



Legislative Affairs Department
Broward County Public Schools

Florida Legislature
2024 Regular Session, End of Session Report

OVERVIEW

The Legislature adjourned Sine Die from the Regular Legislative Session at 2:25 p.m. on Friday, March 8, 2024. The 2024 session included:

- 1,957 bills and proposed committee bills filed
- 2,196 amendments filed
- 3,051 votes taken
- 43 Floor Sessions
- 325 bills passed both chambers (116 Senate bills, 209 House bills)

This Legislative Session yielded a \$117.5 billion budget, with a record of \$28.4 billion added to the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP).

The budget includes a \$1.8 billion increase in funding for public schools which will mean a \$240 bump in per-student spending, and \$1.2 billion for increasing teacher salaries. That amount represents a roughly \$200 million increase for teacher pay over the current year. Lawmakers also included a \$40 million increase in school safety funding, bringing the total to \$290 million, and a \$20 million boost to school mental-health funding, bringing the total to \$180 million.

An overview of legislative topics related to Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) can be found below. Each bill headline below is hyperlinked providing bill language, analysis, and more information.

All bills in this document were approved by the Governor.

All budget items in this document were approved by the Governor, except for the Broward County Student Athlete Mentoring Expansion Program (HF 2207) (SF 1334) that was vetoed.

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

BCPS Unweighted Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) Student Funds: \$8,910.14 (3.15% increase).

BCPS Funding Highlights

- \$800,000 for Adults with Disabilities
- \$250,000 for Athlete Mentoring Pilot program (**Vetoed**)

The full budget is linked [here](#).

FEFP		
	2023/24	22024/25
Base Student Allocation (BSA) (Per student)	\$5,139.73	\$5,330.98 (3.72% increase)

Broward Specific Funds:		
Base Funding FEFP	\$1,587,558,299	\$1,691,442,925
Classroom Teacher and Other Instructional Personnel Salary Increase	\$94,551,660	\$112,650,099
DJJ Supplemental Allocation	\$220,360	\$182,143
Educational Enrichment Allocation	\$59,827,600	\$61,035,285
ESE Guaranteed Allocation	\$105,567,857	\$113,760,367
Instructional Materials Allocation	Collapsed into BSA, District is still required to allocate \$300/ teacher for instructional materials	
Mental Health Assistance Allocation	\$13,292,890	\$ 14,758,713
Safe Schools Allocation	\$21,742,075	\$ 25,195,142
Student Transportation Allocation	\$34,956,025	\$35,249,295
The full FEFP is linked here .		
FAMILY EMPOWERMENT SCHOLARSHIP (FUNDED WITHIN FEFP)		
	Projected FTE	Projected Funds
Educational Options	27,427.00	\$ 214,932,563
Unique Abilities	9,132.75	\$ 97,774,994
Total	36,559.75	\$ 312,707,557
REQUIRED INSTRUCTION		
SB 1264 History of Communism		
<p>Mandates instruction in public schools on the history of communism beginning with the 2026/27 school year, and establishes the Institute for Freedom in the Americas at Miami Dade College.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires public school instruction on communism history, including U.S. and foreign communist movements, atrocities committed under communism, comparative discussions on political ideologies, the increasing threat of communism in the United States and to our allies through the 20th Century, the economic, industrial, and political events that have preceded and anticipated communist revolutions, and the communist policies of Cuba and the spread of communist ideologies throughout Latin America. Authorizes the Department of Education (DOE) to prepare instructional standards and seek input from victims of communism or recognized organizations dedicated to communism victims. Charter schools are exempt from this bill. <p>Final Legislative Analysis</p> <p>Approved by the Governor: April 17, 2024 Effective Date: July 1, 2024</p>		
HB 1329 Veterans		
<p>Revises provisions related to veterans including veterans' history program, Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., Veterans Employment & Training Services Program, grants, workforce training & recruitment, exemption from fees, advisory council on brain & spinal cord injuries, & required instruction on Veterans' Day & Memorial Day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defines "veteran" and creates the Major John Leroy Haynes Florida Veterans' History Program within the Division of Arts and Culture to collect and preserve Florida veterans' experiences. Revises the purpose of Florida Is For Veterans, Inc., to promote Florida as a veteran-friendly state, provide employment opportunities for veterans and their spouses, and enhance entrepreneurial skills. Authorizes the Veterans Employment and Training Services Program to assist veteran employment and education, including priority grant funding for certain training and the establishment of an entrepreneur initiative program. 		

- Provides free hunting, freshwater, and saltwater fishing licenses to disabled veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 50 percent or greater, requiring reissuance every 5 years.
- Includes two veterans with traumatic brain injury, chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or subconcussive impacts due to military service, or their family members, in the advisory council on brain and spinal cord injuries.
- Requires instruction on the history and importance of Veterans' Day and Memorial Day in public schools.
- Appropriates funds for the implementation and administration of the Major John Leroy Haynes Florida Veterans' History Program.

While this bill primarily focuses on veterans' issues, it also amends section 1003.42, Florida Statutes, to add to the required instruction on patriotism. Currently, paragraph 1003.42(2)(u), F.S., requires instruction on "the sacrifices that veterans and Medal of Honor recipients have made in serving our country and protecting democratic values worldwide." This instruction must occur on or before Medal of Honor Day, Veterans' Day, and Memorial Day. With this new law, paragraph (u) is divided into two (2) subparagraphs. Subparagraph (2)(u)1. will now address Medal of Honor recipients and Medal of Honor Day, while subparagraph (2)(u)2. will now address Veterans' Day and Memorial Day. Thus, district schools will be required to teach about the sacrifices of Medal of Honor recipients, and they will be required to teach "[t]he history and importance of Veterans' Day and Memorial Day. Such instruction may include two (2) 45-minute lessons that occur on or before the respective holidays."

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Approved by the Governor: June 21, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 357 Special Observances

Designates November each year as "Veterans Appreciation Month" and removes references to Veterans Week, allowing for a month-long recognition of veterans.

- Changes the observance from a week to the entire month of November.
- Authorizes the Governor to issue an annual proclamation to designate November as Veterans Appreciation Month.
- Encourages counties, municipalities, public schools, and residents to observe the occasion with special programs and events that show appreciation for veterans.
- Charter schools are exempt from this bill.

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Approved by the Governor: April 5, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

CTE/CAREER PLANNING

HB 917 Career and Technical Education

Revises duties of Office of Reimagining Education & Career Help; revises provisions relating to journeymen & specified career fairs; provides exemption for minors to work in specified conditions; revises list of individuals who are required to review & comment on certain revisions to state academic standards; requires DOE to convene workgroup by specified date; authorizes certain students to be exempt from completing certain examinations.

- Adds a duty that the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) coordinate with the Department of Education (DOE), Department of Commerce, and CareerSource Florida "to publish and disseminate, by March 1, 2025, a statewide asset map of career and technical education to inform workforce and industry partners of opportunities to partner and expand career and technical education in the state." The information must include a listing and information about district CTE courses and programs, as well as district career dual enrollment programs.
- Amends the definition of "journeyworker" to require that these individuals have taken part in state-approved programs and passed the appropriate state-approved test, if required.

- Adds details about when 16- and 17-year-old minors can be employed on a residential building construction site.
- Amends standards for counties and municipalities with respect to journeyworker licensing and reciprocity for plumbing and HVAC. Requires counties and municipalities to recognize an individual as a journeyman if that person would be issued a journeyworker license by another county or municipality within Florida.
- Same as above, but for the electrical and alarm system trades.
- Amends the supplemental powers and duties of a district school board. Last year, the Legislature added the requirement that each high school host or take part in an annual career fair. This year, an alternative has been added. Instead of the career fair, districts can “consult with local workforce development boards, advisory committees, and business groups to determine free or cost-effective methods to provide other career and industry networking opportunities during the school day for secondary students and exposure for elementary and secondary students to a representative variety of industries, businesses, and careers.”
- The Commissioner of Education is required to consult with certain experts before developing revisions to state academic standards. This provision adds a representative from the Department of Commerce and business leaders from “in-demand careers,” to the list of people with whom the Commissioner must consult.
- Currently, a student can earn credit towards graduation upon completion of an apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program registered with the DOE. This provision now provides that credit can be earned “upon completion of 1 year of related technical instruction for an apprenticeship” or preapprenticeship program registered with the DOE. This section of the bill also gives the DOE a deadline for convening a workgroup to identify best practices for CTE pathways from middle school to high school and to establish three (3) separate mathematics pathways for secondary students. Those requirements already existed, but now the DOE has until December 1, 2024, to convene the required workgroup.
- Repeals section 1004.015, Florida Statutes, which established the Florida Talent Development Council.
- Exempts private school, home school, and personal education program (PEP) graduates who complied with the relevant laws from career education program basic skills requirements.
- Requires the State Board of Education (SBE) and the the Board of Governors to consider reports and recommendations from the REACH Office, rather than the nowrepealed Florida Talent Development Council.
- Most of the provisions related to public schools refer only to school districts or modify school board powers and duties. However, the amendments to the high school graduation requirements section apply to charter school students too.

If the district decides to go with the alternative to career fairs, it will need to consult with local entities to develop networking opportunities for secondary students and methods of exposing elementary students to industries and careers. Next, the student progression plan should be updated to reflect the changes to obtaining credit while participating in a registered apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program. Finally, there may be many data requests as a result of the REACH Office’s requirement to consult with several organizations before publishing a statewide, CTE asset map that will look at and assess each district’s CTE offerings.

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Approved by the Governor: April 5, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

SB 1688 Career-themed Courses

Revises the requirements for a specified school district strategic plan to include certain information; requiring the Department of Education to include specified data in an annual review of K-12 and postsecondary career and technical education offerings, etc.

- Requires updated strategic plans from school districts, detailing research on local workforce needs, strategies for career academies, and industry certification pathways.
- Mandates annual reviews by the Department of Education to include student performance in career education programs.
- Obligates school districts to inform students and parents about career and technical education opportunities during middle school course selection.
- Stipulates that plans include strategies for student recruitment into career-themed courses, especially targeting students at risk of dropping out or below a 2.0 GPA.
- Highlights the incorporation of strategies to promote career and technical education among students, parents, the community, and stakeholders.
- Charter schools are exempt from this bill.

The three-year strategic plan required by the Florida Career and Professional Education Act may need to be updated, and the district may need to update the information it provides to fifth graders and other new students entering its middle schools.

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Approved by the Governor: April 26, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

SB 7032 Education

Establishes the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program within the Department of Education; revising the services to which the one-stop delivery system is intended to provide access; requiring a student's certified school counselor or other school personnel to inform the student of opportunities in the GATE Program; requiring district school boards to notify all candidates for the high school equivalency diploma of adult secondary and postsecondary education options, including specified eligibility requirements; creating the GATE Scholarship Program; requiring the department to administer the program, etc.

