

# Florida's Education in Focus: Navigating the 2024 K-12 Legislative Landscape

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Policy Brief

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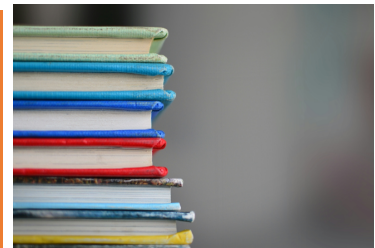
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In an effort to promote understanding and transparency regarding the 2024 K-12 education legislation in Florida, the UF Education Policy Center presents this brief. The purpose of this brief is to provide a concise explanation of the key components of several potentially impactful bills in a user-friendly manner accessible to the general public. It is important to note that this brief is explanatory and does not offer evaluations of or endorsements of the legislation reviewed. The goal is to provide readers unbiased information on the content and potential impact of the legislation.

## 2024 K-12 Legislation

### Education (HB 1285)

House Bill 1285 (HB 1285), aims to restrict the ability of school boards to remove books from school libraries or reading lists as well as a number of other education related policy changes. The bill requires school boards to create and implement a policy for handling complaints about instructional materials, including books, used in schools. It specifies that the policy must include a formal review process conducted by a hearing officer or committee, with opportunities for public input. The bill also prohibits school boards from removing books solely because they contain offensive or controversial material.



HB 1285 includes a provision that would require the State Board of Education to establish specialized teaching certificates for individuals seeking to work in schools that use a classical education model. This provision aims to address the growing interest in classical education and provide educators with the necessary training and credentials to effectively teach in such schools.

HB 1285 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

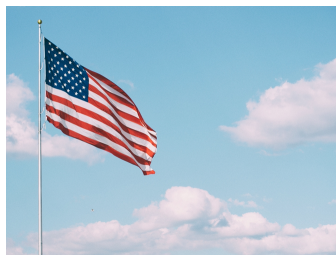
### **School Chaplains (HB 931)**

House Bill 931 (HB 931), also known as the "School Chaplains" bill, aims to allow school districts to designate individuals to serve as volunteer chaplains in public schools. These chaplains would provide nonsectarian, non-proselytizing spiritual support and counseling to students and staff. The bill specifies that chaplains must be designated by the school district and may not be school employees or receive compensation for their services. They would be subject to background checks and training requirements.

HB 931 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Patriotic Organizations (HB 1317)**



House Bill 1317 (HB 1317), also known as the "Patriotic Organizations" bill, aims to allow patriotic organizations to conduct educational programs in public schools. The bill names six patriot groups explicitly: the mentoring organization Big Brothers-Big Sisters of America, the Boy Scouts of America, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, Civil Air Patrol, Future Farmers of America and the Girl Scouts of the United States of America. These programs would focus on promoting patriotism, civic responsibility, and respect for the flag and the Constitution. The bill specifies that these programs must be conducted in a manner that is consistent with the principles of the First Amendment and must not promote any particular religious belief. It also requires school districts to adopt policies governing the conduct of these programs and to ensure that they do not disrupt the normal school day or interfere with the educational process.

HB 1317 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).



## **History and Instruction of Political and Socio-economic Systems (SB 1264/HB 1349)**

Both House Bill 1349 (HB 1349) and Senate Bill 1264 (SB 1264), known as the "History and Instruction of Political and Socio-economic" bills, propose the creation of a task force tasked with developing K-12 public school curricula on the history of communism. This curriculum is intended to be implemented in schools beginning in the 2026-27 academic year.

The bills aim to educate students about the history and impact of communist regimes around the world, emphasizing the ideological foundations, political structures, and human rights abuses associated with communism.

These courses would cover topics such as the rise of communism, key figures and events in communist history, and the consequences of communist rule in various countries. The bills specify that the courses must present a balanced and factual view of communism, without promoting or endorsing its ideology.

