

SREB

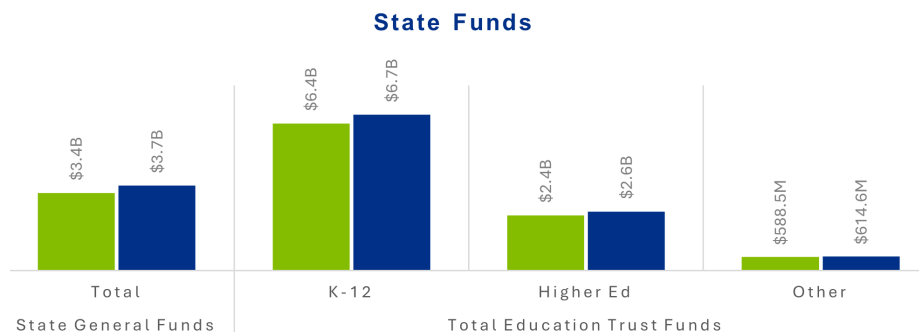
Legislative Report

Final legislative and budget actions

This report presents a summary of the education budgets approved by SREB states. The report aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the education allocations and highlight the legislative priorities of the state for the fiscal year.

Alabama (<http://www.legislature.state.al.us/>)

The Alabama General Assembly approved a nearly \$3.7 billion general fund budget to support state government functions other than education, up 9.4%, and a \$9.9 billion Education Trust Fund budget, which supports education as well as some non-education state functions, up 6% for 2025-26 over 2024-25 appropriation. Funding for K-12 public education totals \$6.7 billion, up 5.9%, and higher education totals nearly \$2.6 billion, up 6.7%.



Alabama Public K-12 Education

- Nearly \$213.2 million for the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education (up 6.2%), including:
 - \$4.8 million for Strong Start, Strong Finish, up 15.3%
 - \$197.4 million for the office of school readiness, up 6.5%
 - \$2.9 million for Dolly Parton Imagination Library, up 36.9%

- \$5.5 billion for K-12 local board (up 3.9%), including:
 - \$4.8 billion for K-12 foundation program, up 3.2%
 - \$478.5 million for transportation program, up 9.1%
- Nearly \$732.9 million for Alabama Department of Education (up 5.8%), including:
 - \$112.9 million for reading initiative, up 7%
 - \$32.6 million for Principal Leadership and Mentoring Act, up 5.7%
 - \$22.5 for distance learning, up 11.6%
 - \$2.5 for school safety security and climate, 66.7%
 - \$95 million for Alabama Numeracy Act, up 39.7%

Alabama Higher Education

- Nearly \$1.8 billion for state-funded colleges and universities, up 6.6%
- \$85.2 million for the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, up 19.9%
- \$622.2 million for the community college system, up 6% including \$44.2 million for dual enrollment (up 9.3%) and \$15.3 million for prison education (up 31.8%)

Alabama Major Education Bills

Senate Bill 305 establishes the Renewing Alabama’s Investment in Student Excellence Program and the non-reverting RAISE Fund in the State Treasury to provide additional funding for public K-12 schools to address the educational needs of students. The bill requires:

1. Providing weighted allocations based on the educational needs of students for use in calculating the funding available to a local educational agency.
2. Requiring each LEA to produce an accountability plan and report analyzing the previous year’s progress on student groups receiving weighted allocations.
3. Establishing the RAISE Act Review Committee to review the progress of the act and provide revisions for continuous improvement.
4. Establishing a RAISE Act Accountability and Implementation Board to form a hearing process to monitor the progress of LEA to ensure the RAISE Funds are spent effectively.

House Bill 166 prohibits public K-12 students from using or possessing any wireless communication device on school grounds during the instructional day, with exceptions. The bill requires each local board of education to adopt a wireless communication device policy and an internet safety policy. Additionally, the bill increases the administrative obligations of the state board of education to adopt rules and the state department of education to develop and approve an online course for students regarding the use of social media.

House Bill 102 requires local education agencies to permit an enrolled high school student to enroll in any dual enrollment course offered by a local community college or university that is approved for dual credit by the state department of education. The bill also requires the department, with input from the Alabama Community College System and universities, to prepare and distribute guidelines related to this act.

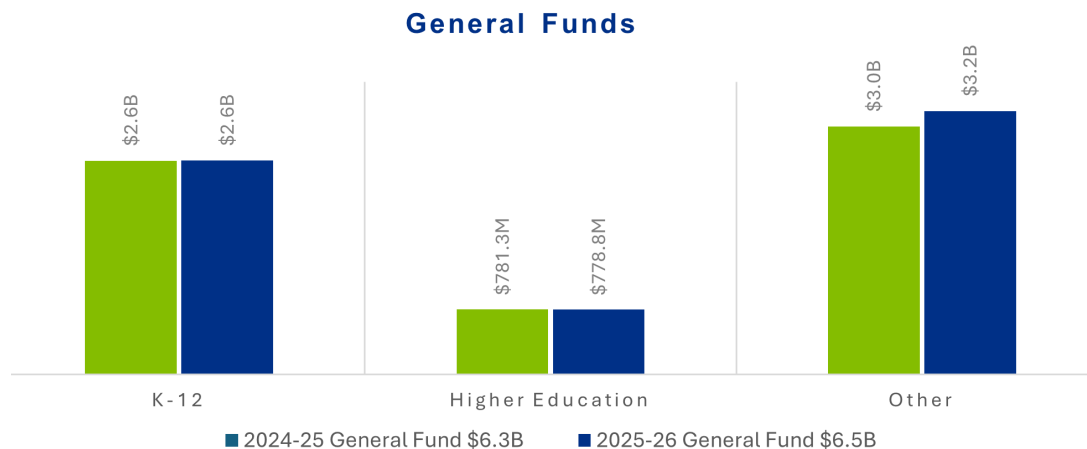
Senate Bill 196, known as the Move on When Ready Act, establishes and provides procedures for a program allowing eligible 11th and 12th-grade public school students to fully enroll in an eligible public institution of higher education and receive high school credit for completed courses, which count toward graduation requirements. The bill creates the Move on When Ready Fund, subject to legislative appropriation, to pay eligible institutions on behalf of participating students.

Senate Bill 61 adopts the School Psychologist Interstate Licensure Compact, allowing licensed school psychologists to practice among compact states in a limited manner. Additionally, the bill establishes a commission to oversee and enforce the compact.

House Joint Resolution 40 establishes the SREB Crisis Recovery Network to address the need for coordinated, region-wide counseling capacity following a crisis. The resolution authorizes the Southern Regional Education Board, in collaboration with governors' offices, state education agencies, local districts and postsecondary institutions, to provide long-term psychological support by deploying specially trained counselors to schools in extreme need. The measure also allows hiring a network coordinator and covers counselor travel costs during training and deployment.

Arkansas [\(http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/\)](http://www.arkleg.state.ar.us/)

In mid-April, the Arkansas General Assembly adjourned its fiscal session with the passage of the Revenue Stabilization Act, which sets the financial priorities of the state for the upcoming fiscal year based on expected revenue. For the 2025-26 fiscal year, the general fund budget totals nearly \$6.5 billion which is 2.9% over the prior fiscal year. The education budget remained at almost the same level as last year. Funding for K-12 public education totals nearly \$2.6 billion, up 0.04% and higher education totals \$778.8 million, down 0.3%.



Arkansas Public K-12 Education

- \$2.4 billion for the division of elementary and secondary education, level-funded
- Nearly \$26.9 million for career and technical education, level-funded

Arkansas Higher Education

- \$627.5 million for four-year institutes, down 0.2%
- \$116.3 million for two-year institutes, down 0.7%
- \$33.7 million for technical colleges, up 1.9%

Arkansas Major Education Bills

Senate Bill 142 prohibits the use of personal electronic devices, including phones, during the school day and provides limited exceptions, including use in an emergency, at a special school event, or when necessary under an individualized education program or 504 plan. The bill allows the use of personal electronic devices before the time students are required to be at school and after the time students are dismissed from school, including during extracurricular activities held after school hours. Additionally, it requires each public school to create a policy that complies with this act and submit that policy for approval by the division of elementary and secondary education.

House Bill 1733 merges and streamlines the Arkansas Better Chance Program and the Arkansas Better Chance for School Success Program to promote efficient administration of the programs. The bill expands both programs to allow early childhood options for ages birth through five and requires the Arkansas Department of Education to establish rules for children to qualify for the programs.

House Bill 1017 grants public and charter school employees up to 12 weeks of paid maternity leave when the employee

- has been employed for at least one year,
- has not been disciplined for any leave abuse; and
- is female and taking the leave for maternity purposes following the birth of their biological child, placement of an adopted child under age one, or foster placement of an infant under age one.

The bill also requires the division of elementary and secondary education to cover 100% of the costs for approved maternity leave.

House Bill 1062 prohibits a student who is removed from a classroom due to violent or abusive behavior against a teacher or another student from being placed in class with the teacher or student against whom the behavior was directed. The bill requires that a student who is removed from a class due to such behavior must be placed in an alternative learning environment.

House Bill 1496 amends provisions of the Arkansas Code to ensure that students are taught by qualified teachers. The bill provides that a teacher must be assigned to teach a grade level or a subject for which he or she is licensed or for which he or she is on a licensure plan.

