



# GRAYROBINSON

## 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Passed: Pre-K12 Education Bill Summaries

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

2025 PRE-K12 EDUCATION BILL SUMMARIES*	2
Hazardous Walking Conditions CS/CS/HB 85	2
Children with Developmental Disabilities CS/CS/SB 112	2
Student Participation in Interscholastic and Intrасcholastic Extracurricular Sports CS/CS/SB 248	4
Special Observances HB 259	4
Public Records/Congressional Members and Public Officers CS/CS/SB 268	5
False Reporting CS/CS/HB 279	5
Middle School and High School Start Times CS/CS/SB 296	6
Holocaust Remembrance Day SB 356	6
Education CS/CS/HB 443	6
Disability History and Awareness Instruction CS/HB 447	7
Gulf of America CS/HB 549	8
Diabetes Management in Schools CS/CS/CS/HB 597	8
Apprenticeship and Preapprenticeship Program Funding CS/HB 681	9
Child Care and Early Learning Providers CS/SB 738	10
School Social Workers HB 809	10
Educator Preparation CS/CS/HB 875	11
Type 1 Diabetes Early Detection Program CS/CS/SB 958	13
Reporting of Student Mental Health Outcomes CS/CS/HB 969	14
Driver License Education Requirements SB 994	14
Electrocardiograms for Student Athletes CS/CS/CS/SB 1070	14
Local Government Land Regulation CS/SB 1080	15
School Readiness Program CS/SB 1102	16
Education CS/CS/CS/HB 1105	16
Workforce Education CS/HB 1145	19
Human Trafficking Awareness CS/HB 1237	20
Education CS/CS/HB 1255	21
Juvenile Justice CS/CS/CS/SB 1344	23
School District Reporting Requirements CS/SB 1374	24
Students Enrolled in Dropout Retrieval Programs CS/CS/SB 1402	25
School Safety CS/SB 1470	25
Anaphylaxis in Public and Charter Schools CS/CS/SB 1514	27
Background Screening of Athletic Coaches CS/CS/SB 1546	27
Cardiac Emergencies CS/HB 1607	28

*\* Bill summary information was derived by the Florida Senate final bill summaries.*

## 2025 PRE-K12 EDUCATION BILL SUMMARIES

### HAZARDOUS WALKING CONDITIONS [CS/CS/HB 85](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee, Education Administration Subcommittee, Rep. Kendall, and others. CS/CS/SB 650 by Appropriations Committee on Pre-K-12 Education, Transportation Committee, and Senators Leek and Rouson.*

The bill expands the criteria for identifying hazardous walking conditions for public elementary school students to include walkways along a limited access facility, as defined in the Florida transportation code.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

### CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES [CS/CS/SB 112](#)

*By the Fiscal Policy Committee, Education Pre-K – 12 Committee, and Senator Harrell.*

The bill expands and coordinates state efforts to support children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD or autism) and other developmental disabilities through early intervention, school readiness services, specialized educational options, and professional training. It also codifies and assigns new responsibilities to the University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment (UF CAN), establishes new grant programs, and extends eligibility for Florida's Early Steps Program.

#### ***Early Steps Extended Option***

The bill creates the Early Steps Extended Option, which allows eligible children to continue receiving services through the Early Steps Program (Early Steps) until the beginning of the school year following their fourth birthday. To qualify, a child must be:

- Determined eligible for Early Steps services at least 45 days before his or her third birthday;
- Eligible for services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); and
- Enrolled by parent choice in the Extended Option before his or her third birthday.

The Department of Health (DOH) must seek federal approval for the option by July 1, 2026, but may implement the program with state funds regardless of federal participation. The child's family must choose between Early Steps or IDEA Part B services; children may not receive services under both programs concurrently or reenter the Extended Option once they exit. School districts and local Early Steps offices must coordinate transitions to school district services or other programs, convene joint conferences, and develop or modify education plans. The DOH must include performance measures for the program in its annual Early Steps report.

The bill appropriates \$720,282 in recurring funds and \$35,622 in nonrecurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the DOH and authorizes six full-time equivalent positions to implement the Early Steps Extended Option.

#### ***UF Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment***

The bill codifies the UF CAN and assigns it a broad range of responsibilities, including:

- Coordinating research, training, public awareness, and best practices related to autism;
- Collaborating with state and local agencies, the Florida State University Autism Institute, each Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), and others;
- Creating an autism micro-credential, available at no cost to instructional personnel, early learning providers, and child care staff. The micro-credential must align with the autism endorsement and include competencies in identification, instructional strategies, assistive technology, and classroom support. Participants who earn the credential are eligible for a one-time stipend, and
- Administering new grant programs and reporting annually, beginning August 1, 2026, on expenditures and outcomes.

***Autism Charter School Startup Grants***

The bill establishes a startup grant program to assist in creating or expanding charter schools and laboratory schools that exclusively serve students with autism. UF CAN must administer the program and develop guidelines, including application requirements, planning assistance, eligibility criteria, and accountability reporting. Grants may be used for facility acquisition or improvements, specialized materials and technology, staff recruitment and training, and transportation. Priority is given to applicants serving rural and underserved areas or with a track record of success. Schools may receive funding after securing charter or laboratory school approval.

***Specialized Summer Program Grants***

The bill creates a specialized summer program grant to support structured, inclusive summer services for children with autism and significant cognitive or behavioral needs. UF CAN must administer the program, publish grant guidelines, and offer technical assistance. Eligible programs must operate for at least four weeks and provide a full-day schedule that may include therapy, skill-building, recreational activities, and family training. Staff must be appropriately trained, and grant funding may support facilities, staffing, equipment, curriculum, insurance, and transportation. Programs must submit a post-program report to UF CAN.

***Additional Provisions***

The bill includes additional provisions related to grant funding and professional development. The bill:

- Expands the Dr. and Mrs. Alfonse and Kathleen Cinotti Health Care Screening and Services Grant Program to allow grant funds to be used for autism screenings, referrals for treatment, and related services provided by nonprofit organizations.
- Requires the Commissioner of Education to review continuing education and in-service training related to ASD and to submit findings and recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2025.
- Allows autism-related training to be applied toward the renewal requirements for professional educator certificates.

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

**STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN INTERSCHOLASTIC AND INTRASCHOLASTIC EXTRACURRICULAR SPORTS** [CS/CS/SB 248](#)

*By the Judiciary Committee, Education Pre-K – 12 Committee, and Senator Simon.*

This bill expands the ability of home education programs and private school students to participate in interscholastic or intrascholastic athletics at Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) member schools. The bill authorizes students enrolled in a home education program to participate in interscholastic athletic teams at any public school within their school district, provided they reside in that district and meet certain conditions.

