices & all information held by DLA pursuant to active investigation of such complaints; defines "active"; specifies information that remains confidential & exempt after investigation is completed or ceases to be active; authorizes release of confidential & exempt information to governmental entities for specified purpose; provides for future repeal of exemption; provides statement of public necessity. Effective Date: 11/18/2021

HB 5B – Florida Occupational Safety and Health State Plan: Requires EOG to develop proposal for state plan to assert state jurisdiction over occupational safety & health issues for government & private employees; requires office to designate or hire necessary staff to develop proposal; requires Division of Risk Management & Division of Workers' Compensation within DFS, DOH, & DBPR to assist office with development of proposal upon request; requires office to submit status report to Legislature by specified date; requires that status report contain specified information; provides appropriation. 11/18/2021

HB 7B – Vaccinations During Public Health Emergencies: Removes authority of State Health Officer to order vaccination of individuals upon declaration of public health emergency; revises requirement that DOH adopt certain rules. 11/18/2021

Governor's Recommended 2022-23 Education Budget

The Governor's proposal for the FY 2022-2023 education budget recommendation includes increases in funding for both educators and students (information released by the Governor's office):

- Governor DeSantis is proposing a **second round of \$1,000 bonus checks for 177,000 teachers and principals in Florida**. He is also proposing **\$600 million – a \$50 million budget increase over the past year – for teacher pay, continuing Florida's efforts to reach a minimum starting teacher salary of \$47,500**.
- Governor DeSantis is also calling for an increase in per-student funding to raise this year's budget to \$8,000 per student. **This will represent the highest amount of per-student funding in Florida's history**.

- Governor DeSantis is also proposing **\$421 million for school safety and mental health initiatives**. That funding includes \$210 million for the safe schools program – an increase of \$30 million over the previous year, \$140 million for mental health – a \$20 million increase over the previous year, \$42 million for school hardening grants, and \$4 million for safety initiatives at Jewish Day Schools.

Governor DeSantis is also proposing three major investments in Florida's new education initiatives and innovative education programs:

- **To fully eliminate the Florida Standards Assessment and implement progress monitoring** in its place, Governor DeSantis is proposing \$15.5 million in recurring funding to provide progress monitoring tools to schools.
- Governor DeSantis is also proposing **\$500,000 to expand access to the Florida Civics and Debate Initiative** into every school district in the 2022-2023 school year, which is in addition to \$106 million Governor DeSantis announced earlier this year to provide teacher bonuses for earning a Florida Civics Seal of Excellence.
- To further efforts to make Florida the number one state for Workforce Education by 2030, **\$534 million in funding to support workforce education programs is included in the proposed budget**. The Governor's budget also includes \$100 million for the Workforce Development Capitalization Grant Program, which will create and expand workforce development programs at Florida's school districts and state colleges.