House Bill 1601 requires the division of higher education to maintain an accessible location on its website with a link for career counseling and other career-related resources available to students and provided by state-supported institutions of higher education. The bill also requires that the career counseling and other career services offered by an institution must remain available to a student who has not yet graduated for up to six months after the student is no longer enrolled, upon request.

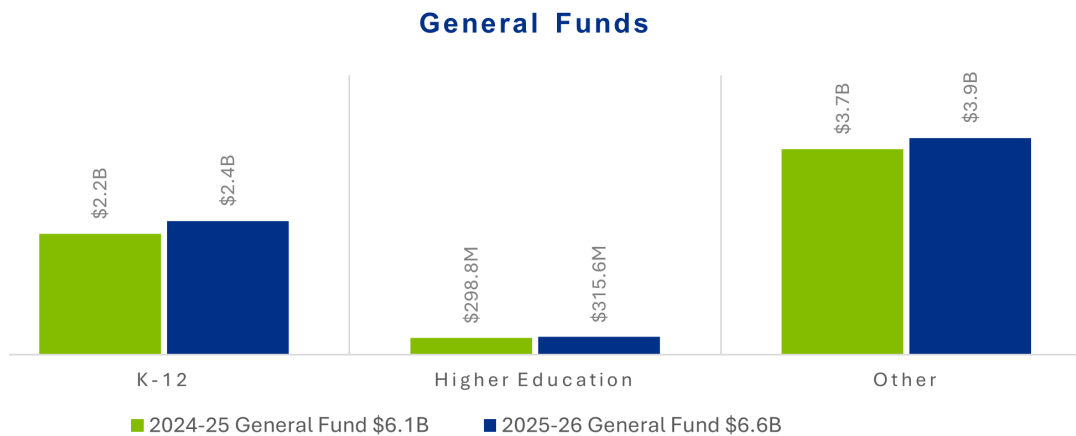
Senate Bill 206 increases the amount of literacy tutoring grant from \$500 to \$1,500 per eligible student per year on a first-come, first-served basis, with priority given to eligible students who are to be retained in third grade. The grant is allowed to be used to improve reading or literacy skills, including tutoring services from a list of state-approved providers whose employees are trained in the science of reading and hold specified credentials.

Senate Bill 391 creates a Robotics Competition Grant Program to boost science, technology, engineering and mathematics opportunities for students that provide hands-on learning and establish community partnerships to increase awareness of local workforce and postsecondary opportunities. The bill requires that the school grant teams must receive a 25% matching contribution from a community sponsor, business entity, an institution of higher education or a technical school.

Senate Bill 148 establishes the Creating an Investment Opportunity for Early Childhood Workers Act of 2025. The bill provides a voluntary mechanism for early childhood workers to participate in the Arkansas Teacher Retirement System, including anyone employed at an early childcare facility that provides teaching, early childcare education or supervision for a child enrolled in a licensed childcare facility under the Childcare Licensing Act. Additionally, the provider must be licensed and regulated by the Arkansas Department of Education and receive state or federal funding from the department.

Delaware [\(http://legis.delaware.gov/\)](http://legis.delaware.gov/)

The Delaware General Assembly approved a nearly \$6.6 billion budget for 2025-26, up 7.4% over the 2024-25 budget along with \$37.6 million in supplemental funding to provide one-time initiatives. Funding for K-12 public education totals nearly \$2.4 billion, up 10.8%, and higher education totals \$315.6 million, up 5.6%.



Delaware K-12 Education

- \$66 million for Opportunity Fund, up 4.9%
- \$19.6 million for math coaches, up 25.5%
- \$67.7 million for mental health services, up 14.2%
- \$3.5 million for early child nutrition, up 1356.6%
- \$8 million for literacy emergency fund

Delaware Scholarships and Grants

- \$18.5 million for SEED scholarship, up 5.7%
- \$13.1 million for Inspire, up 22.1%

Delaware Higher Education

- \$148.4 million for the University of Delaware, up 1.5%
- Nearly \$59.1 million for Delaware State University, up 13.5%
- \$108 million for Delaware Technical Community College, up 7.5%

Delaware Major Education Bills

House Bill 15 allows early childhood educators in the public schools to use and encourage play-based learning in their classrooms and in their curriculum in pre-kindergarten through second grade. This act also permits local education agencies to provide professional development in play-based learning for early childhood educators and permits the department of education to develop regulations on the subject.

House Bill 49 makes changes to the Delaware Child Care Act to clarify that early education programs run by state or local education agencies are subject to a parallel regulatory and monitoring structure administered by the Office of Child Care Licensing to ensure health, safety, and child development standards are met.

House Concurrent Resolution 2 re-establishes the Public Education Funding Commission to continue its comprehensive review of public education funding for all students and populations served by district and charter schools, develop a roadmap of recommendations to implement improvements to the public education funding system, and serve as an ongoing body to review the funding annually and recommend updates and changes.

Senate Bill 77 enacts the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists, which is designed to facilitate the interstate practice of school psychology in educational settings. The act aims to increase the availability of school psychological services for students in this state by creating an additional licensing pathway for school psychologists to obtain equivalent licenses to practice school psychology in any state that is a member of the compact. The Interstate Compact for School Psychologists must be enacted in seven states to become effective.

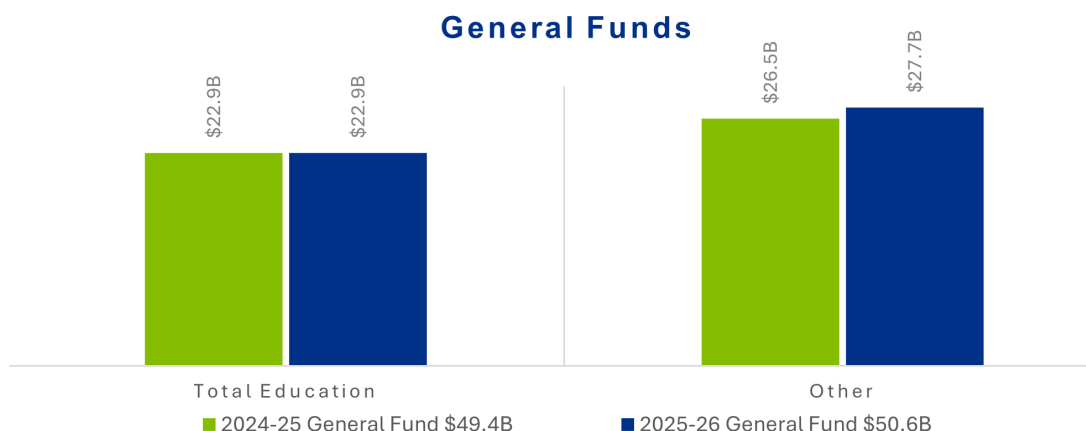
Senate Concurrent Resolution 84 encourages Delaware's participation in the Southern Regional Education Board's Crisis Recovery Network to meet the need for a coordinated, region-wide effort to provide consistent long-term counseling that is ready to deploy immediately after a crisis is managed. The network will complement existing school and district crisis management efforts by focusing on long-term healing and psychological resilience by deploying counselors with specialized training to schools in extreme need.

House Bill 77 requires that members of public and charter school boards receive training on the following:

- Requirements for school board meetings
- Best practices regarding the conduct of meetings, including the use of rules of order
- The state employees', officers' and officials' code of conduct

Florida [\(http://focusonfloridasfuture.com/\)](http://focusonfloridasfuture.com/)

The Florida General Assembly approved nearly \$50.6 billion budget for 2025-26, up 2.4% over the 2024-25 budget. General revenue funding for all levels of education totals nearly \$22.9 billion, up 0.02% which includes, among other things, increased funding for teachers' salaries and per-pupil K-12 funding, and recurring funding for safe schools activities.



Florida Education Enhancement Lottery Funds

- Total lottery funding increased 0.4% to \$2.5 billion
- K-12 grants increased 3.3% to nearly \$629 million including \$525.2 million for Florida Education Finance Program funding (up 3.9%)
- Lottery funds for college and universities down 1.7% to nearly \$867 million
- Student financial aid funding up 2.6% to \$747.1 million

Florida Public Education General Funds

- Nearly \$14.8 billion for K-12 education, up 2.3% including \$12.3 billion for FEFP (up 4.7%)
- \$605.1 million for early learning education, down 0.6%
- \$4.1 billion for state universities, down 3.5%
- Nearly \$1.6 billion for state colleges, up 5.3%
- \$326.9 million for student finance aid program, up 2.6%

Florida Major Education Bills

House Bill 875 aligns the core standards and content of Florida's teacher preparation programs. The bill requires the state department of education to convene a workgroup to revise the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices and adopt a uniform core curriculum for all teacher preparation programs, including two required courses. It also establishes the Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching Program, a competency-based certification pathway. The bill also requires school districts to set minimum qualifications for part-time fine and performing arts teachers, link professional learning to student outcomes, and establish a flexible pathway for school counselor certification.