The bill provides that middle or high school students in private schools may participate in interscholastic or intrascholastic sports at member public or private schools by:

- Allowing middle or high school students attending an FHSAA-member private school that does not offer their sport of interest to participate in interscholastic or intrascholastic sports at a member public or private school. Current law allows such participation from a non-member FHSAA private school, regardless of whether the school offers the sport.
- Eliminating the requirement that students be enrolled in a non-FHSAA member private school consisting of 200 students or fewer to participate in activities or sports.

The bill clarifies that, in determining whether an FHSAA school offers an activity or sport, the activity or sport must be expressly designated as one of the following based on the biological sex at birth of the team members: males, men, or boys; females, women, or girls; or coed or mixed, including both males and females.

Finally, the bill requires that any decisions made by an FHSAA committee on appeals, the executive director or his or her designee, and the FHSAA board of directors must be posted online in a searchable format, in compliance with safeguards for privacy of educational records.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**SPECIAL OBSERVANCES** [HB 259](#)

*By Rep. Gerwig and others. SB 214 by Sen. Polsky.*

The bill designates August 21 of each year as "Fentanyl Awareness and Education Day" to increase awareness of the dangers of fentanyl and potential overdoses. The bill encourages specific state agencies, local governments, public schools, and other agencies to sponsor events to promote awareness of fentanyl's dangers, community resources for drug prevention, and substance use and abuse generally.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**PUBLIC RECORDS/CONGRESSIONAL MEMBERS AND PUBLIC OFFICERS** [CS/CS/SB 268](#)

*By the Community Affairs Committee, Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee, and Senators Jones and Brodeur.*

The bill exempts from public records copying and inspection requirements the partial home addresses and telephone numbers of certain public officers (includes Superintendents and School Board members), as well as their spouses and adult children; and the names, home addresses, telephone numbers, and dates of birth of their minor children, if any, as well as the names and locations of the school or day care facility said children attend. The exemption repeals on October 2, 2030, unless reviewed and saved by the Legislature.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**FALSE REPORTING** [CS/CS/HB 279](#)

*By the Judiciary Committee, Criminal Justice Subcommittee, and Rep. Partington and others.  
SB 726 by Senators Ingoglia and Wright.*

The bill amends s. 365.172, F.S., to provide that it is a first-degree misdemeanor for a person to cause another party to access the 911 system for the purpose of making a false alarm, false complaint, or reporting false information.

The bill creates a:

- Third-degree felony for misuse of the 911 system if a person suffers great bodily harm, permanent disfigurement, or permanent disability as a proximate result of the misuse; and
- Second-degree felony for misuse of the 911 system if a person dies as a proximate result of lawful conduct arising out of the emergency response.

The bill reduces the number of prior convictions needed to subject a person to an enhanced penalty of a third-degree felony for misuse of the 911 system from four convictions to two convictions. The bill deletes an enhanced penalty for misusing the 911 system and receiving services of more than \$100.

A court must order a person convicted of misusing the 911 system or making a false report to law enforcement to pay:

- The costs of prosecution and investigation, and
- Restitution to any victim who suffers damage or injury as a proximate result of lawful conduct arising out of an emergency or law enforcement response.

A defendant must also pay full restitution to a responding public safety agency for any costs incurred by responding to the incident.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025



**MIDDLE SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL START TIMES** [CS/CS/SB 296](#)

*By the Fiscal Policy Committee, Education Pre-K – 12 Committee, and Senators Bradley, Yarborough, and Davis.*

The bill provides an exemption for a district school board or a charter school governing board from the statutory requirement that by July 1, 2026, the instructional day at all district and charter middle schools may not start before 8 a.m., and high schools may not start before 8:30 a.m. Rather than implementing the statutorily prescribed start times, the bill allows such boards to submit a report to the Department of Education by June 1, 2026, that includes information related to current school start times, documentation of strategies that were considered to implement prescribed start times, and the impacts and unintended consequences of implementing the prescribed start times.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY** [SB 356](#)

*By Senators Berman, Davis, Polsky, Arrington, Smith, Gaetz, Avila, Bernard, and Brodeur.*

The bill establishes "Holocaust Remembrance Day". The bill requires the Governor to proclaim January 27 as annual "Holocaust Remembrance Day" and permits the day to be suitably observed in public schools, the Capitol, and elsewhere as designated by the Governor. The bill permits instruction to be delivered by schools on January 27, or another day as appropriate, on the harmful impacts of the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, as well as the positive impacts of the Jewish community on humanity.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**EDUCATION** [CS/CS/HB 443](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee, Education Administration Subcommittee, and Reps. Snyder, Rizo, and others. CS/CS/SB 822 by Rules Committee, Education Pre-K – 12 Committee, and Senator Rodriguez.*

***Charter School Administration and Operations***

The bill clarifies that charter schools are public schools and should be considered a public facility for concurrency related to community development.

The bill allows university lab schools to use discretionary capital improvement funds for purchases, lease-purchases, and leases of real property, facilities, insurance, certain vehicles, certain equipment, and other materials.

The bill prohibits sponsors from imposing administrative deadlines on charter schools that are earlier than the sponsor's own deadlines for similar reports or submissions. Additionally, the bill limits imposing deadlines for financial audits or other administrative requirements that are 15-days before the sponsor's own deadline for similar submissions to the Department of Education.

The bill limits a landlord and associated persons from serving on the governing board of a charter school, with an exception for a charter school-in-a-municipality.

The bill allows a high-performing charter school to assume the charter of an existing charter school within the same district and requires that the request to assume the charter be in written format from the charter school being assumed.

**Charter School Enrollment**

The bill expands available enrollment preferences for charter schools to include all preschool children who completed a prekindergarten program at the charter school or a prekindergarten program with a written agreement with the charter school, not limited to only the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) program.

The bill allows certain charter schools to increase their enrollment capacity beyond what is stated in the charter agreement, subject to certain conditions, and requires notification by the charter school to the sponsor of the intention to increase enrollment by March 1 for the upcoming school year.

**Charter School Students**

The bill allows charter schools to adopt their own code of student conduct and requires acknowledgement by the parents if the code is more stringent than the code of student conduct adopted by the charter school's sponsor.

The bill requires that the charter school sponsor and the Department of Education promptly and efficiently share student data, including student assessment data, with charter schools.

The bill clarifies that charter schools must comply with Florida law regarding notification to parents of any change in a student's services or monitoring related to mental, emotional, or physical well-being.

**Virtual Education Students**

The bill allows full-time virtual students to participate in athletic activities in any public school in the district where the student resides, if requirements are met, or develop an agreement with a private school for participation in athletics.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**DISABILITY HISTORY AND AWARENESS INSTRUCTION [CS/HB 447](#)**

*By the Student Academic Success Subcommittee and Rep. Salzman and others.*

*CS/SB 540 by the Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senators Collins, Burgess, Harrell, Wright, Gaetz, Albritton, Arrington, Avila, Berman, Bernard, Boyd, Bradley, Brodeur, Burton, Calatayud, Davis, DiCeglie, Garcia, Hooper, Ingoglia, Jones, Leek, Martin, McClain, Osgood, Passidomo, Pizzo, Polsky, Rodriguez, Rouson, Sharief, Simon, Smith, Truenow, and Trumbull.*

The bill designates the act as the "Evin B. Hartsell Act" and modifies the content of disability history and awareness instruction for school districts that choose to provide such instruction during the first two weeks of October.