SB 1264 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

## **Short-acting Bronchodilator Use in Public and Private Schools (HB 883)**

House Bill 883 (HB 883) addresses the use of short-acting bronchodilators in public and private schools. The bill aims to ensure that students with asthma or other respiratory conditions have access to necessary medication by allowing them to possess and use short-acting bronchodilators on school grounds. The bill specifies that schools are required to maintain a written treatment plan for each student



authorized to possess a short-acting bronchodilator. This plan must include the student's name, a description of the medication, the prescribed dosage, and instructions for use. Parents or legal guardians must provide written consent for their child to possess and self-administer a short-acting bronchodilator. The consent form must also acknowledge that the school district and its employees are not liable for any adverse reactions resulting from the student's use of the medication.

The bill also says schools are required to provide training to designated employees who may assist students in using a short-acting bronchodilator in case of an emergency. This training must be conducted by a healthcare professional. Finally, schools must maintain records of each student's written treatment plan, parental consent form, and any training provided to designated employees.

HB 883 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).



See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Deregulation of Public Schools/Education (SB 7002, SB 7004)**

Senate Bill 7002 and Senate Bill 7004 are part of a package of deregulation bills aimed at reducing regulations and licensing requirements in Florida. These bills focus on different aspects of deregulation. Senate Bill 7002 addresses occupational and professional licensing. It seeks to reduce barriers to entry for individuals seeking to enter various professions by streamlining the licensing process and eliminating unnecessary or overly burdensome requirements. The bill aims to promote economic growth and job creation by making it easier for individuals to pursue careers in licensed professions. Senate Bill 7004 focuses on regulatory reforms across various industries. It aims to identify and eliminate regulations that are outdated, unnecessary, or overly burdensome. The bill seeks to create a more business-friendly regulatory environment in Florida, with the goal of stimulating economic growth and innovation.

Specifically, SB 7002 and 7004 revise the Teacher Apprenticeship Program by aligning GPA requirements to that of other professional certification programs. They also incorporate the Florida Department of Education recommendations for deregulation and include eliminating certain reporting requirements no longer necessary due to changes in statute. These reports include the Fine Arts Report, Charter Technical Career Centers Report and the Academically High Performing School District Report. The bills also expand parental notification and supports for students in K-2 with reading deficiencies. They also preclude collective bargaining processes from blocking certain school district practices and decision-making, such as providing incentives for effective and highly effective teachers, implementing school safety plans, and corresponding with parents, teachers and community members.

SB 7002 and 7004 passed both the Florida House and Senate and are awaiting Governor DeSantis' signature (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Student Transportation Safety (SB 994)**

Senate Bill 994 (SB 994) aims to enhance safety measures for student transportation in Florida. It includes requirements for school buses to be equipped with video camera systems to capture footage of vehicles illegally passing stopped school buses.



The bill also addresses penalties for such violations and establishes a pilot program for the Florida Department of Education to study the effectiveness of stop-arm cameras on school buses. The bill also requires the Department of Education to develop training materials for school bus operators regarding student safety and conduct. Additionally, it mandates the reporting of incidents involving illegal passing of school buses to law enforcement. The goal is to improve student safety during

transportation to and from school.

SB 994 passed both the Florida House and Senate and is awaiting Governor DeSantis' signature (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **School Safety (HB 1473)**

House Bill 1473 (HB 1473) known as the "School Safety" bill, aims to enhance safety measures in Florida schools. Key provisions include requiring schools to conduct annual drills for active shooter situations, requiring schools to establish threat assessment teams, and providing training for school personnel on mental health awareness and intervention. The bill also includes provisions for the development of school safety policies and procedures, as well as the creation of a centralized reporting system for school safety incidents. Overall, the bill seeks to improve the safety and security of students and staff in Florida schools.

HB 1473 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **School Choice (HB 1403)**

House Bill 1403 (HB 14303), known as the "School Choice" bill, aims to address issues related to the use of vouchers in Florida's education system. The bill proposes changes to the state's voucher programs to make them more accessible and efficient.

