



***It's Snowing in North Florida!
Legislative Committees Cancelled
Schools across North Florida Closing Wednesday***

The Briefing for January 21, 2025

The Last Briefing was January 20, 2025

What's the weather outlook?

[10-Day Weather Forecast for Tallahassee, FL – The Weather Channel | weather.com](#)

***29 North Florida School Districts Closing Schools Wednesday*
*Link to Dept of Education Emergency Response Site - School Closures***

Legislative Committees are being rescheduled for the Week of Jan. 27

The following items were scheduled to be discussed:

REGIONAL EDUCATION CONSORTIA; EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT; FEMA REIMBURSEMENTS; TEACHER PREPARATION; CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION; COUNTY BUDGETS; and SCHOOL SAFETY

Small District Start Time Survey

As a result of legislation, approved in the 2023 Legislative Session, the State of Florida requires that no later than July 1, 2026, the instructional day for all public and charter middle schools must begin no earlier than 8:00 a.m. and no earlier than 8:30 a.m. for high schools.

Initial Results from a survey of small school districts indicate the following:

- Thirty-three districts responded
- 22 districts have yet to implement the state required start times.
- 11 districts meet the start time requirement.

- All 33 indicated a preference for local flexibility.
- All respondents provided narrative on the challenges and issues related to implementation.

The Small School District Council Consortium is supporting legislation that would provide local authority for local school boards to set school start times. Senator Bradley has filed SB 296 repealing the mandate.

Local Projects to Get Hard Look Amidst Reduction of COVID Funding

As of this morning, House members had filed 40 funding proposals, while one had been filed in the Senate. The Legislature routinely considers thousands of projects requests submitted each session. Over the past five years, spending on such projects grew from \$174 million in 2019 to \$1.3 billion in 2024. Proposals submitted will work to be included in the state budget for the 2025-2026 fiscal year during the legislative session that will start March 4. The increase in funding was primarily due to an infusion of Federal Covid funds. These funds will no longer be available, and legislators are being asked to tighten the belt. Key Senators are indicating that project funding could be limited to around \$500 million. Lawmakers also have been advised that getting local matches could help with their requests for money from the Legislature.

[Link to House Local Projects](#)

[2025 Appropriations Project Requests](#)

[Link to Senate Local Projects](#)

[2025-26 Local Funding Initiative Request Form](#) [PDF]

Tracking Committee Meetings

Deliberations can be watched live on

[The Florida Channel: Home](#)

Accessing Committee Meeting Agendas and Materials (If available)

[Link to Senate Committees](#)

[Link to House Committees](#)

On the Docket

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 22, 2025

- GOODWILL DAY AT CAPITOL -Wednesday is Florida Goodwill Day at the Capitol, with Goodwill leaders from across the state meeting with lawmakers and staff members.
- UNEMPLOYMENT APPEALS BOARD - Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. - The state Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission is scheduled to meet. - Reemployment Assistance Appeals Commission, 1211 Governors Square Blvd., Suite 300, Tallahassee. Call-in number: 850-988-5144. Code: 261180880
- GEOLOGY ISSUES - Wednesday, 10 a.m - The Florida Board of Professional Geologists will meet. - Florida State University Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences- EOAS Building, 1011 Academic Way, Tallahassee.
- ST. JOHNS RIVER COLLEGE BOARD - Wednesday, 3 p.m. - The St. Johns River State College Board of Trustees will meet. - St. Johns River State College, St. Augustine Campus, 2990 College Dr., St. Augustine.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 23, 2025

- HUMAN RELATIONS PANEL - Thursday, 10 a.m. - The Florida Commission on Human Relations will meet. - Call-in number: 850-270-6017. Code: 503795883

