

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2026 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Education Pre-K - 12

CS/CS/SB 182 — Education

by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education; Education Pre-K - 12 Committee; and Senators Jones, Yarborough, Osgood, Massullo, and Bracy Davis

The bill revises provisions relating to teacher mentoring, patriotic displays in public schools, cursive instruction, private school land use and facilities, the Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program, and charter school enrollment.

Teacher Mentoring

The bill establishes the School Teacher Training and Mentoring Program within the Department of Education (DOE), which authorizes school districts, charter schools, and charter management organizations to place retired or current classroom teachers in schools earning a grade of “D” or “F” to serve as teacher mentors supporting new or struggling classroom teachers. The bill also:

- Requires teacher mentors to have at least three years of teaching experience in prekindergarten through grade 12 and to have earned a highly effective rating on their most recent performance evaluation.
- Authorizes a stipend of up to \$3,000 for teacher mentors and requires each mentor-mentee relationship to last one grading period.
- Limits retired teacher mentors to no more than five mentees at a time and classroom teachers serving as mentors to no more than one mentee at a time.
- Requires the DOE to establish program standards and a standard contract outlining the responsibilities of mentors and mentees, and authorizes State Board of Education rulemaking.
- Specifies behaviors of teacher mentors adhering to principles of accuracy, fairness, and equal opportunity.
- Authorizes the use of Educational Enrichment Allocation funds under the Florida Education Finance Program, if available, to support the program.

Patriotic Displays at Public Schools

The bill adds a patriotic display in public schools. The bill requires, subject to appropriation, that portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln be displayed in a conspicuous place in each public school in the district. The DOE must select the portraits and make them available to each school district.

Instruction in Cursive

The bill adds to required instruction provisions related to cursive writing instruction. The bill:

- Requires public schools to provide specified cursive writing instruction for students in grades 3 through 5.
- Requires each student to demonstrate proficiency in cursive writing by the end of grade 5.
- Defines proficiency in cursive writing as the ability to write upper and lowercase letters in cursive, write words and sentences legibly with proper spacing and alignment, and

read and apply cursive writing to support literacy development, including writing essays and other assignments in cursive in accordance with state academic standards.

Private School Facilities and Land Use

The bill provides specified private schools flexibility in zoning, land use, and compliance with fire prevention codes. The bill:

- Provides that a private school enrolling 150 or fewer students, or located within the unincorporated area of a specified county, is exempt from rezoning, a special exception, or a land use change if located in a commercial or mixed-use zoning district.
- Preempts local mitigation requirements, conditions, performance standards, ordinances, rules, codes, or policies for such schools, except that a county or municipality may require mitigation measures necessary to address vehicular traffic and pedestrian safety that are reasonably and directly attributable to the operation of the private school.
- Authorizes a private school to submit a traffic study demonstrating that the school will not have a disproportionate traffic impact within the same zoning district.
- Authorizes a private school enrolling 150 or fewer students to operate in certain existing facilities and meet the Florida Fire Prevention Code for that occupancy classification. The school may satisfy the requirements of the Florida Fire Prevention Code through an alternative fire safety evaluation adopted by the State Fire Marshal.

Florida Tax Credit Scholarship

The bill clarifies that when a student's Florida Tax Credit Scholarship Program account is closed, any remaining funds revert to the scholarship funding organization rather than the state. Reverted funds must be separately accounted for and used to fund scholarships.

Charter School Academic Dismissal Restrictions

The bill revises charter school enrollment to prohibit a charter school implementing a school improvement plan or a corrective action plan from dismissing a student based on academic performance.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect on July 1, 2026.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 91-11