



OVERVIEW

The Legislature held Week 9, the final week of Regular Legislative Session.

In Education the state budget allocates \$28.4 billion for PreK-12 schools, including a \$1.8 billion increase from the current year, with \$200 million earmarked for teacher salaries. That comes to \$8,959 per student, a \$240 increase on the current year. All three Broward County Public Schools appropriation passed in Budget Conference.

- Student Athlete Mentoring Pilot Expansion \$250,000
- SmartPass Pilot Project \$300,000
- Adults with Disabilities (recurring) \$800,000

Budget Proposals

	2023-2024	House (2/1/24)	Senate (2/7/24)	Governor
BSA	\$5,139.73	\$5,316.31		\$5,246
Broward FTE	\$8,638.20	\$8,892.56	\$8,854.18	--
State FTE	\$8,718.58	\$8,936.95	\$8,936.98	\$8,842

Senate and House Sessions

[SB 994 - Student Transportation Safety](#) General Bill by Burgess CS Sponsors: Transportation, Appropriations Committee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development.

HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 111 Yeas / 4 Nays); SENATE: Ordered enrolled, Enrolled Text (ER) **Filed**.

Enhances safety measures for student transportation by revising the function and use of school bus infraction detection systems.

- Authorizes school districts to contract with private vendors for the installation, operation, and maintenance of infraction detection systems, with a clear stipulation that financial remuneration is not based on the number of violations detected.
- Mandates updated signage on school buses to indicate the presence of camera enforcement systems.

- Requires law enforcement agencies to send a notice of violation within 30 days after identifying a vehicle that has failed to stop for a school bus, detailing the violation and options for the recipient.
- Stipulates that a court determines the occurrence of a violation, upholding it based on evidence and potentially imposing penalties and costs on the violator.
- Specifies that collected civil penalties are used by school districts not only for the technology but also for safety initiatives, driver stipends, or other enhancements related to student transportation safety.
- Prohibits the use of school bus infraction detection systems for any form of remote surveillance not related to traffic enforcement or determining liability for incidents.
- Requires quarterly reporting by school districts on the operation and outcomes of the infraction detection systems, including statistical data on violations and safety improvements.
- Alters the allocation of additional penalties for violations detected by these systems, directing funds to the operating school district for safety-related expenses.

Effective Date: Upon becoming a law.

HB 1473 - School Safety General Bill by Trabulsy CoSponsors: Daley, Dunkley, Garcia (A), Holcomb, Lopez (J), Massullo, MD, Valdes, Woodson CS Sponsors: Judiciary Committee, Education & Employment Committee

SENATE: **Withdrawn** from Fiscal Policy; Placed on Calendar, on 2nd Reading; **Substituted for SB 1356**; Read Second Time; Amendment Adopted (536102); Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 39 Yeas / 0 Nays); HOUSE: In returning messages.

Addresses school safety through various measures, revisions, and new provisions related to school guardian programs, school safety reporting, drone operation restrictions over schools, and requirements for emergency procedures and school safety instruction.

- Assigns private schools the responsibility for covering costs linked to school guardian programs, while allowing sheriffs to waive these costs.
- Allows certain individuals to be certified as school guardians without completing specific training requirements, adjusting training mandates.
- Requires schools and sheriffs to timely report information regarding school guardians and their programs to the Department of Law Enforcement, which will maintain a comprehensive list and report non-compliant entities.
- Establishes penalties for drone operation over public and private schools, including potential criminal charges for unauthorized video recording.
- Mandates district school boards and charter schools to provide instruction on the use of a mobile suspicious activity reporting tool to students each school year.
- Obligates superintendents to notify appropriate officials at postsecondary institutions of certain alleged acts by dual-enrolled students within a specific timeframe.
- Directs the Office of Safe Schools to develop and adhere to a school safety compliance inspection report, conduct unannounced inspections, and refer non-compliant personnel for disciplinary action.

- Stipulates that schools must keep records of emergency drills, including active assailant emergency drills, and comply with specified safety requirements such as locking classrooms and identifying safe areas.
- Requires district school boards and charter school governing boards to adopt a progressive discipline policy for personnel who knowingly violate school safety protocols.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

SB 832 - Employment of Individuals with Disabilities General Bill by Calatayud

HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 113 Yeas / 0 Nays); SENATE: Ordered enrolled; Enrolled Text (ER) **Filed.**

Requires agencies involved in the Employment First Act to enhance collaborative efforts by collecting and sharing data.