- Creates the GATE program and delegates rulemaking authority to the State Board of Education (SBE). It provides the intent of the program, definitions, eligibility for participation, reporting requirements, and rules. Eligible students who enter the GATE program shall have all registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees waived. Instructional materials must also be provided at no cost. To be eligible, a student must be a Florida resident between 16 and 21 who has withdrawn from school without having earned a diploma or GED. If the student is under 18, he or she still must withdraw from school with parental permission. Once in the program, the student must maintain a GPA of 2.0 in CTE coursework and complete the program within three (3) years, absent extenuating circumstances. The Department of Education (DOE) is required to provide information about the program and connect prospective students to eligible institutions. Beginning October 1, 2025, the DOE must also submit a report to the Governor and Legislature about the program, including the number of students enrolled, how much has been paid, how many diplomas or GED's have been earned, how many industry certifications have been earned, etc.
- Adds integrated education and training, as well as the GATE program, to the one-stop delivery program access list.
- Adds the GATE program to the list of information the school is required to give to students when they wish to unenroll from school after they turn 16.
- Requires each district school board to notify adult education candidates of their options, including the GATE program, and the eligibility requirements for the available options.
- Creates the GATE Scholarship Program. This provision describes the award of funds through the scholarship program, directs the DOE to administer the program, requires participating institutions to report total reimbursable expenses by category to the DOE, and provides for proration of the payments if the demand exceeds the annual appropriation. The SBE has rulemaking authority to implement the scholarship program.

- Changes requirements for students enrolled in the Open Door Grant program. Currently, a student must be enrolled in an integrated education and training program. Now, they can also be enrolled in an adult secondary education program.
- Removes the requirement that the DOE develop a list of courses designated as core curricula for the purposes of co-enrollment in a dual enrollment workforce education program. Also, if a student is co-enrolled for credit recovery or dropout prevention purposes and has an acceptable record of attendance and behavior, the student may be reported for funding for up to four (4) courses per year, instead of just two (2).
- Creates the GATE Startup Grant Program within the DOE. This program is for funding and supporting the startup and implementation of the GATE Program. It allows the DOE to solicit proposals from district career centers, charter technical career centers, or FCS institutions even if they do not currently have programs that met the requirements of the GATE Program. However, they must be located in or serve a rural area of opportunity. Priority must be given to institutions that combine adult basic education, adult secondary education, and career education in the same location. The DOE must start receiving grant applications no later than August 15, 2024. There are several requirements for any grant application, including programs provided, expected enrollment, the credentials associated with the programs, expected costs, and planned outreach activities. Once received, the grant funds can be used for planning and other activities necessary for the creation of the local GATE program, but they may not be used for indirect costs. As with the other two (2) new programs, the SBE has rulemaking authority to implement it.
- Creates the GATE Program Performance Fund. This program will reward institutions for successful implementation of the GATE Program. Each institution will receive \$1,000 per student who completes the GATE Program by earning a diploma or GED and a credential on the Master Credentials List within three (3) years. If the diploma or GED and the credential are earned at different institutions, each one will receive \$500. If there is insufficient funding, the awards will be prorated, and the SBE has rulemaking authority to implement the program.
- Charter school students are eligible, and charter technical career centers are eligible to participate in the GATE Program.

The goal with the GATE Program is to find a way to offer students who might otherwise dropout and, at best, seek a GED, another pathway that includes not only a diploma or GED but also an industry certification. There are no costs for the student, and the student is given three (3) years to complete the program.

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Approved by the Governor: May 9, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

READING, WRITING, AND ARITHMETIC

SB 46 Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program

Provides that tutoring provided through the tutoring program established as part of the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program may be provided after the school day; authorizing school districts that participate in the tutoring program to provide a stipend to instructional personnel and high school students who serve as tutors under the program, etc.

- Allows for tutoring to occur after the school day, expanding the opportunities for student participation.
- Authorizes participating school districts to offer stipends to instructional personnel and high school students who tutor after school hours.
- Requires eligible high school tutors to meet specific criteria, including a minimum GPA and no history of significant disciplinary actions.
- Incorporates a provision for high school tutors to earn elective credits and recognitions such as the New Worlds Scholar pin for their tutoring service.

- While the new language refers to school districts, and the program is designed to provide support to school districts, school administrators, and instructional personnel, it is possible that an elementary charter school could be identified as eligible for the program and eligible to receive assistance from the regional support team.

Currently, the RAISE program authorizes a tutoring program for students in grades K-3 at schools where 50% or more of the students are not on track to pass the 3rd grade assessment. The tutoring program is supposed to prepare 11th and 12th grade students to tutor students "during the school day on school district property in the presence and under the supervision of instructional personnel who are school district employees." The high school students can receive elective credit, and the volunteer hours can count towards Bright Futures.

The district will need to decide whether it wants to expand the RAISE tutoring program to include after-school hours and whether there are funds available for stipends.

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Approved by the Governor: April 2, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

STUDENT HEALTH

HB 865 Youth Athletic Activities

Revises requirements for athletic coaches to include certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first aid, & use of automatic external defibrillators.

- Requires each employed athletic coach in public schools to hold a valid temporary, professional, or specific athletic coaching certificate.
- Stipulates that all athletic coaches must hold and maintain certification in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), first aid, and the use of an automatic external defibrillator (AED), aligning with national evidence-based emergency cardiovascular care guidelines.
- Clarifies that the certification requirements do not apply to athletic coaches who volunteer their services without employment by any public school district.
- The law applies to all people employed as an athletic coach in any public school, including charter schools.

Beginning July 1, 2024, all public school coaches (whether they have a regular teaching certificate or an athletic coaching certificate) will be required to be certified in CPR, first aid, and the use of an AED. Certification in these areas must be "consistent with national evidence based emergency cardiovascular care guidelines." It is worth noting that section 1006.165, Florida Statutes, already requires every school to have at least one (1) AED on campus with someone trained in CPR and AED usage present at every athletic event.

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Approved by the Governor: March 22, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 883 Short-acting Bronchodilator Use in Public and Private Schools

Amends Florida Statutes to authorize public and private school students with asthma to carry and use short-acting bronchodilators and components, and allows schools to acquire, stock, and administer these medications under specific protocols.

- Defines terms such as "administer," "asthma," "authorized health care practitioner," "components," "respiratory distress," and "short-acting bronchodilator."
- Permits asthmatic students to carry a short-acting bronchodilator and components on their person with approval from a parent and physician.
- Allows authorized health care practitioners to prescribe short-acting bronchodilators and components in the name of public and private schools.
- Enables public and private schools to acquire and stock a supply of short-acting bronchodilators and components, maintaining them in a secure location.

- Requires schools to adopt a protocol for the administration of these medications by trained personnel.
- Stipulates that school personnel may administer short-acting bronchodilators and components to students experiencing respiratory distress, under certain conditions.
- Provides immunity from civil or criminal liability for school nurses or personnel who administer these medications in compliance with the act.
- Specifies that health care practitioners and pharmacists prescribing or dispensing these medications are also protected from liability.

The new provisions of the law authorize health care practitioners to prescribe short-acting bronchodilators in the name of a public school, and licensed pharmacists can dispense to the school pursuant to that prescription. Public schools can acquire and stock a supply of short-acting bronchodilators from wholesale distributors. Also, a school can choose to receive bronchodilators as a donation as long as they are new, unexpired, sealed, not subject to recall, unadulterated, and in compliance with relevant regulations. The school must then maintain the supply in a secure location on the school's premises.

If the school has obtained a supply, it must adopt a protocol developed by a medical or osteopathic doctor "for the administration of short-acting bronchodilators or components by school personnel who are trained to recognize symptoms of respiratory distress and to administer a short-acting bronchodilator or components." The protocol can include administering to both students known to have asthma and, if the district so chooses, to those with no known diagnosis.

With respect to training, a school nurse, or other trained school personnel, may only administer the bronchodilator if he or she has "successfully completed training and believe in good faith that the student is experiencing respiratory distress, regardless of whether the student has a prescription . . . or has previously been diagnosed with asthma."

Unlike the provision in the same subsection that addresses epinephrine use and administration in schools, but consistent with the recent expansion of parental rights, districts are required to notify parents about the school's adopted protocol and must receive prior permission before administering a bronchodilator or components to a student. Thus, prior parental permission is not required when a student is suffering a life-threatening allergic reaction and needs an epi-pen, but a student in respiratory distress cannot receive a bronchodilator from the school unless the parent consented beforehand. However, notwithstanding any other provision of law, a school nurse or other trained school employee who administers or attempts to administer a short-acting bronchodilator or components is immune from civil or criminal liability.

If the district does decide to participate, it will need to develop a protocol with the assistance of a doctor. How many bronchodilators are needed at each school, from where will they be purchased, will someone local donate them, etc.? More importantly, who is going to be trained to use the bronchodilators and have access to where they are securely stored at the school?

The district would need to amend its medical information and consent forms to include details about the program and then update the student information file to indicate whether a parent has provided consent to use of the school's bronchodilator during an emergency. This may be the most difficult part of implementation, as the nurse or other trained person at the school would need to be able to access the student's file to see if there is parental consent before administering a dose. If there is no consent on file, the person should call 911 instead, even though he or she would not be held personally liable for providing the student with a bronchodilator.

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Approved by the Governor: April 2, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

OTHER STUDENT-CENTERED LAWS

[HB 537](#) Student Achievement

Creates the Music-based Supplemental Content to Accelerate Learner Engagement and Success (mSCALES) Pilot Program within the Department of Education; providing the purpose of the pilot program; providing requirements for the pilot program; providing eligibility; etc.

- Stipulates the program's aim is to assist districts in using music-based materials to support STEM courses for middle school students.
- Requires these materials be used by math-certified teachers at least twice a week to enhance mathematics instruction.
- Mandates compliance with class size requirements and specifies eligibility for school districts in Alachua, Marion, and Miami-Dade Counties.
- Allows district school superintendents to apply for their district's participation, with funding contingent on legislative appropriation.
- Provides participating districts with \$6 per student, targeting middle schools in zones of elementary schools involved in the Early Childhood Music Education Incentive Program.
- Requires annual certification from districts to maintain eligibility, verifying compliance with material usage and class size.
- Charges the College of Education at the University of Florida with evaluating the program's effectiveness, sharing annual findings and preparing a comprehensive final report by October 1, 2026.

For the pilot period, Alachua, Marion, and Miami-Dade are eligible to participate, and the pilot period ends June 30, 2026. Participating districts will receive \$6.00 per student, and participating middle schools must be in the same attendance zones as any elementary schools that participated in the Early Childhood Music Education Incentive Program. Any materials purchased under the program must be used by certified mathematics teachers, and the materials must be used at least twice per week. Similar to the early childhood program in place over the last few years, the University of Florida will evaluate the pilot program's effectiveness.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: April 15, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 523 Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program

Establishes Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program within DOE; provides purpose of program, eligibility criteria, & Commissioner of Education, DOE, & school district duties & responsibilities.

- Recognizes students who demonstrate an exemplary level of proficiency in performing or visual arts.
- Requires students to earn a standard high school diploma and complete at least three year-long fine arts courses with a grade of "A" or higher, among other specified requirements.
- Defines "work of art" as a musical, theatrical composition, visual artwork, choreographed routine or performance.
- Authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt additional criteria for the awarding of the seal.
- Mandates the Commissioner of Education to provide seals and benchmarks for the program, and requires each school district to maintain records, provide information to the Commissioner, and affix the seal to diplomas and transcripts of eligible students.
- Prohibits charging a fee for the Seal of Fine Arts.
- Directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules for program administration, including a verification process for students' completion of requirements.
- Although the new law refers to school districts, charter school graduates should also be eligible for the Seal of Fine Arts.

The Commissioner will provide districts with the appropriate seal and benchmarks for districts to use to track students. School districts are required to maintain accurate records, inform the Commissioner of the number of students who have met the requirements, affix the appropriate insignia to the diploma, and indicate the award on the student's transcript.

