

Florida Education Association

# *Frontline Report*

*2025 Legislative Session*

*January 17, 2025*

## **Your Advocacy is Working**

Public education advocates like you have been demanding that legislators pay attention to the voices and concerns of teachers and education staff professionals. In the 2024 legislative session, 178 FEA members from all areas of the state came to Tallahassee to testify, meet with lawmakers and advocate for public education. An additional 60,000 FEA members took action by emailing, calling or visiting legislators in their home districts. Make no mistake about it, your voices are being heard!

FEA President Andrew Spar and several FEA members have been asked to share how FEA locals offer professional learning and mentoring in next week's House Student Academic Success Committee. This is the first time in over a decade that FEA has been invited to present at a House committee meeting.

Meanwhile, in the Senate, Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez (R-Doral) has filed [SB 136](#) which would help ensure educators are paid a fair wage and strengthens our unions' ability to fight for better pay at the bargaining table.

Both of these positive developments are because of the hard work FEA members like you have been doing in building relationships with lawmakers while advocating for better pay and respect on the job.

## **Let's Build on this Momentum**

It's critical that we build on the early momentum we are seeing at the start of session. FEA will once again be hosting weekly [Power Hour sessions](#) on Zoom throughout session.

If you've never attended Power Hour before, it's an hour jam-packed with excitement and advocacy. We provide updates on what is happening in the legislature as well as take collective

action to advance [FEA's legislative priorities](#).

The meetings occur each Tuesday during session from 5:30-6:30 p.m. EST. [Register here](#) to join us on Feb. 4, 11 and 18 for these interim committee week Power Hours!

## Bills We're Watching

We are still nearly a month and a half away from the start of session and the list of bills we are watching is going to get much larger. For now, there are two bills you need to know about:

- [SB 136](#): As we mentioned above, this bill would go a long way towards fixing the inequities in educator pay. Salary compression has been in issue for at least a decade since Gov. Scott signed legislation to create “performance pay” which placed limits on raises for experienced teachers. Gov. DeSantis’ focus on increasing pay only for starting teachers has made the issue much worse. In total, there are more than 20 rules and laws in Florida that restrict how teachers can be paid. By getting rid of these restrictions, SB 136 places the power to determine salaries back where it belongs, at the bargaining table where local unions and school districts will be able to negotiate fair raises without having to navigate the complex and burdensome rules that currently limit pay raises for experienced teachers.
- [SB 140](#): When bad bills die in one legislative session, they are often brought back the next session and somehow made even worse. That is definitely the case with SB 140. SB 140 takes away the voices of educators and community members in how schools in their communities are operated. To understand how SB 140 impacts communities, it’s important to remember that at its core, the charter school industry is largely a [real estate scheme](#) designed to enrich large, for-profit charter school corporations at the expense of neighborhood public schools. SB 140 makes it even easier for corporate-run charters to rake in profits and can even force school districts to give away land once that land has been deemed as “surplus” by the unelected bureaucrats on Florida’s State Board of Education.

## Committee Meetings Recap

We end this week’s newsletter by taking a look back at what happened during this interim committee week. It was full of round-table discussions and presentations. While none of the committees have taken up any legislation yet, the topics of discussion during these interim committees give us some indication of what priorities committee leadership is looking at.

In the education policy committees, the big topics of discussion this week included career and technical education, early learning and supporting students with special needs. Meanwhile, the education appropriations committees received overviews of education spending.

Next week will be more of the same; committee meetings will be dominated by discussions and presentations. Legislation will start to move in committees during the February committee weeks.

That being said, Gov. DeSantis has called a Special Session for the week of Jan. 27 and his wish list of items for the special session does include some education topics. So far, the leadership in the legislature has [pushed back](#) and it's entirely unclear what, if anything, will materialize that week. There will be an update in next week's Frontline newsletter. If something urgent comes up before next Friday, we'll send a text out to our education activists. To be sure you are signed up to receive those messages, text "edacativist" to 22394. Or, if you're reading this on your phone, simply [click this link](#) and then press send.

*Questions? Call PPA at 850-224-2078.*

If this email was forwarded to you, [click here to subscribe to the FEA Frontline so you can receive these update regularly.](#)

[Unsubscribe - Unsubscribe Preferences](#)