- Ensures that the interagency cooperative agreement identifies the roles, responsibilities, and objectives of state agencies and organizations, including data collection and sharing to support individuals with disabilities.
- Mandates the identification of accountability measures for the sustainability of the agreement, specifically focusing on increasing competitive integrated employment, decreasing subminimum wage employment, and reducing nonintegrated employment settings for individuals with disabilities.
- Directs the Office of Reimagining Education and Career Help to issue an annual statewide report by December 1 each year, detailing the act's implementation progress and the effectiveness of accountability measures.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 1688 - Career-themed Courses General Bill by Osgood CoSponsors: Book, Davis, Garcia (I), Hutson, Simon, Yarborough

HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 115 Yeas / 0 Nays); SENATE: Ordered enrolled; Enrolled Text (ER) **Filed.**

Enhances the Florida Career and Professional Education Act by revising strategic plan requirements, annual review data inclusion, and informational provisions to students and parents.

- Requires strategic plans to include strategies for informing and promoting career and technical education opportunities to students, parents, the community, and stakeholders.
- Mandates the Department of Education to collect student achievement and performance data in industry-certified career education programs and career-themed courses as part of the annual review.
- Obligates school districts to inform students and parents during middle school course selection of the career and professional academy or career-themed courses available within the district.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 544 - Swimming Lesson Voucher Program General Bill by Hutson CoSponsors: Berman, Book CS Sponsors: Health Policy

HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 114 Yeas / 0 Nays); SENATE: Ordered enrolled; Enrolled Text (ER) **Filed.**

Aims to increase water safety by offering vouchers for swimming lessons at no cost to eligible families.

- Requires the establishment of a Swimming Lesson Voucher Program within the Department of Health to offer swimming lesson vouchers to families earning no more than 200% of the federal poverty level with children aged 4 years or younger.
- Mandates the creation of a network of swimming lesson vendors across the state, allowing the department to contract with nonprofits for network establishment and management.
- Obligates public swimming lesson vendors to participate in the program upon request.
- Sets criteria for family eligibility based on child age, family income level, and residency.
- Conditions the issuance of vouchers on specific appropriations.
- Authorizes the department to seek additional public and private funding for the program.
- Directs the department to adopt implementing rules.
- Allocates \$500,000 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund for the fiscal year 2024-2025 to support the program.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

HB 1109 - Security for Jewish Day Schools and Preschools General Bill by Fine CoSponsors: Garcia (A), Holcomb, Leek, Lopez (J), Lopez (V), Maney, Overdorf, Roth, Trabulsy
SENATE: **Withdrawn** from Fiscal Policy; Placed on Calendar, on 2nd Reading; **Substituted for SB 1396**; Read Second Time; Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 39 Yeas / 0 Nays); HOUSE: Ordered enrolled; Enrolled Text (ER) **Filed**.

Establishes a program for providing funds to Jewish day schools and preschools in Florida for security enhancements.

- Directs the Department of Education to create a program for funding security measures at full-time Jewish day schools and preschools, contingent on appropriations.
- Specifies that funds may be used for the purchase and installation of security cameras, perimeter lighting, fencing, shatter-resistant glass, hiring security personnel, transportation for minimizing exposure, and other security services based on a risk assessment.
- Allows the State Board of Education to adopt rules for administering these provisions.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

HB 1285 – Education General Bill by Canady CoSponsors: Michael, Rizo, Skidmore CS Sponsors: Education & Employment Committee, Choice & Innovation Subcommittee
SENATE: **Withdrawn** from Fiscal Policy; Placed on Calendar, on 2nd Reading; **Substituted for SB 0996**; Read Second Time; Amendment Adopted (155292); Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 28 Yeas / 11 Nays); HOUSE: In returning messages.

Streamlines and amends various components of Florida's education system from K-12 through postsecondary levels, with focuses on charter schools, virtual education, military family support, disciplinary programs, employment for students, instructional materials, among other areas.

- Exempts properties used to house charter schools from annual exemption application while imposing notifications and penalties for status changes.

- Authorizes charter schools to prioritize enrollment for students transferring from classical schools and modifies definitions around charter school personnel.
- Establishes the Purple Star School District Program to support military students and families, setting criteria for program participation.
- Requires school districts and charter schools to offer the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery Test to certain students.
- Prohibits public postsecondary institutions from restricting student employment, with exceptions for foreign countries of concern.
- Allows for the assessment of a processing fee for material objections in school districts and mandates the discontinuation of certain instructional materials based on specific criteria.
- Initiates associate in arts specialized transfer degrees, detailing the approval process and requirements for such degrees.
- Revises requirements around student assignment to disciplinary programs and academic intervention plans.
- Implements stricter criteria for state universities regarding payments for tuition differential fees for prepaid college program beneficiaries.
- Directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules for issuing a classical education teaching certificate.
- Specifies that the Commissioner of Education may appoint an executive director for the Education Practices Commission.
- Repeals the Florida College System institution employment equity accountability program.
- Adjusts authorities and responsibilities of Florida College System institution presidents and boards concerning the president's evaluation and the college system's operation.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

[SB 564 - Young Adult Aftercare Services](#) General Bill by Garcia (I) CoSponsors: Book, Hooper, Rouson CS Sponsors: Fiscal Policy, Children, Families, and Elder Affairs HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 113 Yeas / 0 Nays); SENATE: Ordered enrolled; Enrolled Text (ER) **Filed**.

