

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



November 18, 2023

HCPS Government Affairs

2024 Legislative Session

Interim Committee Week 5

The Florida legislature concluded their fifth interim committee week yesterday. Legislators in several committees took up their first bills for consideration for the year, and House members had a bill and appropriations request filing deadline on Tuesday. A number of House and Senate education committees met throughout the week.

Legislators will return to Tallahassee on December 4 for the sixth interim committee week, and session convenes on January 9. Details from the week are below and attached is a list of bills we are tracking.

House

The Education Quality Subcommittee met Wednesday to discuss pathways to teacher certification in Florida. The Florida Department of Education presented on the five types of educator certificates and emphasized that the educator preparation programs aim to ensure that teachers and educators are prepared for the classroom by obtaining certificates with rigorous standards. Data from the department shows that since 2020, the rate at which certificates are earned through reciprocity and initial teacher programs has increased while alternative routes and other pathways have slightly decreased. Committee members questioned the vacancy percentage of teachers amidst a statewide educator shortage. The department stated that there has been a nearly 10% decrease in vacancies from the previous school year to this year and that the vacancy average in Florida is much lower than the national average. Additionally, the department discussed having more pathways to teaching certificates than most states. [Committee Packet](#)

The Choice & Innovation Subcommittee met Thursday afternoon to discuss Career and Technical Education programs in the state. Committee members heard two presentations, one from the Florida College Access Network (FCAN) and one from the Department of Education. The DOE presentation highlighted statewide enrollment figures from the 2021-2022 reporting year, with nearly 600,000 students in grades 9-12 enrolled in CTE programs and that figure steadily increasing throughout recent history. Additionally, the subcommittee participated in a panel discussion with three school district CTE-focused representatives from Escambia, Hillsborough and Seminole counties. Our very own **Chris Jargo**, Director of Career and Technical Education, was invited to participate. Mr. Jargo did a fantastic job highlighting the dynamic CTE work HCPS is doing. The three district officials highlighted the status of their CTE enrollment, community impacts, program development, and more. [Committee Packet](#)

Senate

The PreK-12 Education Committee met on Wednesday, where they were presented with the highly-anticipated deregulation bills that are a direct result of last year's HB 1. All three bills were voted favorable with committee members, and the bills now head to the Senate Fiscal Policy Committee before they are subject to a vote on the floor.

* [SB 7000](#) grants school districts additional flexibility in teacher training, certification, salary and scheduling, allowing district to give multi-year contracts to teachers and to administer a teacher apprenticeship program to help qualify new educators. Additionally, it provides more authority for evaluations and evaluation system changes and more flexibility for hiring bus drivers, CTE instructors, and adjunct teachers.

* [SB 7002](#) seeks to simplify financial reporting requirements, enhance facility management, and advance efficient administrative processes. The bill provides flexibility in managing district policy, for missing days in an emergency, online notifications for student issues and gives districts more flexibility in using federal funds for recruiting teachers in certain areas. Also, it adjusts monthly reporting requirements based on financial status, directs charter schools to respond to DOE directly for certain reporting requirements, and removes some requirements for educational plant surveys and average cost limitations.

* [SB 7004](#) provides school districts with greater authority over determining progression, school improvement programs, providing instructional material, and early learning programs. The bill also eliminates high-stakes assessments to earn a high school diploma, providing extra time to prepare for low-performing schools, and a community partnership school as a turnaround option. In addition, the bill creates a process to adopt state required instructional materials, allows flexibility to adopt VPK Summer Programs and reporting requirements, and decreases the number of reports and programs.

2024 Legislative Session Calendar

December 4-7, 2023: Interim Committee Week 6
December 11-15, 2023: Interim Committee Week 7
January 9, 2024: First Day of Session
March 8, 2024: Last Day of the Regular Session

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