

Florida Education Association

Frontline Report

2022 Legislative Session

Interim Committee Week Six

December 3, 2021

Week Six

This was the last and final committee week of the 2022 legislative session. Session is around the corner, and we anticipated more being done this week. Alas, few bills were taken up for consideration.

Priority Legislation Update

Currently we are tracking more than 100 education-related bills out of over 2,000 filed bills this session. The final bill filing deadline is the opening day of session on Jan. 11. For up-to-date information on all our priority bills this session, visit the FEA website at <https://feaweb.org/session>.

Assessment and Accountability

One of the most anticipated education bills relates to assessment and accountability. **SB 1048**, by Sen. Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens), was quietly filed on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving.

In summary, the Senate bill does not live up to the governor or commissioner's billing as fewer and better tests. Instead, there are more tests and more time on testing, and no change in our state's flawed accountability system. The bill removes the paper and pencil testing process in the lower grades and requires the test results be returned to teacher within a week and parents within two weeks. Perhaps the standardized data will be provided more quickly, but the dependence on computer-based assessments, whether adaptive or not, does not translate into good teaching and learning.

The bill requires three computer-based assessments for each student in grades 3-10 for English language arts and 3-8 in math, with the first two assessments being labeled as "Progress Monitoring." The final assessment would be given at the end of the year and used in the same way as the current FSA. There would also be no change in the End of Course and science tests that are currently administered and no changes in the process of assigning school grades, nor would the consequences change, except for a pause in some consequences for the first year the new tests are implemented (2022-23).

In prekindergarten through grade 2, three computer-based progress monitoring tests would be used to guide instruction and identify students having difficulties. The bill states the tests are for "screening and diagnostic purposes."

We will be watching and sharing recommendations for improvement as we wait for the House bill to be released. For a more comprehensive overview of all the proposed changes in SB 1048, visit <https://feaweb.org/issues-action/2022-legislative-session/bills-were-watching/sb-1048/>.

FEA Priority Bills

FEA is currently advocating for several policy changes this session. These include:

- **HB 587** (Rep. Rene Plasencia, R-Titusville)/ **SB 298** (Sen. Lauren Book, D-Plantation), regarding instructional personnel and school administrator salaries, will allow school districts more flexibility in allocating the Teacher Salary Increase Allocation (TSIA) to experienced teachers.
- **HB 6077**, Postsecondary Intellectual Freedom and Viewpoint Diversity (Rep. Yvonne Hinson, D-Gainesville)/ **SB 810** (Sen. Tina Polsky, D-Boca Raton) is a fix to last year's bill that attacks our higher education faculty's academic freedom.
- **HB 769**, State University Student Fee Waivers (Rep. Joy Goff-Marcil, D-Maitland)/ **SB 666** (Sen. Janet Cruz, D-Tampa) is the fee waiver bill that will help graduate assistants in the state university system afford their education while they are both teaching

undergraduate classes and conducting the research required for them to earn advanced degrees.

Other FEA priority bills that are still in bill drafting and have not been assigned bill numbers include legislation addressing contracts for instructional personnel and legislation addressing our state's education staff professional critical shortages.

Committees of Relevance This Week

This **Senate Education Committee** reviewed 10 bills this week. Of note to our members is **SB 758**, by Sen. Manny Diaz (R-Hialeah Gardens). This legislation proposes a statewide commission for charter school review and approval. Questions remain about the decision-making authority of the proposed commission and how it will interact with local school districts. Also of concern are the local implications for the increase in the amount of charter schools in certain districts and the effect they will have on public schools. The bill passed 7-3 along party lines except for Sen. Shevrin Jones (D-Miami Gardens), who voted with Republicans in support of the bill. The bill's next stop will be the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Education.

Also in the Senate, the **Ethics and Elections Committee** spent most of its meeting discussing school board elections. **SB 244**, by Sen. Joe Gruters (R-Sarasota), aims to place a constitutional amendment on the 2024 ballot that will require school board seats to be elected on a partisan basis. Sen. Tina Polsky (D-Boca Raton) inquired about the origin of nonpartisan school board elections and the need for these elections to become partisan. Sen. Gruters responded regarding partisan "shell games" and the need for voters to be aware of candidate's values. Sen. Annette Taddeo (D-Miami) expressed serious concerns about how the measure could disenfranchise NPA (No Party Affiliation) voters in her district in school board races. The bill passed by a party line 5-4 vote. It now heads to the Senate Education Committee.

Redistricting Part II: Maps, Maps, Maps!

The House Redistricting Committee has released four proposed maps, two congressional maps and two State House maps. The proposed House maps, **H8005** and **H8007**, are far

different from the district maps currently being used. We see large-scale changes throughout the state, and unlike the Senate, the House has changed nearly every district number.

As you may recall from the previous *Frontline*, Florida is now home to 21.5 million residents (an increase of 14.6 percent), with the most considerable growth occurring in Osceola, St. Johns, Sumter and Walton counties and the most considerable decreases occurring in Gulf, Hardee, Lafayette, and Calhoun counties. House districts incorporate a much smaller population than Senate districts, so the population shifts throughout the state are causing more significant changes to the maps.

The two proposed House maps are very different, but here are some commonalities that run throughout them:

- There are significant changes in the South Florida area. Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach will have vastly different districts and could pit two House incumbents against one another.
 - The proposed HD 104 would incorporate parts of Miami-Dade and Broward; this district would combine the current HD 102 and HD 103 into one House Seat and pit the incumbents against one another.
 - In Palm Beach, one of the proposed maps would make significant changes to the House districts. Proposed map H8005 would merge several districts along the coast and redraw a long-standing majority/minority seat.
- In Central Florida, where most of the state's population growth has occurred, we see some extensive changes.
 - Current HD 50 will now be a part of an expansive district, HD 35, which stretches down to the southern Osceola County line.
 - The proposed HD 37, which includes the University of Central Florida, now has parts of southern Seminole County.
 - Additionally, two of our friends have been drawn into the same district, HD 42.
- Notably, the most significant change made in the Panhandle is to HD 9. Currently, this district is wholly within Leon County; however, the two proposed versions of HD 9 shift the district east to incorporate less of Leon County and add parts of neighboring counties.
- The House seats in the Jacksonville area are also seeing some changes.
 - Both proposed maps combine parts of the current House District 13 and 14 into one district.
 - Additionally, two incumbents would be drawn into the new House District 12.

Thanks to Alexis Montalvo for assisting with the redistricting content, Chad Leonard for committees of relevance content and Cathy Boehme for priority bill legislation content.

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