The Florida Senate

BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education

BILL:	SB 920
INTRODUCER:	Senator Gaetz
SUBJECT:	Mathematics Education
DATE:	February 3, 2026
REVISED:	

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Palazesi	Bouck	ED	**Favorable**
2.	Gray	Elwell	AED	**Pre-meeting**
3.			FP	

I. Summary:

SB 920 directs the Department of Education (DOE) to develop applied algebra courses for designated career clusters on a phased timeline for district adoption in 2027-2028 and 2028-2029, authorizes districts to offer these courses in lieu of Algebra 1 (with successful completion satisfying Algebra 1 credit requirements for graduation or middle grades promotion), requires course alignment with the Algebra I end-of-course assessment and requires coordination to ensure the courses are accepted for state university admissions, supported by professional development and implementation resources.

The bill also updates Florida's existing secondary mathematics pathways by requiring the state's pathway workgroup to incorporate newly developed applied algebra courses that align Algebra 1 standards with career and technical education expectations. The bill requires the pathways to include at least one course sequence that includes an applied algebra course tied to a specific career cluster, allows flexibility for students to move between pathways, and creates clear links from precollege math to college-level pathways and workforce-aligned programs. The bill specifies pathway identification deadlines in September 2027 and September 2028.

The bill also requires the DOE to collaborate with the University of Florida's Lastinger Center to recommend an individualized, adaptive artificial intelligence tool to support K–12 math instruction and submit recommendations by December 1, 2026.

This bill has an indeterminate, likely significant, fiscal impact on the DOE. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Student Engagement in Mathematics

Student engagement in mathematics is a persistent challenge, particularly when students struggle to connect classroom content to real-world applications. A 2025 report by RAND reviewed reasons why student performance has not recovered to the pre-2019 student performance levels and had three key findings:

- About one-half of middle and high school students reported losing interest during their math lessons about half or more of the time.
- The students who are the most likely to maintain interest in math are the same ones who comprehend math, feel supported in math, are confident in their ability to do well in math, enjoy math, believe in the need to learn math, and see themselves as a math person.
- The students who are the most prone to disengage in math lessons want fewer online activities and more real-world applications in their math classes.[1]

Specifically, 55 percent of the least engaged students want fewer online activities compared with 17 percent of the most engaged students. Regarding real-world math problems, 54 percent of the least engaged students want more real-world math problems compared with 37 percent of the most engaged students.[2] The findings on students who are disengaged from mathematics complements other research on career and technical education, which finds that occupationally focused courses with real-world applications help engage disadvantaged students because the material is directly relevant to their future.[3]

Over the course of 10 weeks in the fall of 2023, the UF Lastinger Center Listening Tour team traveled from the Panhandle to the Florida Keys to listen to students, educators, leaders and policymakers and gather their perspectives on mathematics education in Florida. The Lastinger Center produced five briefs covering the following topics of mathematics education:

- Student Experience.
- Math Beyond High School (employers).
- Teacher Experiences.
- Math Beyond the School Day (parents).
- Early Learning and Math.[4]

In the Student Experience brief, when students were asked what they would change about math class or what they wished for, students asked for opportunities to more actively engage with the mathematics content, collaborate with others, and for their mathematics experience to be fun.[5]

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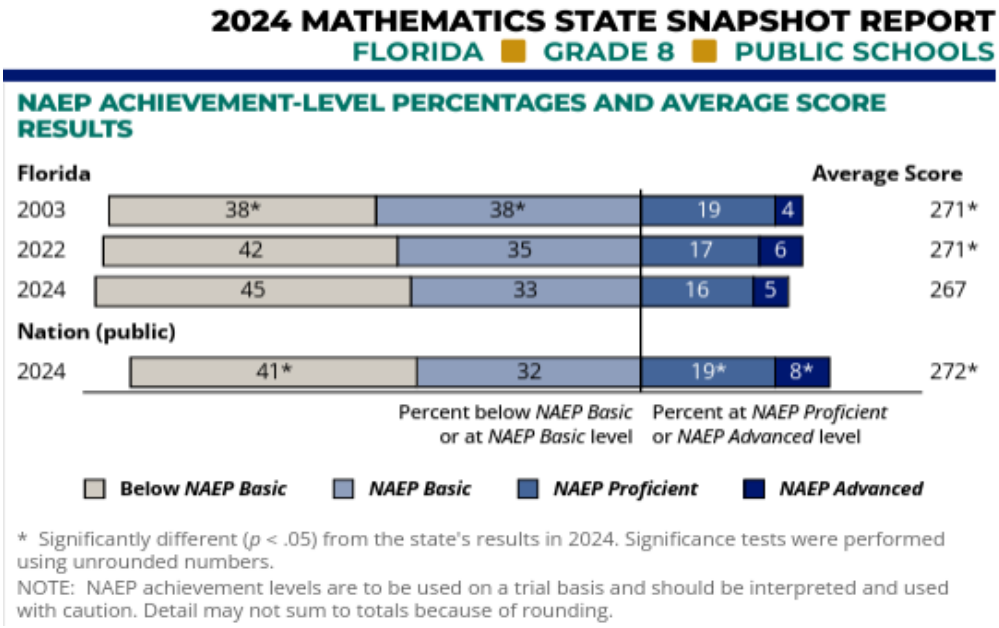
[1] RAND, *Students Lose Interest in Math*, p. 1 (2025), *available at* https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RRA3900/RRA3988-1/RAND_RRA3988-1.pdf, (last visited Jan. 27, 2026).
[2] *Id.* at 6
[3] *Id*. at 8
[4] University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, *Lastinger Listening Tour Math Summit,* https://lastinger.center.ufl.edu/research/listening-tour/summit/ (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).
[5] University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, *Student Experiences in the Mathematics Classroom,* at 3 (2024), *available at* https://lastinger.center.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Brief-1-Students-Experiences.pdf (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).