Expands aftercare services for young adults and allows for special federal funding distribution in emergencies.

- Revises eligibility for aftercare services to include young adults up to 23 years old not in foster care, temporarily not receiving financial aid for education, in emergency situations, or previously in out-of-home care for at least 6 months after turning 14 without reunification.
- Authorizes the Department of Children and Families to distribute federal funds to eligible young adults during state or national emergencies, regardless of standard eligibility criteria.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

[SB 396 - Holocaust Remembrance Day](#) General Bill by Berman CoSponsors: Book, Perry CS Sponsors: Education Pre-K – 12

SENATE: Read Second Time; Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 38 Yeas / 0 Nays); HOUSE: In Messages.

Requires the Governor to annually proclaim the first weekday in "Holocaust Education Week" as "Holocaust Remembrance Day."

- Authorizes public schools in the state to observe "Holocaust Remembrance Day."
- Permits public exercises at the State Capitol and elsewhere as designated by the Governor to honor Holocaust victims.
- Allows for the observance to be held on the following school day if the designated day is not a school day, subject to district school board jurisdiction.
- Authorizes instruction on the Holocaust's harmful impacts, anti-Semitism, and the positive contributions of the Jewish community within public school instruction on "Holocaust Remembrance Day."

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

HB 537 - Student Achievement General Bill by Valdes CoSponsors: Garcia (A), Lopez (J), Mooney, Jr., Plasencia, Williams CS Sponsors: Education & Employment Committee, Education Quality Subcommittee

SENATE: **Withdrawn** from Fiscal Policy; Placed on Calendar, on 2nd Reading; **Substituted for SB 0590**; Read Second Time; Amendment Adopted (319730); Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 39 Yeas / 0 Nays); HOUSE: In returning messages.

Introduces a program to integrate music-based learning in STEM education for middle school students and revises regulations related to high school diplomas and certificates of completion.

- Deletes provisions for awarding certificates of completion to certain students, aligning with new standards for graduation eligibility.
- Shares responsibilities and guidelines for students with disabilities, specifying transitions without explicitly mentioning the award of certificates of completion.
- Introduces the mSCALES Pilot Program to use music-based supplemental materials at least twice per week in middle school mathematics instruction, specifically in selected counties.
- Details participation criteria and funding for school districts in the pilot program, ensuring adherence to class size and instructional material usage criteria.
- Assigns the College of Education at the University of Florida the task of evaluating the pilot program's effectiveness, requiring annual reports and a final comprehensive report by October 1, 2026.
- Specifies the expiration of the pilot program section by June 30, 2026.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

HB 1291 - Educator Preparation Programs General Bill by Snyder, Jacques CoSponsors: Anderson, Chamberlin, Chaney, Redondo, Rizo, Roth, Tramont CS Sponsors: Education & Employment Committee

HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 81 Yeas / 31 Nays); SENATE: In Messages; Received; Referred to Rules.

Establishes guidelines for educator and leader preparation programs in Florida, focusing on historical accuracy, critical thinking, and competency in program content.

- Prohibits teacher preparation, postsecondary educator preparation institutes, professional learning certification programs, and school leader preparation programs from distorting significant historical events or including curriculum that teaches identity politics, or is based on theories of systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege as inherent in U.S. institutions.
- Requires these programs to provide candidates opportunities for critical thinking, achieving mastery of academic content, learning instructional strategies, and demonstrating competence.
- Mandates that school leader preparation programs also focus on mastery of program content, including instructional leadership strategies, coaching development, school safety, and continuous improvement efforts.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

SB 1264 - History of Communism General Bill by Collins CoSponsors: Avila, Harrell, Rodriguez CS Sponsors: Education Pre-K - 12, Appropriations Committee on Education HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 106 Yeas / 7 Nays). SENATE: Ordered enrolled. Mandates public schools in Florida to include instruction on the history of communism and establishes the Institute for Freedom in the Americas at Miami Dade College to promote democracy.