Like other awards and honoraria, the district's student information system (e.g., Focus or Skyward) should be updated to track this information, much like it does for graduation requirements, Bright Futures eligibility, and other matters. Beyond that, school counselors, teachers from the relevant arts programs, and others will want to promote this new Seal of Fine Arts to interested students.

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Approved by the Governor: April 2, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

DEREGULATION

[SB 7002](#) Deregulation of Public Schools

Required a district school board to advertise its intent to adopt a tentative budget on a publicly available website if the district school board does not advertise such intent in a newspaper of general circulation; revising the general powers of district school superintendents to include establishing a process for the review and approval of certain policies and procedures through the delegated authority of district school boards; authorizing district school boards to adopt a policy relating to parental notification methods; revising the amount of funds school districts may expend from specified revenue and for certain purposes; authorizing district school boards to use advanced degrees in setting salary schedules for specified personnel, etc.

- Allows districts to publish their intent to adopt budget notice on a county public notice website, instead of just in the newspaper. More importantly, for this paragraph only, a "publicly accessible website" can include the district's own website if it meets the requirements of section 50.0311, Florida Statutes.
- Currently, districts must provide facilities and staff during emergencies. This bill changes that to say that districts must provide "access" to facilities, but not "staff." Districts must also do whatever they have agreed to do as part of the county's emergency management plan and program, which is where staffing considerations can be addressed.
- Signage on the back of buses regarding infraction detection systems no longer needs to be "high-visibility reflective." A new provision in this subsection allows districts to use the funds collected from bus infraction detection systems to recruit and retain bus drivers in addition to other allowed uses.
- The law on noticing school board meetings is amended to allow districts to use the county's public notice website or the district's own website to publish the notices.
- Currently, the law says superintendents recommend policy language to the school board for adoption. This bill says that superintendents will approve operational policies through the delegated authority of the school board. Superintendents will "establish a process for the review and approval of districtwide policies and procedures, through the formal delegated authority of the district school board."
- A parent can agree to receive written notice of placement in a dropout prevention by a method other than certified mail. A parent can agree to receive written notice of suspension by a method other than US mail. The bill repeals the requirement that the district give middle and high school students a two-page summary of the economic security report from DEO upon enrollment.
- Gives newly hired pre-K teachers 45 days to complete the three (3) emergent literacy training courses.
- Board policy may allow parents to agree to receive electronic notice or other alternative forms of notice, instead of certified mail, before placing a student in dropout prevention.
- Requires program participants to meet certification requirements "before participating in field experiences."
- Allows the Florida Institute for Charter School Innovation to develop a professional learning system.
- The annual guidance report sent to Commissioner is repealed.

- Board policy may allow parents to agree to alternative notification instead of US mail for suspension notices.
- Allows districts to submit financial reports only quarterly or less frequently, unless State Board of Education (SBE) rule identifies the district as having financial concerns, in which case it will still have to submit monthly.
- Exempts school districts from section 668.50(18)(b), F.S., which allows the Department of Management Services (DMS) to prescribe requirements for the creation and management of electronic records. This allows districts to follow the Uniform Electronic Transaction Act without having to follow DMS rules.
- Districts could already publish a summary of their tentative budget on the district website. Now, they have the option to post it on the county's legal notices website instead. Also, districts will now submit one (1) copy of the final, adopted budget to the Department of Education (DOE), instead of two (2) copies.
- If the district is unable to purchase transportation equipment and supplies at or under the DOE price limits, the district can ask DOE for help and then purchase in excess of those limits if the DOE cannot help.
- Raises from \$175 to \$200 the amount per ufte from 1.5 capital millage funds that districts can use for driver's ed vehicles and payment of property and casualty insurance premiums.
- School board policy for mentors may include DOE guidelines, but no longer must be based upon those guidelines. The bill also reduces from twice per year to once per year the required submission to DOE of school email addresses for all instructional and administrative personnel. The submission is now only due on September 15th. Districts will no longer need to submit another report on February 15th.
- In addition to its duty to identify critical teacher shortage areas every year, now "The State Board of Education shall develop strategies to address critical teacher shortage areas."
- The current law says that districts cannot pay teachers hired after July 1, 2011, for advanced degrees unless the degree was in the area of certification, and the pay has to be in the form of a salary supplement. The new law eliminates the double negative and will say that districts can pay teachers for advanced degrees if the degree is in the area of certification. It also eliminates the reference to salary supplements. This may allow districts to pay all teachers a salary adjustment if they have advanced degrees in their certification areas and a salary supplement to any teacher who has an advanced degree outside their certification areas. This is new language setting forth various board duties that cannot be constrained by collective bargaining, such as incentives for highly effective teachers, student discipline, school safety, correspondence to parents and community, the school calendar, and a few more. This is new language requiring the SBE to require the union president to appear before it whenever the SBE requires a superintendent to appear before it for an update about the distribution of legislatively-appropriated teacher raises.
- Adds the SAT, ACT, and CLT to the list of tests someone can pass to show mastery of general knowledge (the law currently lists only GRE but uses "including but not limited to the GRE" language). A new paragraph (g) allows a certificate holder to place his or her certificate in inactive status. The SBE shall adopt rules for requirements to reactivate if inactive for more than one (1) year.
- Changes the reference from "temporarily certified" to "inexperienced," which means a teacher who has been teaching three (3) years or less. With this change, schools may not assign too many "inexperienced" teachers to a D or F school. However, given that temporary certifications used to be for three (3) years, not five (5), this does not really change anything other than prevent the new 5-year temporary certification period from creating an unintended problem. This new language clarifies that a district's ability to provide incentives without interference from collective bargaining includes incentives paid for with federal funds.

- Aligns teacher apprenticeship program requirements with other programs by setting the GPA at 2.5 instead of 3.0. It also says that a mentorship needs to be “at least” 2 years, and the bill reduces the required experience for a mentor from 7 years to 5.
- Simplifies the adjunct educator language.
- Adds the Florida Institute for Charter School Innovation to the list of those who can design a teacher preparation program for teachers to obtain additional endorsements.
- Requires the DOE to waive subject area examination fees and certification fees for ESE K-12 teachers looking to add Elementary K-6 and for Elementary K-6 teachers looking to add ESE K-12.
- By December 1, 2024, the Commissioner shall recommend to the Governor and Legislature policy and funding changes to enhance the development and retention of ESE teachers. The report should consider alternative certifications, financial incentives, ways to reach high school students to get them to consider ESE programs, FEFP funding, and innovative ideas for supporting ESE teachers in their work.
- Repeals the Dale Hickam Excellent Teaching Program, which has not been funded in over a decade.
- Repeals the Florida College System Institution Employment Equity Accountability Program.
- Adds the Florida Institute for Charter School Innovation to the list of entities that can develop a professional learning system.
- Adds ancillary and auxiliary facilities, instead of just schools, to the list of facilities that can be rented or leased. It also adds them to the list of facilities that can be part of a lease-purchase agreement.
- Removes the requirement that the school board must have a long-term lease of land for at least 40 years before it constructs any facility on the land. Now, the lease must be for at least as long as the life expectancy of the permanent facility constructed on the land.
- Removes the requirement that districts submit a plan, within the 5-year work plan, to Commissioner for approval for the use of existing portables and then submit an annual progress report on portable usage.
- Repeals the reduction of relocatable classrooms law.
- Removes school districts from the requirement to submit an educational plant survey every five (5) years. However, paragraph (1)(c) still says that the DOE shall review and validate school district surveys, but the DOE will no longer do an in-depth analysis of five (5) districts every year.
- Section 1013.35, F.S., and the requirement for adoption of an education facilities plan remains unchanged. Also, the Commissioner may still condition the receipt of fixed capital outlay funds from state trust funds upon the receipt of a survey that accurately projects facility needs.
- Creates more flexibility for districts to opt out of educational facility construction requirements, allowing districts to build a school that only has to meet the same requirements as charter schools. There are restrictions if there is a deficit of necessary shelter space within the district, but no one can require districts to build more shelter space than identified as needed in the statewide emergency shelter plan.
- Increases the day-labor contract limitation from \$280,000 to \$600,000.
- Removes the requirement that districts report on change orders as part of its facilities plan under section 1013.35, F.S.
- Extends the moratorium on cost-per-student station limitations for an additional two (2) years. Now, there will be no CPSS limits for new construction started on or before July 1, 2028, instead of 2026.
- Eliminates the requirement that a college include certain things in its annual evaluation of its president, which is then submitted to the DOE.

Most of these changes can be classified as operational. Some reporting requirements are eliminated or reduced, advertising meetings and budgets is made cheaper and easier, and some state oversight is reduced, particularly with respect to district control over its facilities.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)**Approved by the Governor:** May 9, 2024**Effective Date:** July 1, 2024**SB 7004** Education

Deleted a requirement that the State Board of Education establish the cost of certain tuition and fees; repealing a provision relating to single-gender programs; deleting a requirement that school districts provide certain virtual instruction options to students; deleting a requirement regarding assessment procedures for Department of Juvenile Justice education programs; providing requirements for students in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program who exhibit a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills and early mathematics skills, etc.

- Amends the State Board of Education's (SBE) authority over the Florida College System (FCS).
- Repeals some language relating to the SBE's responsibility over the FCS.
- Removes the requirement that a student, parent, and principal execute a performance contract in certain instances where a student participates in an ACCEL option. In all ACCEL cases, a performance contract will be at the discretion of the principal.
- Repeals the statutory authorization for single-gender programs, because they are already authorized by federal law.
- Eliminates the requirement that the Commissioner provide an annual report comparing technical charter centers and public technical centers.
- Currently, each school district is required to provide at least one (1) option for part-time and full-time virtual instruction. This bill removes that requirement. Districts still may create their own virtual instruction program or contract with FLVS, another approved virtual instruction provider, or another district, but they do not have to do so. This bill also strikes the requirement that a virtual instruction program provider be nonsectarian, and it authorizes districts to "provide each full-time student enrolled in [a] virtual program with the equipment and access necessary for participation in the program."
- Currently, the law requires school districts to run a summer VPK program. With this bill, districts will be allowed to satisfy the requirement by contracting with a private prekindergarten provider.
- Changes the Department of Education's (DOE) requirement to review every early learning coalition's (ELC) school readiness program plan from every two (2) years to every three (3) years.
- Changes the ELC's requirement to match section 8. ELC school readiness programs will be submitted every three (3) years instead of two (2).
- Currently, the law only allows 16- and 17-year-olds to seek a high school equivalency diploma (GED) in "extraordinary circumstances." Those extraordinary circumstances are established by school board rule or policy. With this bill, there will no longer be a need to demonstrate extraordinary circumstances. Anyone who has withdrawn from school may take the test after they turn 16.
- Removes the requirement that the DOE collect and report student achievement data for students enrolled in middle school career and professional academy or career-themed courses. This is already required in section 1003.491, Florida Statutes. See also SB 1688.
- Repeals the Commissioner's Fine Arts Report, which was based on annual reporting from schools about access to and participation in fine arts courses. The data is still collected and available elsewhere.
- Repeals the Competency-Based Education Pilot Program, which ended after the 2022-23 school year.
- Currently, the law requires each school district to hold an Art in the Capitol Competition for all public, private, and home school students in grades 6-8. This bill makes participation optional.
- Removes some duplicative testing requirements for certain students in DJJ programs now that all students engage in progress monitoring. The bill also removes the requirement that the SBE

adopt rules with a series of graduated sanctions against school districts for poor performance in DJJ programs.