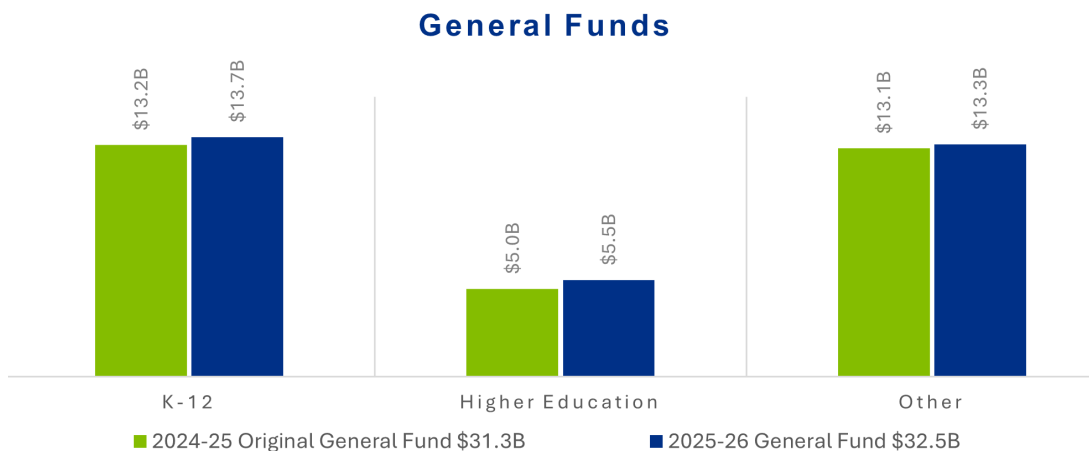
Senate Bill 969 directs the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to evaluate mental health services provided to students by school districts to the governor and legislature. Specified agencies must share data and information to support the evaluation, including outcomes from behavioral health systems and referrals from school threat management processes. The bill requires the final report to include a comprehensive review of district mental health assistance programs.

Senate Bill 1102 expands eligibility and priority criteria for children in the School Readiness Program. The bill gives priority to children with special needs, including those requiring accommodations beyond those required under the Americans with Disabilities Act. A child's special needs must be verified by a licensed health care or mental health professional, or an educational psychologist, using documentation such as an IEP, IFSP or a formal determination of required accommodations. The bill also allows School Readiness providers to receive additional funding through the special needs differential rate if they meet new eligibility standards specified in the bill.

House Bill 681 directs the state department of education to strengthen coordination between local educational agencies and apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs. The bill requires the state DOE to develop a standard model contract template for partnership agreements and create an apprenticeship funding transparency tool. The bill also revises reporting deadlines, establishes requirements for partnership agreements and outlines procedures for District Workforce Education Funding Steering Committee meetings.

Georgia (<https://opb.georgia.gov/>)

The Georgia General Assembly approved a \$32.5 billion budget for 2025-26, up 3.7% over the 2024-25 original budget. Funding for K-12 public education totals \$13.7 billion, up 3.4%, and higher education totals \$5.5 billion, up 9%.



Georgia K-12 Education

- \$14.7 billion for Quality Basic Education program, up 4.2% which is largely due to increased funds for teachers' retirement system, health insurance employer contribution, enrollment growth and training
- \$364.1 million for pupil transportation, up 2.9%
- \$116 million for school security grant program to help schools provide safe learning environments for students, up 6.5%

Georgia Higher Education

- \$3.6 billion for the University System of Georgia, up 6.2%
- \$538.3 million for the technical college system, up 10%
- Nearly \$1.4 billion for the Georgia Student Finance Commission, up 20.7% including \$108.7 million for dual enrollment (up 19.1%)

Georgia Scholarship Lottery Funds

- Funding for HOPE merit scholarship programs increases to meet projected need:
 - \$895.8 million for HOPE Scholarships for public schools, up 5.9%
 - \$88.2 million for HOPE Scholarships for private schools, up 18%
 - \$93.8 million for HOPE Grants, up 22.5%

Georgia Major Education Bills

House Bill 307, the Georgia Early Literacy and Dyslexia Act, strengthens early literacy instruction and support for students at risk of reading difficulties, including those with dyslexia. The bill mandates universal reading screeners, requires the use of instructional materials aligned with the science of reading and prohibits the three-cueing system in K-3 instruction. It establishes tiered interventions for struggling readers, mandates teacher training, creates a literacy coordination committee and requires reporting on literacy outcomes.

House Bill 192 aligns Georgia's K-12 career education programs with the high-demand career list published by the Georgia Workforce Development Board, ensuring students are prepared for in-demand jobs. It requires the Georgia Department of Education to update and align career-focused programs of study for grades 6-12 and mandates approval by the state board of education. The bill also extends the reporting deadline for the dual enrollment HOPE grant program for CTAE courses, expands eligibility for the annual competitive grant program to include high-demand career programs and requires individual college and career plans for students in grades 6-12.

House Bill 340 restricts access to personal electronic devices during the school day for students in kindergarten through grade eight, beginning July 1, 2026. The bill requires each local school system to adopt policies by Jan. 1, 2026, that prohibit bell-to-bell device use, outline secure storage procedures, and establish communication protocols for parents and for emergencies. The bill allows exceptions for students with medical or educational needs specified in an IEP or 504 Plan. Schools must implement monitoring and enforcement measures, inform families of the policy and regularly review its effectiveness. The state department of education must provide guidance and technical support for implementation of the act.

House Resolution 263 commends the Crisis Recovery Network, coordinated by the Southern Regional Education Board, for its efforts to support academic institutions during times of crisis. It recognizes the network's valuable work in promoting recovery and resilience in education systems and extends best wishes for its continued success.

House Bill 81 authorizes the state of Georgia to join the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists, establishing a pathway for licensed school psychologists to obtain equivalent credentials across member states and expanding access to qualified professionals. The bill aims to improve the availability and quality of school psychological services for students while ensuring these services are delivered safely and effectively. The bill also provides definitions, related provisions and repeals conflicting laws.

Senate Bill 123 strengthens Georgia's response to chronic absenteeism by requiring each local school system to establish policies and procedures to identify and support students who are chronically absent or at risk of becoming so. The bill mandates that districts with a chronic absenteeism rate of 10% or higher create a district-level attendance review team, while schools with rates of 15% or higher must form school-level teams. These teams are required to meet monthly to review individual student cases, develop intervention plans for students and families and collaborate across district and school levels to improve attendance and student engagement.

Senate Bill 93 amends the Georgia Early Literacy Act to establish criteria for core curricula in state-approved educator preparation programs, ensuring that curricula and instruction are aligned with the science of reading.

Senate Resolution 237 urges the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, with input from key education and workforce agencies, to lead a statewide collaboration to develop comprehensive recommendations for strengthening the K–12 education workforce. The resolution requires recommendations focus on expanding innovative teacher preparation pathways, improving data collection on teacher placement and retention, enhancing partnerships with postsecondary institutions, increasing public awareness of teaching careers, and supporting teacher and leader retention through mentorship and professional development.

Kentucky (<http://osbd.ky.gov/>)

Kentucky is in the second year of the biennium. The state enacted a two-year budget in 2023-24 covering fiscal years 2024-25 and 2025-26.

Kentucky Major Education Bills

House Bill 190 requires each local Kentucky board of education to adopt a district plan outlining policies to promote advanced coursework and accelerated learning in grades 4–12 for language arts, math, science and social studies. The bill requires that the plan must be publicly available online, detail strategies by grade level and ensure that gifted and talented students have access to at least one advanced or accelerated learning option plus additional supports such as mentorships, enrichment services or independent study.

Districts may also automatically enroll high-achieving students in advanced courses, set eligibility criteria and specify procedures for withdrawal — with parental consent or under limited exceptions. The bill allows the Kentucky Board of Education to issue regulations to implement these requirements and the state department of education to provide recommendations for consistent use of data to identify students ready for advanced coursework.

House Bill 208 requires each Kentucky school districts to adapt a policy governing student use of personal telecommunication devices on school property and during school activities. The bill prohibits the use of telecommunication devices during instructional time, except in emergencies or when authorized by a teacher. The bill also directs the Kentucky Board of Education to establish regulations ensuring that social media and sexually explicit content are blocked from school networks. Districts must use the latest internet filtering technology, and the state department of education must provide school with free software to help enforce these protections. Additionally, districts must adopt policies for student internet access, including parental consent, teacher supervision and auditing procedures to prevent inappropriate use.

House Bill 240 allows kindergarten students with a reading improvement plan to remain in kindergarten for an additional year if needed. The provision applies when a student does not meet grade-level reading benchmarks in reading while in kindergarten as determined by the universal screener, did not master the state reading academic standards for kindergarten students based on assessments, or was not properly prepared to be successful in the first grade. The bill requires that all kindergarten and first-grade students are assessed within the designated instructional days each school year.

The bill also requires the state department of education to offer training and resources for teachers, including teacher academies, coaching models and a web-based library of evidence-based instructional tools for literacy, math and behavior. Collaboration with universities, research centers and professional organizations is encouraged to ensure high-quality, research-based instruction statewide.

House Bill 251 requires the Education Professional Standards Board, rather than the Council on Postsecondary Education, to ensure that teacher education programs provide highly skilled teachers. It also requires the board to report to the Legislative Research Commission every three years and regularly report program data to an external evaluator.

House Bill 263 establishes the Student Teacher Stipend Program to reduce financial barriers to students in completing educator preparation programs and entering the educator workforce. The bill directs the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority to distribute stipends directly or through participating institutions, establish rules for out-of-state placements and report annually to the legislature on program participation, demographics and workforce outcomes.