- Requires public school instruction to cover the history of communism, including its impact in the U.S., atrocities committed under communist regimes, comparative discussions on political ideologies, and the threat of communism through the 20th century.
- Authorizes the Department of Education to prepare standards for the instruction and consult victims of communism or relevant organizations for input.
- Establishes the Institute for Freedom in the Americas at Miami Dade College to preserve free society ideals and promote democracy, including partnerships and programs with the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom.
- Obligates Miami Dade College to approve a direct-support organization for the institute, with a board appointed by legislative leaders and the Governor.
- Amends the name and expands the goals of the Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom to include educational freedom and partnerships advancing human progress focused on Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Instructs the Department of State and the Department of Education to consult stakeholders for a recommendation on creating a museum of the history of communism by December 1, 2024.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 46 - Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program General Bill by Stewart HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 114 Yeas / 0 Nays); SENATE: Ordered enrolled; Enrolled Text (ER) **Filed**.

Expands the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program to allow tutoring to occur after school hours and permits stipends for tutors.

- Establishes a tutoring program as part of the Reading Achievement Initiative, focusing on developing effective reading tutoring practices for K-3 students, based on science and aligned with English Language Arts standards.
- Specifies eligibility criteria for high school students to become tutors, including a minimum GPA of 3.0 and no history of significant disciplinary issues.
- Requires school districts participating in the tutoring program to use established materials for recruiting, training, and deploying student tutors; tutoring must happen on district property under staff supervision.
- Allows tutoring to be part of a service-learning course, with students able to earn elective credits for graduation based on tutoring hours, which can also count towards community service requirements for graduation and scholarship programs.
- Authorizes participating school districts to provide a stipend to instructional personnel and student tutors for after-school tutoring sessions.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 7032 – Education General Bill by Education Postsecondary CS Sponsors: Appropriations HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 112 Yeas / 0 Nays); SENATE: In returning messages. Establishes the Graduation Alternative to Traditional Education (GATE) Program to provide alternative pathways for students who have withdrawn from high school before graduation.

- Requires institutions to waive 100% of registration, tuition, laboratory, and examination fees for GATE Program students.
- Limits eligibility to students aged 16 to 21 who have not earned a high school diploma or equivalency and are state residents.
- Obligates the Department of Education to disseminate information about the GATE Program, connect prospective students to institutions, and offer online career planning tools.
- Mandates the Department to report annually on the program's outcomes, including the number of students obtaining diplomas or certificates and the fees waived.
- Introduces the GATE Scholarship Program and GATE Startup Grant Program to support institutions financially and fund the implementation of the GATE Program.
- Subjects reimbursements from the GATE Scholarship Program to legislative appropriation and potential proration.
- Requires school counselors or personnel to inform eligible students about the GATE Program during exit interviews upon school withdrawal.
- Directs district school boards to notify candidates for high school equivalency diplomas about their education options, including the GATE Program.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 958 - Local Government Employees General Bill by Martin CoSponsors: Perry HOUSE: Read Third Time; **Passed** (Vote: 110 Yeas / 3 Nays); SENATE: Ordered enrolled. Revise the base salary calculation for both county tax collectors and district school superintendents.

- Define "tax collector employee" and make them eligible for specified monetary benefits for adopting children from the child welfare system.
- Allow tax collector employees to apply for adoption benefits under certain conditions, requiring applications to the Department of Children and Families.
- Authorize specific tax collectors to budget for and pay hiring or retention bonuses to employees, pending approval from the Department of Revenue.
- Permit district school boards to contract with a county tax collector's office for administering road tests on school grounds.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

Senate Sessions

Special order as determined by the Committee on Rules and Calendar:

SB 1356 - School Safety General Bill by Calatayud CS Sponsors: Criminal Justice
Read Second Time; **Substituted for HB 1473**; Laid on Table, Refer to HB 1473.

Enhances school safety by establishing training, certification, and reporting requirements for school guardians and prohibits the operation of drones over schools.

- Mandates sheriffs to establish guardian programs for schools opting in, with ability to train or contract another sheriff's office for training.
- Allows charter schools and private schools in districts without a guardian program to contract with sheriffs for such training. Private schools bear all costs unless waived by the sheriff.
- Defines "employer" as the entity employing a school guardian, requiring reporting of guardian information to the Department of Law Enforcement, which will maintain and share a list of certified guardians.
- Introduces stricter drone operation restrictions over schools, imposing penalties for unauthorized overflight and video recording.
- Requires schools to include instruction on using the mobile suspicious activity reporting tool within the first five days of each school year.
- Encourages the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Commission to research and recommend best practices for school safety.
- Involves superintendents or their designees in notifying law enforcement at postsecondary institutions about dual-enrolled students who commit severe offenses.
- Directs the Office of Safe Schools to develop a school safety compliance inspection report, conduct periodic inspections, and possibly take disciplinary action against personnel who violate safety requirements.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 558 - Homeless Service Professionals General Bill by Rouson
Temporarily Postponed on Second Reading; Retained on Special Order Calendar.