Specifically, the bill seeks to streamline the process for applying for and using vouchers, making it easier for families to access educational options outside of traditional public schools. The bill also includes provisions to ensure accountability and transparency in the use of vouchers, including requirements for schools accepting vouchers to meet certain academic standards and report on student outcomes.

Specifically, HB 1403 Increases annual cap growth from 3% to 5%, with an opportunity to unlock an additional 1% for the Family Empowerment Scholarship for

Students with Unique Abilities. It also merges the Hope Scholarship and Florida Tax Credit Scholarship programs and expands opportunities for military families to access the scholarship programs. It deletes the requirement that virtual instruction program providers be nonsectarian, gives authority to the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities to develop purchasing guidelines for families using the Family Empowerment Scholarship for Students with Unique Abilities. And finally, it specifies application windows and payment schedules.

HB 1403 passed both the Florida House and Senate and is awaiting Governor DeSantis' signature (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Program (RAISE) (SB 46)**



Senate Bill 46 (SB 46), or the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) Program provides tutoring to students after school hours. It also allows school districts participating in the program to offer stipends to instructional personnel and high school students who serve as tutors in the program. This bill will support and expand upon existing efforts (i.e., New Worlds Reading Initiative) to improve literacy rates in Florida.

SB 46 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by Governor DeSantis (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Career and Technical Education/Career Themed Courses/Education (HB 917, SB 1688, SB 7032)**

House Bill 917 (HB 917) allows 16- and 17-year-old minors with OSHA 10 certification to work on residential building construction, with safety restrictions. It revises journey worker definitions and licensing criteria, requires a DOE workgroup on career and technical education, and expands the Office of Reimagining Education's duties. The bill also repeals the Florida Talent Development Council, offers exemptions from postsecondary career education requirements, and allows districts to provide alternative career networking for students.

HB 917 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

Senate Bill 1688 (SB 1688), amends several sections of the Florida Statutes related to career-themed courses and education. It requires specified information to be included in



school district strategic plans, such as workforce needs and career academies or courses. The Department of Education is required to include certain data in its annual review of K-12 and postsecondary career and technical education offerings. School districts must provide information to students and parents during middle school course selection. The bill aims to enhance career education planning, student advisement, and course alignment to meet industry needs. It also promotes professional development for school counselors and strategies for funding career academies and courses.

SB 1688 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

Senate Bill 7032 (SB 7032), introduces the Graduation with Alternative Pathways for Success (GATE) program. This initiative targets students aged 16–21 who have discontinued their education, offering them a pathway to earn their high school diploma or equivalent while concurrently acquiring postsecondary course credits at zero cost.

The bill also establishes the GATE Scholarship Program to financially support institutions participating in the GATE Program and provides for reporting, rulemaking, and implementation details. It emphasizes the value of a standard high school diploma and aims to connect students with education and workforce opportunities.

SB 7032 passed both the Florida House and Senate and is awaiting Governor DeSantis' signature (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

## **Education (HB 1361)**



House Bill 1361 (HB 1361), builds on the success of the New Worlds Scholarship program and New Worlds Reading Initiative by expanding their reach to students struggling with math and granting the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning the authority to create micro credentials for teacher support. It also establishes a new artificial intelligence grant program for school districts.

Specifically, HB 1361 extends the New Worlds Reading Scholarship to include Voluntary Prekindergarten students and broadens its focus to cover math deficiencies, tasks the University of Florida Lastinger Center for Learning with devising strategies to enhance literacy and math skills and creating professional development opportunities for educators through micro credentialing. It also establishes the New Worlds Tutoring program, which offers grants to districts for tutoring services, both in-person and virtual, as well as professional development and assistance for teachers, focusing on students with reading or math challenges. Finally, it establishes and allocates funds (\$2 million in recurring funds) for an artificial intelligence (AI) grant

program aimed at providing personalized tutoring and professional development for students and teachers. Districts can request funds to implement educational AI platforms, such as Khanmigo, by purchasing licenses for students and teachers.