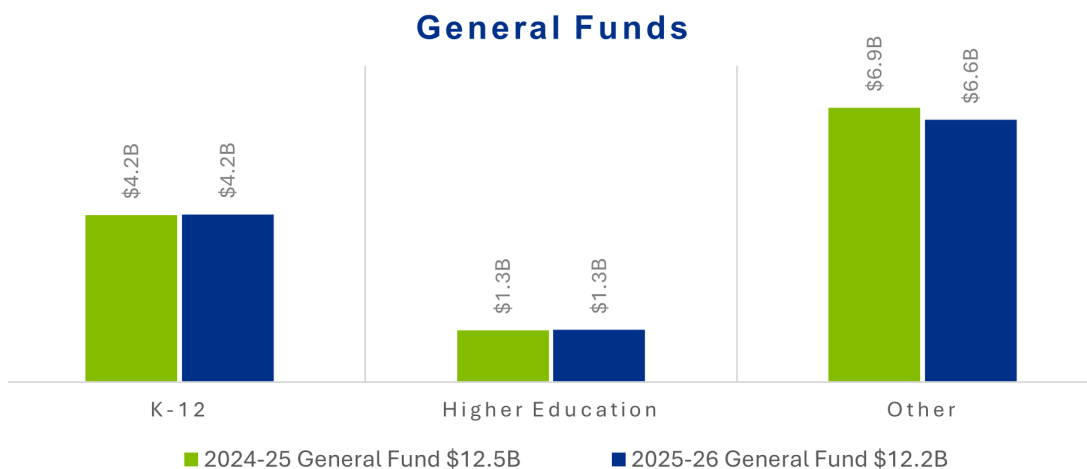
House Bill 298 requires the Kentucky Department of Education to annually identify comprehensive support and improvement schools and audit them to assess the principal’s capacity to lead turn-around efforts. It removes the mandate to use external turnaround vendors and instead requires superintendents and principals to collaborate with the department to create a turnaround training and support team. The department must provide professional learning for CSI teachers and district superintendents must adopt evidence-based curricula and high-quality instructional materials for these schools.

Senate Bill 9 requires each school district to establish a policy to provide up to 30 paid maternity leave days for a teacher or employee who gives birth to a child. The maternity leave days must be used without deduction of salary and used prior to the teacher or employee using any other leave. Any maternity leave days unused by the teacher or employee must not transfer into sick leave or be converted to any other leave type and shall expire upon return to work.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 43 supports the mission of the Southern Regional Education Board Crisis Recovery Network. In close collaboration with governors’ offices, state education agencies, local school districts and postsecondary institutions, SREB will complement existing school and district crisis management efforts by deploying counselors with specialized training to schools in extreme need. These counselors will focus on long-term healing and psychological resilience.

Louisiana <http://www.legis.la.gov>

The Louisiana General Assembly approved a \$12.2 billion budget for 2025-26, down 2.2% from the 2024-25 existing operating budget. Funding for K-12 public education totals \$4.2 billion, up 0.5%, and higher education totals \$1.3 billion, up 0.5%.



Louisiana K-12 Education

- \$3.7 billion for minimum foundation program (down 4.1%), including:
 - \$174.1 million for teacher pay stipend

Louisiana Higher Education

- \$6.1 million non-discretionary funding for the Board of Regents, down 1.1%
- \$50.2 million for the Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges Board of Supervisors, up 1%

Louisiana Special Schools and Commissions

- Nearly \$1.4 million non-discretionary funding for the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and Arts, up 1%
- \$574.5 million non-discretionary funding for Thrive Academy, up 19.4%

Louisiana Major Education Bills

House Bill 321 strengthens Louisiana's focus on early numeracy instruction and teacher preparation. Beginning Sept. 1, 2028, teacher certification applicants must either complete the required semester hours in foundational numeracy approved by the state board of elementary and secondary education or complete numeracy training approved by the Louisiana Department of Education. The bill extends numeracy professional development to all kindergarten through third-grade mathematics teachers and requires each public school to provide numeracy coaches for these teachers. It also permits districts to use allowable state or federal funds for implementation and authorizes stipends or job-embedded training for teachers completing numeracy training outside regular work hours.

House Bill 466 requires Louisiana school systems to provide salary increases for teachers and other school employees using savings generated from the state's payment of the unfunded accrued liability of the Teachers' Retirement System of Louisiana. The bill is contingent on the passage of House Bill 473, which transfers funds from the Education Excellence Fund, the Louisiana Education Quality Trust Fund and the Louisiana Quality Education Support Fund to TRSL to pay off these liabilities. Additionally, the legislation requires teacher certification applicants to complete either BESE -approved coursework in foundational numeracy or LDOE-approved numeracy training aligned with their certification area.

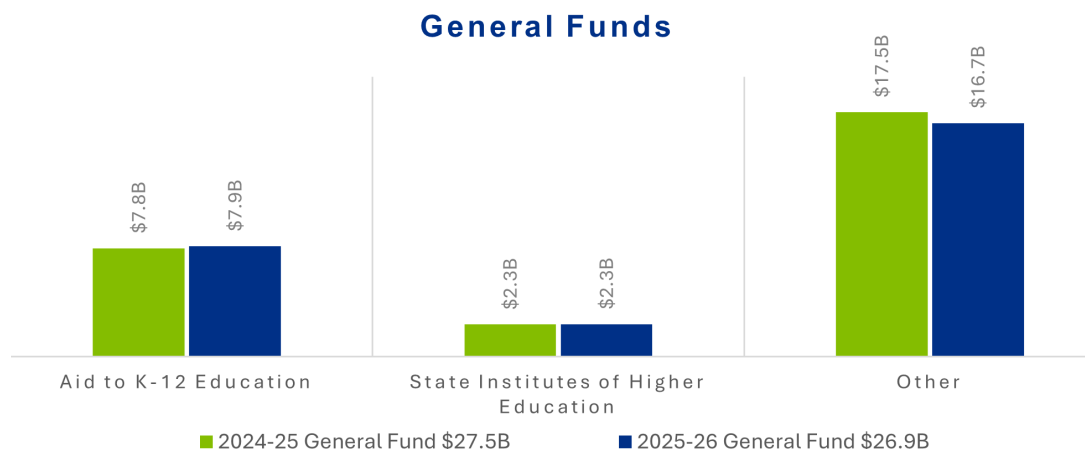
House Resolution 98 urges and requests the state department of education to study the impact of the law banning student possession of telecommunications devices during the instructional day, including but not limited to factors related to student performance that may be attributable to the law.

Senate Bill 207 requires all public high schools, including charter schools, to offer students the opportunity to enroll in vocational and technical education courses. Schools that do not offer such courses may partner with other public schools, public two-year colleges, approved nonprofit proprietary schools or BESE-approved course choice providers. The bill also requires schools to inform students about the TOPS Tech Early Start Award and clarifies that these provisions do not override the Course Choice Program. Schools with specialized missions or curricula that do not align with vocational education may request a waiver from BESE.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 38 creates the Task Force on Career Alignment to study ways to implement education-to-career counseling to assist public college and university students to obtain employment in the state after graduation.

Maryland [\(http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/\)](http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/)

The Maryland General Assembly began its legislative session facing significant projected general fund cash and structural budget shortfalls for the 2025-26 fiscal year, leading to a 2.2% reduction in the approved general fund budget, which totals \$26.9 billion. Despite the overall decrease, total aid to K-12 public education totals \$7.9 billion (up 1.8%), and state institutes of higher education total \$2.3 billion (up 1.2%).



Maryland K-12 Education

- \$3.7 billion for the foundation program, up 0.03%
- Nearly \$1.2 billion for fringe benefits, up 21%
- \$414.2 million for child care assistance grants, up 26.1%
- \$16.8 million for innovative programs, down 23.7%
- \$3.4 million for Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center, up 12.3%
- \$8 million for Maryland Center for School Safety Grants, down 20%

Maryland Higher Education

- \$784.4 million for the Maryland Higher Education Commission, up 4.1%
- \$2.3 billion for state operated institutions of higher education, up 1.2%

Maryland Special Funds for Education

- \$31.8 million for college and career readiness, up 174.5%
- \$492.6 million for Concentration of Poverty Grant program, up 35.6%
- \$69.2 million for Blueprint for Maryland's Future transition, down 24.7%

Maryland Major Education Bills

House Bill 504, the Excellence in Maryland Public Schools Act, makes changes to education funding and the Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The bill reduces annual state funding for the Coordinated Community Supports Partnership Fund, lowers per-pupil state funding and local share of certain major education aid, delays or alters required spending on teacher collaborative time and provides additional mandate relief tied to state revenue conditions. In addition, the bill creates new teacher development and recruitment grant programs and funds, revises the Grow Your Own Educators program, establishes a national teacher recruitment campaign, alters community schools requirements, extends funding for career counseling programs, and assigns new responsibilities to several state agencies.

House Bill 1475 requires the Maryland State Department of Education to convene a workgroup to conduct an analysis of the mixed delivery, publicly funded full-day prekindergarten system. The bill requires the workgroup to solicit feedback from public and private prekindergarten providers and child care providers who have elected not to participate in the full-day publicly funded prekindergarten program and submit a report to the general assembly.