Specifically, the bill:

- Requires instruction to include grade-specific content for kindergarten through Grade 12:
- Grades K-3: Conversations about bullying and activities to teach about physical disabilities.
- Grades 4-6: Information about autism spectrum disorder.
- Grades 7-9: Information about hearing impairments.
- Grades 10-12: Information about learning and intellectual disabilities.
- Authorizes the Department of Education to consult with the Evin B. Hartsell Foundation to develop the required instructional materials further.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

### **GULF OF AMERICA** [CS/HB 549](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee and Rep. Porras and others.*

*CS/SB 1058 by the Governmental Oversight and Accountability Committee and Senators Gruters and Avila.*

The bill (Chapter 2025-7, L.O.F.) reflects the federal designation of the "Gulf of Mexico" as the "Gulf of America." Under the bill, each state agency must change references to the "Gulf of Mexico" in geographic materials to the "Gulf of America." Similarly, starting on July 1, 2025, public and charter schools may only acquire instructional and library materials using the term "Gulf of America," as opposed to the "Gulf of Mexico."

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect on July 1, 2025.

### **DIABETES MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS** [CS/CS/CS/HB 597](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee, Health Professions and Programs Subcommittee, Education Administration Subcommittee, and Rep. Smith and others.*

*CS/SB 772 by the Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senator Calatayud.*

The bill (Chapter 2025-15, L.O.F.) authorizes school districts or public schools to acquire and maintain a supply of undesignated glucagon and requires that undesignated glucagon be stored in a secure location that is immediately accessible to authorized personnel. The bill authorizes school districts or public schools to enter into arrangements with manufacturers or suppliers to obtain glucagon free of charge or at a fair market or reduced price and allows school districts or public schools to accept donated or transferred glucagon that meets certain requirements. School districts or public schools may also obtain monetary donations or apply for grants to purchase glucagon.

The bill allows school districts or public schools to request a prescription for glucagon from a county health department and authorizes licensed health care practitioners to prescribe glucagon in the name of the school district or public school. The bill further authorizes licensed pharmacists to dispense glucagon.

The bill requires participating schools to make available undesignated glucagon to be administered as ordered in a student's diabetes medical management plan or by a health care practitioner. The bill requires employees to call for emergency assistance and provide parental notification after the administration of glucagon to a student. The bill provides certain persons and entities with immunity from

civil and criminal liability for the appropriate administration of glucagon. The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules to implement these requirements.

These provisions were approved by the Governor and take effect July 1, 2025.

### APPRENTICESHIP AND PREAPPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM FUNDING [CS/HB 681](#)

*By the Careers and Workforce Subcommittee, Rep. Melo, and others.*

*CS/SB 1458 by the Education Postsecondary Committee and Senator DiCeglie.*

The bill modifies transparency, financial accountability, and governance requirements in the administration of registered apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs. It establishes new requirements for partnerships between local educational agencies (LEAs) and program providers, modifies reporting timelines and content, and expands public access to workforce education funding information. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires the Department of Education (DOE) uniform minimum standards and policies for apprenticeship and preapprenticeship programs to allow partnerships between LEAs and program partners to ensure equitable and transparent funding arrangements.
- Requires partnership agreements between LEAs and apprenticeship or preapprenticeship providers to document each party's responsibilities and define a funding split based on services provided. If the LEA's role is administrative only, its funding share may not exceed 10 percent.
- Requires the DOE to develop a standard model contract template for LEA-program partnerships that addresses roles, funding terms, legal compliance, and reporting obligations.
- Modifies the required contents of the DOE's annual apprenticeship and preapprenticeship report by expanding existing reporting elements related to local educational LEA expenditures. Specifically, the bill:
  - Shifts the deadline for publication of the report from September 1 to November 30.
  - Expands the expenditure summary to include both the LEA's and the apprenticeship or preapprenticeship program's responsibilities and costs.
  - Adds to the requirement for reporting allocations by training provider, program, and occupation to also include the total funds "received."
  - Adds to the reporting of administrative costs a requirement to include the total number of personnel hours required to administer each apprenticeship and preapprenticeship program.
  - Directs the DOE to develop and publish an online funding transparency tool by July 1, 2026. The tool must provide searchable historical funding data (by source, school district, or Florida College System institution) for the previous three fiscal years.
  - Adds requirements for District Workforce Education Funding Steering Committee meetings, including public notice, opportunity for comment, publication of workpapers, and authorization for remote participation. It also moves the deadline for submitting the funding model to the Legislature from March 1 to at least two months before the start of the regular session.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**CHILD CARE AND EARLY LEARNING PROVIDERS [CS/SB 738](#)**

*By the Children, Families, and Elder Affairs Committee and Senator Burton.*

The bill revises and modernizes several requirements related to child care facility licensure, personnel training, facility inspections, and licensure violation enforcement. The bill:

- Allows the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to create three classification levels for violations relating to the health and safety of a child, and requires a class three violation to be the least serious, and must be the same incident at least three times within two years.
- Updates abbreviated inspection standards to include these new classification levels, requires at least two years of consecutive licensure, and requires two full onsite renewal inspections in the most recent two years with no current uncorrected violations or open complaints.
- Requires the DCF to provide criminal history record check results to child care facilities within three business days of receipt.
- Removes the requirement for child care facilities to provide parents with pagers or beepers during drop-in child care; to provide parents with information regarding the influenza virus and the dangers of a distracted adult leaving a child in a vehicle; and to develop a program to assist in preventing and avoiding physical and mental abuse.
- Revises introductory training for child care personnel and requires in-person training for at least one staff person trained in cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Requires the DCF to provide the minimum required training coursework online.
- Removes the requirement for the DCF to develop standards for specialized child care facilities for the care of mildly ill children.
- Requires the DCF to issue current or prospective child care personnel a 45-day provisional-hire status upon delayed background screening, provided direct supervision of that person by a fully screened and trained staff member when in contact with children.
- Requires a county commission that elects to license their own child care facilities to annually affirm this decision through a majority vote to designate a local licensing agency.
- Exempts child care facilities and family day care homes certified by the U.S. Department of Defense or the U.S. Coast Guard from licensure in certain instances.