- Eliminates annual reporting requirements for academically high performing school districts.
- Repeals the law requiring that automotive service technology programs be industry certified in accordance with SBE rules.
- Makes several amendments to the instructional materials requirements for school districts. First, the bill eliminates the requirement that school districts purchase instructional materials "for each student." They will now have some flexibility in determining what is adequate. Next, the bill modifies the requirement that superintendents notify the DOE by April 1 each year about what materials will be purchased and the plan for purchasing an adequate amount. Now, it will simply be an annual report (not necessarily April 1st) as to what materials will be requisitioned. The plan for how they will be used so that the DOE can assess whether an adequate amount have been purchased will no longer be required. For principals, the law currently says that they shall collect funds from a student or parent to replace instructional materials lost or damaged. This bill gives the principal some discretion by changing "shall" to "may."
- Amends the requirement that the superintendent certify to the DOE by March 31st each year that all instructional materials for core courses used by the district are aligned with state standards to just an annual reporting requirement (not necessarily March 31st).
- Currently, the DOE is required to advertise for four (4) weeks, starting no later than May 15th, that it will start receiving bids by June 15th for instructional materials adoption. This bill provides that, during the 2025-26 school year, DOE's bid adoption process must include at least six (6) months between the release of the bid specifications and the deadline for adoption of the bids. The initial list of state-adopted instructional materials must be published no later than December 1, 2025. Then, beginning with the 2026-27 school year, DOE's adoption timeline must continue to include at least six (6) months between the release of the bid specifications and the deadline for submitting bids, and the initial list of state-adopted materials must be published no later than July 31st "in the year preceding the adoption."
- Removes language related to the Board of Trustees of St. Petersburg College.
- Requires some changes to the district's student progression plan. First, the plan should account for students referred to the district from VPK after exhibiting a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills. Next, it directs districts to include retention requirements for grades K-2, which must include parental notification, an opportunity for parental input into any retention decision, and information about the importance of mastering early literacy and communication skills so that they can be on grade level by the end of third grade. Districts must allocate remedial and supplemental instruction resources to VPK students who have a substantial deficiency in early literacy or early mathematics skills, in addition to those in grades K-3 and K-4, respectively. Currently, the law provides that a student identified with a substantial reading or mathematics deficiency must have an individual education plan or an individualized progress monitoring plan, or both. Now, if the student has an individualized progress monitoring plan, it must be developed within 45 days after the results of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring. Adds VPK students to the law, with VPK students deemed to be exhibiting a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills based on the results of the midyear or final coordinated screening and progress monitoring. Also, the bill expands parental involvement beyond the initial notification and monthly progress reports currently required. "Upon the request of the parent, the teacher or school administrator shall meet to discuss the student's progress. The parent may request more frequent notification of the student's progress, more frequent interventions or supports, and earlier implementation of the additional interventions or supports described in the initial notification." The bill includes the same changes that were added for reading in (5). The bill includes the same parental involvement expansion as in (5) and (6). The bill differentiates students in the regular VPK

program and those in the summer VPK program. Regular VPK program students will still undergo coordinated screening and progress monitoring three (3) times per year. For students in the summer VPK program, it will be twice per year. The first administration must be within the first ten (10) instructional days, and the final administration must be within the last ten (10).

- Changes reference from No Child Left Behind Act (2001) to Every Student Succeeds Act (2015).
- The SBE will now be able to allow a school that has received a community school grant "additional time" with its district-managed turnaround plan for the implementation of a community school model.
- Changes reference from No Child Left Behind Act (2001) to Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). The bill also removes the requirement that the committee of practitioners created by this section submit an annual report to the Governor and Legislature.
- Removes language requiring the DOE to develop a feedback report for districts to complete annually to demonstrate whether adequate progress is being made toward implementing a system of school improvement. This information is now readily available from other sources. Next, the bill reduces some of the requirements for the Commissioner's annual report to the SBE and the Legislature about school improvement and accountability. The report will no longer need to include certain district intervention and support strategies.
- Removes some language about the SBE's oversight of FCS.
- Removes reference to repealed section 1002.311, F.S.
- Removes reference to the feedback report data removed from section 1008.345, F.S.

Having an adequate number of materials will no longer require having one for each student. Districts will be able to make a localized determination based on the materials and student needs. Second, although removing the specific due dates for some reports does not do much, some of the annual reporting about instructional materials may be simplified. Most importantly, the changes imposed on the DOE with its own adoption process should prove extremely beneficial to districts. For the last several years, districts have struggled with delays at the state level and numerous new laws regarding the adoption process, which has then made it difficult to purchase materials in time for the start of the school year. Having the list of state-approved materials by July 31st in the year preceding adoption will be exceptionally helpful.

The bill requires school districts to add provisions to their student progression plans about retention in grades K-2. In other words, some districts may not want to wait for the mandatory third grade retention. Now that we have progress monitoring as early as VPK, deficiencies can be detected and addressed even earlier. On the other hand, districts that attempt to retain more students in kindergarten or 1st grade may find that they have several overage students in 3rd grade. Section 1008.25, F.S., provides a good cause exemption for promotion to 4th grade for students who already have been retained twice but prohibits repeating 3rd grade more than once. As a result, if a student is retained in kindergarten but still fails to score a level 2 in 3rd grade, he or she may need to be retained a second time, putting a lot of 11-year-olds in 3rd grade classrooms.

Several local decisions will need to be made, such as whether to continue operating a district virtual program, whether to implement some earlier retention policies, and whether to continue participating in the Art in the Capitol Competition.

Perhaps the most beneficial part of this bill will not be implemented immediately, but the textbook adoption process should become much less stressful beginning in the 2025-26 school year due to the earlier deadlines imposed on the DOE. Also, thanks to the new flexibility offered in section 1006.28, F.S., districts will want to assess their purchasing strategies to determine what will be an adequate number of instructional materials for upcoming adoption cycles.

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Approved by the Governor: May 9, 2024

Effective Date: Except as otherwise expressly provided in this act and except for this section, which shall take effect upon this act becoming a law, this act shall take effect July 1, 2024

SCHOOL SAFETY

HB 1473 School Safety

Revises provisions & establishes reporting requirements for school guardian programs & school guardians; revises school safety requirements for DOE, school districts, charter schools, & school safety specialists.

- Although a private school participating in the guardian program must pay for all of its costs related to background screening and training, the sheriff who provides the training and certification may waive those costs. The bill also provides that anyone who is certified by the Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission, and is otherwise qualified to be a guardian, is exempt from required guardian training. In addition, the 144-hour guardian training program must include 12 hours about responding to and de-escalating incidents on school premises. It no longer will include 12 hours of nationally recognized diversity training.

Finally, the bill requires that information about guardians be reported to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE). Within 30 days of issuing a guardian certificate to someone, the sheriff must report the name, date of birth, and certification date. Also, twice per year, each school district, charter school, and private school must report to FDLE the name, date of birth, and appointment date of each person appointed as a guardian, as well as the date of separation if a guardian leaves. An initial report from each district, charter school, and private school of all guardians currently appointed is due September 1, 2024.

FDLE will then maintain a list of all people appointed as guardians in the state. Sheriffs are required to report quarterly to FDLE the schedule for upcoming guardian trainings, which FDLE will publish on its website. Sheriffs who fail to report the required information cannot be paid for guardian trainings until the missing reports are filed. If a district, charter school, or private school fails to report, it cannot operate a guardian program for the following school year, unless it first submits the required information. FDLE will report any noncompliance to the Department of Education (DOE) on March 1st and October 1st each year.

- Prohibits the operation of drones over public and private schools, unless school personnel have granted written permission, or the drone is operated by law enforcement. Violations of this new provision can result in a second-degree misdemeanor up to a third degree felony.
- Requires school districts and charter school boards to ensure that instruction is given on FortifyFL within the first five (5) days of school each year. It must be age and developmentally appropriate and include the consequences of making a threat or false report.
- Currently, the law requires law enforcement to notify the superintendent when a student is arrested. Now, for students who are dual enrolled in a postsecondary institution, the law will require the superintendent to inform the institution within one (1) business day of receiving notification from law enforcement.
- Requires the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) to develop a "Florida school safety compliance inspection report to document compliance or noncompliance with school safety requirements mandated by law or rule and adherence to established school safety best practices to evaluate the safety, security, and emergency response of the school." Once it has been developed and adopted, a blank copy must be provided to each superintendent and charter school principal. OSS will also be required to conduct unannounced visits of every public school every three (3) years. Within three (3) days of the unannounced inspection, OSS must provide a copy of the inspection report, including any photographic or other evidence of noncompliance, to the school safety specialist, principal or charter school administrator, and the superintendent. The school safety specialist (or charter school administrator) must acknowledge receipt of the report within one (1) day and provide notice to OSS within three (3) days of how the noncompliance with § 1006.07(6)(f) has been remediated. OSS must reinspect a school with documented deficiencies within six (6) months.

OSS will also be required to provide quarterly reports to each superintendent and school safety specialist, disclosing the number and percentage of schools within the district, including charter schools, that were inspected or reinspected and the number and percentage of inspected schools that had no deficiencies. The school safety specialist must then present each quarterly report to the school board at a public meeting, and, during the first quarter of every school year, the safety specialist will provide the board with an annual report about the number of schools inspected the prior year and the number of those schools found to be in compliance.

For those schools found to be in compliance during the unannounced inspection, OSS will award a \$1,000 bonus to the principal of the school. When OSS uncovers noncompliance, it will report any instructional or administrative personnel to the district for disciplinary action for any knowing violation of section 1006.07(6)(f), F.S. The district or charter school must notify OSS of the outcome of the disciplinary proceedings within three (3) days of their conclusion. Finally, OSS must notify all administrative and instructional personnel every year about the requirements of section 1006.07(6)(f), F.S., and it has until December 1, 2024, to “evaluate the methodology for the safe schools allocation in s. 1011.62(12) and, if necessary, make recommendations for an alternate methodology to distribute the remaining balance of the safe schools allocation as indicated in” that subsection.

- It requires schools, including charter schools, to maintain an accessible record of all current school year and prior school year drills conducted. The record must contain the names of the law enforcement personnel present on campus for any active assailant emergency drills.

Next, this bill amends the subsection on safety and security best practices. Currently, school safety specialists are required to review the district’s policies and procedures for compliance with the law and applicable rules, including compliance with SESIR reporting requirements. Now, this will become an annual duty, and it is to be performed with the superintendent. In addition, the school safety specialist (or designee) will be required to make quarterly reports to the superintendent and the school board of any noncompliance by the district with school safety laws or rules. Similar to the new OSS duties, the school safety specialist must also make unannounced visits to all public schools in the district, including charter schools. The inspection must be done using the form that OSS will be adopting for compliance visits. Any violations discovered of paragraph (6)(f) must be reported to the superintendent or charter school principal.

