

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

**SB 124 — Florida Virtual School**

by Senator Rodriguez

The bill removes priority access to the Florida Virtual School (FLVS) for students who need expanded access to courses, are seeking accelerated access in order to earn a high school diploma one semester early or are children of an active-duty member of the United States Armed Forces, to reflect the FLVS's capacity to serve all students.

**FLVS Governance**

The bill authorizes the FLVS president and chief executive officer to request a meeting of the FLVS Board of Trustees (board), rather than limiting that authority to the board chair or board membership. The bill authorizes the board to enter into contracts with other public and private entities and government agencies, rather than limiting the board to franchise agreements with school districts. In addition, the bill aligns the definition of instructional and administrative personnel at the FLVS with current law for K-12 public school personnel and removes board authority to reject such personnel from employment for cause. Finally, the bill requires, rather than authorizes, FLVS employees, except for temporary, seasonal, and student employees, to be state employees for the purpose of eligibility to participate in the Florida Retirement System.

**FLVS Funding**

The bill clarifies the current practice of including grade 6-12 part-time students to full-time equivalent (FTE) student calculations so that all full-time and part-time FLVS students are included in such FTE student calculations. The bill authorizes the FLVS to accrue revenue from a direct-support organization, and requires that expenditures from all supplemental funds be contingent upon review and approval by the FLVS president and chief executive officer.

**FLVS Annual Report**

The bill requires the FLVS to report only on the operations and accomplishments of the FLVS and deletes the reporting requirements for the FLVS and FLVS Global related to the marketing and operational plan, assets and liabilities, recommendations regarding the unit cost of providing services to students, and recommendations regarding an accountability mechanism to assess the effectiveness of the services provided.

**Assessment Requirements**

The bill requires a school district to provide a test administrator when a student from the FLVS is participating in required statewide assessments, the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system, industry certification examinations, and national assessments at the assigned school.

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 39-0; House 110-2*

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**Committee on Education Pre-K - 12**

**CS/CS/SB 178 — Athletics in Public K-12 Schools**

by Judiciary Committee; Education Pre-K - 12 Committee; and Senator Jones

The bill requires the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) to adopt bylaws authorizing head coaches of athletics teams to support the welfare of the students they coach using personal funds. Head coaches may, in good faith, provide assistance in the form of food, transportation, and recovery services. The bylaws must require a parent to provide written consent before a head coach may provide such assistance to a student. The bylaws must also restrict such use of funds to one head coach per athletic team.

The bill requires coaches who provide assistance using personal funds to report it to the FHSAA in a manner provided by FHSAA bylaw. If a coach uses personal funds, it is presumed not to be an impermissible benefit unless the use of personal funds is not reported, reported and deemed not to be in good faith by the FHSAA, or used for recruiting purposes.

The maximum amount of personal funds a coach may use per athletic team per year is \$15,000.

The bill also authorizes any other organization governing interscholastic athletic competition in Florida to adopt similar bylaws.

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 112-0*

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*

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

**CS/HB 453 — Requirements for a Standard High School Diploma**

by Student Academic Success Subcommittee and Rep. Gossett-Seidman and others (CS/SB 556 by Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senators Berman and Simon)

The bill addresses requirements for earning a standard high school diploma. Specifically, the bill:

- Allows completion of two years of marching band to satisfy both the one-credit requirement in physical education and the one-credit requirement in performing arts instead of one or the other.
- Allows a student with a disability to meet the one-credit requirement in physical education by participating in the Special Olympics for one year as determined by the student's individual education plan (IEP) team.

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 36-0; House 111-0*

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
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**Committee on Education Pre-K - 12**

**CS/CS/CS/SB 538 — Extracurricular Activities**

by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; Education Pre-K - 12 Committee; and Senator Simon

**Interscholastic and Intrascholastic Extracurricular Activities**

The bill makes substantial changes to high school and middle school athletics in Florida regarding student eligibility, transfers, and costs for students to play sports. The bill provides the following definitions:

- “Eligible student” means a home education student, charter school student, private school student, Florida Virtual School student, alternative school student, or traditional public-school student who wishes to participate in an interscholastic or intrascholastic extracurricular activity.
- “Governing Organization” means any organization that governs interscholastic and intrascholastic activities of a school, including, but not limited to, the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA).

The bill aligns eligibility for all students, regardless of the educational setting, by specifying that students are eligible to participate in an interscholastic or intrascholastic extracurricular activity (activity) at the school in which he or she is enrolled. An eligible student may participate in an activity at a school other than the school in which the student is enrolled if:

- The school in which the student is enrolled does not offer the same activity or the student is in a home education program; and
- The school at which the student will participate in the activity is located in the school district in which the student resides.

The bill provides that if a public or charter school in the district in which the student resides does not offer the activity, and an agreement cannot be reached with a private school in the district in which the student resides, the student may participate at a public, charter, or private school in a school district adjacent to the school district in which the student resides. The student may also petition the executive director of the governing organization to explore additional options. The bill expands the school personnel who may maintain records for all participating eligible students from both FHSAA and non-FHSAA schools.