The bill also exempts preschools from special assessments levied by municipalities. Further, the bill provides an exemption from licensing, except for the screening of personnel, for a child care facility that solely provides child care to certain eligible children.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS [HB 809](#)**

*By Reps. Hunschofsky, Lopez, V., and others.*

*CS/SB 1150 by the Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senator Calatayud.*

The bill exempts school social workers from the demonstration of mastery of general knowledge and subject area knowledge required for educator certification.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

### EDUCATOR PREPARATION [CS/CS/HB 875](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee, Careers and Workforce Subcommittee, and Reps. Rizo, Snyder, and others. CS/SB 1590 by the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education and Senator Burgess.*

#### **Implementation Plan**

The bill outlines a multi-year implementation plan, beginning with the Department of Education (DOE) establishing a workgroup by September 1, 2025, to revise the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs) and to develop a rule to implement uniform core curricula. The workgroup must include representatives from teacher preparation programs, educator preparation institutes, school districts, classroom teachers, and other stakeholders.

The bill requires the DOE to submit the revised FEAPs to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by July 1, 2026, and the State Board of Education (SBE) must consider them by August 1, 2026. Once the revised practices and rules are approved, the bill requires the DOE to submit an implementation plan to align teacher preparation programs, certification pathways, and core training courses with the new standards.

By July 1, 2027, the DOE must begin developing the Florida Teacher Excellence Examination (FTEE) to align with the revised FEAPs and serve as a readiness measure for certification.

#### **Uniform Core-Curricula**

The bill requires all state-approved teacher preparation programs to implement uniform core curricula by August 1, 2027, aligned with the revised FEAPs and adopted by the SBE to ensure consistency in teacher training statewide. The core curricula must:

- Support critical thinking, mastery of academic content, instructional strategies, and teaching competence;
- Be guided by the state's academic standards, including evidence-based assessment and grading practices;
- Include training on evidence-based instructional materials from various sources and on the use of intervention materials;
- Provide scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instruction grounded in the science of reading, with phonics as the primary strategy for teaching word reading;
- Include literacy and mathematics instructional practices and differentiated instruction for English language learners and students with disabilities;
- Require a mastery-based clinical experience in classroom settings; and
- Exclude instruction that distorts significant historical events or promotes identity politics or specified theories.

The bill also requires teacher candidates to complete two specific courses: one on the cognitive science of learning and one on classroom management and high-impact instructional strategies.

***Florida Center for Teaching Excellence***

The bill establishes the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence at Miami-Dade College, subject to funding, in collaboration with the University of South Florida, to prepare high-quality teachers through training in cognitive science, teaching strategies, and knowledge-rich curricula.

***Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching Certification Program***

The bill requires the DOE to create the Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching (CERT) Certification Program as a competency-based, on-the-job certification pathway for teachers holding a temporary certificate. School districts, charter schools, and charter management organizations are authorized to implement the program to support teacher development and professional certification.

The CERT program must include structured mentorship, individualized professional learning plans, and guided classroom practice. The program must include:

- An initial evaluation of the teacher's competencies to guide the development of a personalized professional learning plan;
- A summative evaluation aligned with the school or district's instructional personnel evaluation system;
- Ongoing professional learning tied to the educator's growth needs; and
- On-the-job training aligned to the revised FEAPs.

The bill requires candidates to pass the applicable subject area examination and complete all reading endorsement competencies, including the practicum, if required by the certificate area.

***Teacher Apprenticeship Program***

The bill revises mentor qualifications for the Teacher Apprenticeship Program to require three rather than five years of teaching experience, "effective" or "highly effective" evaluations not solely based on value-added model (VAM) scores, and in 2029, completion of clinical educator training and certificate or endorsement in reading, as applicable.

***Educator Certification***

Effective July 1, 2029, the bill adds new certification pathways and removes outdated ones. Specifically, the bill:

- Adds a general knowledge mastery pathway via education and classroom management coursework.
- Adds a professional preparation pathway through the CERT program.
- Removes the professional education competency exam for candidates completing approved programs.
- Repeals the use of professional learning certification programs and educator preparation institutes for certification.

***School Community Professional Learning Act***

The bill updates statutory references to align with the revised FEAPs and Florida Educational Leadership Standards. The bill requires training on using approved instructional materials, including intervention resources.

The bill requires the DOE to establish criteria for approving clinical educator and mentor training programs, including components such as FEAPs-based instruction, communication strategies, modeling of evidence-based practices, and educator resilience.

***Flexible Education Pathway for School Counselors***

The bill creates a flexible pathway to certification for school counselors by reducing internship hour requirements from 600 to 300 for classroom teachers with five years of experience and recent “effective” or “highly effective” evaluations. The SBE and Board of Governors must adopt rules and regulations to support flexibility in meeting internship requirements.

***Non-Degreed Teachers of Fine and Performing Arts***

The bill establishes qualifications for part-time, non-degreed fine and performing arts teachers to require background screening and documentation of a high school diploma and at least three years of successful experience in the specialization area.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law, except as otherwise expressly provided in this act.

**TYPE 1 DIABETES EARLY DETECTION PROGRAM [CS/CS/SB 958](#)**

*By the Appropriations Committee on Health and Human Services, Health Policy Committee, and Senator Bernard.*

The bill requires the Department of Health (DOH), in collaboration with school districts throughout the state, to develop informational materials on Type 1 diabetes for the parents and guardians of students. Within 90 days after July 1, 2025, the DOH must develop materials related to the early detection of Type 1 diabetes and post the materials on its website to be available to each early learning coalition, school district, and charter school.

The bill requires the DOH to develop a standardized methodology for each early learning coalition, school district, and charter school for the notification of the parents or guardians of voluntary prekindergarten, kindergarten, and first-grade students. Parents and guardians must be notified of the availability of the Type 1 diabetes early detection materials by September 30, 2025, and annually thereafter.

The bill also requires the informational materials on Type 1 diabetes to include, at a minimum:

- A description of Type 1 diabetes.
- A description of the risk factors and warning signs associated with Type 1 diabetes.
- A description of the process for screening students for early detection of Type 1 diabetes using a blood autoantibody test.
- A recommendation for further evaluation for students displaying warning signs associated with Type 1 diabetes or positive early detection screening results.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.



**REPORTING OF STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES** [CS/CS/HB 969](#)

*By the Human Services Subcommittee, Education Administration Subcommittee, Rep. Cassel, and others.  
CS/SB 1310 by Children, Families, and Elder Affairs and Senator Bradley.*

The bill requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA), in consultation with the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Department of Education (DOE), the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute (Institute), and other relevant stakeholders to evaluate school district student mental health services and supports and compliance with statutory requirements.

The bill requires the DOE, school district threat management coordinators, and mental health coordinators to provide specified information to the OPPAGA for reporting and evaluation purposes.

The bill requires the DCF and the Institute to coordinate with the OPPAGA and provide requested information related to the performance of the coordinated behavioral health system of care pursuant to Ch. 394, F.S. If approved by the Governor, or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

**DRIVER LICENSE EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS** [SB 994](#)

*By Senator Collins.*

The bill provides that each applicant for a driver's license who is 18 years of age or older must complete an approved traffic law and substance abuse education course.

