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Florida Education Association

Frontline Report

2026 Legislative Session

January 23, 2026

In an [essay published in the July 11, 1966, edition of The Nation](#), author and activist James Baldwin famously wrote “I cannot believe what you say because I see what you do.” Though he was writing about the oppressive conditions faced by people of color in Harlem, his words also sum up week two of Florida’s 2026 legislative session. This disconnect between what politicians say and what they do is approaching an all-time high.

Read on to learn more about

- FEA member priorities moving in the Senate,
- FLDOE priorities moving in the House,
- Completely misplaced priorities in the Higher Education Committee, and
- Book banning efforts continue

FEA Member Priorities

Thursday morning the Senate [unanimously](#) passed [SB 320](#), a bill that would restore multiyear contracts, establish a 10-year teaching certificate, allow greater flexibility to districts for advanced degree pay and more. We’ve heard from FEA members all over the state that these are the types of policies that would help with retention, and because of your great advocacy this is now the third consecutive year this package of legislation has received [unanimous approval](#) in the Senate.

In addition to those policies, we know it is vitally important that the legislature rollback the 20+ rules and laws that govern teacher pay and have led to salary compression. [SB 1216](#) does just that. SB 1216 [passed its first committee unanimously](#) this week. Again, that is a testament to your advocacy.

Both SB 320 and SB 1216 have companion bills in the House, but neither of them have yet been placed on an agenda. You can help to change that by emailing the Chair of the House Education

Administration Committee and asking her to put [**HB 963 \(SB 320's companion\) on the agenda**](#) and to put [**HB 1187 \(SB 1216's companion\) on the agenda**](#).

FLDOE's Priorities

Rep. Dana Trabulsy is sponsoring and championing [**HB 1071**](#), an omnibus bill that includes such wide-ranging topics as

- restricting collective bargaining,
- changing regulations for school readiness programs and early learning,
- establishing new guidelines for math instruction,
- mandating specific videos that must be shown in sex education classes,
- expanding state control of curriculum by allowing the Commissioner of Education to remove instructional materials statewide,
- eliminating funding for diversity, equity and inclusion efforts,
- allowing ICE agents into school ([**Rep. Trabulsy disputes that is the intent of the language in the bill**](#). If she does amend her bill to clarify it does not allow ICE officers on campus we will be sure to let you know.), and
- adjusting requirements for representation on School Advisory Committees.

In short, the bill is a FLDOE wish list that does more to harm our schools and public education than it does to help them. This bill continues the trend of FLDOE pushing policies to stoke division and create distrust in an effort to get parents to abandon public schools.

Regardless of what lawmakers say about any given bill, it's important to look at a bill's impacts from every single angle. We have seen what happens when this level of consideration isn't provided. When lawmakers sought to change the start times of schools, a seemingly well-intentioned bill did not consider the cost, logistics, and needs of other students and educators, causing the legislature to have to come back the following year and remove the bill.

In Rep. Trabulsy's case, she recognized the CEO of Boys and Girls Club of St. Lucie County who was in the audience during the bill's committee stop and lauded the great work the Boys and Girls Club does. But her own bill that deals with eliminating funding for diversity, equity and inclusion as well as "political advocacy" would force school districts across the state to end their relationships with the Boys and Girls Club and many other student-focused organizations. You see, the Boys and Girls Club proudly touts their efforts related to diversity.

Trabulsy claims that she filed HB 1071 to address the "real needs of today's students, families, and educators." But, so far, her actions do not match her intent.

Free Speech for Whom?

When the Senate Postsecondary Education Committee met this week, they could have tackled real issues like Sen. Shevrin Jones' bill [SB 882](#) related to expanding fee waivers for college and university students.

Instead, the committee dedicated their time to virtue signaling. [SB 194](#) creates a day of remembrance for Charlie Kirk, a bill that [passed along party lines](#). Supporters of the bill lauded Kirk for his (alleged) embrace of free speech and open debate while minimizing his history of racist and sexist comments.

Sen. Jones called the bill's supporters out for their hypocrisy. As he pointed out, those same individuals who celebrate Kirk's (alleged) free speech advocacy have consistently voted to restrict the free speech rights of educators.

Click the image below to hear Sen. Jones in his own words



Like Sen. Jones, we simply can't believe the senators who [voted for this bill](#) care about free speech when we live with the impacts of their censorship in the books that are available to students in classrooms and in school libraries, the pictures and posters and words that can be on a classroom or school wall, and the very historical truths that educators are discouraged to teach.

Free speech isn't just for a select few.

Public school libraries under attack

Rep. Doug Bankson (R-Apopka) says that his bill [HB 1119](#) is necessary to “block pornography” and weed out materials that is “harmful to minors.”

If you’ve made it this far into Frontline, you already know his words and his actions are mismatched. Rep. Bankson is a pastor at a church in Apopka that is associated with a [private voucher school that received nearly \\$1,000,000 in taxpayer funds in 2023](#). Neither Bankson’s school nor any of the thousands of publicly-funded private voucher schools are subject to the provisions of HB 1119. This is as clear of an indicator as there can possibly be that the bill isn’t actually about protecting children.

After all, if this bill were necessary to protect children, wouldn’t it apply to all publicly funded schools? Rep. Angie Nixon (D-Jacksonville) asked Rep. Bankson that question—why should public school students be subject to a more restrictive censorship standard than private school students? You’ll want to hear his answer for yourself. Click the image below to hear Nixon’s question and Bankson’s answer.



Did you catch that? Rep. Bankson said that private school parents (like those who he profits off of) should have greater rights and more freedom than public school parents.

That is what is at the heart of HB 1119 and so many other bills this session—favoring private schools while burdening public schools with unfunded mandates, controlling what public school students can read and learn and public school teachers can teach, and sowing division between public schools and the public they serve.

Most Floridians disagree with Bankson. They believe in strong public schools and they expect legislators to uphold our state’s constitution that declares public education as a paramount duty of the state.

For the next seven weeks of session and into the 2026 election season, we will continue to fight forward on the priorities of FEA members and to fight back against to attack our public schools.

Thank you for joining us in this journey.

Thanks!

We appreciate the FEA members who came up this week to talk with lawmakers and make their voices heard in committee meetings! A big shout out to the Orange County Classroom Teachers Association, Palm Beach County Classroom Teachers Association, Putnam Federation of Teachers United, Seminole Education Association, United Teachers of Dade and United School Employees of Pasco for sending members up to Tallahassee this week.

How You Can Take Action Today

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