

# Florida Education Association

# *Frontline Report*

*2026 Legislative Session*

*February 13, 2026*

At the end of week two of session, we asked [whose priorities would legislators focus on](#)? The answer remains mixed. Some very good legislation continues to move in both chambers, but time is quickly running out for bills to get across the finish line. This week we also finally got a glimpse of proposed budgets and while they are just that, proposals, they do not go far enough in their investment for our public schools and don't help move Florida's teachers up from #50 in the nation in average pay.

- Read on to learn more about
- A look at the budget,
- Anti-worker legislation advances along party-lines,
- Good bills moving, and
- Bad bills moving as well.

## **Budget proposals that don't go far enough for students, educators, and public school communities**

It took a little longer than expected, but budget proposals were finally released this week.

There is one thing we can guarantee about the proposed budgets—they will change between now and the end of session. We know that public pushback can move budgets in a more fair and equitable manner. We witnessed this change just last session when the House originally proposed slashing funding to accelerated courses like AP and IB, but relented and funded those courses in the final budget. What follows is not a prophecy written in stone, but a snapshot of the budget as it stands on Friday, February 13.

When FEA released our [members' priorities](#) in advance of the 2026 legislative session we called for legislators to invest just \$1,000 more per student into the Florida Education Finance Program

(FEFP). After years of neglect, that is the type of investment it would take to right the ship and make sure that every school, every student and every educator have what they need to thrive.

Neither the House nor Senate come close to that number, however, the House increase is significantly more than the Senate proposal and it is significantly more than this past year's increase. The Senate is once again trying to be transparent and account for the \$4.5 Billion in voucher money in the budget. Remember this is just the beginning of the budget process a lot will change before the final budget.

Here is a quick breakdown of the proposals:

House BSA increase: \$129.11

Senate BSA increase: \$50

House total per student Increase: \$247.60

Senate total per student Increase: \$150.98

House total increase: \$1,003,093,937

Senate total increase: \$692,851,519

House teacher salary increase: \$101,306,201\*

Senate teacher salary increase: \$100,810,150

*\*The House allocates this money only to teachers with 20+ years of experience. The Senate keeps with current policy.*

For years, FEA members have been demanding salary flexibility. Rigid rules put in place around performance pay led to salary compression, a problem that was made much worse with the teacher salary increase allocation (TSIA) that dedicated money almost exclusively to new teachers.

In the past few years, your hard work and advocacy has led the legislature to relax some of the TSIA regulations so raises can be negotiated and distributed in a more fair and equitable manner. The House's proposed budget calls for a tightening of strings on TSIA funding that will make the majority of educators in the state ineligible for the allocated salary increases.

Their proposal would provide raises only for teachers "[with at least twenty years of full-time teaching experience in a Florida public school.](#)" In places like Gulf County, for example, where the average educator has less than five years of service, this could mean that virtually everyone will be completely left out of the TSIA funding if the House's proposal is adopted.

In the recent PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee [presentation](#) of the salary increase allocation that is funded in the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP), lawmakers discussed just how necessary addressing wage compression is. Wage compression is an issue that must be fixed

because we recognize that we cannot sustain in a system that pits educators against one another based on years of experience.

We know that Florida's 67 counties are very different from one another and that a one-size fits all solution is destined to fail. For the legislature to address the issue of compression, they must also acknowledge that reality. We need fewer strings on salaries, not more!

The House can actually address this issue right now with current legislation that has stalled in their chamber. HB 1187 would rollback many of the current barriers to fair pay. The senate companion has already passed each of its committees, but HB 1187 remains stuck in its first House committee. [Email the chair of the House Education Administration Committee and tell her the best way to address salary compression is by putting HB 1187 on the agenda!](#)

We must continue to press the issue and demand a budget that is worth of Florida's students, educators and school communities.

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## Anti-Worker, Anti-Freedom Bill Passes First Committee

"A mockery of the process."

"Constitutional ignorance."

"Gross negligence."

"Republican legislators ignore their voters."

Those are some of the responses we received when we asked people who sat in the committee room where [SB 1296](#) had its first committee stop on Wednesday afternoon. See what everybody is talking about by [clicking here](#) and then advancing to 34:37 into the video to watch the committee meeting for yourself.

SB 1296 is the Senate companion to [HB 995](#). These bills are not only anti-freedom and anti-worker in nature, they are also blatantly unconstitutional. That's not just our opinion, that's the view of the independent staff in the Florida Senate tasked with writing an [analysis of the bill](#). Pages 20-23 of the analysis outline the many ways in which the bill is unconstitutional.

Among the unconstitutional provisions of the bill are that it

- restricts free speech by constraining the activities unions can engage in,
- abridges the right to collectively bargain,
- violates the equal protection clause by creating two-tiers of public sector unions (public safety unions and then everyone else), and
- contains multiple subjects in violation of Article III, Section 6 of Florida's Constitution that requires every law to "embrace but one subject and matter properly connected therewith."

SB 1296 passed on a party line vote of 6-3 as pictured below.