The bill also provides that each learner's driver license applicant must satisfactorily complete a driver education course approved by the Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles that meets or exceeds the Department of Education Driver Education/Traffic Safety-Classroom #1900300 current course description.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**ELECTROCARDIOGRAMS FOR STUDENT ATHLETES** [CS/CS/CS/SB 1070](#)

*By the Fiscal Policy Committee, Health Policy Committee, Education Pre-K - 12 Committee, and Senators Simon, Avila, and Arrington.*

The bill cites the act as the "Second Chance Act" and requires that, beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, prior to participating or seeking to participate in interscholastic athletic competition for the first time, a student must pass an electrocardiogram (EKG) screening. The EKG screening must be based on standards established by the Florida High School Athletic Association's (FHSAA) Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. The bill allows a student who has received an EKG in the two years prior to the 2026-2027 school year to use that EKG to meet the requirement.

The bill requires the FHSAA to adopt bylaws to prohibit participation based on the results of an abnormal EKG until the student submits written medical clearance from a specified health professional.

The bill includes a provision that requires each school district to pursue public and private partnerships to provide low-cost EKGs for students and to exempt students who reside in counties where the district is unable to provide EKGs for less than \$50 per student.

The bill allows for exceptions to the required EKG for the following reasons:

- Parental objection based on religious reasons, which must be in writing.
- The parent has secured a medical exemption from the EKG by a physician.
- The school district where the student resides is unable to secure low-cost EKGs.

The bill also allows a practitioner in good standing with equivalent licensure issued by another state to provide the EKG.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAND REGULATION [CS/SB 1080](#)

*By the Rules Committee and Senator McClain.*

### **Zoning Applications and Comprehensive Plan Amendments**

The bill requires a local government to specify in writing the minimum information that must be submitted in an application for a zoning approval, rezoning approval, subdivision approval, certification, special exception, or variance. Such information must be available for inspection and copying, posted on the local government's website, and provided to an applicant at a pre-application meeting.

The bill also provides that comprehensive plan amendments not approved at the second public hearing in the plan amendment adoption process must be approved within 180 days thereafter to avoid being deemed withdrawn.

### **Timeframes for Processing Development Permits and Orders**

The bill establishes timeframes for which counties and cities must process applications for development permits and orders. Within five business days after receiving an application for the approval of a development permit or order, the local government must confirm receipt of the application to the applicant. Within 30 days of receiving an application, the local government must either notify the applicant in writing that the application is complete or specify any deficient areas. The local government must approve, approve with conditions, or deny the application within 120 days of deeming the application complete, or 180 days if the application requires a quasi-judicial or public hearing.

Additionally, the bill requires the local government to issue specified refund amounts to applicants for failing to meet the prescribed timeframes in the bill.

### **Impact Fees and Building Code Fees**

Current law provides limitations on impact fee increases imposed by local governments, requiring an increase to be phased in over specified time periods depending on the rate of the increase. However, the

phase-in limitations do not apply if the local government completes a study justifying the increase and demonstrating extraordinary circumstances necessitating the need to exceed the limitations, holds two public hearings, and receives approval by at least a two-thirds vote of the governing body. The bill prohibits a local government from increasing impact fees using extraordinary circumstances methodology if the local government has not increased the impact fee within the past 5 years. The bill increases the vote threshold to a unanimous vote of the governing body and requires such increase to be implemented in at least two but not more than four equal annual increments. These provisions take effect on January 1, 2026.

The bill also provides that alternative fees to school district impact fees must meet certain concurrency tests in order to be collected, charged, or imposed; and expands the use of revenue from building code fees and fines to also be used for carrying out processes and enforcement related to obtaining or finalizing building permits.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect October 1, 2025, except as otherwise provided.

#### **SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM** [CS/SB 1102](#)

*By the Fiscal Policy Committee and Senator Calatayud.*

The bill expands eligibility criteria for children with special needs served in the School Readiness (SR) program. The bill expands the individuals who can determine and provide documentation of a child's special needs and allows additional documentation, rather than only an individual education plan, to determine eligibility for the SR program, to include an Individualized Family Support Plan, diagnosis of a special need, or written determination by certain medical professionals.

The bill provides specific criteria for SR providers to be eligible to receive additional funding through the special needs differential rating for serving children with special needs. The criteria include meeting the minimum program assessment score for SR contracting, targeted training for working with children with special needs within a specified timeframe, and subsequent relevant training to maintain eligibility.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

#### **EDUCATION** [CS/CS/CS/HB 1105](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee, Higher Education Budget Subcommittee, Careers and Workforce Subcommittee, Rep. Kincart Jonsson, and others.*

*CS/CS/SB 270 by the Appropriations Committee on Higher Education, Education Postsecondary Committee, and Senator Burgess.*

The bill revises multiple components of Florida's K-20 education system, including charter school funding and accountability, high school graduation requirements, school bus safety, student device use, and postsecondary program eligibility.

***Charter Schools***

The bill establishes new funding and reporting requirements related to charter schools. The bill:

- Requires school districts to share any local government infrastructure surtax revenues with eligible charter schools based on enrollment, for levies approved on or after July 1, 2025.
- Requires school districts to provide district charter schools with information related to shared discretionary revenues.
- Requires the use of a State Board of Education-adopted standard monitoring tool to monitor charter school performance.

The bill modifies charter school conversion procedures and establishes a new class of “job engine” charter schools focused on job creation and economic development. The bill:

- Requires that charter school conversion applications submitted by parents must originate from parents of students enrolled in the school to be converted, and removes the requirement for demonstration of teacher support.
- Authorizes municipalities to apply to establish a job engine charter school, either as a new or conversion school, and allows such schools to give enrollment preference to children of employees of identified job-producing entities.
- Expands Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant eligibility to include job engine charter schools and clarifies eligibility for serving students in grades 6-12.

***Private School Construction***

The bill authorizes private schools located in counties with four incorporated municipalities to construct new facilities on property that housed specified facilities, such as a church or theater, under that facility's preexisting zoning and land use designations without obtaining a special exception or a land use change and without complying with any mitigation requirements or conditions.

***High School Instruction and Graduation Requirements***

The bill modifies provisions related to high school instruction and graduation options. The bill:

- Allows marching band to substitute for a performing arts or physical education credit, with exceptions.
- Eliminates the certificate of completion and requires the DOE to develop, by January 1, 2026, guidance about adult education and postsecondary options for students who do not earn a diploma.
- Requires the DOE to develop new applied, equivalent, and integrated courses to substitute for course requirements and to incorporate work-based internships in graduation planning.
- Expands the Florida Seal of Fine Arts to include Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) arts courses.
- Requires the DOE to establish, by August 1, 2026, competencies for a mathematics endorsement for teachers, which must include specified topics.

***Bright Futures Scholarship Program***

The bill:

- Expands Bright Futures Scholarship eligibility to include students who graduate from non-Florida high schools while residing with a parent or guardian who retired from military or public service within 12 months prior to graduation.
- Authorizes use of the Advanced Placement (AP) Capstone designation, with conditions, to meet specified diploma eligibility requirements for the Florida Academic Scholars (FAS) award, beginning with students graduating in the 2025-2026 school year, but clarifies that earning the AP Capstone designation does not satisfy the requirements for earning a standard high school diploma.