Amends the definition of "person with lived experience" to include those with current or past homelessness, including domestic violence survivors seeking homeless services.

- Defines "person with lived experience" as individuals with direct experience of homelessness per federal guidelines.
- Acknowledges the shortage in homeless service professionals and acknowledges the unique qualifications of persons with lived experience.
- Requires that to be certified, a person must have received homeless services, to be documented by a Continuum of Care lead agency during the background check.
- Mandates the Department of Children and Families to conduct background screenings for certification applicants.
- Specifies disqualifying offenses including various felonies, sexual offenses, abuse, neglect, fraud, and other criminal activities.
- Allows individuals disqualified due to their background screening to request an exemption from the department.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 472 - Suits Against the Government General Bill by Brodeur CoSponsors: Rouson CS Sponsors: Rules, Appropriations, Governmental Oversight and Accountability
Temporarily Postponed on Second Reading; Retained on Calendar.
Increases statutory limits on liability for tort claims against the state, its agencies, and subdivisions.

- Limits liability for individual claims to \$300,000 and total claims from the same incident to \$500,000.
- Authorizes state agencies and subdivisions to settle claims exceeding these amounts without further legislative action.
- Prohibits insurance policies from conditioning payment on the enactment of a claim bill and prevents lobbying against agreed settlements.
- Specifies that liability limits applicable on the date of the claim incident apply to the claim.
- Mandates the Department of Financial Services to adjust liability limits every 5 years based on the Consumer Price Index, not to exceed a 3% increase.
- Reduces the claim presentation period to 18 months and sets specific time frames for filing suit after claim denial or deemed denial.
- Revises the statute of limitations for filing civil actions related to negligence, contribution, medical malpractice, wrongful death, and other specified actions.
- Reenacts various sections of Florida Statutes to incorporate these amendments.

Effective Date: 10/1/2024.

SB 1396 - Security for Jewish Day Schools and Preschools General Bill by Gruters CoSponsors: Yarborough
Read Second Time; **Substituted for HB 1109**; Laid on Table, Refer to HB 1109.
Aims to establish a program providing funds for enhancing the security of full-time Jewish day schools and preschools in Florida.

- Mandates the Department of Education to create a program funded by the General Appropriations Act for security improvements at Jewish educational institutions.
- Specifies funds can be used for professional security hardening including the purchase and installation of security cameras, perimeter lighting, fencing, and shatter-resistant window glass.
- Allows for hiring or contracting state-licensed and insured security personnel.
- Covers expenses related to transportation to minimize security risks for staff, parents, and students.
- Permits investment in nonhardening security measures like professional detection, prevention, and security services.
- Authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt rules to administer the program.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

[SB 996 – Education](#) General Bill by Burgess CS Sponsors: Fiscal Policy, Appropriations Committee on Education, Education Pre-K – 12

Read Second Time; **[Substituted for HB 1285](#)**; Laid on Table, Refer to HB 1285.

Amends education-related laws, including property exemptions for charter schools, business restrictions for university and college board members, and enrollment preferences for charter schools.

- Eliminates the requirement for annual application for exemption on property used to house a charter school but mandates notification to the property appraiser in specific circumstances.
- Prohibits members of Florida College System institution or state university boards from having business affiliations with institutions under their purview.
- Students transferring from certain classical schools to charter classical schools may now receive enrollment preference.
- Enables private schools to utilize specific facilities without zoning or land use restrictions, under conditions ensuring compliance with health, safety, and welfare laws.
- Establishes the Purple Star School District Program with specific requirements for participating school districts.
- Requires school districts and charter schools to offer 11th and 12th-grade students opportunities to take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery and consult with a military recruiter.
- Revises requirements for dropout prevention and academic intervention programs, including the creation of an academic intervention plan for enrolled students.
- Prohibits public postsecondary institutions from implicitly or explicitly restricting student employment.
- Requires instructional materials publishers to make sample editions available electronically for certain educational programs at discounted prices.
- Creates associate in arts specialized transfer degrees with specific requirements and approval processes.
- Revises the Florida prepaid college program payment structure for qualified beneficiaries regarding tuition differential and other fees.

- Authorizes the issuance of a classical education teaching certificate for applicants meeting specified requirements.
- Allows the Commissioner of Education to appoint an executive director of the Education Practices Commission.
- Repeals the Florida College System institution employment equity accountability program.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 558 - Homeless Service Professionals General Bill by Rouson
Temporarily Postponed on Second Reading; Retained on Special Order Calendar.