The bill authorizes public schools to assess an activity fee to an enrolled student. The bill provides that public schools in which a student seeks to participate may assess an activity fee to a student that is not enrolled, provided that such fee does not exceed the greater of the following:

- The fee students enrolled at the school pay to participate in the activity; or
- A reasonable fee based on the costs to the school not to exceed \$400 per activity.

Annually by July 1, activity fees different from the fees charged to enrolled students must be approved by the district school board or charter school governing board, as appropriate, after being voted on as an action item. The bill requires each public school to post on its website a complete list of fees charged to participating students, by activity, prior to the beginning of the

school year and submit to the Department of Education. The bill specifies that the activity fee charged to home education student must be the same as charged to enrolled students.

The bill also requires the parents of the student participating in the activity to provide for the transportation of the student and releases the school and district school board from liability for such transportation.

The bill prohibits a student from participating in sports at two different schools during the same school year unless the student:

- Is a dependent child of active duty military personnel whose move resulted from military orders;
- Has been relocated due to a foster care placement in a different school zone;
- Has moved due to a court-ordered change in custody due to separation or divorce, or the serious illness or death of a custodial parent; or
- Has been granted approval by the applicable governing organization's executive director.

The bill requires the governing organization to provide a determination of eligibility to the requesting student within 14 days after the request is made, and to adopt bylaws establishing criteria for determining the eligibility of transferring students. The bill requires that the governing organization establish an appeals process that is equivalent to the appeals procedure that is currently in law but must include a 20-day timeline for a decision.

### **Governing Organizations**

The bill requires a governing organization to adopt, maintain, and enforce sport-specific manuals or handbooks that govern interscholastic competition. The manuals or handbooks may include, but are not limited to, timing, scoring, equipment, officiating, and athlete safety. The bill requires the governing association to ensure that athletes may request exemptions or accommodations from real-time scoring requirements not later than 72 hours before a sanctioned event. If a request is made within the prescribed time, the FHSAA must provide access to accommodations for such participants.

### **Athletic Coach and Activity Sponsor Compensation**

The bill authorizes a district school board to adopt a policy regarding the use of voluntary donations and revenues generated by authorized booster clubs or associations to provide funds to athletic coaches or activity sponsors. The bill specifies that such funds may not be used for severance pay or for salary compensation.

The bill defines an extracurricular activities administrator, and authorizes a district school superintendent to negotiate individual compensation for such personnel, which may not exceed the compensation of the highest paid administrator in the district.

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 104-6*

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THE FLORIDA SENATE  
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**Committee on Education Pre-K - 12**

**CS/HB 561 — Educator Preparation and Certification**

by Education & Employment Committee and Rep. Gerwig and others (SB 1718 by Senator Calatayud)

The bill authorizes educator preparation institutes (EPIs) to enroll participants and allow them to complete coursework while they work to obtain an “eligible” statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area included in the participant’s educational plan.

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to issue a temporary certificate to an educator whose previously issued professional certificate has expired, provided the educator meets the basic eligibility requirements for certification. This allows the educator to begin teaching without having to again demonstrate subject area mastery.

The bill requires an applicant seeking reinstatement of a professional educator certificate to meet specified statutory certification eligibility requirements, but removes the requirement that an educator retake subject area examinations for each subject included on the certificate. Upon reinstatement, the professional certificate must include all subject area coverages and endorsements held at the time of expiration. The bill also specifies that inservice points earned to obtain or renew a professional certificate that has since expired may not be used to satisfy reinstatement requirements.

The bill updates the name of the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at the University of South Florida to the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching as the required collaborating entity for the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence (center).

The bill requires, rather than authorizes, the center to submit a professional learning system to the DOE. The bill also requires the center to offer professional learning, at no cost, to certified educators seeking to renew or reinstate their certificate and to submit any inservice points earned through the system to the DOE on the educator’s behalf. Additionally, the center must provide such educators with information on school district professional learning systems that offer access to inservice training to individuals who are not employed by the school district.

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 112-0*

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**CS/CS/HB 753 — School Counselors**

by Education Administration Subcommittee; Careers & Workforce Subcommittee; and Rep. Hunschofsky and others (CS/CS/SB 1036 by Rules Committee; Education Pre-K - 12 Committee; and Senator Calatayud)

The bill modifies evaluation and educator certification requirements for certified school counselors. Specifically the bill:

- Requires that performance evaluation criteria for certified school counselors be based on indicators from the Florida School Counseling Standards.
- Specifies that individuals seeking an educator certificate as a school counselor are exempt from the demonstration of mastery of general knowledge and mastery of professional preparation and education competence. However, such exemption does not limit a school district from requiring demonstration of mastery as a condition of employment as a certified school counselor.