There is a new paragraph 1006.07(6)(f), which imposes several new school safety requirements beginning August 1, 2024:

- All gates or other access points that restrict ingress to or egress from a school campus shall remain closed and locked when students are on campus, unless:
 - It is attended or actively staffed when students are on campus;
 - The use of the campus is in accordance with a shared use agreement pursuant to section 1013.101, F.S.; or
 - The school safety specialist, or designee, has documented in FSSAT that the gate or access point does not need to be locked or staffed because of other safety measures in place at the school. OSS may conduct a compliance visit to review whether this was appropriate.
- All classrooms and other instructional spaces must be locked or actively staffed when occupied by students, except between class periods.
- All campus access doors, gates, and other access points that allow ingress to or egress from a school building shall remain closed and locked, unless the school safety specialist, or designee, documents in FSSAT that the door, gate, or access point can remain open or unlocked based on other safety measures at the school. All campus access doors, gates, etc., can be electronically or manually controlled.
- All classrooms and instructional spaces must have the safest areas for students to shelter in place clearly and conspicuously marked. Students must be told of these safe areas

within the first ten (10) days of school. If it is not feasible to clearly and conspicuously mark the safe spaces, the school safety specialist, or designee, must document this in FSSAT. OSS shall then assist the school safety specialist with compliance during its unannounced inspection.

- o Anyone aware of any violation of paragraph (6)(f) must report it to the principal, who must then report it to the school safety specialist by the next business day. If the violator is the principal, the report should go to the superintendent or charter school governing board.

Finally, each school board and charter school governing board is required to adopt a progressive discipline policy to address any knowing violation of school safety requirements by instructional or administrative personnel.

- It provides that an agreement between a district and a law enforcement agency for school resource officers must identify what entity is responsible for maintaining training records.

Next, with the new requirements for FDLE to maintain lists of who has been certified to be a guardian and who has been appointed a guardian at every school, the district or charter school must first contact FDLE and review the information it has about an individual before he or she can be appointed as a guardian.

Also, DOE must notify FDLE whenever it receives notice from a district or charter school that a safe schools officer has been dismissed or disciplined for misconduct or has discharged his or her firearm in the exercise of the safe-school officer's duties, unless it was for training.

Finally, this bill removed the requirement that safe-school officers who are not law enforcement officers must undergo training on responding to and de-escalating incidents on school premises, because this has now been added to the guardian training requirements in section 30.15, F.S.

- This provision creates a grant program for private schools. It requires FDLE to provide grants to sheriffs' offices and law enforcement agencies to conduct site security assessments for, and provide private schools with recommendations on, improving school infrastructure and safety.

Most of the emphasis has been on the issue of locked doors and gates, because schools historically have been built to be open and welcoming. Also, there is a school safety provision in this year's budget conforming bill, HB 5101 (see below), which requires each district "to establish a threat management coordinator to serve as the primary point of contact regarding the district's coordination, communication, and implementation of the threat management program and to report quantitative data to the Office of Safe Schools in accordance with guidance from the office."

Superintendents are going to need to conduct a deep review of the uses of each school in the district outside of normal school hours and then determine whether it is feasible for these activities to continue in light of this new law. What sort of school-sponsored after-school activities are there, such as clubs, athletics, tutoring, band, drama, etc.? Do other organizations use the campus after school or on the weekend, and is it possible that students will be present during those uses? For example, do the Cub Scouts use some classrooms for den meetings every week? Is the middle school auditorium rented by a church on Sundays? This review may result in difficult decisions that may upset students, families, and the community, so it would be best to make sure that these conversations happen soon and very publicly. It was hoped that the amendments to Rule 6A-1.0018, which were already in the works at the time of the first draft of this legislative summary, would provide some clarity on issues such as the definition of a school campus (e.g., external parking lots vs. interior spaces or exclusive zones vs. non-exclusive zones) and student (e.g., is a child always a student when present on a school campus, or is the child not a student when present for a non-school-related activity, such as attending a church service on Sunday?).

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: May 6, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 1509 Pub. Rec./School Guardians

Provides exemption from public records requirements for information relating to school guardians held by FDLE, law enforcement agency, school district, or charter school.

- Prohibits the disclosure of information that identifies whether a person has been certified as a school guardian by the Department of Law Enforcement, law enforcement agencies, school districts, or charter schools.
- Establishes a sunset review date of October 2, 2029, for the exemption, requiring legislative review and reenactment to continue its effect.
- Asserts the necessity of the exemption to protect the safety of school guardians and the students they serve, arguing that disclosure could compromise security and the guardians' effectiveness in emergency situations.

Currently, the law already exempts from public records disclosure any information that would identify who has been appointed as a safe-school officer. With the changes in HB 1473 and the maintenance of a list of everyone who has been certified by a sheriff to serve as a school guardian, this bill provides that any information held by the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE), a law enforcement agency, a school district, or a charter school which might identify whether someone has been certified to serve as a school guardian is exempt from public records disclosure. Some people may have completed the training and received certification from a sheriff to serve as a guardian but do not currently serve in that capacity. This provision will expire on October 2, 2029, unless it is reenacted by the Legislature.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: May 6, 2024

Effective Date: July 2, 2024 (same date that HB 1473 takes effect)

MULTIPLE-SUBJECT (TRAIN BILLS)

[HB 1285](#) Education

Revises provisions relating to K-12 education, postsecondary education, & Education Practices Commission; establishes Purple Star School District Program; creates AA specialized transfer degrees; requires SBE to adopt rules for issuance of classical education teaching certificate.

- It adds a new subsection (5) re: property tax exemptions for property being used to house a charter school. There is no need to file an annual exemption application. Instead, charters must notify the property appraiser promptly when the property is no longer being used for a charter school.
- New section created for "Ocean Economy Development." Office of Ocean Economy created at FAU.
- 1001.61 Section 112.313, Florida Statutes, (Ethics) applies to members of college boards of trustees.
- 1001.71 Section 112.313, F.S., applies to university boards of trustees' members.
- Charters using the classical school model can give enrollment preference to students transferring from another classical school in the state.

Charters already can target for enrollment those students who live in a specific development that provided land or facilities for the charter school. Now, they can also target students whose parent or guardian works in the development.

New subparagraph allows charters to target a student whose parent "is employed within a reasonable distance of the charter school, as described in paragraph (20)(c)." Students eligible under this new subparagraph are subject to random lottery. (20)(c) is the transportation paragraph, which says that the charter and sponsor shall cooperate to make sure that transportation is not a barrier for students residing "within a reasonable distance of the charter school as determined in its charter."

- Private schools can use facilities owned by a library, museum, theater, church, college, etc., without the need for rezoning or special exception. The same applies if they purchase such a facility from one of those entities.

- Students in virtual programs must take state assessments. Districts have to allow students at approved virtual schools to use district facilities to take assessments. The new language says it is the virtual provider's responsibility to provide a list of students to the district, including their ID number, grade, and needed assessments. Districts and virtual providers can agree to testing elsewhere, but the default is testing at the zoned school. The district must give students access and tell them when and where to be.
- Creates the Purple Star School District Program. If 75% or more of the schools in a district are Purple Star Campuses and the district has a website with resources and info for military families, the district can be a Purple Star School District. The Department of Education (DOE) may adopt additional criteria.
- Every district and charter school must give 11th and 12th graders an opportunity to take the ASVAB during normal school hours. It also says they should allow the students to consult with a military recruiter "if the student selects."
- Current law says districts may assign students to a program for disruptive students. New language says districts can assign to a disciplinary program or an alternative school setting or other program pursuant to section 1006.13, F.S. (zero tolerance statute). Also adds language saying that a student's disability cannot be the sole reason for reassigning the student. (2)(a) – "Such programs shall utilize instructional teaching methods and student services that lead to improved student behavior as appropriate to the specific needs of the student." (2)(c) – New paragraph. When a student is enrolled in a dropout prevention program, an academic intervention plan has to be developed with goals and progress monitoring procedures. If applicable, it must also be consistent with a student's IEP. (4) – Adds that teachers in the program must be certified. (5) – The law currently requires notice to a parent by certified mail. With this bill, similar to SB 7002, boards can adopt policies to allow parents to agree to alternative notification methods.
- Postsecondary institutions cannot prohibit applicants or current students from being employed (unless they are employed by a foreign country of concern).
- Residents of a county who are not the parent of a student "with access to school district materials" can only object to one (1) book per month. The State Board of Education (SBE) can adopt rules for this new provision. (Need to see if the SBE does adopt a rule and, if so, how does it define a parent of a student with access to school district materials.). Also, this section of the law adds that districts must discontinue the use of a book throughout the district if the school board does not allow a parent the right to read passages because of sub-subparagraph b.(l) (pornographic)
- Publishers of instructional materials must make sample student editions of instructional materials on the Commissioner's list of state-adopted materials electronically available below cost for use by educator prep programs and institutes so that educators can practice teaching with currently adopted materials. These programs and institutes must protect against unauthorized use of the materials.
- AA specialized transfer degree must include 36 hours of general education and require at least 60 hours of college credit. Specialized transfer degrees are for students who need supplemental lower-level coursework to prepare for transfer to another institution. The SBE will adopt criteria for review and approval. Lots of parameters, timelines, review and notice procedures, etc. established.
- Districts "must make reasonable efforts to enter into dual enrollment articulation agreements with a Florida College System institution that offers online dual enrollment courses."
- New language about using the charter school option for turnaround. If this option is selected, the district will continue to operate the school for another year. It has to enter into an agreement with the charter school by October 1st and give the charter an opportunity to evaluate the program and personnel to help prepare for assumption of full control of the

school and facility by July 1st of the following year. The district cannot reduce or remove resources during this time.

The charter school must provide enrollment “preference” to students currently attending the school and those zoned to attend it. The district and charter must consult every three (3) years to see if attendance zones need to be adjusted. The charter school has to keep the current grades served by the school, but it can also elect to serve additional grades.

Districts cannot charge rent for the facility. The charter and district must agree to reasonable maintenance provisions to maintain the facility “in a manner similar to all other school facilities in the school district.” Finally, the district may not withhold any administrative fees for services provided under section 1002.33(20)(a), F.S.

If the school gets a C during the evaluation year before the charter takes over, the school must still go to the charter. It does not exit turnaround status.

The DOE needs to adopt a standard charter school turnaround contract, standard facility lease, and a mutual management agreement.

- Beginning with the 2024-25 school year, any changes to the school grading model or scale adopted by the SBE cannot go into effect until the following school year.
- Residency status for tuition. Two (2) forms of proof are required unless you have a homestead exemption in Florida, in which case you only need that.
- Student fees. New subsection (22) – Miami Dade College, Polk State College, and Tallahassee State College can charge up to \$290 per credit hour for nonresident tuition and fees for distance learning.
- Prepaid College Program. The bill strikes some language about the base rate for the tuition differential fee. It also extends language in (10)(b)-(f) to contracts entered through July 1, 2034, instead of July 1, 2024.
- The SBE shall adopt rules for issuing a classical education teaching certificate. Such a certificate would only be valid at a classical school.
- The Commissioner now has the authority to appoint and remove the executive director, rather than a ¾ vote of the Commission.
- Repealed. Florida College System Institution Employment Equity Accountability Program. (Also repealed in SB 7002).
- 1001.64 Removes reference to repealed section 1012.86, F.S.
- Removes requirement to submit annual employment accountability plan pursuant to repealed 1012.86, F.S.
- DOE to give \$50 bonus to IB teachers for each student who receives a C or higher on a Theory of Knowledge subject examination. The bonuses will be prorated if not enough funds are available to give \$50 per student. \$250,000 in nonrecurring funds appropriated.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: April 16, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 1361 Education

Providing for the award of grants to school districts to implement artificial intelligence in support of students and teachers; providing requirements for the use of such artificial intelligence; eligible expenses for students who have an account; etc.