Amends the definition of "person with lived experience" to include those with current or past homelessness, including domestic violence survivors seeking homeless services.

- Defines "person with lived experience" as individuals with direct experience of homelessness per federal guidelines.
- Acknowledges the shortage in homeless service professionals and acknowledges the unique qualifications of persons with lived experience.
- Requires that to be certified, a person must have received homeless services, to be documented by a Continuum of Care lead agency during the background check.
- Mandates the Department of Children and Families to conduct background screenings for certification applicants.
- Specifies disqualifying offenses including various felonies, sexual offenses, abuse, neglect, fraud, and other criminal activities.
- Allows individuals disqualified due to their background screening to request an exemption from the department.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 472 - Suits Against the Government General Bill by Brodeur CoSponsors: Rouson CS Sponsors: Rules, Appropriations, Governmental Oversight and Accountability
Temporarily Postponed on Second Reading; Retained on Calendar.

Increases statutory limits on liability for tort claims against the state, its agencies, and subdivisions.

- Limits liability for individual claims to \$300,000 and total claims from the same incident to \$500,000.
- Authorizes state agencies and subdivisions to settle claims exceeding these amounts without further legislative action.
- Prohibits insurance policies from conditioning payment on the enactment of a claim bill and prevents lobbying against agreed settlements.
- Specifies that liability limits applicable on the date of the claim incident apply to the claim.
- Mandates the Department of Financial Services to adjust liability limits every 5 years based on the Consumer Price Index, not to exceed a 3% increase.
- Reduces the claim presentation period to 18 months and sets specific time frames for filing suit after claim denial or deemed denial.

- Revises the statute of limitations for filing civil actions related to negligence, contribution, medical malpractice, wrongful death, and other specified actions.
- Reenacts various sections of Florida Statutes to incorporate these amendments.

Effective Date: 10/1/2024.

SB 590 - Music-based Supplemental Content to Accelerate Learner Engagement and Success Pilot Program

General Bill by Burgess CoSponsors: Perry

Read Second Time; **Substituted for HB 0537**; Laid on Table, Refer to HB 0537.

Creates a pilot program within the Department of Education to integrate music-based supplemental materials in middle school STEM education, specifically mathematics.

- Sets the goal of assisting districts in adopting music-based materials to support STEM courses.
- Requires the materials to be used at least twice per week by certified mathematics teachers.
- Limits class sizes for participating classes according to existing requirements.
- Initially targets school districts in Alachua, Marion, and Miami-Dade Counties with eligibility requirements.
- Provides \$6 per student funding to eligible middle schools in specific attendance zones.
- Mandates annual certification by participating school districts to maintain eligibility based on program requirements.
- Tasks the College of Education at the University of Florida with evaluating the program's effectiveness and reporting its findings annually to the Department and Legislature.
- Requires a comprehensive final report on the program's effectiveness to be submitted by October 1, 2026.
- Sets the program expiration date for June 30, 2026.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

SB 1044 - School Chaplains General Bill by Grall CS Sponsors: Education Pre-K – 12

Read Second Time; **Substituted for HB 0931**; Laid on Table, Refer to HB 0931.

Authorizes school districts and charter schools to adopt policies for volunteer school chaplains to provide various supports and programs to students, setting specific requirements for these policies and outlining background screening for the chaplains.

- Mandates the policy to outline the supports, services, or programs available, inform parents about them, and require written parental consent for student participation.
- Specifies that volunteer chaplains must comply with established background screening requirements.
- Requires the publication of a list of volunteer chaplains, including their religious affiliations if any, on the school district's website.
- Extends background screening requirements to include volunteer school chaplains, ensuring they meet the same criteria as other noninstructional school district employees or contractors with access to students.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

[HB 931 - School Chaplains](#) General Bill by McClain, Daniels CoSponsors: Anderson, Bankson, Black, Dunkley, Fine, Melo, Mooney, Jr., Rizo, Roth, Shoaf, Yeager

Withdrawn from Rules; Placed on Calendar, on 2nd Reading; **Substituted for SB 1044**; Read Second Time; Placed on Third Reading for 03/07/24.

A bill authorizes the adoption of policies for volunteer school chaplains in school districts and charter schools, setting specific requirements for such policies and the duties of the chaplains.

- 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.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

[HB 1317 - Patriotic Organizations](#) General Bill by Duggan CoSponsors: Fine, Holcomb, Leek, Lopez (J), Rizo CS Sponsors: Choice & Innovation Subcommittee

Read Second Time.

Allows school districts to offer representatives of defined patriotic organizations opportunities to interact with students, distribute materials, and set up displays to promote patriotism, civic involvement, and educational benefits.