Students also expressed a desire for less lecture and procedural practice, and more interaction with their peers to collaboratively solve problems.[6] Employers expressed a real need for students to enter the workforce with a core set of skills that can be tailored to a career of their choosing.[7]

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) researched the connection of incorporating mathematics instruction into CTE courses. In the study, SREB found that students in the classrooms of teachers who trained in the Math-in-CTE model performed significantly better on standardized math tests and community college math placement tests than students who received the regular CTE curriculum. Students also improved their math skills without losing the technical skills needed for college and career readiness.[8]

Student Performance in Mathematics

On the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) report, 21 percent of Florida's grade 8 students scored at NAEP Proficient or NAEP Advanced levels,[9] a 2 percent decrease from the 2022 results. Additionally, Florida's grade 8 students saw a 3 percent increase from 42 percent in 2022 to 45 percent in 2024 of students scoring at Below NAEP Basic. The chart below shows Florida's performance in Grade 8 NAEP Mathematics:[10]



[6] University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, *Student Experiences in the Mathematics Classroom,* at 4 (2024), *available at* https://lastinger.center.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Brief-1-Students-Experiences.pdf (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).
[7] University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning, *Importance of School Mathematics Beyond High School,* at 3 (2024), *available at* https://lastinger.center.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/Brief-2-Beyond-High-School.pdf (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).
[8] Southern Regional Education Board, *Math-in-CTE Resources, available at* https://www.sreb.org/nrccte-math-cte-resources, (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).
[9] NAEP provides scores in four achievement levels: Below NAEP Basic, NAEP Basic, NAEP Proficient and NAEP Advanced.
[10] Florida Department of Education, *2024 NAEP Mathematics Results, available at* https://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/subject/publications/stt2024/pdf/2024219FL8.pdf, (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).

On Florida's Algebra I end-of-course (EOC) assessment, there is a significant difference in performance between students who take Algebra I prior to entering high school versus students who take Algebra I while in high school. On the Algebra I EOC administration in the Spring of 2025, approximately 81,000 grade 8 students participated in the Algebra I EOC assessment, with 83 percent of students passing. In the same administration, approximately 95,000 grade 9 students participated in the Algebra I EOC assessment, with 40 percent of students passing. The table below shows the passing rate by grade level on the Spring 2025 Algebra I EOC administration.[11]

Grade	Number of Students	Percentage in Level 3 or Above
All Grades	231,744	60
03	1	*
04	1	*
05	6	*
06	190	100
07	24,772	95
08	81,379	83
09	95,760	40
10	26,764	28
11	2,035	27
12	732	27
AD	104	10

Middle School Promotion and High Graduation Requirements

In order for a student to be promoted to high school from a school that includes middle grades 6, 7, and 8, the student must successfully complete the following courses:

- Three middle grades or higher courses in English Language Arts (ELA).
- Three middle grades or higher courses in mathematics.
- Three middle grades or higher courses in social studies.
- Three middle grades or higher courses in science.
- One course in career and education planning to be completed in grades 6, 7, or 8.

To be awarded a standard high school diploma under the 24-credit program requires students entering the ninth grade in 2023-2024 or later must earn the following credits:

- Four credits in English Language Arts (ELA) and students must pass the grade 10 ELA assessment.
- Four credits in mathematics and students must pass the Algebra I end-of-course assessment.