***Career and Professional Education***

The bill makes several changes to the Florida Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act and associated Bright Futures scholarship programs. The bill:

- Updates references to reflect the inclusion of the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars and Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars awards in the Bright Futures Scholarship Program.
- Requires CAPE academies and high schools offering career-themed courses to provide students the opportunity to earn the Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars award.
- Modifies eligibility for the Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars award by:
- Shifting the requirement from a three-course sequential program of studies to three career and technical education courses; and
- Requiring 75 hours of volunteer service, rather than the current 30, to satisfy the community service requirement for both Gold Seal Vocational and Gold Seal CAPE Scholars awards for students entering grade 9 in the 2024-2025 school year and thereafter.

***Career Dual Enrollment Access***

The bill requires dual enrollment agreements between career centers and the high schools they serve to specify how students will be notified of available transportation options and to address scheduling changes to increase access and participation. The bill also requires that dual enrollment articulation agreements between district school superintendents and public postsecondary institution presidents include any necessary scheduling changes.

***Workforce Credential Program for Students with Disabilities***

The bill creates a new program to help students with disabilities demonstrate job readiness through employer-recognized credentials. The bill:

- Establishes a DOE-led credentialing program for students with autism or cognitive disabilities, to be implemented by January 1, 2026.
- Requires validation by exceptional student education (ESE) instructors and collaboration with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) on a safety badge.
- Mandates annual reports through 2030, on participation and outcomes.

**Student Wireless Communications Device Use**

The bill establishes statewide restrictions on student cell phone use and creates a pilot to evaluate full-day prohibitions. The bill:

- Prohibits device use by elementary and middle school students during the school day.
- Prohibits high school use during instructional time, except as authorized, with teacher-designated storage areas and board-adopted usage zones.
- Provides exceptions for medical or educational needs.
- Requires the DOE to study full-day restrictions in high schools in six districts and submit a report with a model policy by December 1, 2026.

**School Bus Trespass**

The bill modifies the enforcement of trespassing laws on school property by:

- Expanding the definition of “school” for purposes of the school trespass statute to include any vehicle operated, owned, or contracted by a school district for student transportation.
- Clarifying that verbal notice or a posted sign is sufficient to support prosecution for trespass.
- Authorizing an arrest without a warrant based on probable cause for trespass on a school bus.

**Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys**

The bill revises the structure and operations of the Council on the Social Status of Black Men and Boys by:

- Transferring the council and administrative support from the Department of Legal Affairs to Florida Memorial University.
- Reducing the quorum requirement from 11 to 9 members and allowing members to participate via communications media technology to count toward a quorum and vote.

**ABLE Program Governance**

The bill authorizes the Florida Prepaid College Board chair to designate a representative to serve on the board of directors of Florida ABLE, Inc. It also revises the governance structure of Florida ABLE, Inc. by requiring its board to elect a chair from among its members annually, rather than designating the chair of the Florida Prepaid College Board to serve in that role.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor’s signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**WORKFORCE EDUCATION [CS/HB 1145](#)**

*By the Higher Education Budget Subcommittee and Rep. Shoaf.  
CS/SB 742 by the Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senator Simon.*

The bill expands access to workforce education grant funding and modifies requirements under the Money-back Guarantee Program.

Specifically, the bill:

- Authorizes charter schools to directly apply for and receive funding through the Workforce Development Capitalization Incentive Grant Program. This allows charter schools to independently



propose and implement new or expanded career and technical education programs that lead to industry certifications on the CAPE Industry Certification Funding List.

- Expands the Money-back Guarantee Program, which requires school districts and Florida College System (FCS) institutions to refund tuition to students who are unable to find employment within six months of completing a qualifying workforce program. The bill:
- Increases the number of required programs from three to six by July 1, 2026, and requires notification to the State Board of Education.
- Clarifies that enrollment in a designated program automatically enrolls the student in the Money-back Guarantee Program. o Allows institutions to set eligibility criteria for reimbursement, but specifies that work search and internship requirements may not exceed the requirements for reemployment assistance under s. 443.091, F.S.
- Requires school districts and FCS institutions to report eligibility criteria annually to the State Board of Education.
- Expands DOE's annual reporting requirement to include both performance outcomes and the eligibility criteria used by each school district and FCS institution for tuition reimbursement.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

#### **HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS** [CS/HB 1237](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee and Reps. Booth, Overdorf, and others.*

*CS/SB 444 by the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education and Senators Avila, Collins, and Yarborough.*

The bill creates requirements for human trafficking awareness training in public schools. The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) by December 1, 2025, to identify a free training curriculum regarding human trafficking awareness, which may be conducted either in person or online. The training must include:

- The difference between sex trafficking and labor trafficking.
- The identification of students who may be victims of human trafficking.
- The role of school employees in reporting and responding to suspected human trafficking.
- A protocol for reporting suspected human trafficking. Each public school, including charter schools, must require that the following staff receive human trafficking awareness training:
  - o Instructional personnel include classroom teachers, school counselors, social workers, career specialists, school psychologists, librarians and media specialists, learning specialists, and paraprofessionals.
  - o School administrators.
  - o Educational Support Employees include, but are not limited to, doctors, nurses, secretaries, craft workers, and service workers.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**EDUCATION** [CS/CS/HB 1255](#)

*By the Education and Employment Committee, Student Academic Success Subcommittee, and Reps. Trabulsy, Tramont, and others.*

*CS/CS/SB 1618 by the Fiscal Policy Committee, the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education, and Senator Calatayud.*

The bill modifies Florida's prekindergarten through grade 12 education system related to early learning, academic standards and student achievement, instructional personnel, and student discipline, and modifies provisions related to higher education, which focus on tuition and fee policies, educational programs, and institutional operations. The bill also repeals the Florida School for Competitive Academics.

***Early Learning and the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program***

The bill updates eligibility for the School Readiness (SR) program by redefining "economically disadvantaged" as families earning up to 55 percent of the state median income, replacing the previous threshold of 150 percent of the federal poverty level. The bill requires SR program waitlists to track children waiting for services by household income and priority levels. Finally, the bill removes the restriction preventing families from using the full Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) voucher if their child has attended more than 70 percent of the program, allowing transfers between providers without forfeiting benefits.

***School Districts***

The bill removes the Commissioner of Education's authority to evaluate whether schools have adequately included minority or low-income persons on school advisory councils. The bill also adds liability insurance to the types of casualty insurance expenses that can be funded using revenues from a school district's discretionary millage levy.