- Defines "patriotic organization" as a youth organization listed in specific sections of Title 36, U.S.C., with an educational goal of fostering patriotism and civic participation.
- Grants school districts the option to let representative of patriotic organizations speak to students during school hours, distribute informational materials, and set up displays aimed at student recruitment.
- Mandates that if a district permits such activities, it must provide a specific day and time for the organization's representatives to engage with students, following reasonable notice from the organization.
- Permits patriotic organizations access to school buildings or properties for their activities, provided these occur outside of school hours.
- Specifies that districts allowing access to patriotic organizations are not obligated to grant the same access to non-patriotic organizations.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

[HB 7017 - Annual Adjustment to Homestead Exemption Value](#) Joint Resolution Bill by Ways & Means Committee, Buchanan CoSponsors: Garcia (A), Melo CS Sponsors: State Affairs Committee
Placed on Special Order Calendar, 03/06/24.

Proposes an amendment to adjust the value of certain homestead exemptions annually for inflation.

- Mandates yearly inflation adjustments starting January 1 for the \$25,000 exemption on assessed value over fifty thousand dollars, excluding school district levies.
- Specifies the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average, as the measure for calculating inflation adjustments if the percent change is positive.
- Applies the inflation adjustment mechanism to future homestead exemptions added to the constitution post-January 1, 2025.
- Limits one exemption per individual or family unit and dictates no exemption can exceed the value of the real estate assessable to the owner.
- Allows for legislative provision of ad valorem tax relief to renters who are permanent residents.
- Permits counties or municipalities to grant additional homestead tax exemptions for seniors based on age, residence duration, income, and property value, with adjustments for cost of living changes.
- Provides a discount on ad valorem taxes for disabled veterans aged 65 or older with combat-related disabilities, with provisions for surviving spouses.
- Offers ad valorem tax relief to surviving spouses of veterans or first responders who died in service and to permanently disabled first responders, excluding chronic conditions or diseases not directly caused by duty.
- Sets the effective date of these adjustments as January 1, 2025.

Effective Date: Not Specified.

[HB 7019 - Exemption of Homesteads](#) General Bill by Ways & Means Committee, Buchanan CoSponsors: Garcia (A), Melo CS Sponsors: State Affairs Committee
Placed on Special Order Calendar, 03/06/24.

Adjusts homestead exemption values annually for inflation and mandates legislative appropriations to offset ad valorem revenue losses in fiscally constrained counties due to constitutional revisions.

- Requires the \$25,000 additional homestead exemption value to be adjusted annually based on the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for inflation if the change is positive.
- Appropriates funds beginning in fiscal year 2025-2026 to compensate fiscally constrained counties for reductions in ad valorem tax revenue resulting from constitutional revisions approved in the November 2024 general election.
- Requires fiscally constrained counties to apply to the Department of Revenue by November 15 each year for appropriations, providing detailed documentation of estimated ad valorem tax revenue reductions.
- Specifies that the Department of Revenue may adopt emergency rules to administer the act and that such rules are effective for 6 months and may be renewed during the adoption of permanent rules.
- Stipulates that the provisions apply first to the 2025 tax roll and will take effect contingent on the approval of a related constitutional amendment.

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.

SB 7048 – Education General Bill by Education Pre-K – 12

Placed on Special Order Calendar, 03/06/24.

Expands and modifies various Florida educational scholarship programs, including the Family Empowerment Scholarship Program, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and the Hope Scholarship Program.

- Requires that equipment as instructional materials may only be purchased for specified academic subjects.
- Introduces transition services as a coordinated set of activities for students with disabilities.
- Authorizes funds for certain prekindergarten programs and prohibits some eligible students from enrolling in public schools while offering exemptions to receiving other educational scholarships.
- Adds criteria for the closure of scholarship accounts and revises what organizations must include in their quarterly reports.
- Deletes the requirement for certain students to be placed on a waitlist and revises documentation that private schools must provide.
- Prohibits parents from applying for multiple scholarships for a single student under specified programs at the same time.
- Requires organizations to establish processes for scholarships application and renewal.
- Revises provisions related to the administrative fee, increasing the number of scholarships, payment, and disbursement of funds.
- Authorizes a charitable organization to apply at any time to participate as a scholarship-funding organization.

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.

HB 1403 - School Choice General Bill by Tomkow CoSponsors: Bell, Daniels, Plasencia CS Sponsors: Education & Employment Committee, Choice & Innovation Subcommittee
Received; Referred to Appropriations.

Expands the scope and modifies requirements for school choice programs and private school participation in Florida.