[11] Florida Department of Education, *2025 Florida Assessment of Student Thinking and B.E.S.T. Assessments , available at* https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/5668/urlt/33Spring25Alg1SS.xls, (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).

- Three credits in science.
- Three credits in social studies.
- One credit in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or career and technical education.
- One credit in physical education, which includes the integration of health.
- Seven and one-half credits in electives.
- One-half credit in personal financial literacy.[12]

Students who earn an industry certification for which there is a statewide college credit articulation agreement approved by the State Board of Education may substitute the certification for one mathematics credit. Substitution may occur for up to two mathematics credits, except for Algebra I and Geometry.

Mathematics Pathways

In 2023, the Legislature required the Department of Education (DOE) to convene a workgroup, no later than December 1, 2024, to:

- Identify best practices in career and technical education pathways from middle school to high school to aid middle school students in career planning and facilitate their transition to high school programs. The career pathway must be linked to postsecondary programs; and
- Establish three mathematics pathways for students enrolled in secondary grades by aligning mathematics courses to programs, postsecondary education, and careers. The workgroup must collaborate to identify the three mathematics pathways and the mathematics course sequence within each pathway which align to the mathematics skills needed for success in the corresponding academic programs, postsecondary education, and careers.[13]

The DOE gathered a workgroup to discuss and determine three mathematics pathways for students enrolled in grades K-12 by aligning mathematics courses to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs, postsecondary education and careers. The workgroup consisted of teacher-experts across the state selected through an application process and approved by the DOE. The workgroup met regularly to gather information and provide data for each of the mathematics pathways. Based on workgroup collaboration, the Bureau of Standards and Instructional Support within the DOE recommends the three pathways, that are tentatively scheduled to be adopted by rule in the Fall of 2026:

- Algebraic Thinking - Students will engage in mathematics courses that provide a strong foundation for success within various fields including engineering, health sciences, information technology and energy.
- Statistical Thinking - Students will engage in mathematics courses that provide a strong foundation for success within various fields including finance, marketing, business administration and education.
- Quantitative Thinking - Students will engage in mathematics courses that provide a strong foundation for success within various fields including human services, education, communication, public safety and manufacturing.[14]

[12] Section 1003.4282(3), F.S.
[13] Ch. 2023-81, s.22 Laws of Fla. *see also* s. 1003.4282(10), F.S.
[14] Email, Florida Department of Education, Governmental Relations (Jan. 13, 2026) (on file with the Senate Committee on Education Pre-K-12).

Artificial Intelligence in Education

Artificial intelligence (AI) provides opportunities to customize and accelerate learning for students and reduce teacher workload.[15] However, school districts in Florida implement AI differently and are using different AI tools for educators and students. For example, in Hillsborough County School District, educators and students are using Ameria Learning as their main AI tool for instruction, whereas the Pinellas County School District not only uses Ameria Learning but several other AI tools. The top general AI tools being used by school districts are Microsoft Copilot, Canva, and Magicschool.ai and the top AI tools being used by students are Gemini for students, Khanmingo, Canva and Microsoft Copilot.[16]

In 2024, the Legislature passed HB 1361, which created the Florida Tutoring Advantage, administered by the UF Lastinger Center for Learning to support school districts with tutoring programs that include virtual tutoring and automated tutoring software for students in kindergarten through grade 5.[17] A school district 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. Grant recipients must select an AI platform that:

- Uses large language models based on GPT-4, its equivalent, or a successor, and is on a closed system.
- Provides professional learning to teachers.
- Provides one-on-one tutoring aligned to the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards for reading and mathematics.
- Provides standards-aligned lesson plans and provides insights on student progress. Provides district- and school-level reporting and parental access to artificial intelligence interactions.[18]

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

This bill creates s. 1003.4936, F.S., to provide legislative intent that algebra is an important step in a student's mathematics pathway and is a prerequisite for higher level mathematics courses. The bill requires the DOE to develop an applied algebra course for each of the established CTE career clusters and provide professional development, instructional resources, and technical assistance to support district implementation. Each applied algebra course must:

- Integrate the CTE program standards and benchmarks for the relevant career cluster with the Florida Standards for Algebra I;
- Provide students with rigorous, career-relevant mathematical applications that demonstrate the use of algebraic concepts in authentic industry problems, processes, or settings;
- Prepare students to take the statewide, standardized Algebra I end-of-course assessment; and

[15] Section 1002.321(3), F.S.
[16] Dr. Maya Isreal, University of Florida, *Overview of AI in Florida Schools,* Presentation to the Student Academic Success Subcommittee, The Florida House of Representatives (Dec. 10, 2025), *available at* https://www.flhouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?MeetingId=14953&PublicationType=Committees&DocumentType=Meeting%20Packets (last visited Jan. 26, 2026).
[17] Chapter 2024-162, s. 9, Laws of Fla.
[18] Section 1002.321(3), F.S.