House Bill 879 establishes the Task Force to Improve Attendance and Reduce Chronic Absenteeism in Schools to study and make recommendations on practices to identify, prevent and eliminate chronic absenteeism. The bill requires the task force to submit a report detailing its findings and recommendations to the governor and the general assembly and MSDE to update regulations relating to student attendance to incorporate the task force's recommendations.

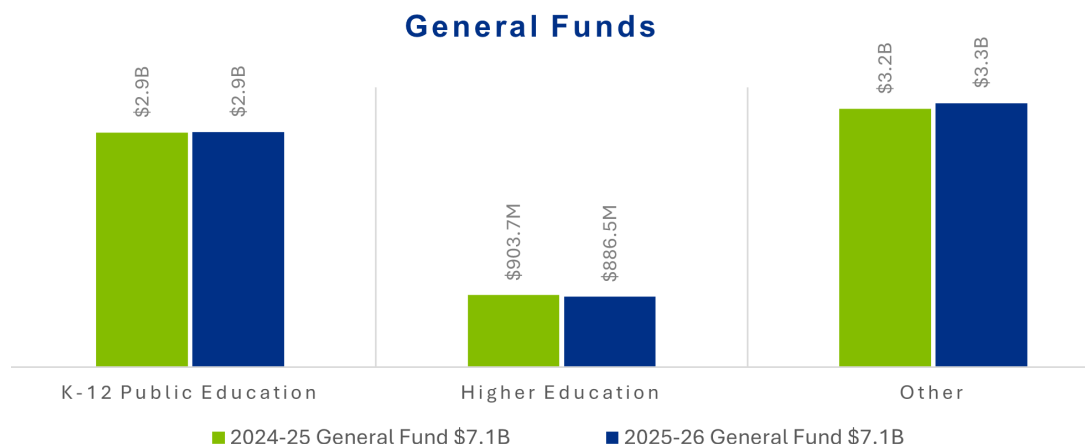
House Bill 1452, another absenteeism-related bill, requires the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Maryland to report annually to the General Assembly on the Truancy Reduction Pilot Program and require the report to include the number of Truancy Reduction Pilot Programs established in state, the number of participants in each pilot program, information on the outcomes of the participants in each program, and recommendations to improve the function of the current program.

House Bill 161 requires the state department of education to develop content standards for each subject at each grade level and further requires each local board of education to adopt curriculum guides and courses of study aligned with content standards developed by MSDE. The bill also establishes a process for correcting discrepancies identified by the state superintendent of schools in a local board's curriculum guides and courses of study, including the imposition of penalties and makes conforming and technical changes.

Senate Bill 378 establishes the Family Literacy Pilot Program, administered by the Maryland State Library Agency, to foster family literacy and strengthen parent-child relationships by providing children's books in state correctional facilities to incarcerated individuals and a means for an incarcerated individual to read aloud to the individual's child.

Mississippi [\(https://governorreeves.ms.gov/\)](https://governorreeves.ms.gov/)

In a special session at the end of May, the Mississippi General Assembly approved a \$7.1 billion budget for 2025-26, which is 0.9% higher than the 2024-25 budget. Funding for K-12 public education totals \$2.9 billion, up 0.2%, and higher education totals \$886.5 million, down 1.9%.



Mississippi K-12 Education

- \$2.7 billion for the Mississippi Student Funding Formula, the new public school funding formula, up 0.6%
- \$19.5 million for Chickasaw interest, up 28.3%

Mississippi Higher Education

- \$652.7 million for the institutions of higher learning, down 2.2%
- \$233.8 million for the community and junior colleges, down 1.1%

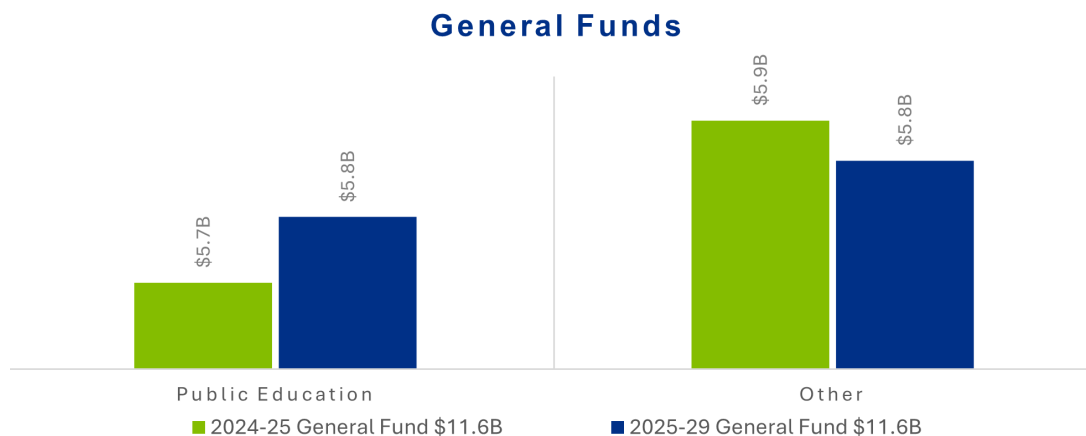
Mississippi Major Education Bills

House Bill 1193 prohibits state institutions of higher learning, community colleges, and public schools from creating or implementing diversity, equity and inclusion programs or using diversity statements in hiring, admissions or employment. The bill requires state education boards to ensure that funds are not used for prohibited activities and mandates that public schools and colleges teach and distribute information using specific definitions of male, female and sex, with required reporting of violations.

Senate Bill 2177 authorizes the use of state appropriations for vocational education under the Smith-Hughes Act and allows the state board of education to approve extended contracts for vocational agriculture and related programs that support local economic development. The bill limits the funding to high schools whose vocational teachers conduct approved instructional or supervision programs such as agricultural experience, farmer instruction or youth leadership training during periods between academic years or quarters.

Oklahoma (<http://www.oklegislature.gov/>)

Oklahoma General Assembly approved a nearly flat budget of \$11.6 billion for 2025-26, up 0.3% from the 2023-24 budget. Funding for all levels of public education totals nearly \$5.8 billion, up 1.6%.



Oklahoma Overall Public Education

- Nearly \$4 billion for the State Department of Education, up 3.1%
- Nearly \$8.1 million for Oklahoma School of Science and Math, up 12.6%
- Nearly \$1.1 billion for the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, up 0.4%
- \$433.9 million for Teacher's Retirement System, down 3.2%
- \$179.1 million for the Department of Career and Technology Education, down 8.8%
- \$3.7 million for the Office of Education Quality and Accountability, up 76.3%

Oklahoma Major Education Bills

House Bill 1087 extends the minimum salary schedule for certified personnel from 25 years to 35 years of experience and allows out-of-state and out-of-country teaching experience to count toward salary placement. The bill also extends the amount of time classroom instruction to 1,086 hours. It also permits school districts to count up to two days or 12 hours of virtual instruction toward the total instructional time, with specific approvals and under certain conditions. The bill also removes outdated salary provisions and directs funding to districts not receiving foundation aid or salary incentive aid to implement salary increases.

House Bill 1277 directs the state board of education to allocate \$7.5 million, subject to availability of funds, to provide grants to public middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools to incentivize phone-free spaces for student learning. The bill directs the board to attempt to select recipients equally from eligible schools that have an average daily membership of fewer than 500, schools with an average daily membership between 500 and 1,500, and schools with an average daily membership of 1,500 or more. It directs the grants to be used to purchase devices or equipment in which students can store their cell phones during the school day.

Senate Bill 139 requires school district boards of education to adopt a policy prohibiting students from using cell phones and personal electronic devices while on the campus of a public school district from bell to bell, except in emergencies or when needed to monitor health conditions.

House Bill 1287 authorizes the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma to establish a pilot program within the College of Education that will provide high-dosage mathematics tutoring for the lowest performing ninth grade students, based on performance on mathematics assessments administered in the eighth grade. The pilot program must operate in high schools in districts with 30,000 or more enrolled students and public charter schools.

House Bill 1412 allows funds to be used to provide stipends instead of salary increases. School districts receiving Title I funds in the top quartile of per-student allotments may designate up to an additional 10% of teachers at Title I school sites as advanced, lead or master teachers.

House Bill 1466 requires that, before a school district's accreditation status is changed from warning to probation or from probation to nonaccredited, the district must be given an opportunity to request a hearing before the state board of education. The board must notify the district of its right to a hearing. If the district does not request a hearing within 10 working days after receiving the notice, it waives that right. The bill also directs the board to establish rules governing the notice and hearing procedures related to accreditation status.