- Because AI can be used to assist student learning and reduce teacher workload, school districts “may receive grant funds for subscription fees and professional learning to support and accelerate learning for students in grades 6 through 12 during the school day.” Any AI model selected with grant funds must:
 - Use large language models based on GPT-4 or its equivalent.
 - Be on a closed system.
 - Provide professional learning to teachers.
 - Provide one-on-one tutoring aligned to BEST standards.

- Provide standards-aligned lesson plans and insights on student progress.
- Provide district and school-level reporting and parental access to AI interactions.
- New Worlds Scholarship Accounts. First, these scholarships will now be available to VPK students, as well as grades K-5. Consistent with the changes in SB 7004 (above), the standard for VPK students will be exhibiting a “substantial deficiency in early literacy skills,” as opposed to demonstrating a “substantial reading deficiency” or the characteristics of dyslexia in grades K-5. Similarly, the standard for mathematics in VPK is a “substantial deficiency in early mathematics skills,” as opposed to a substantial deficiency in mathematics or exhibiting the characteristics of dyscalculia in grades K-5.

With the expansion into VPK, districts and private VPK providers must notify parents of eligible students about the scholarships when they provide progress monitoring results. Finally, the bill expands the list of those who can provide tutoring services to include those with a micro-credential and certain prekindergarten instructors.

- New Worlds Reading Initiative. The Lastinger Center for Learning is formally designated as the program administrator. Micro-credentials under the program are now called New Worlds micro-credentials. Also, the Department of Education (DOE) is required to provide Lastinger with progress monitoring data for all eligible PreK-12 students within 30 days after the end of each progress monitoring period. Lastinger also has some additional elements to include in its annual report to the DOE.

Finally, the law currently provides that students are eligible for free books from the Initiative if they scored below a Level 3 on the “preceding year’s” ELA assessment. Now, they will be eligible if they scored below a Level 3 on the “most recent” assessment. Thus, school districts should be notifying parents about the Initiative after each round of progress monitoring if a student does not get at least a Level 3.

- Law codifies the Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida. Lastinger shall:
 - Develop and administer programs to improve student achievement outcomes in early learning, literacy, and mathematics.
 - Provide professional learning for educators, including the development of micro-credentials.
 - Provide technical assistance and support to school districts.
 - Conduct and publish research on teaching and learning.

This new section of law takes effect but then is also repealed on July 1, 2024.

- Law also codifies the Lastinger Center. However, this section does not include repeal language. In addition to the same duties established in section 6 of the bill, the Lastinger Center is also tasked with administering the New Worlds Tutoring Program and collaborating with districts on the implementation of the Digital Learning Now Act (section 1002.321, Florida Statutes). Finally, \$2 million in recurring funds are awarded to the Lastinger Center for the grants awarded in this bill.
- Student Progression. A few statutory references are changed, and a couple of changes are made to reflect the expansion into VPK.
- New Worlds Tutoring Program. This program, which is administered by the Lastinger Center, and is not the same as the New Worlds Scholarship Program (also used for tutoring), is now codified in law to improve student achievement in reading and mathematics. The program should provide best practice guidelines in the science of reading and mathematics tutoring. There also needs to be minimum standards established for district eligibility to participate in the program, including the size of the tutoring sessions, frequency of the sessions, staffing qualifications, use of assessments, and prioritization strategies. The program must also include access to tutoring software during the school day for students in grades K-5 with a substantial deficiency, and awards grants to districts to pay stipends for tutoring (during, before, or after school, as well as during a summer program). Finally, the program must include technical assistance and professional learning opportunities for districts.

The Lastinger Center must submit an annual report to the Senate President, Speaker of the House, and Commissioner of Education summarizing “school district use of program funds and student academic outcomes as a result of the additional literacy or mathematics support provided under this section.”

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Approved by the Governor: May 9, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 5101 Education

Providing for the initial open enrollment period for specified employees; providing requirements for the minimum participation period for specified institutions; requiring charter schools to report full-time equivalent student membership rather than student enrollments for funding purposes; providing that funding for students enrolled in charter schools sponsored by state universities or Florida College System institutions is provided in the Florida Education Finance Program and General Appropriations Act; etc.

- The bill codifies what the State Board of Education (SBE) has already established in its rules by requiring each school district to establish a threat management coordinator to serve as the point of contact for coordination, communication, and implementation of the threat management program and report data to the Office of Safe Schools (OSS).
- Currently, VPK students who exhibit a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills must be referred to the school district. With this bill, any VPK students who score below the 10th percentile in their final assessment/monitoring must be referred to the district to receive early literacy instructional supports through a summer bridge program during the summer before entering kindergarten. The Department of Education (DOE) will adopt requirements for these programs, but they must have at least four (4) hours of instruction daily and a minimum of 100 hours total.
- This bill eliminates the requirement that applicants for a temporary apprenticeship certificate first pass the subject area content requirements or demonstrate master of subject area knowledge, because it somewhat defeated the purpose to ask potential apprentices with only 60 hours of college credit to pass a subject-area test before they have completed their schooling.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: June 12, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

SCHOOL CHOICE

HB 1403 School Choice

Revises contributions & provisions for Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program; revises provisions for Family Empowerment Scholarship Program, Hope Scholarship Program, virtual instruction program providers, private school requirements, & students in personalized education programs.

- Amends section 212.1832 of law concerning credit for contributions to eligible nonprofit scholarship-funding organizations (SFO). The changes detail eligible contribution requirements, as well as dealer, designated agent, or private tag agent requirements.
- The bill adds military families who move into the state and Hope Scholarship recipients. The bill adds a definition for “transition services,” and it includes private prekindergarten programs as eligible for voucher funds.

The bill adds a provision that voucher funding will terminate if a student remains unenrolled in an eligible private school for 30 days while receiving a voucher that requires full-time enrollment. Currently, the law provides that students who are enrolled in a public school are ineligible for program funds. This bill adds that they are ineligible if they are enrolled full time in a public school,

which includes the Florida Virtual School, the Florida Scholars Academy, and the Florida School for Competitive Academics, not just district and charter schools. However, public school students receiving a New Worlds Scholarship under section 1002.411, Florida Statutes, may still receive a scholarship for transportation to another public school than the one to which the student is zoned.

The bill revises some of the DOE's obligations concerning reporting and compliance. Also, it adds several items to the list of things the DOE must receive in quarterly reports from the SFO's. These new items are:

- o The number of applications received;
- o The number of applications processed within 30 days;
- o The number of incomplete applications received;
- o Data related to reimbursement decisions, such as the average number of days to review and approve a request for reimbursement; and, Parent input and feedback that the SFO has collected.

The bill adds a requirement that private schools confirm a student's admission to the school and that they provide the SFO with "any other information required" by the SFO to process payments. Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, new voucher recipients (both FES-EO and FES-UA) need to notify the SFO by December 15th whether the voucher is being accepted or declined. Also, beginning the same year, parents have to inform the SFO by May 31st if they wish to renew the voucher or decline renewal. Also, a parent cannot apply for multiple vouchers under FES and the Florida Tax Credit (FTC) Scholarship Program.

The bill adds several new requirements for SFO's, including the creation of a renewal process beginning in 2025-26 that will have a renewal window from February 1st to April 30th, with parents then being able to confirm renewal by May 31st. There must also be a new application process to allow parents to request a voucher from February 1st until November 15th, with parents then confirming acceptance by December 15th. For FES-UA vouchers, funding priority goes first to renewing students and then first-come, first-served to new, eligible students.

With respect to reimbursements and eligible purchases, the SFO's need to develop a purchasing handbook. Also, SFO's must submit, "in a timely manner," the verified list of eligible voucher students and any other information requested by DOE. Finally, the bill modifies the administrative fees for SFO's and requires SFO's to establish a process to receive feedback from parents, private schools, and providers before implementing any substantial changes to the reimbursement process.

Scholarship Funding and Payment. SFO's will be required to verify a student's eligibility to continue receiving vouchers at least 30 days prior to releasing tuition payments. Also, the DOE is required to release funds to the SFO's for renewing students by August 1st, November 1st, February 1st, and April 1st. The same dates apply for new voucher recipients, except the first deadline for the release of funds is September 1st. SFO's cannot submit a new voucher student for funding after February 1st. Also, within 30 days of receiving the release of state funds from the DOE, SFO's must indicate how much was distributed so that the DOE can adjust future payments if it sent more funds than were distributed. Finally, the cap for FES-UA vouchers for 2024-25 is 72,615, and the cap will now start increasing by five (5) percent of the state's ESE enrollment. Once the number of FES-UA recipients reaches 95% of available vouchers, the annual increase will be one (1) percent.

- For the most part, the changes to the FTC Program are identical to the changes outlined above for FES.
The bill more clearly spells out the SFO's obligation to develop a purchasing handbook that includes policies for the authorized use of program funds for both FTC awards and FES awards. The handbook must include a regularly updated list of prohibited items and services, as well as those that require pre-authorization or additional documentation. SFO's must also work with the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities as it develops purchasing guidelines under section 1004.6495, F.S. (see below).
- The bill repeals most of this section. With universal vouchers, there is no longer a need to separately fund hope scholarships. However, school districts must still offer enrollment in another district school with capacity and notify parents about their eligibility to apply for an FES or FTC voucher, if there is an allegation of bullying or one of the other listed offenses.
- Currently, the law requires student presence on campus five (5) days a week to satisfy the "regular and direct contact" requirement. The bill amends "regular and direct contact" for students enrolled in a Personalized Education Program (PEP) to include physical presence on campus at least two (2) days per week with a student learning plan in place to address the remaining instructional time.
- This bill strikes the requirement that a virtual instruction program be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices and operations.
- Adds PEP to the list of education programs for which students need not meet the middle school civics requirement if the student transfers into public school after the second term of grade 8.
- Adds PEP to the list of education programs for which a student must still pass the Algebra I EOC, if the student later transfers into a public school.
- 1003.485 Amends statutory cross-reference.
- The bill requires that the Center develop purchasing guidelines for the authorized use of scholarship funds by July 1, 2024, and then make annual revisions. Effective upon becoming law.

For school districts, the only people directly affected are those in student services or whichever department currently oversees compliance with the Hope Scholarship Program. Presumably, the DOE will amend Rule 6A-6.0951 and change the required notification form, but the process will remain largely the same. The difference now will be that parents are notified about their right to apply for a universal voucher rather than the specific Hope Scholarship.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: May 9, 2024

Effective Date: May 9, 2024 (section 11) / July 1, 2024 (sections 1-10)

TRANSPORTATION

[SB 994](#) Student Transportation Safety

Revising requirements for signage posted on the rear of a school bus indicating the use of a school bus infraction detection system; requiring a law enforcement agency to send a notice of violation to the registered owner involved in a violation within a specified timeframe after receiving certain information; prohibiting the use of school bus infraction detection systems for remote surveillance; requiring that certain civil penalties be remitted to a participating school district operating a school bus with a school bus infraction detection system to be used for certain purposes, etc.

- Allows school districts to contract with private vendors for the installation, operation, and maintenance of school bus infraction detection systems, with specifications to prevent profit per violation.