- Meet all requirements for a mathematics credit required for high school or for middle grades promotion.

The bill requires the DOE to develop applied algebra courses by the following timeline:

- Applied algebra courses in the following career clusters must be developed and available for district adoption in the 2027-2028 school year:
  - Agriculture, food, and natural resources.
  - Architecture and construction.
  - Business management and administration.
  - Energy.
  - Engineering and technology education.
  - Finance.
  - Health science.
  - Information technology.
  - Manufacturing.
  - Transportation and distribution logistics.
- Applied algebra courses in the following career clusters must be developed and available for district adoption in the 2028-2029 school year:
  - Arts, AV technology, and communications.
  - Education and training.
  - Government and public administration.
  - Hospitality and tourism.
  - Human services.
  - Law, public safety, and security.
  - Marketing, sales, and service.

The bill authorizes school districts to offer one or more applied algebra courses in lieu of Algebra I, and successful completion of the course will satisfy the Algebra I credit requirement for high school graduation or middle grades promotion. The bill also requires the DOE to work with the Board of Governors of the State University System to ensure that each applied algebra course is accepted as a mathematics credit for state university admissions.

The bill amends s. 1003.4282, F.S., to expand upon the DOE's requirement to establish three mathematics pathways for students enrolled in secondary grades by aligning mathematics courses to programs, postsecondary education, and careers. The bill requires the mathematics pathways to include:

- The applied algebra courses established by the bill, which are required to be aligned to the Florida Standards for Algebra I with the career and technical education (CTE) standards and benchmarks for each designated career cluster;
- At least one course sequence beginning with an applied algebra course aligned to a specific career cluster. The workgroup must identify additional mathematics courses that follow each applied algebra course and build on the algebraic reasoning, modeling, and quantitative skills introduced through industry-relevant applications. The mathematics pathways may include a plan to create new mathematics courses to complete a pathway;
- Flexibility and the ability to move between pathways if necessary; and

- Clear links between precollege mathematics and college-level math pathways, and support student progression into postsecondary academic programs, state college career and technical education programs, career center programs, industry certification programs, and high-skill, high-wage occupations.

The bill requires the DOE's workgroup to submit identified mathematics pathways that incorporate the first set of applied algebra courses established in the bill no later than September 1, 2027, and the second set of applied algebra courses established in the bill no later than September 1, 2028, to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

The bill creates an undesignated section of law that requires the DOE to collaborate with the Lastinger Center for Learning at the University of Florida to recommend to the Legislature an individualized, adaptive artificial intelligence tool to support mathematics instruction in kindergarten through grade 12. The DOE must submit its recommendations to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1, 2026. The recommendations must:

- Ensure that recommended tools align to the Florida academic standards and prepare students for state assessments;
- Consider alternate mathematics sequencing and grade-level progression, and alternate funding models to support individualized progression through content;
- Evaluate the extent to which tools provide real-time diagnostic assessments, individualized learning pathways, adaptive sequencing of content, and immediate, personalized feedback to students;
- Evaluate the applicability of the tool to progress monitoring tools, district learning management systems, suggested interventions, small-group instructional supports, and professional development that enables teachers to integrate the tools into classroom instruction;
- Provide for student data privacy and transparency in data collection and retention; and
- Consider statewide and district-level costs.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to develop algebra courses. In order to implement the bill, the DOE estimated it would need $698,693, which includes salary and benefits for five new positions and funding to support workgroup operations such as travel, lodging, meeting space and related operating expenses.

The bill also requires the DOE to collaborate with the Lastinger Center for Learning to recommend to the Legislature an individualized, adaptive artificial intelligence tool to support mathematics instruction in kindergarten through grade 12. The costs for developing such recommendations can be absorbed within existing resources.

The bill authorizes school districts to choose to offer one or more applied algebra courses in lieu of Algebra I. If any school district chooses to offer one of the courses developed by the DOE, then the DOE is required to provide professional development, instructional resources, and technical assistance to support district implementation.[19]

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

[19] Department of Education, *Senate Bill 920 Fiscal Analysis* (Dec. 19, 2025) (on file with the Senate Appropriations Committee on Pre-K-12 Education).

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 1003.4282 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill creates section 1003.4936 of the Florida Statutes.

This bill creates an undesignated section of Florida Law.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None