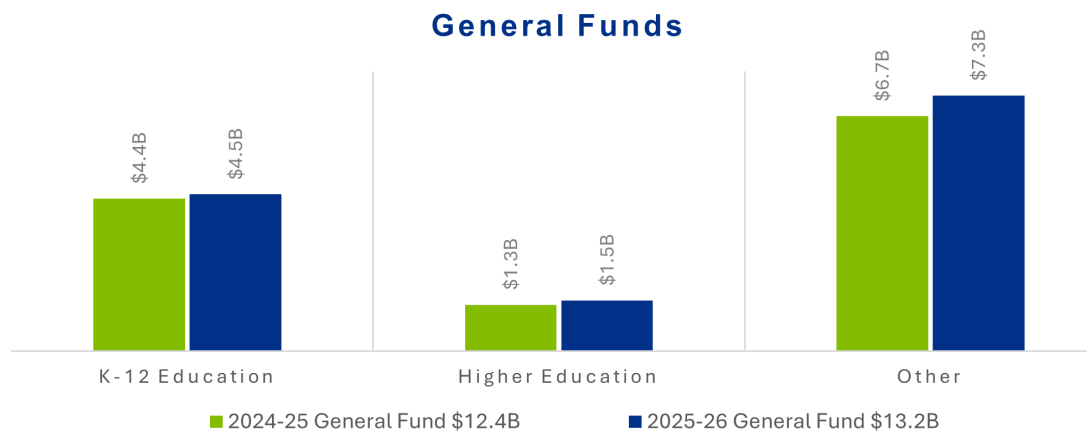
House Bill 1601 creates the "Advancing Rights for Caregiving, Health, and Extended Recovery (Maternity Leave Protection for Teachers) Act," or the ARCHER Act, allowing eligible school employees to use accrued sick leave to extend the duration of maternity leave beyond six weeks. The bill prohibits the use of such leave from being subject to approval from a school board or employer, as long as the employee has sufficient sick leave to cover the extended duration.

Senate Bill 212 directs the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability to establish and maintain a two-year pilot program called TeachForward OK. The bill requires Oklahoma's Office of Educational Quality and Accountability to select technical assistance providers to evaluate teacher education programs at higher education institutions in the state. The bill authorizes the commission to award grants to approved programs, which must use the funds to contract with a provider for these evaluations. The commission must also select one approved teacher education program to receive \$500,000 to implement the recommendations from its evaluation report.

House Bill 1096 directs professional development programs adopted by school districts to have a goal of increasing student achievement on national norm-referenced college entrance exams, rather than just the ACT. The bill amends language related to continuing education for math teachers, directing that certain core curriculum math courses be recommended by the state department of education, rather than the ACT. Additionally, it expands remediation opportunities to include students scoring below benchmarks on the SAT or Classical Learning Test and requires state subject matter standards to align with the goal of improving overall college entrance exam performance statewide.

South Carolina [\(http://www.governor.sc.gov/\)](http://www.governor.sc.gov/)

The South Carolina General Assembly approved a \$13.2 billion budget for 2025-26, up 6.6% from the 2024-25 budget. Funding for K-12 public education totals nearly \$4.5 billion, up 2.7%, and higher education totals nearly \$1.5 billion, up 9.1%.



South Carolina Public Education

- Nearly \$4.2 billion for state aid to school districts, up 2.7%, including:
 - Nearly \$3.8 million for state aid to classrooms, up 2.2%
 - \$60 million for Education Scholarship Trust Fund, up 100%
- \$1.1 billion for state colleges and universities, up 10.7%
- \$262.4 million for technical and comprehensive education, up 5.2%
- \$42.2 million for Commission on Higher Education, up 1.9%
- \$28.4 million for Higher Education Tuition Grants Commission, up 0.6%

South Carolina Lottery Funds and Education Improvement Act Funds

- \$562.6 million lottery funds dedicated to education, up 0.3%
- \$1.3 billion for Education Improvement Act funds, up 4.2%

South Carolina Major Education Bills

House Bill 3196 enacts the Educator Assistance Act. Provisions of the bill include:

- Allowing the state department of education to use existing data systems to report on post-secondary outcomes.
- Requiring school districts to adopt a policy allowing employees to contribute unused sick or annual leave to a sick leave bank for other employees.
- Mandating earlier and more detailed teacher employment notifications, including salary information and teacher assignments.

- Expanding collegial professional development requirements to four days and granting teachers self-directed time for planning and preparation.
- Updating teacher contract and certification rules by clarifying breach of contract provisions and penalties.
- Making retired educator teaching certificates permanent and allowing full- or part-time teaching without renewal.

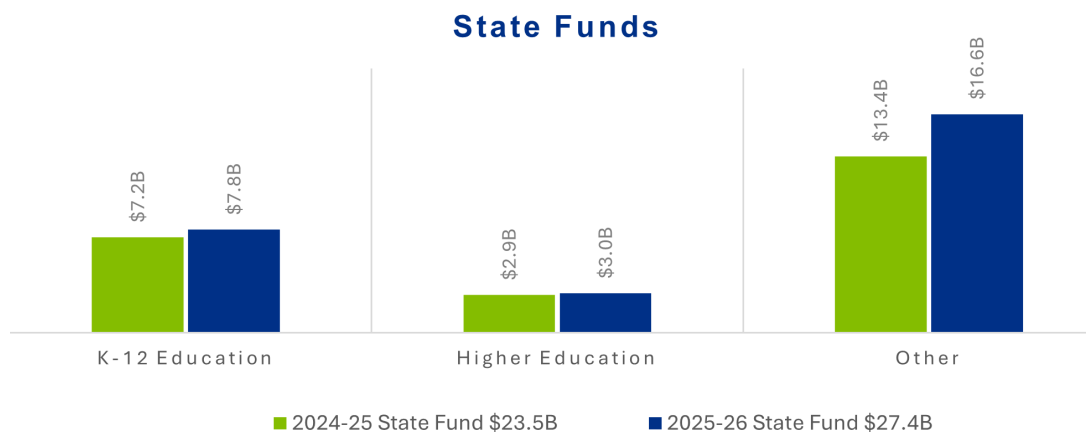
Senate Bill 62 updates the Education Scholarship Trust Fund by requiring the state superintendent of education to appoint a trustee to manage scholarship funds, increasing the individual scholarship amount from \$6,000 to \$7,500 and raising the income cap from 300% of poverty to 500% of poverty. Additionally, to expand public school choice, the bill requires the state department of education to develop a model interdistrict policy for student transfers and requires school districts to enact an interdistrict policy that is consistent with the model policy.

Senate Bill 78 allows an individual's prior years of work experience to be awarded on an educator certificate if the prior experience is in, or related to, the content field of the certificate for which the individual qualifies. One year of experience credit may be awarded for every two years of full-time relevant occupational experience. Eligible individuals will receive a pay adjustment at the beginning of the next school year to reflect the new experience step. The bill also requires the state department of education to develop guidelines for implementation of the bill and to make the non-teaching occupational experience verification form available within 180 days of the bill's approval.

Senate Bill 79 requires the state department of education to establish a pilot program that will permit a school that received an overall rating of "Excellent," "Below Average," or "Unsatisfactory" on its annual report card for at least two consecutive years, or is located in a critical geographic area to hire noncertified teachers in a ratio of up to 10% of its entire teaching staff. The bill also requires SCDE to establish procedures for the registration and clearance of all noncertified teachers working in a public school pursuant to this bill and imposes additional reporting requirements on the department.

Tennessee (<http://www.legislature.state.tn.us/>)

The Tennessee General Assembly approved a nearly \$27.4 billion budget for 2025-26, up 16.6% over the 2024-25 budget. Funding for K-12 public education totals \$7.8 billion, up 7.9%, and higher education totals nearly \$3 billion, up 4.4%.



Tennessee K-12 Education

- Nearly \$7 billion for Tennessee Investment in Student Achievement, up 2.8%
- \$106.8 million for early childhood education, down 0.03%
- \$3.3 million for the state board of education, up 0.02%
- \$90.5 million for Centers of Regional Excellence, up 104.6%
- \$13.5 million for college and career tech education, up 30.8%
- \$148.6 million for Education Freedom Scholarship Program —Tennessee’s universal school choice program

Tennessee Higher Education

- Nearly \$930 million for the University of Tennessee System, up 5%
- \$406.8 million for community colleges, up 4.3%
- \$125.3 million for Tennessee Student Assistance Awards, up 10.6%
- \$19.7 million for Tennessee Higher Education Commission Grants, up 127%

Tennessee Major Education Bills

House Bill 932 requires each local board of education and each public charter school governing body to adopt and implement a wireless communication device policy that prohibits a student from using a wireless communication device during instructional time and authorizes a teacher to allow a student to use a device for educational purposes during instructional time.

Senate Bill 729 authorizes local education agencies to adopt and implement a merit-based pay structure for educators to award additional compensation to high-performing educators and to incentivize educators to meet and exceed expectations. The bill requires that a merit-based pay structure adopted pursuant to this bill may only result in an increase to the compensation of an educator, whether in the form of a one-time bonus or an increase to the salary payable to the educator in accordance with the salary schedule approved by the commissioner for the LEA for the respective school year.

Senate Bill 870 requires the state department of education to convene a teacher evaluation advisory committee to review and evaluate current teacher evaluation practices in this state. The committee must report its findings and recommendations to the department at which time the committee ceases to exist. The bill also requires the department and the state board of education to provide a final report that includes the landscape analysis, the committee’s recommendations and any further recommendations to the education committee of the Senate and the committee of the House of Representatives by Jan. 31, 2026.