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 34-0; House 103-0*

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
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**Committee on Education Pre-K - 12**

**CS/SB 824 — School District Unimproved Real Property**

by Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senator Truenow

The bill requires school districts to annually submit an inventory to the Department of Education (DOE) of all unimproved real property owned by the district. “Unimproved real property” is defined in the bill as any parcel of land owned in whole or in part by a district that does not contain any vertical improvements, including, but not limited to, buildings, permanent structures, or constructed facilities.

The inventory is due on a date determined by the DOE and must be a complete inventory of all unimproved real property owned by the district as of June 30 of that year. For each parcel, the district must provide the following:

- The identification number.
- The address or descriptive location and acreage.
- The date of acquisition by the district.
- The current use, if any.
- The fair market value, calculated using the most recent market value assessed by the county property appraiser or a district-commissioned appraisal completed within the previous 24 months.

The DOE must compile the data into a statewide report that includes:

- The total statewide acreage of all unimproved real property owned by districts.
- The aggregate statewide fair market value of such property.
- A district-by-district breakdown of such unimproved real property, including total parcels and acreage, fair market value, and each parcel’s identification number and acreage.
- Any trends or findings the DOE determines relevant to effective statewide land use or long-range facilities planning.

The DOE must publish the statewide report on its website by December 1, 2026, and every 3 years thereafter.

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 33-4; House 84-27*

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
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**Committee on Education Pre-K - 12**

**CS/HB 851 — Professional Learning for Instructional and School Administrative Personnel**

by Student Academic Success Subcommittee and Rep. Long and others (CS/SB 206 by Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senators Harrell and Massullo)

The bill modifies district professional learning requirements to support students with autism spectrum disorder. The bill:

- Requires each school district’s professional learning system to provide at least one autism-specific professional learning opportunity each year for instructional personnel and school-based administrators.
- Requires the professional learning to be developed in consultation with the district’s assigned Center for Autism and Related Disabilities.
- Requires the professional learning to include evidence-based practices for supporting students with autism spectrum disorder across all levels of need, including academic instruction, behavioral supports, communication strategies, and inclusive practices.

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 38-0; House 108-0*

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
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**Committee on Education Pre-K - 12**

**CS/HB 1073 — Public Education**

by Education Administration Subcommittee and Rep. Koster and others (CS/CS/SB 1620 by Rules Committee; Judiciary Committee; and Senators Leek and Gaetz)

The bill creates the “District School Board Members’ Bill of Rights” to clarify the rights of school board members in the exercise of their statutory oversight and responsibility. The bill clarifies that district school board members have the right:

- Upon request, to be given free and timely access to all school district documents necessary to fulfill the required constitutional and statutory duties and responsibilities. A request not related to a matter on a publicly noticed meeting of the district school board must be fulfilled within 10 business days after receipt of such request. Any document provided to a district school board member must be offered to all board members.
- To consult with the school district’s chief financial officer on general matters related to the budget, and sources and uses of school district funds, and have reasonable access to district budget and financial transaction information.
- To request any document or information, except for documents or information that the member would be prohibited by law from accessing, from school district staff with the permission of the superintendent or other members of the administration where such permission must not be unreasonably withheld.
- To comment publicly during or outside of district school board meetings on any matter of district school board business, except for student and employee disciplinary hearings.

The bill specifies records that must be kept as a public record with the minutes. The bill prohibits a school district from requiring or otherwise providing incentives to an employee to sign a nondisclosure agreement or confidentiality agreement. Additionally, the school district may not impose any conditions on employment that would circumvent the prohibition against the use of nondisclosure or confidentiality agreements.

The bill defines the term “good cause” as it relates to district school board rejection of an employee nominated for a position as any of the following:

- That the nominated employee fabricated or materially exaggerated his or her credentials or background.
- That the nominated employee does not meet the minimum requirements for the position.
- That the nominated employee’s educator certificate has been revoked by another state.

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 108-0*

THE FLORIDA SENATE  
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**Committee on Education Pre-K - 12**

**SB 7022 — Public Records/Examination and Assessment Instruments**

by Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

The bill expands the public records exemption for examination and assessment instruments, including related developmental materials and workpapers, by applying the exemption to instruments held by additional records custodians, including public schools, district school boards, boards of trustees, the State Board of Education (SBE), and the Board of Governors (BOG). The current exemption is limited to Florida College System (FCS) institutions, state universities, and the Department of Education (DOE).

The bill authorizes covered custodians to disclose confidential and exempt materials to other covered custodians, and requires public schools, district school boards, FCS institutions, and state universities to provide such materials, upon request, to the DOE, the SBE, or the BOG. The bill provides that the exemption may not be construed to limit a student or parent's rights relating to student records and education records.

The bill revises the duties of the SBE and the BOG to require adoption of rules and regulations, respectively, limited to establishing retention schedules and disposal processes for exempt records, rather than adopting provisions governing access, maintenance, and destruction of exempt records.

The bill extends the scheduled repeal of the exemption from October 2, 2026, to October 2, 2031.

If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

*Vote: Senate 36-1; House 101-8*