HB 1361 passed both the Florida House and Senate and is awaiting Governor DeSantis' signature (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Educator Preparation Programs (HB 1291)**

House Bill 1291 (HB 1291), known as the "Educator Preparation Programs" bill, has garnered significant attention for its impact on the content of teacher training programs. The bill prohibits discussions of institutional racism, oppression, and identity politics in teacher training programs. This initiative is seen as an extension of the "Individual Freedom Act" (Stop WOKE Act), aiming to prevent the discussion of systemic and institutional issues related to racism, sexism, and oppression within educator preparation courses.

HB1291 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Student Achievement (HB 537)**

House Bill 537 (HB 538) introduced the Music-based Supplemental Content to Accelerate Learner Engagement and Success (mSCALES) Pilot Program within the Florida Department of Education. This program aims to use music-based content to enhance student engagement and success in learning. Specifically, it will help districts implement music-based supplementary resources to enhance STEM education for middle schoolers. The bill also outlines the program's requirements and eligibility criteria for participating schools.

HB 537 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program (HB 523)**

House Bill 523 (HB 523) established the Florida Seal of Fine Arts Program within the Department of Education. The purpose of this program is to motivate students to achieve high proficiency in performing or visual art. It recognizes high school graduates who have achieved exemplary benchmarks in fine arts coursework. Students who earn a high school diploma and excel in at least three annual courses in visual or performing arts and fulfill at least two additional criteria will receive the Seal of Fine Arts.

HB 532 passed both the Florida House and Senate and has been signed by the Governor (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

### **Veterans (CS/CS/HB 1329)**

House Bill 1329 (HB 1329) requires that all public schools incorporate two 45-minute lessons on the history and significance of veterans, Veterans Day, and Memorial Day. The lessons will need to be taught before these holidays and require that instructional staff use books and materials that are of high standards and historically accurate. These lessons may be taught through social studies, English Language Arts, or broader character and veteran awareness programs to fulfill this mandate.



HB 1329 passed both the Florida House and Senate and is awaiting Governor DeSantis' signature (as of May 2024).

See more information including the language and the breakdown of votes [here](#).

## **Summary**

In conclusion, the 2024 K-12 legislative landscape in Florida presents a range of bills that touch on various educational issues. From controversial measures like HB 1291's restrictions on discussions of racism in teacher training to bills aimed at expanding educational opportunities like HB 1361's support for students with math struggles, each bill has the potential to significantly impact Florida's education system. It is important to note that as of May 2024, not all of these bills have been signed into law, the rest are awaiting Governor DeSantis' signature. The outcomes of these bills will shape the future of education in Florida, highlighting the ongoing importance of staying informed and engaged in the legislative process.



# Appendix

## Methodology

The 2024 education-related bills discussed in this brief were sourced from the Florida Education Association (FEA) website, House and Senate committee listing, and other newspaper sources. Multiple sources were consulted to ensure the list of education-related bills discussed in this brief was accurate and non-partisan.

To ensure relevance to K-12 education, a few bills were excluded from the brief. Bills related to higher education, teacher unions and retirements benefits, and child labor laws were excluded for the purpose of this brief. Once the relevant bills were identified, they were further researched using the official websites of the Florida House of Representatives and the Florida Senate, including a review of their text, sponsors, status, and votes.

The methodology used in this brief aims to provide an overview of the 2024 education-related bills relevant to K-12 education in Florida. Excluding bills related to higher education, teacher unions and retirement benefits, and child labor laws from this brief was done to maintain a focused analysis on legislation that directly impacts K-12 students and their educational experiences. While these topics are undoubtedly important and relevant to the broader education landscape, the decision was made to prioritize bills that have a more direct and immediate impact on K-12 education policies and practices. This approach allows for a more in-depth examination of the specific issues and challenges facing K-12 education in Florida in 2024.