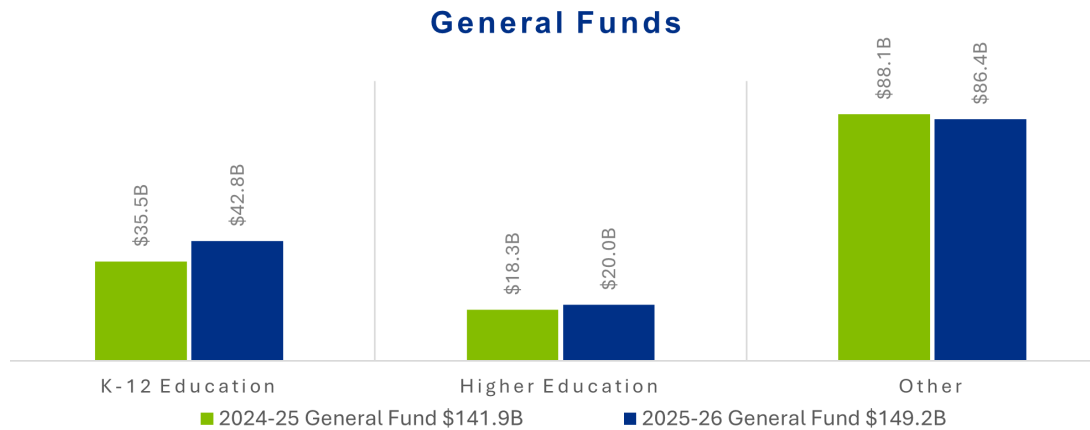
House Bill 623 requires the state department of education to establish enrollment deadlines for voluntary prekindergarten programs so that at-risk students who will be four years old by specified date must be enrolled by the beginning of the school year and students who are four-year-olds who do not have a disability or who meet the qualifications for enrollment at three years of age must be enrolled by specified date.

Senate Bill 208 requires the office of the comptroller to annually conduct a review of the implementation of the Tennessee Literacy Act and by Nov. 1 of each year, to submit a report detailing the findings of the review to legislative committees with subject matter jurisdiction over education and publish the report on the comptroller’s website. The bill also requires the state department of education to provide any information requested by the Office of the Comptroller to its office as soon as practicable.

House Bill 485 authorizes local education agencies and public charter schools to provide up to four days of the required specified days of classroom instruction via hybrid learning in the event of dangerous or extreme weather conditions, or an emergency, as determined by the director of schools or the director of public charter schools.

Texas (<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>)

The Texas Legislature approved a \$149.2 billion general revenue biennial budget for 2025-26, up 5.1% over the budgeted amount for the 2024-25 biennium. State general revenues for K-12 education are up 20.4% to \$42.8 billion, while higher education receives \$20 billion, up 6.9%.



Texas Major Education Bills

House Bill 2, a major public education funding bill, provides additional funding to boost educator salaries, change the basic allotment, enhance special education funding, improve school safety, and support early childhood education. The key provisions of the bill include:

- Adds a higher level to the Teacher Incentive Allotment, designates “enhanced TIA schools,” and creates a grant program to help districts expand local teacher designation systems.
- Establishes a teacher retention allotment to provide additional funding for classroom teacher compensation based on teaching experience and district size.
- Requires the Texas Education Agency to provide liability insurance for classroom teachers.
- Provides one-time payments for uncertified teachers who earn certification and for educators completing literacy or math academies.
- Establishes the Preparing and Retaining Educators through Partnership program to support teacher residencies and preservice classroom practice opportunities for pre-K–12 candidates.

- Directs the state Board for Educator Certification to update educator preparation program rules requiring TEA to develop new instructional and training materials.
- Amends the basic allotment under the foundation school program to include the new guaranteed yield increment adjustment, increasing the basic allotment from \$6,160 to \$6,215 for the 2026-27 biennium.
- Expands the school safety allotment, doubling it to approximately \$21.10 per ADA and \$33,540 per eligible campus.
- Overhauls special education funding by introducing new allotments for service-group, transition funding, evaluations, transportation and day placements.
- Expands pre-K enrollment eligibility, creates early literacy interventions for at-risk students, introduces adaptive vocabulary assessments for grades K–3 and funds additional instructional days to improve early academic outcomes.

House Bill 6 enhances school safety and discipline by giving administrators greater flexibility while ensuring fairness for students and educators. It limits out-of-school suspensions to three days per incident and allows in-school suspensions without a fixed time limit, provided that each case is reviewed at least once every 10 days to determine if continued suspension is appropriate. The bill also permits administrators to place expelled students in a virtual expulsion program, offering remote instruction and materials under specific conditions. For younger students, it allows out-of-school suspension for those below third grade only if the student poses an immediate threat to others' safety or causes repeated, significant classroom disruptions.

Additionally, each school must designate a campus behavior coordinator to monitor disciplinary referrals and report potential threats to the school's safety team. The bill further authorizes districts to adopt a parental involvement policy in disciplinary placements, requiring that parents be informed of their right to request a behavioral agreement that could shorten the disciplinary period at the administrator's discretion.

Senate Bill 2 creates an Education Savings Account program to fund approved educational expenses for eligible children, with total program funding capped at \$1 billion for the 2026-27 biennium. The bill authorizes the comptroller to request biennial appropriations to cover ESAs for each participating student, those on the waiting list, and eligible siblings of a participating student and allows the comptroller to certify up to five certified educational assistance organizations to help administer the program.

Approved ESA expenses include private school tuition, online or higher education courses, instructional materials, transportation, therapies, technology and certain meals. If demand exceeds available funding, a lottery system will prioritize siblings of current participants and students with disabilities from lower-income households. No more than 20% of total funds may go to students from households earning above 500% of the federal poverty level, with preference given to those previously enrolled in public or charter schools.

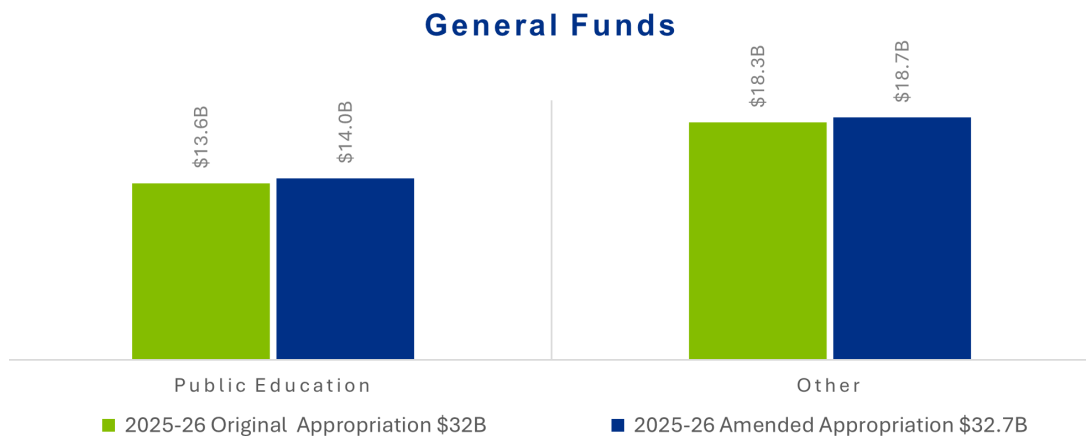
House Bill 20 establishes the Applied Sciences Pathway Program, allowing high school juniors and seniors to concurrently earn high school diplomas and an industry-recognized certificate through partnerships between school districts or open-enrollment charter schools and higher education institutions. The program targets high-wage, high-growth industries and requires coursework to follow a non-duplicative, progressively advanced sequence leading to a high school diploma and job placement opportunities. The bill also requires the Texas commissioner of education to approve participating partnerships and revise the list of qualifying industries every five years, beginning in the 2027-28 school year, to align with current labor market trends and workforce needs.

House Bill 1178 creates a temporary educator certificate for teachers certified in other states who hold a valid, non-temporary certificate or similar teaching credential in another state and a bachelor's degree from an accredited higher education institution. The temporary certificate issued under this legislation expires after one year or until the educator receives a Texas certification. For spouses of active-duty military members, the certificate may remain valid for up to three years. The bill prohibits a temporary certification from being renewed or reissued.

House Bill 1481 requires the board of school districts or governing body of open-enrollment charter schools to adopt, implement and ensure the school district or school complies with a written policy prohibiting a student from using a personal communication device while on school property during the school day. It also establishes disciplinary measures to be imposed for violation of the prohibition and may provide for confiscation of the personal communication device.

Virginia (<http://dpb.virginia.gov/budget/>)

In Virginia, legislators approved amendments to the second year of the 2024-26 biennial budget, which includes a \$32.7 billion general fund budget for fiscal year 2025-26, 2.4% higher than the amount originally enacted for the year. Public education at all levels totals \$14 billion, including nearly \$2.5 billion for public colleges and universities, up 2%.



Virginia K-12 Education

- \$10.1 billion for direct aid to public schools in 2025-26, up 3.1% from the original budget, including \$461.7 million for early childcare to support the childcare subsidy program and Virginia preschool initiative
- \$111.4 million for the department of education central office operations, up 22.6%

Virginia Higher Education

- Nearly \$712.3 million for Virginia Community College System, level funded
- \$290 million for the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, up 24.1%

Virginia Major Education Bills

House Bill 1626 and **Senate Bill 822** prohibit any public elementary or secondary school teacher from being required to participate in any non-academic training activity more frequently than once within six months of employment with the applicable school board and once every five years thereafter, except for certain necessary training. The bill also provides that the total frequency and duration of non-academic training activities in which each such teacher is required to participate must not exceed 25 hours every five years.