***K-12 Academic Support and Tutoring***

The bill expands student academic support for students with mathematics deficiencies by requiring school districts to notify parents when a student is eligible for the New Worlds Scholarship or tutoring services. The bill requires that the New Worlds Tutoring Program's best practice guidelines, aligned with Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) standards, must be in consultation with the Department of Education's (DOE's) Office of Mathematics and Science. The bill requires that reading interventions be delivered by educators with a reading certification, endorsement, or micro-credential and specifies supervision for instructors with a micro-credential. Finally, the bill requires that instruction on personal financial literacy be included in guidance on the costs of higher education and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

***Charter and Private School Facilities***

The bill specifies that local governments cannot enforce building, site, or operational rules on charter schools, such as parking, student capacity, hours of operation, or site size, unless those rules are also uniformly applied to public schools in the area. Charter schools are exempt from land use changes or permits that would not be required of other public or private schools at the same location. Any condition to limit the size or hours of operation imposed on a charter school must match those for public schools

and only apply if the charter school is on a site with an already approved development order that includes such conditions.

The bill authorizes private schools located in counties with four incorporated municipalities to construct new facilities on property that housed specified facilities, such as a church or theater, under the preexisting zoning and land use designations without obtaining a special exception or a land use change and without complying with any mitigation requirements or conditions.

### ***Instructional Personnel***

The bill replaces the term “critical-teacher shortage” with “high-demand teacher needs area” throughout the statute. The bill authorizes lab schools and charter school consortia with at least 30-member schools and a DOE-approved professional learning system to submit Teacher of the Year nominations. The bill also requires that background screening for private school employees be transferred to the Agency for Health Care Administration clearinghouse, aligning fingerprinting standards with those applied to public school teachers.

### ***Student Discipline and Safety***

The bill gives school districts additional authority to address students’ persistent disobedience or disrespect. The bill specifies measures for the child study team and provides that prior to the expiration of an expulsion period, the school superintendent must determine, based on input from the school’s threat management team, whether the expulsion should be extended and what educational services should be offered during the extension. The bill requires that if a school district or charter school adopts corporal punishment policies, the policies must include a requirement for parental permission. The bill revises requirements for emergency opioid antagonists, removing the specification of naloxone and allowing broader options for K-12 and postsecondary institutions.

### ***Scholarships and Financial Aid***

The bill expands Bright Futures Scholarship eligibility to include students who graduate from non-Florida high schools while residing with a parent or guardian who retired from military or public service within 12 months prior to graduation. The bill also authorizes the use of tutoring hours performed by students under the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) program, whether paid or unpaid, to count toward community service requirements for both high school graduation and the Bright Futures program. The bill also clarifies and maintains the eligibility of EASE Grant institutions under DOE’s oversight for funding through the Linking Industry to Nursing Education (LINE) initiative.

### ***Higher Education***

The bill renames Hillsborough Community College to Hillsborough College. The update cycle for university facility master plans is extended from every five years to every ten years. The bill authorizes the State Board of Education (SBE) and the Board of Governors to identify a national consortium to develop general education courses for high school students and to deliver related training under the Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement. The bill expands acceptable assessments for

university preeminence eligibility by including the Classical Learning Test (CLT), with a qualifying average score of 83 or above on a 120-point scale.

The bill revises the criteria for nonpublic religious postsecondary institutions to operate without licensure. The bill requires the Commission for Independent Education (Commission) to approve or deny institution compliance affidavits in a public meeting. The bill authorizes the commission to take certain actions against an institution that fails to comply with operating requirements.

#### ***Military-Connected Students***

The bill extends the repeal date of the Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2028, and requires the DOE to develop training modules for employees to expedite student record transfers for military families.

#### ***Assessments and Standards***

The bill requires that standards documents approved by the SBE contain only the standards and benchmarks, without additional clarification statements. All currently-approved standards documents must be revised no later than July 1, 2026. The bill adds the CLT 10 assessment as an approved test option for students in grade 10 under the Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement.

#### ***Public Agency Provisions***

The bill revises membership in local children's services councils and increases terms from two to three years. The bill also waives open competition requirements for state agencies to hire individuals who have completed an apprenticeship program with that agency.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

### **JUVENILE JUSTICE [CS/CS/CS/SB 1344](#)**

*By the Fiscal Policy Committee, the Appropriations Committee on Criminal and Civil Justice, the Criminal Justice Committee, and Senator Simon.*

#### ***Truancy***

The circuit court has exclusive original jurisdiction of early truancy intervention and may retain jurisdiction for up to 180 days. The court must terminate supervision and relinquish jurisdiction if the child has substantially complied with the requirements of early truancy intervention, is no longer subject to compulsory education, or is adjudicated a child needing services.

If the school determines that a student subject to compulsory school attendance has had at least five unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, with a calendar month or 10 unexcused absences, or absences for which the reasons are unknown, within a 90-day calendar-day period or has had more than 15 unexcused absences in a 90-day calendar period, the superintendent of schools may file a truancy petition seeking early truancy intervention. A principal must report students

who have 15 unexcused absences in a period of 90 days, and the school board must take action and provide remedial actions for failure to comply.

If the court determines that the student missed any of the alleged days, the court must enter an order finding the child to be a truant status offender, order the student to attend school, and order the parent, legal guardian, or custodian to ensure that the student attends school. If the student substantially complies with compulsory school attendance, the court must close the truancy case.

If the student does not substantially comply with compulsory school attendance and court ordered services required and the child meets the definition of a child in need of services, the case must be referred by the court to the DJJ's designated service provider for review by the case staffing committee with a recommendation to file a petition for child in need of services.

Any truant student who meets the definition of a child in need of services and who has been found in contempt for violation of a court order two or more times must be referred to the case staffing committee with a recommendation that the committee file a petition for a child in need of services. The truancy case must be closed if the child is adjudicated as needing services.

Additionally, the bill amends the education statutes to revise provisions relating to child study teams. Some of these revisions include allowing a parent to attend the meeting virtually or by telephone and permitting the meeting to take place even if the parent fails to attend.

### SCHOOL DISTRICT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS [CS/SB 1374](#)

*By the Rules Committee and Senator Yarborough.*

The bill modifies reporting, self-reporting, and background screening requirements for school employees and volunteers. It expands mandatory notifications, requires new school district policies, and authorizes additional options for background checks.

Specifically, the bill:

- Requires district school boards to adopt a policy for the temporary removal of instructional personnel from the classroom within 24 hours after notification of an arrest for a felony or any misdemeanor offense listed in Level 2 background screening standards.
- Expands law enforcement notification requirements to include misdemeanor offenses under Level 2 background screening.
- Expands self-reporting requirements for instructional and administrative personnel, requiring them to report felony and misdemeanor arrests under Level 2 background screening standards within 48 hours. The bill clarifies that self-reports are not admissions of guilt and are inadmissible in any proceeding.
- Authorizes public and private schools participating in state scholarship programs to screen volunteers through the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse or request national criminal history checks through the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

The bill also requires school districts to handle sealed and expunged criminal records disclosed through self-reporting in accordance with existing confidentiality laws.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

### **STUDENTS ENROLLED IN DROPOUT RETRIEVAL PROGRAMS** [CS/CS/SB 1402](#)

*By the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education, Education Pre-K - 12 Committee, and Senator Yarborough.*

The bill authorizes a Virtual Instruction Program (VIP) provider to choose to receive a school improvement rating in lieu of a school grade for each district with which it contracts and requires that the school improvement rating be based on the assessment scores of all students served by that VIP within the school district.