- Allows active duty military children and students who received Hope Scholarships in the 2023-2024 school year to be eligible for Family Empowerment and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Programs.
- Mandates instructional materials for civic education courses be reviewed and approved by various organizations and the Commissioner of Education.
- Requires families applying for scholarships to confirm acceptance or declination by specific deadlines starting in the 2025-2026 school year.

- Requires eligible private schools to confirm a student's admission and provide fee schedules to successfully process scholarship payments.
- Clarifies "regular and direct contact with teachers" can be satisfied for personal education program students who physically attend at least two days per week.
- Specifies that reimbursements and scholarship payments for full-time enrollment be made within seven business days after parental and school approval.
- Imposes requirements for personalized education program students transferring from out-of-state or home education programs for high school credit acceptance.
- Deletes requirement that virtual instruction program providers be nonsectarian.
- Authorizes the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities to develop purchasing guidelines for authorized uses of scholarship funds under specific programs.

Effective Date: July 1, 2024.

[SB 1372 - Educator Preparation Programs](#) General Bill by Ingoglia CoSponsors: Perry, Yarborough CS Sponsors: Appropriations Committee on Education Placed on Special Order Calendar, 03/06/24.

Imposes restrictions on educator and school leader preparation programs to ensure historical events are not distorted and certain theories are not taught, while promoting critical thinking and mastery of program content.

- Prohibits courses within teacher, postsecondary educator, professional learning certification, and school leader preparation programs from distorting historical events or teaching curriculum that asserts systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege as inherent in US institutions.
- Requires these programs to offer opportunities for candidates to think critically, master academic content, learn instructional strategies, and demonstrate competence.
- Specifies that school leader preparation programs must also train candidates in instructional leadership strategies, coaching development, school safety, and continuous improvement efforts.

Effective Date: 7/1/2024.

House Session

Bills and Joint Resolutions on Third Reading:

[HB 735 - Government Accountability](#) General Bill by Andrade CS Sponsors: Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special Districts Subcommittee, State Affairs Committee Temporarily Postponed on Third Reading. Enhances government accountability and establishes lobbying registration requirements.

- Defines "foreign country of concern" and prohibits public officers, employees, and candidates from accepting anything of value from such countries.
- Requires individuals lobbying counties, municipalities, or special districts to register with the Commission on Ethics.

- Obliges the Commission on Ethics to maintain a public database of registered lobbyists and establishes penalties for non-compliance.
- Prevents the governing bodies of counties, municipalities, and special districts from renewing or extending contracts of certain officials close to general elections without unanimous agreement.
- Mandates that proposed amendments to municipal charters be placed on the ballot at the earliest possible election.
- Requires that findings from investigations into lobbyists or principals be reported to relevant local authorities, who may enforce recommendations.
- Allows pre-existing local lobbying registration programs to remain operative until January 1, 2025.

Effective Date: January 1, 2025.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Florida lawmakers pass bill requiring teaching of history of communism in public schools [The Daytona Beach News-Journal](#)

Florida Senate supports limiting book objections in school districts [Click Orlando](#)

Teachers union: 'Unprecedented' new education funding won't move state out of basement national rankings [Florida Politics](#)

Senate passes 1 per month limit on book challenges [Florida Politics](#)

Patriotic organization legislation headed back to House after Senate changes [Florida Politics](#)

Emotions fly in debate over Florida teacher preparation [Tampa Bay Times](#)

Please find below a summary of the Joint Committee & Subcommittee hearings this past week.

Budget Conference – At Large

Met on 3/4/24 at 5 PM

Budget Conference Chairs Leek and Broxson concluded their sixth and final meeting, on issues bumped on the Implementing Bill, Conforming Bills on Education and Health Care, Administered Funds, Retirement, and Supplemental Funding Initiatives.

Chair Leek presented the House's offers on the Implementing Bill (HB 5003), the Education Conforming Bill (HB 5101), Administered Funds, and the House Supplemental Funding Initiatives bump issues.

Vice Chair Broxson accepted the Houses bump offers on SAT/AEG Proviso, Back of Bill and Implementing; PECO Budget Proviso and Back of Bill, and HB 5005 - Collective Bargaining.

Vice Chair Broxson then presented the Senates offers on HB 151 - Retirement, the HHS Conforming Bill (SB 2518), and the Senate Supplemental Funding Initiatives bump issues.

Chair Leek accepted the Senates offers on HB 151, SB 2518 and the Senate Supplemental Funding Initiatives.

Chair Broxson accepted the Houses offers on Administrative Funds, HB 5003, HB 5101, and House Supplemental Funding Initiatives.

The Chairs concluded their business and the 2024 Budget Conference came to a close.

[Committee Video 3/4/24](#) / [HB 5101 Education - House Bump Offer 1](#)