House Bill 1760 directs the state Department of Health, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Department of Education, to convene a work group to develop a plan to:

- (i) Create a mental health screening and assessment tool for children in early childhood care.
- (ii) Provide mental health consultation resources and training to early childhood education providers, pediatric health providers and families.

The bill requires the work group to report its findings and recommendations to the House and Senate appropriations committees by Nov. 1, 2025.

House Bill 2637 and **Senate Bill 1377**, direct the state department of education, in collaboration with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, to develop and implement a plan to incentivize and facilitate participation of public school staff and students in the Commonwealth Mental Health First Aid Program.

House Bill 1947 and **Senate Bill 768** also focus on mental health and require the state department of education to survey each local education agency to determine:

- (i) How public schools grant access to local departments of social services and community services boards and other community-based providers of mental and behavioral health services.
- (ii) What school-based mental and behavioral health services are made available by such local education agency.

The bills also require the state department of education to utilize the results of and feedback from the survey to inform the continued development and improvement of guidelines for school professionals to support students and families by connecting them with community resources that provide mental and behavioral health services.

House Bill 2679 requires each division superintendent to provide materials on recognition of and strategies for responding to behavior indicating that a student poses a threat of violence or physical harm to himself or others to the parent or legal guardian of the student. The bill specifies that these materials must be provided either during the initial attempt to notify the parent or legal guardian, as required by law, or through separate communication made as soon as practicable afterward. The bill also requires instructional materials to follow the state board of education's guidelines, including information on safe firearm storage around minors and provide guidance on limiting student access to lethal means such as firearms and medications.

House Bill 1961 and **Senate Bill 738** direct each school board to develop and each public elementary and secondary school to implement policies relating to the possession and use of cell phones and smart devices by students on school property and require restricting student cell phone and smart device possession and use on school property from bell to bell. The bill allows exceptions by permitting any student who has an Individualized Education Plan, Section 504 Plan, individualized health care plan or Limited English Proficiency plan to possess and use a cell phone or smart device on school property, including in the classroom.

House Bill 2777 and **Senate Bill 955** make several changes relating to the textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials, including:

- (i) Requiring each local school board to adopt and implement textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials in English language arts for grades six through 12 and mathematics, science, and history and social studies for grades kindergarten through 12 and requiring the department of education to support such local adoption and implementation in several ways; and
- (ii) Requiring each education preparation program that provides training for students seeking initial licensure to include a program of coursework and clinical experience and require all such students to demonstrate mastery in identifying and implementing textbooks and other high-quality instructional materials.

House Bill 2454 and **Senate Bill 784** direct the board of education to revise its Three “E” Readiness Framework: Employment, Enlistment and Enrollment, adopted pursuant to the public school accountability system to measure high school student postsecondary readiness. The bills require the framework to include an indicator of postsecondary readiness that incentivizes participation in and completion of work-based learning experiences. The maximum number of points for this indicator will be awarded to students who participate in a minimum of 90 hours of work-based learning experience.

House Bill 2018 and **Senate Bill 879** require the state board of education to issue a provisional license to any person seeking an initial license in the Commonwealth with an endorsement in career and technical education who has a high school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate and an industry-recognized credential, certification or license in the field. The bill allows these individuals to meet remaining licensure requirements by completing the specific coursework listed in the legislation, instead of fulfilling other requirements they have not yet met.

House Bill 2201 and **Senate Bill 1230** extend from 90 to 180 teaching days the maximum period of time during one school year for which a school board may employ a temporarily employed teacher to fill a teacher vacancy, with certain conditions and restrictions. The provisions of the bill expire on July 1, 2027.

House Bill 2686 requires each school board to develop and adopt a policy that allows students in grades five through eight to be eligible to enroll in advanced or accelerated mathematics and requires each such policy to provide for:

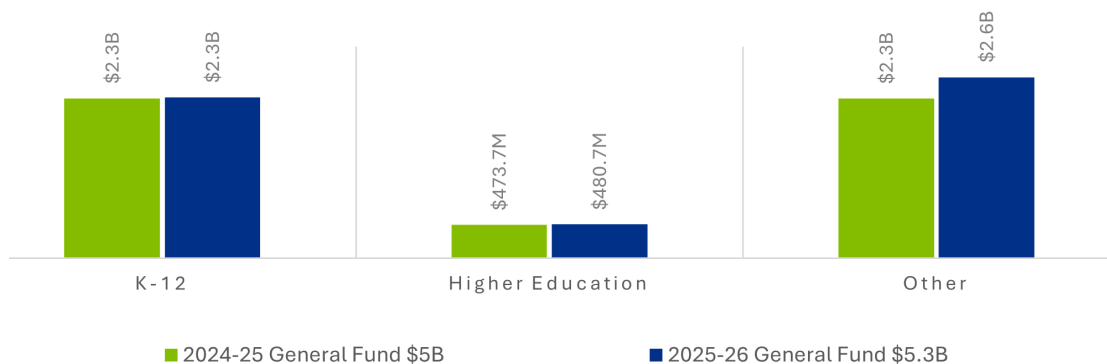
- (i) the automatic enrollment of students scoring in the top statewide quartile on math assessments into advanced math, unless parents opt out,
- (ii) additional ways for students to qualify for advanced math; and
- (iii) an annual parental notification relating to mathematics coursework.

The bill also requires each school board to report and the state department of education to post on its website certain data relating to advanced or accelerated mathematics participation and performance.

West Virginia [\(https://budget.wv.gov/\)](https://budget.wv.gov/)

The West Virginia General Assembly approved a \$5.3 billion budget for 2025-26, up 6.4% over the 2024-25 enrolled budget. Funding for K-12 public education totals nearly \$2.3 billion, up 0.5%, and higher education totals nearly \$480.7 million, up 1.5%.

General Funds



West Virginia Public K-12 Education

- \$39.8 million for teachers' retirement savings, up 4.4%
- \$13.7 million for increased enrollment, up 30.8%
- \$886,532 for the math program, down 5.6%
- Nearly \$1.4 billion for basic foundation formula funding, up 1.2%
- \$24.6 million for Hope Scholarships, up 35.1%
- \$7.4 million for safe school, up 67.9%

West Virginia Higher Education

- \$308.8 million for state-funded colleges and universities, up 0.9%
- \$88.1 million for community and technical colleges, up 0.9%
- \$81.7 million for West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission, up 0.8%

West Virginia Major Education Bills

House Bill 2003 requires county boards of education to adopt policies limiting student access to personal electronic devices during instructional time, with exemptions for medical needs, IEP or 504 plans or work-based learning programs. County boards of education policies must include, but are not limited to, storage procedures, consequences for violations, and communication protocols for parents and guardians. The bill also requires schools to document all violations in the West Virginia Education Information System and the Local School Improvement Councils to annually review the discipline data, assess the policy effectiveness and make recommendations to promote student compliance with the policy.

Senate Bill 199 strengthens the authority of teachers and school staff to manage student behavior by establishing clear procedures for removing students who display violent or disruptive behavior, especially in pre-K and elementary grades. It requires behavioral assessments, evidence-based intervention plans and partnerships with behavioral health agencies or alternative learning centers to support affected students. The bill also encourages staff training in behavioral intervention and directs the state board to adopt a disciplinary policy that allows waivers for schools showing progress with behavioral supports.

House Bill 3125 provides that a teacher with 10 years of teaching experience, with a valid teaching certificate, in good standing, and without any unsatisfactory evaluations, may apply for and be issued a permanent teaching certificate without having to complete any additional coursework.

House Bill 2411 provides that beginning with the 2027-28 school year, public high school students are required to earn a full credit in a high school computer science course as a graduation requirement, which can be earned in 8th through 12th grade. The bill requires that the computer science course must be of high quality, meet or exceed the curriculum standards and be available in a traditional classroom setting. The computer science credit required by this act may be substituted for a math credit and approved as a CTE credit if the course is relevant to the student's CTE study program. The act requires the West Virginia Board of Education to adopt rules that ensure flexibility for students to be credited for fulfilling the requirement and states that the WVBE may adopt rules to license computer science teachers.

House Bill 2129 creates the Parents' Bill of Rights by declaring that parents have the right to:

- 1) Direct the education of their child
- 2) Apply to enroll their child in a public school or any alternative school option
- 3) Access and review all school records relating to their child

The act also states that it does not restrict courts, law enforcement, or child welfare officials from carrying out their lawful duties.

House Bill 3209 requires every county board of education to employ two school counselors for every 1,000 students in net enrollment. County boards are permitted to provide one school counselor per every 400-450 students in any elementary and middle school and one school counselor per every 250-300 students in high schools. The bill clarifies that this requirement does not increase the number of funded student support positions under the Public School Support Plan.

Notes from other SREB states

A final state budget for North Carolina for the 2025-27 biennial has not been passed, and lawmakers have not reached a final agreement as of the writing of this report. Instead, the state is operating under a continuing budget resolution, or "mini-budget," which covers essential functions and was extended after the original deadline.

This report was prepared by Kimiya Munni, SREB analyst II, who can be reached at Kimiya.Munni@SREB.org or (404) 875-9211.