- Revises signage requirements on school buses to indicate the presence of infraction detection systems and specifies the content of such signage.
- Mandates law enforcement agencies to send a notice of violation to registered owners of vehicles that violate school bus safety laws within 30 days, detailing the violation and penalties.
- Requires courts to determine the occurrence of a violation and to uphold it if found, potentially imposing penalties and costs on violators.
- Directs that collected civil penalties be used by the school district for school bus infraction detection systems, driver stipends, or safety enhancements, excluding remote surveillance uses.
- Outlines that video and images from detection systems can only be used for traffic enforcement or determining liability for captured incidents, with quarterly reporting requirements on the system's impact.
- Adjusts penalties for violations detected by school bus infraction detection systems, specifying a \$25 addition to be used by the school district for transportation safety.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: May 16, 2024

Effective Date: May 16, 2024

ACCESS TO CAMPUS

HB 931 School Chaplains

Authorizes school districts & charter schools to adopt policy to allow volunteer school chaplains; requires district school boards & charter school governing boards to assign specified duties to such volunteer school chaplains; requires volunteer school chaplains to meet certain background screening requirements; requires school districts and charter schools to publish specified information under certain circumstances.

- Allows school districts or charter schools to create policies for volunteer school chaplains to offer support, services, and programs to students.
- Mandates that school policies detail the types of support provided by chaplains and require parental notification and consent for student participation.
- Requires chaplains to be selected by parents from a list that discloses any religious affiliations.
- Stipulates that volunteer school chaplains must comply with background screening requirements specified in s. 1012.465.
- Obligates any school district or charter school with a volunteer chaplain policy to publish a list of chaplains, including their religious affiliations, on their website.
- Amends section 1012.465 to include volunteer school chaplains in the background screening requirements for noninstructional school district employees and contractors.

If a district does decide to proceed with a school chaplain program, it should carefully consider multiple issues:

- In addition to the level 2 background check, are there other minimum qualifications the district will demand, such as a background in counseling?
- Will the district broadly or narrowly define the supports, services, and programs available under the program? Supporters of the legislation point out the shortage of school counselors and the growing need for mental health services for children, but how will the district both identify areas in need of additional services while simultaneously making sure that those approved to provide them are actually qualified to do so?
- Will the district require volunteer school chaplains to undergo any training?
- Who will develop and pay for any training the district may require of school chaplains?
- Will the district seek to actively recruit chaplains, especially from less-represented religions and denominations?
- What procedures and protections need to be in place to avoid allegations of discriminating against or promoting particular religions?

- Where and when will students be able to meet with school chaplains? Will this be at school, during the school day, in a school office, etc.?
- Who will be responsible for coordinating schedules, making sure that students will have privacy while still under supervision, and communicating with parents after the student starts meeting with a chaplain?
- What will be the process if a parent has a complaint about a chaplain?
- What will be the process of and standards for revoking someone's ability to serve as a school chaplain?
- Who will pay for the background checks?
- Who is responsible for verifying any additional information the district may require before allowing someone to serve as a school chaplain?
- What happens when one school has 10 chaplains, but another does not have any?
- What will be included in the parent permission form?
- What if two parents disagree?
- How does a parent revoke consent or request a change of chaplains?
- How will the parent be kept informed about the meetings with the chaplain, and who will be responsible for keeping the parent informed?

It is also worth remembering that there is nothing to prevent local clergy and other religious leaders from volunteering or mentoring in school now. The issue is whether there will be an organized program with school counseling and other services handled by school chaplains, which would give districts both more ownership and liability for anything that happens.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: April 18, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 1317 Patriotic Organizations

Authorizing school districts to allow representatives of patriotic organizations to speak to students, distribute certain materials, and provide opportunities for certain displays relating to the patriotic organizations; requiring certain school districts to provide a date and time for such patriotic organizations to speak with students, distribute materials, and provide certain displays; authorizing patriotic organizations to be provided certain access to school buildings and properties under certain circumstances, etc.

- Defines a "patriotic organization" as a youth membership organization listed in specific sections of Title 36, U.S.C., with an educational purpose promoting patriotism and civic involvement.
- Authorizes school districts to allow patriotic organizations to speak with students, distribute materials, and provide recruitment displays during school hours.
- Requires districts that permit such activities to provide a specific date and time after reasonable notice from the patriotic organization.
- Mandates that districts notify parents or guardians about presentations by patriotic organizations and the option to withhold consent for their child's participation.
- Prohibits discrimination against these organizations in using school buildings or property for activities outside school hours.
- Specifies that school districts are not required to provide equal access to non-patriotic organizations.

This bill creates section 1001.433, Florida Statutes, and addresses access to schools by certain patriotic organizations. These are youth membership organizations serving "people under the age of 21 with an educational purpose that promotes patriotism and civic involvement." The bill lists 9 sections from the U.S. Code which then identify certain organizations, which are:

1. Big Brothers, Big Sisters
2. Boy Scouts of America
3. Boys and Girls Club

- 4. Civil Air Patrol
- 5. Future Farmers of America
- 6. Girl Scouts
- 7. Little League Baseball
- 8. Marine Corps League
- 9. Naval Sea Cadet Corps

The bill provides that districts “may” allow representatives from these organizations the opportunity to speak with students and distribute materials “in a classroom setting” during school hours and instructional time. Districts may also allow these organizations to put up displays and informational flyers for recruitment.

If a district decides to allow for this, it must provide the organization with a specific date and time to speak to students at schools, and it must notify parents or guardians about each organization's expected presentation and give those parents/guardians the right “to withhold consent for their child participating in such presentation.”

Even if the district decides not to allow these activities during the school day, the law provides that districts cannot discriminate against these nine (9) organizations using the school building or property for recruitment activities outside of the school day.

Finally, any decision to allow these nine (9) organizations access to campus and students does not require districts to allow other organizations the same kind of access. The law is limited to the nine (9) referenced patriotic organizations.

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Approved by the Governor: April 18, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

FACILITIES & CONTRACTING

[HB 149](#) Continuing Contracts

Revises maximum estimated construction cost of construction projects for which governmental entity may enter into continuing contract to \$7.5 million; requires DMS to annually adjust maximum amount allowed under specified contracts using specified index & publish adjusted amount on DMS's website.

- Requires the Department of Management Services to annually adjust this maximum cost using the June-to-June Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers by the Bureau of Labor Statistics starting July 1, 2025, and publish the new maximum amount on its website.
- Updates the definition of a "continuing contract" to reflect the increased maximum dollar value and includes the requirement for annual adjustments of this maximum amount based on the specified index, with details to be made available on the department's website.
- Affirms that firms providing services under continuing contracts are not obligated to bid against each other.

School boards may need to amend their construction policies to account for the new maximum project cost authorizing the use of continuing contracts, such as NEOLA Policy 6330 or NEFEC Policy 7.141.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: May 28, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

[HB 781](#) Unsolicited Proposals for Public-private Partnerships

Authorizes, rather than requires, responsible public entity to publish notice of unsolicited proposal for qualifying project in specified manner & that other proposals for same project will be accepted; authorizes responsible public entity to proceed with unsolicited proposal for qualifying project without public bidding process if responsible public entity holds public meeting that meets certain requirements & holds a subsequent public meeting at which responsible public entity makes certain determination; requires responsible public entity to consider certain factors; requires responsible public entity to publish certain report in Florida Administrative Register for certain period in certain circumstances; revises

certain determinations that responsible public entity must make before approving comprehensive agreement.

- Authorizes public entities to publish notices for unsolicited proposals at their discretion, detailing the acceptance of other proposals for the project and setting a proposal acceptance timeframe between 21 to 120 days.
- Allows public entities to bypass the public bidding process if they conduct a public meeting to present the proposal, allow public comment, and subsequently hold a second meeting to determine the project's public interest.
- Requires consideration of benefits to the public, financial structure, proposer's qualifications, project compatibility with regional plans, and public comments before deciding on proceeding without a public bidding process.
- Mandates publication of a report in the Florida Administrative Register for at least 7 days, including the public interest determination and supporting factors, if proceeding without public bidding.
- Stipulates that before approving a comprehensive agreement, the public entity must ensure the project is in the public's interest, outlines ownership conditions, identifies safeguards against additional costs or service disruptions, and ensures capacity addition provisions.

Under the current law, if a school district receives an unsolicited public-private partnership proposal, the district must publish notice in the newspaper that it received the proposal and advise that it will accept other proposals for the same project. Now, the law will remove the mandatory notice requirement and instead say that districts "may" publish a notice in the newspaper (or county public notice website, if there is one) and solicit other proposals.

More importantly, the law will now authorize districts to proceed with an unsolicited proposal without first engaging in a public bidding process, as long as the school board instead holds a "public meeting at which the proposal is presented and affected public entities and members of the public are able to provide comment and at a second duly noticed public meeting determines that the proposal is in the public's interest." For a project to be in the public's interest, the board must consider:

- The benefits to the public;
- The financial structure of and the economic efficiencies achieved by the proposal;
- The qualifications and experience of the proposing entity, including their ability to perform;
- The project's compatibility with regional infrastructure plans; and,
- Public comments received at the meeting.

If the decision is made to proceed without a public bidding process, the district must publish a notice for at least seven (7) days that includes the public interest finding, the factors considered in making that finding, and the district's findings based on each of the five (5) factors outlined above. For example, if ownership of the property will not be conveyed to the district within ten (10) years after operations begin, what are the public benefits apart from ownership?

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: April 15, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 705 Public Works Projects

Revising the definition of the term "public works project"; revising applicability of a provision that prohibits the state or a political subdivision that contracts for a public works project from taking certain actions under specified circumstances, etc.

- Revises the definition of a "public works project" to include activities funded by local or state appropriations that encompass construction, maintenance, or improvement of various facilities or infrastructures partly or wholly owned by political subdivisions.
- Excludes from the definition services or work incidental to the public works project, such as security, janitorial, landscaping, and transportation services, as well as activities not requiring a construction contracting license or the supply of construction materials.

- Prohibits the state or any political subdivision contracting for public works from restricting certified, licensed, or registered contractors or suppliers from participating in the bidding process based on the geographic location of the company or the residences of its employees, with an exception for counties or municipalities as sole funders of a project.

If there is a district that has local requirements, for projects that do not involve the expenditure of state funds, regarding residency of the company or its employees, minimum wages paid, minimum employee benefits offered, and other things forbidden by section 255.0992, F.S., then the facilities department will need to change its bidding requirements.

If a district prevents companies from bidding based on the forbidden subjects in section 255.0992, those local policies or practices will need to be eliminated.

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Approved by the Governor: May 28, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 7063 Anti-Human Trafficking

Enhances anti-human trafficking measures by updating regulations across multiple sectors.

- Extends the repeal date for the direct-support organization supporting the Statewide Council on Human Trafficking to October 1, 2029.
- Updates the hotline telephone number across various sections for human trafficking awareness signs.
- Removes obsolete provisions and emphasizes the updated hotline number for reporting suspicions of human trafficking.
- Adjusts rules concerning the employment of minors by vendors licensed under the Beverage Law.
- Nongovernmental entities contracting with governmental bodies must attest to not using coerced labor.
- Prohibits the employment of individuals under 21 years old in adult entertainment establishments, outlining criminal penalties for violations and ID verification requirements.
- Specifies that ignorance or misrepresentation of age cannot be used as a defense in prosecutions related to employing individuals younger than 21 in such establishments.

It includes one provision that applies to all governmental entities, including school districts. It adds to the human trafficking criminal statute – section 787.06, Florida Statutes – a new subsection (13):

(13) When a contract is executed, renewed, or extended between a nongovernmental entity and a governmental entity, the nongovernmental entity must provide the governmental entity with an affidavit signed by an officer or a representative of the nongovernmental entity under penalty of perjury attesting that the nongovernmental entity does not use coercion for labor or services as defined in this section. For purposes of this subsection, the term "governmental entity" has the same meaning as in s. 287.138(1).