The bill exempts VIP providers that operate exclusively as a dropout retrieval program from receiving a district grade. The bill also requires all dropout retrieval programs to choose between receiving a school improvement rating or a school grade. The bill defines a dropout retrieval program as a program serving students who have officially withdrawn from high school before graduation and were not engaged in the education system at the time of enrollment.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

### **SCHOOL SAFETY** [CS/SB 1470](#)

*By the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education and Senator Burgess.*

The bill expands the Chris Hixon, Coach Aaron Feis, and Coach Scott Beigel School Guardian Program (school guardian program), clarifies perimeter and door security requirements, modifies training and oversight for school security guards, and refines procedures for threat assessment and emergency response.

#### ***School Guardian Program Options and Oversight***

The bill aligns the training, certification, and oversight of school security guards with requirements for school guardians. Specifically, the bill:

- Requires all school security guard training, including initial and ongoing training, to be conducted or approved by a sheriff;
- Requires background screening, psychological evaluation, and drug testing before training;
- Prohibits sheriffs from waiving training or screening costs for security agencies;
- Requires sheriffs to maintain training, certification, and firearm qualification records for each certified guard; and
- Allows sheriffs to provide training to individuals legally allowed to carry a concealed firearm under Florida law, including under permitless carry provisions.



The bill authorizes child care facilities to participate in the school guardian program to the same extent as a private school.

***Reporting Requirements for School Safety Personnel***

The bill modifies existing reporting requirements for school guardians and school security guards, which:

- Aligns requirements for school security guards reporting to school guardians;
- Requires security agencies, in addition to schools and sheriffs, to report school security guard employment and separation data to the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE); and
- Directs the FDLE to maintain a consolidated statewide list of school guardians and security guards, including certification, appointment, and separation data, as well as any firearm discharges or misconduct reported under law.

***Clarifications to Locked Campus and Access Requirements***

The bill clarifies and modifies school perimeter and door security requirements. Specifically, the bill:

- Limits the school perimeter, locked access, and door security requirements to the time beginning 30 minutes before the school day and ending 30 minutes after;
- Allows doors or gates to remain unlocked if a locked barrier separates the space from student-occupied areas;
- Provides exemptions for:
  - Career and technical education spaces where locking doors would pose health or safety risks (with documentation in the Florida Safe Schools Assessment Tool);
  - Common areas such as cafeterias and media centers, except during instructional time or student testing; and
  - Requires each substitute teacher to receive school safety protocols and procedures before his or her first day of substitute teaching.

***Temporary Door Lock Use During Active Assailant Incidents***

The bill allows classrooms with permanently installed door locks also to use temporary door locks during active assailant incidents if the devices:

- Can be removed from the egress side in a single operation without a key.
- Can be removed from the ingress side with a key or other credential.
- Comply with the Florida Fire Prevention Code, with allowance for installation at any height, and
- Are incorporated into the school's active assailant response plan.

***Panic Alert and Digital Mapping System Integration***

Subject to appropriation, the bill requires the Department of Education to establish and maintain a centralized system that integrates panic alert systems and digital maps used by public and charter schools. All such schools must connect their panic alert systems to the centralized system and ensure interoperability for real-time emergency coordination.

**Behavioral Threat Management and Data Privacy**

The bill clarifies the responsibilities of the Office of Safe Schools (OSS) regarding behavioral threat assessment and management. The bill codifies OSS's role in maintaining the statewide threat management process and the Florida-specific threat assessment instrument, and authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt rules governing access to threat assessment reports stored in the statewide threat management portal.

**Florida Institute of School Safety Workgroup**

The bill directs the OSS to convene a stakeholder workgroup to develop recommendations for the creation of a Florida Institute of School Safety. The workgroup must include law enforcement, school personnel, mental health professionals, and other experts. OSS must submit its recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by January 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**ANAPHYLAXIS IN PUBLIC AND CHARTER SCHOOLS [CS/CS/SB 1514](#)**

*By the Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education, Education Pre-K - 12 Committee, and Senators Smith, Arrington, Davis, and Avila.*

This bill requires district school boards and charter school governing boards to ensure that the emergency action plan for anaphylaxis for each student in kindergarten through grade eight is in effect and accessible at all times when the student is on campus, including during extracurricular activities, athletics, school dances, and contracted before-and-after-school programs at the school.

The bill also requires district school boards and charter school governing boards to ensure that each school serving these grade levels provides training to an adequate number of school personnel and contracted staff in preventing and responding to allergic reactions, including anaphylaxis. The training must include instruction on recognizing the signs of an anaphylactic reaction and administering an FDA-approved epinephrine delivery device that has a premeasured, appropriate weight-based dose. The bill requires the State Board of Education, in consultation with the Department of Health, to adopt rules by October 1, 2025, including identifying an approved training curriculum.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**BACKGROUND SCREENING OF ATHLETIC COACHES [CS/CS/SB 1546](#)**

*By the Rules Committee, Criminal Justice Committee, and Senator Grall.*

The bill amends s. 943.0438, F.S., to extend the implementation date for the requirement that current and prospective athletic coaches must pass a Level II background screening from January 1, 2025, to July 1, 2026.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.

**CARDIAC EMERGENCIES** [CS/HB 1607](#)

*By the Education Administration Subcommittee and Reps. Yarkosky, Rizo, and others.*

*CS/SB 430 by the Education Pre-K – 12 Committee and Senators Simon, Burgess, and Arrington.*

The bill requires school districts to provide basic first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training to students, once in middle school and once in high school, through physical education or health classes. The instruction must include the opportunity to practice CPR skills and incorporate the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED).

The bill creates a Plan for Urgent Life-Saving Emergencies (PULSE), which each school district must develop to guide personnel in responding to sudden cardiac arrest and similar emergencies on school grounds. The plan must incorporate evidence-based elements, consider those recommended by the American Heart Association, and be integrated with local emergency response protocols.

The bill also requires that by July 1, 2027, each public school, including charter schools, have at least one operational AED on campus in a clearly marked and publicized location. Schools must maintain the AED in accordance with manufacturer guidelines, keep verification records, register the AED's location with the local emergency medical services medical director, and ensure that appropriate staff are trained in CPR and defibrillator use. The bill also clarifies that a public school's compliance with the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) rules regarding AEDs does not constitute compliance with these requirements.

The bill provides civil liability protection for school employees and volunteers under the Good Samaritan Act and the Cardiac Arrest Survival Act.

If approved by the Governor or allowed to become law without the Governor's signature, these provisions take effect July 1, 2025.