Made life more challenging for workers by voting YES on SB 1296, an anti-worker, anti-freedom bill	Stood up for workers and voted NO on SB 1296, an anti-worker, anti-freedom bill.
Sen. Debbie Mayfield (R-Melbourne), Chair	Sen. Kristen Arrington, (D-Kissimmee)
Sen. Nick DiCeglie (R-Indian Rocks), Vice Chair	Sen. LaVon Bracy Davis, (D-Orlando)
Sen. Jason Brouder, (R-Sanford)	Sen. Tina Polsky, (D-Boca Raton)
Sen. Erin Grall, (R-Vero Beach)	
Sen. Stan McClain, (R-Ocala)	
Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez, (R-Miami)	

We encourage you to watch the committee yourself and see how questions were or weren't answered. (Do that by [clicking here](#) and then advancing to 34:37 into the video)

We would love to hear your takeaways and thoughts on the bill's presentation and debate. Send us an email with your thoughts at [advocate@floridaea.org](mailto:advocate@floridaea.org). In the meantime, we'll be sure to let you know about it and how you can reach out to senators to oppose it.

FEA members along with our union siblings in the AFL-CIO made a show of force and testified against SB 1296. Click the image below to watch all of the union members who testified.



## It's not all bad news

Good legislation does continue to work its way through both chambers. This is a testament to the hard work of public education advocates like you who are committed to talking with legislators and demand real solutions to the problems we face. Among the good bills that moved this week are

- **SB 1216**—a bill to address salary compression by removing restrictions on how raises can be negotiated **passed its final senate committee**. It is now ready for a vote of the entire senate. In each of its three committee stops, the bill has passed on a unanimous vote! Don't

forget to email the chair of the House Education Administration Committee and tell her the best way to address salary compression is by putting HB 1187 on the agenda! In order for SB 1216 to become law, HB 1187 needs to move as well.

- [\*\*HB 561\*\*](#)—a bill to address recruitment and retention by making it easier for people whose certification has lapsed to re-certify and return to the classroom [\*\*passed its final committee\*\*](#). It is now ready for a vote on the entire senate. It, too, passed each of its three committee stops on a unanimous vote!
  - [\*\*SB 176\*\*](#)—a bill that would ensure that public colleges and universities would have safety policies and procedures in place [\*\*passed its final committee\*\*](#) and is ready to be heard by the full senate. Importantly, this bill does not allow more firearms on campus the way that [\*\*HB 757/SB 896\*\*](#) do. SB 176 was supported unanimously in each of its three committee stops.
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## Back to the bad news

Additional bills that we are closely monitoring because of the impact they would have on students and educators include (but are not limited to):

- [\*\*SB 538\*\*](#)—this is the bill that allows each school district superintendent to “negotiate individual compensation” for “any athletic director or coach or the director of an activity sponsor specified by the district school superintendent.” This is yet another way to undermine collective bargaining. SB 538 has passed [\*\*each of its three committees unanimously\*\*](#) and is ready for a vote on the senate floor.
- [\*\*SB 7036\*\*](#)—this bill also seeks to undermine collective bargaining by creating artificial “educational emergencies” and then allowing districts to use the guise of an emergency to set salaries outside of the bargaining process. The bill [\*\*passed its second committee\*\*](#) this week and has one committee stop left.
- [\*\*HB 1071\*\*](#)—this bill is the companion to SB 7036. It contains all of the nasty provisions that undermine collective bargaining and adds in provisions requiring students to watch anti-abortion propaganda in health class. It [\*\*passed its final committee\*\*](#) this week and is ready to be heard on the House floor.
- [\*\*HB 725\*\*](#)—this is another solution in search of a problem. The bill requires to Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to adopt regulations on political activities on college and university campuses. It is concerning that the legislature would grant such broad rulemaking authority to the unelected members of the BOG and SBOE. Additionally, the language in this bill is overly broad and dangerously vague. As [\*\*one speaker told the committee\*\*](#) where HB 725 was heard this week, this bill could force Jewish student organizations to host virulently antisemitic speakers. The bill [\*\*passed on a vote of 13-5\*\*](#) and has two committee stops left.
- [\*\*HB 1119\*\*](#)—this is the book banning bill that passed the House last year but did not move in the Senate. The bill would allow for books to be removed from classrooms and school libraries without considering of the literary value or artistic merit of the work. This week it

passed the House on a [vote of 84-28](#). We remain hopeful the bill does not move in the Senate again this year, but it has been referred to the Senate Rules Committee.

- [HB 31](#)—this bill continues the disturbing trend that was started last year of Florida choosing to simply ignore the internationally recognized names of locations around the globe. Last year it was banishing the term “Gulf of Mexico” in favor of “Gulf of America.” This year the House wants to require all new instructional materials to use the term “Judea and Samaira” instead of the term “West Bank.” Changes like this become [unfunded mandates as the Tampa Bay Times recently pointed out](#). HB 31 passed on a vote of [92-14](#).

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## Thanks!

FEA and AFL-CIO members from around the state were in the Capital this week to make their voices heard in committee meetings and to lobby with their lawmakers. Thank you to the transit, city, utility and postal workers- among many more!- who we stood in solidarity with this week. Thanks to the members from Brevard Federation of Teachers, Collier County Education Association, Duval Teachers United, Escambia Education Association, Hillsborough Classroom Teachers Association, Lake County Education Association, Teachers Association of Lee County, Leon Education Support Personnel Association, Palm Beach County Classroom Teachers Association, United School Employees of Pasco, Polk Education Association, St. Johns Education Association, Student FEA and the United Faculty of Florida who came up to Tallahassee!

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## How You Can Take Action Today

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