Section 287.138, F.S., prohibits governmental entities from entering into contracts with companies owned or controlled by a foreign country of concern. It also requires, beginning July 1, 2025, an affidavit from the company that it is not owned or controlled by a foreign country of concern. It defines a governmental entity as "any state, county, district, authority, or municipal officer, department, division, board, bureau, commission, or other separate unit of government created or established by law."

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: May 13, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HUMAN RESOURCES

SB 958 Local Government Employees

Revises the compensation calculation for county tax collectors and school superintendents, defines "tax collector employee," and enhances adoption benefits for certain state employees.

- Authorizes tax collector employees to receive monetary benefits for adopting children from the child welfare system.
- Tax collector employees eligible for a \$10,000 or \$25,000 benefit depending on the child's placement difficulty.
- Requires tax collector employees to apply to the Department of Children and Families for adoption benefits.
- Allows tax collectors to budget for and pay hiring or retention bonuses to employees, with Department of Revenue approval.
- Revises the calculation method for the base salary of county tax collectors and district school superintendents.
- Permits district school boards to contract with county tax collectors for administering road tests on school grounds.

The primary impact here is the increase of the base salary for elected superintendents. If this increase were in place during the current fiscal year, the overall increase to an elected superintendent's salary would be \$26,703.

The new salaries for 2024-25 will be published in mid to late September before the start of the fiscal year for counties. The salaries for superintendents will be retroactive to July 1, 2024. Ultimately, it is a complicated formula based on economic data, some of which has not yet been compiled for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: April 15, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 151 Florida Retirement System

Allows certain retirees to be reemployed after terminating employment, with restrictions on receiving both salary and retirement benefits.

- Authorizes retirees to be employed by non-participating employers without affecting their retirement benefits.
- Prohibits certain reemployed retirees from receiving both a salary and retirement benefits from a participating employer for 6 or 12 months after retirement, depending on their retirement date.
- Removes provisions for reemployment of retired law enforcement officers as school resource officers.
- Mandates employers to pay retirement contributions for reemployed retirees.
- Starting July 1, 2024, imposes a 6-month prohibition on receiving both a salary and retirement benefits for reemployed retirees.
- Establishes that the reemployment limitations apply to all reemployment capacities.
- Prohibits new participation in the Florida Retirement System Preservation of Benefits Plan from July 1, 2026.
- Adjusts employer contribution rates to the Florida Retirement System.
- Conforms a cross-reference in relation to the payment of benefits under the Florida Retirement System Investment Plan.
- Declares the act serves an important state interest by providing fair and adequate benefits in a sound manner.

This bill primarily affects employees in the FRS pension plan and those who have retired within six (months) of or after July 1, 2024. However, district payroll departments will need to make the necessary employer contribution adjustments.

Also, district HR departments will want to make sure that recent retirees are aware of the opportunity to return to employment after six (6) months without jeopardizing or delaying their retirement benefits. It may also be wise to confirm with FRS that those who retired before July 1, 2024, are eligible to return after six (6) months.

Ordinarily, bringing back a teacher or other employee mid-year may not have been the best plan,

but the persistent instructional vacancies experienced in most districts makes it a better option than nothing. Districts should still seek to avoid holding open a recent retiree's specific or preferred position with the promise of rehiring the retiree into his or her former job, as this may jeopardize the retiree's retirement benefits by calling into question whether they truly retired.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: April 15, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

SB 832 Employment of Individuals with Disabilities

The act mandates enhancements in the Employment First Act focused on improving employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities through better interagency collaboration and accountability.

- Requires the collection and sharing of data among agencies to support collaborative efforts under the Employment First Act.
- Identifies necessary accountability measures for sustaining the agreement, which include increasing competitive integrated employment, decreasing subminimum wage employment, and reducing the number of individuals in nonintegrated employment settings.
- Mandates the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help to issue an annual statewide report by December 1 each year, detailing the implementation of the act and progress on accountability measures.

[Final Legislative Analysis](#)

Approved by the Governor: April 5, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING / TEACHER PREPARATION

HB 1291 Educator Preparation Programs

Prohibits courses & curriculum of teacher preparation programs, postsecondary educator preparation institutes, professional learning certification programs, & school leader preparation programs from distorting certain events & including certain curriculum & instruction; & requires teacher preparation programs, postsecondary educator preparation institutes, professional learning certification programs, & school leader preparation programs to afford candidates certain opportunities.

- Requires teacher preparation programs to avoid teaching identity politics or content that violates s. 1000.05.
- Mandates that these programs provide opportunities for candidates to critically think, master content, learn instructional strategies, and demonstrate competence.
- Applies these prohibitions and requirements across various educational training settings, including professional learning certification programs and school leader preparation programs.
- Enforces that postsecondary educator preparation institutes also adhere to these standards, ensuring instruction does not distort historical truths or include prohibited curriculum.
- Stipulates that professional learning certification and school leader preparation programs must allow candidates to exhibit content mastery, encompassing instructional leadership strategies and school safety.

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Approved by the Governor: May 2, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

COMMUNITY

SB 328 Affordable Housing

Modifies affordable housing provisions, prohibiting counties and municipalities from restricting floor area ratio and requiring administrative approval under certain conditions.

- Authorizes multifamily and mixed-use residential uses in commercial, industrial, or mixed-use areas, setting specific affordable housing unit percentages and usage requirements.
- Prohibits counties and municipalities from limiting density, floor area ratio, and height of specific developments, with exceptions under certain proximity to military installations and single-family residential areas.
- Mandates that developments complying with local regulations and falling within specified zones receive administrative approval, with provisions for reducing parking requirements based on location relative to major transportation hubs.
- Specifies that developments within transit-oriented areas must be mixed-use residential and meet other local regulations except for use, height, density, floor area ratio, and parking standards.
- Allows for bonuses in density, height, or floor area ratio if specified conditions are met, ensuring these bonuses are administratively approved.
- Affirms that developments authorized under certain conditions will remain conforming uses even after the expiration of these subsections or the development's affordability period, with provisions for noncompliance.
- Introduces revised application procedures for proposed developments that had previously submitted applications under older provisions.

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Approved by the Governor: May 16, 2024

Effective Date: May 16, 2024

HB 7019 Exemption of Homesteads

Adjusts the value of a certain homestead exemption annually for inflation and mandates legislative appropriations to offset ad valorem revenue loss in fiscally constrained counties.

- Mandates annual adjustment of the \$25,000 additional homestead exemption based on the Consumer Price Index.
- Requires the Legislature to appropriate funds beginning in fiscal year 2025-2026 to compensate fiscally constrained counties for reductions in ad valorem tax revenue due to constitutional amendments.
- Stipulates that funds are distributed among affected counties based on their proportion of total revenue reduction.
- Obliges fiscally constrained counties to apply annually to the Department of Revenue, providing documentation of estimated revenue loss.
- Details the calculation for determining a county's ad valorem tax revenue reduction as 95% of the estimated reduction in taxable value multiplied by the applicable millage rate.
- Specifies that unclaimed funds revert to the original appropriation fund.
- Authorizes the Department of Revenue to adopt emergency rules to administer the act, effective for 6 months and renewable during the adoption of permanent rules.
- Applies the amendments and the creation of new statute sections to the 2025 tax roll.

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Approved by the Governor: June 21, 2024

Effective Date: on the effective date of the amendment to the State Constitution proposed by HJR 7017 or a similar joint resolution having substantially the same specific intent and purpose

HB 187 Antisemitism

Adopts the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism to assist in identifying and combating antisemitism and hate crimes against Jewish individuals in the state.

- Defines antisemitism as a perception of Jewish individuals which may be expressed as hatred, including rhetorical and physical manifestations targeting both Jewish and non-Jewish individuals and Jewish community institutions.
- Includes contemporary examples of antisemitism, such as justifying harm against Jewish people, promoting stereotypes, denying the Holocaust, accusing Jews of dual loyalty, and applying double standards to Israel.
- Clarifies that criticism of Israel similar to that of any other country does not constitute antisemitism.
- Ensures that the section does not infringe upon First Amendment rights or conflict with federal or state antidiscrimination laws.

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Approved by the Governor: May 24, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 49 Employment

Adjusts employment restrictions for minors in Florida, particularly those 16 and 17 years old, and revises meal break requirements.

- Allows minors 15 or younger to work with revised time and hour limitations both during school sessions and vacations.
- Permits minors aged 16 and 17 to work before 6:30 a.m. or after 11 p.m. on days preceding a school day, with certain restrictions on hours per week during school sessions that can be waived by a parent, custodian, or school superintendent.
- Specifies that minors 15 or younger may not work more than 6 consecutive days a week or for more than 4 hours continuously without a 30-minute meal break.
- Exempts certain minors from these restrictions, including those who have completed high school, are subject to hardship waivers, or are employed in domestic service, by parents, or as legislative pages.
- Authorizes the department to grant waivers to these restrictions and establishes penalties for employers who violate these provisions.

It makes some modifications to the laws limiting the hours a minor can work. For children under 15-years-old, the prohibitions remain essentially the same, even if there were some changes to the wording of the law. They cannot work before 7:00 am or after 7:00 pm when there is school the next day, nor can they work more than 15 hours in a week when school is in session. During holidays and summer vacation, they can still work up to eight (8) hours per day for up to 40 hours in a week, but they cannot work before 7:00 am or after 9:00 pm.

For 16- and 17-year-olds, some of the prohibitions remain largely the same, at least when school is in session, but there are few restrictions on employment when it is not. When school is in session, they are limited to 30 hours per week and no more than eight (8) hours per day, unless it is a holiday or a Sunday. Also, the law will now allow these minors to obtain a waiver of the 30-hour limitation when school is in session, which can come from either the parent or the superintendent (or designee). Superintendents already have the authority to waive the entire statute in certain situations, and that authority will remain.

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Approved by the Governor: March 22, 2024

Effective Date: July 1, 2024

HB 3 Online Protections for Minors

Mandates social media platforms to restrict minors' access and authorizes legal actions for non-compliance.

- Defines terms related to social media platforms, account holders, and age verification measures.
- Prohibits children under 14 from creating social media accounts and requires platforms to terminate accounts or provide termination options for these minors.
- Requires parental consent for minors aged 14 or 15 to create social media accounts, and outlines procedures for account termination in this age group.

- Defines "material harmful to minors" and mandates commercial entities to employ age verification for accessing such materials.
- Authorizes the Department of Legal Affairs to enforce compliance through civil penalties, investigative actions, and the imposition of fines for violations.
- Establishes provisions for private legal actions by minors or their guardians regarding unauthorized account creation or access to harmful materials.
- Exempts certain organizations from the age verification requirement, emphasizing the focus on protecting minors from specific online risks.

This bill addresses social media use by minors and age verification requirements for adult websites. After the Governor vetoed HB 1, which addressed the same topics, the Legislature passed HB 3 in its place, which the Governor then approved. There is nothing in this bill that directly relates to school districts, but it is likely to be a topic of conversation locally. First, the bill prohibits children 13 and under from having a social media account. For children who are 14 or 15, they must have parental permission to have an account.

Next, the bill requires websites that offer adult content to verify the age of anyone attempting to access the website's content.

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Approved by the Governor: March 25, 2024

Effective Date: January 1, 2025