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Florida Education Association

Frontline Report

2025 Legislative Session

April 17, 2025

Our thoughts are with the students, staff and faculty of Florida State University as well as all of those spread around the state who have loved ones that work at or attend FSU.

As we are writing this newsletter, there is still much that is unknown about today's mass shooting. And, unfortunately, there are some questions that we will likely never get the answers to.

We recognize that the emotional and mental toll of incidents like this can linger long after the immediate danger passes. It is ok to feel shaken, need rest, and to seek support. If you or someone you know could benefit from speaking with a professional, please take advantage of the [resources available to you](#).

The end of the seventh week of the legislative session brings with it the end of almost all committee meetings as well. As a result, many of the committees that met this week had marathon meetings to get bills in the correct posture to be heard on the House and Senate floor.

In addition to those floor sessions, another focus of the final two weeks will be budget conference—the formal process through which the House and Senate come to agreement on their budget differences which currently are over \$4 billion.

Update on Presidential Searches

A few years back, legislators passed a law that allowed university presidential searches to be conducted without transparency. The results have been disastrous. Voters need to look no further than Ben Sasse's fleeing of the University of Florida to see why such important decisions as a university president must be done openly, transparently and with public participation.

Having these searches be placed back in the sunshine was one of the legislative priorities of FEA and the United Faculty of Florida heading into the 2025 legislative session. On Wednesday, the House approved HB 1321, which fulfills that priority, on a vote of [104-8](#). This legislation passed overwhelmingly despite [fierce criticism from Gov. DeSantis](#). The Senate companion, SB 1726, will be heard in its final committee stop on Monday, April 21.

The Worst Committee Meeting of the Session???

In a legislative session that saw no shortage of terrible legislation, Thursday's House Education and Employment Committee meeting truly stands out for the sheer amount of harmful bills that were on the agenda.

In this one meeting, committee members passed 15 bills including

- HB 1225 to [roll back child labor protections](#), on a vote of [14-6](#).
- HB 1539 a [blatantly unconstitutional book ban bill](#), on a vote of [14-5](#).
- HB 1255 a [regressive sex education bill](#) on a vote of [17-4](#).

On top of those bills was HB 1267. For most of session this bill was on the single subject of charter school co-location. To better understand that practice, check out this [public testimony](#) from Zander Moricz, a recent high school graduate of Florida's public schools, who spoke out earlier this week on the Senate version of the charter school co-location bill., who spoke out earlier this week on the Senate version of the charter school co-location bill.

Late Tuesday evening, a new version of [HB 1267](#) was released. It contains a mishmash of policy from other bills that were in danger of not making it through the committee process. One of the new things that popped up in the bill is a [significant change to the school grading system](#) which is designed to label more schools as failing so those schools can be turned over to charter school corporations. HB 1267 passed on a vote of [13-5](#).

The fate of all four of these bills remains uncertain. As a reminder, for a bill to become law it must pass both chambers in the same form. So far, the Senate has not shown an appetite for these bills.

We know that as budget negotiations continue, those negotiations include backroom deals made over policy as well. So, we'll remain vigilant in monitoring what's happening in the Senate and let you know if any of these policies start to move there.

SB 140: A Very Bad Bill is now Moderately Better

Sen. Don Gaetz (R-Pensacola) removed the provisions from his charter school bill, SB 140, that would have forced school districts to turn over property to charter school corporations if that property were deemed to be surplus by the State Board of Education.

However, the bill still allows public schools to be “converted” to charter schools without the consent of the teachers and staff who work at the school, the school district, or the community at large.

This was the last committee stop for SB 140. Its House companion, HB 123 has also passed each of its committees. So, this bill is well on its way to becoming law.

Budget Update

We have heard from a lot of you that your legislators have responded to the emails you’ve sent about the budget. A common response from legislators seems to be that this budget doesn’t actually cut funding for AP, IB, CAPE, etc. That response is dishonest at worst and disingenuous at best. You don’t have to take our word for it. A non-partisan analysis prepared by staff in the Senate makes it quite plain that “The proposed reductions to the acceleration program bonuses may provide an estimated \$292 million savings to the state.”

When the state “saves” nearly \$300 million that is the definition of a budget cut.

Aside from the cut to college and career prep programs, the budget is also a cut because it doesn’t even come close to keeping up with inflation as seen in the image below.



Putting the Budget into Perspective



2006 Per-student Spending adjusted for inflation (Pre-Great recession)	\$10,489	Florida average teacher salary #28 in the nation
2019 Per student spending adjusted for inflation (The first budget Gov. DeSantis signed into law.)	\$9,541	Florida average teacher salary #46 in the nation and per student spending is \$948 less than 2006.
2025 House Proposed budget	\$9,050	Florida average teacher salary #50 in the nation and per student funding is \$1,439 less than 2006 and \$491 less than DeSantis’ first budget
2025 Senate proposed budget	\$9,124	Florida average teacher salary #50 in the nation and per student funding is \$1,365 less than 2006 and \$417 less than DeSantis’ first budget

The next step in the budget process is known as budget conference. This is when the House and Senate come to agreement on a single budget. Right now, the two chambers are quite far apart. The Senate's budget, while still woefully insufficient, does provide significantly more funding than the House.

Advocacy is a Year-Round Process

This week in a ceremony that was closed to the public, Gov. DeSantis signed HB 549 into law. This law requires instructional materials and library media center collections adopted after July 1, 2025 to use the term "Gulf of America."

The signing of this law is a reminder that even after the legislative session ends, our advocacy must continue.

The next Social Studies textbook adoption process will begin in June 2026. This will be a big test of how the FLDOE expects textbook publishers to comply with this law.

Can they contextualize the history and the reasons behind the name change? Or will they be expected to act as if the body of water has ever only had one name?

The law has been signed, but the implementation is far from over.

Collectively, we decide what happens what next by engaging in the textbook adoption process and continuing our advocacy all year long.

Thanks!

We appreciate the members of the Association of Bay County Educators, Nassau Teachers Association, United Faculty of Florida, United School Employees of Pasco and Wakulla Classroom Teachers Association who traveled to Tallahassee this week to meet with legislators and advocate for public education.

Questions? Call PPA at 850-224-2078.

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