- GULF COAST COLLEGE BOARD - Thursday, 10 a.m. Central time. - The Gulf Coast State College Board of Trustees will meet. - Gulf Coast State College, Student Union West, 5230 West Highway 98, Panama City.
- UWF TRUSTEES - Thursday, 10 a.m. Central time. - The University of West Florida Board of Trustees will meet. - <https://uwf.zoom.us/j/82520294460?pwd=OSKfPSuwq4CSq9LbetK7MonOYaqc7B.1>. Webinar ID: 82520294460. Code: 022020. Call-in number: 1-305-224-1968
- SUPREME COURT RELEASES OPINIONS - Thursday, 11 a.m. - The Florida Supreme Court is scheduled to release opinions.
- NORTH CENTRAL COUNCIL TO - Thursday, 7 p.m. - The North Central Florida Regional Planning Council will meet. - Holiday Inn Hotel and Suites, 213 Southwest Commerce Blvd., Lake City.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 24, 2025

- ETHICS COMMISSION - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - The Florida Commission on Ethics will take up a series of issues, including a long-running case involving Sen. Randy Fine, R-Brevard County. - 1st District Court of Appeal, 2000 Drayton Dr., Tallahassee.
- HOUSING ISSUES - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - The Florida Housing Finance Corp. Board of Directors will meet. - Hilton Naples, 5111 Tamiami Trail North, Naples.
- OPTOMETRY BOARD - Friday, 9 a.m. - The Florida Board of Optometry will meet. - Holiday Inn Tampa Airport Westshore, 700 North Westshore Blvd., Tampa.
- HEARING AID BOARD - Friday, 9 a.m. - The Florida Board of Hearing Aid Specialists will meet. - Call-in number: 850-792-1375. Code: 866954839
- FSDB TRUSTEES - Friday, 9:30 a.m. - The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind Board of Trustees will meet. - Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, Moore Hall, 207 San Marco Ave., St. Augustine.
- JOBLESS NUMBERS RELEASED - Friday, 10 a.m. - The Florida Department of Commerce will release a December unemployment report.
- WATER QUALITY - Friday, 10 a.m. - The state Biscayne Bay Commission will meet. - <https://ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov/BiscayneBayCommission>
- PIZZO SPEAKS AT TIGER BAY - Friday, noon. - Senate Minority Leader Jason Pizzo, D-Sunny Isles Beach, will speak to the Capital Tiger Bay Club. - Donald L. Tucker Civic Center, 505 West Pensacola St., Tallahassee.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 2025

- DEMOCRATIC LEADERS - Saturday, 9 a.m. - The Florida Democratic Party State Executive Committee will meet. - Hilton Orlando Buena Vista Palace, 1900 East Buena Vista Dr., Lake Buena Vista.

Mark Your Calendars

2025

- January 13-17- Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
- ~~January 21-24~~ ~~Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate~~
- January 27 - TBD Special Session and Committee Meetings
- February 2 - Deadline for release of Governors recommended budget
- February 3 – 7 Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
- February 10 – 14 Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
- February 17 – 21 Interim Committee Meeting – House and Senate
- March 4 Regular Session Begins
- March 18 - Small County Coalition Legislative Briefing/Reception
- March 19- FAC Day in the Legislature

- March 19 – 20 FSBA 38th Annual Day in the Legislature, Tallahassee, FL
- March 19 Small School District Legislative Briefing
- March 19 -20 Rural Counties Day in the Legislature
- May 2 - Regular Session Ends

Headlines Around the State

[*News4JAX: Senate confirms Marco Rubio as secretary of state, giving Trump the first member of his Cabinet*](#)

[*USA Today: Marco Rubio breezes through Senate confirmation, becomes first Latino secretary of State*](#)

[*FlaPol: Senate unanimously confirms Marco Rubio as Secretary of State*](#)

[*Bloomberg: China Signals Willingness to Speak With Sanctioned Marco Rubio*](#)

[*FlaPol: Mike Waltz resigns from Congress for National Security Adviser post under Donald Trump*](#)

[*The Floridian: Salazar Counters Biden Decision on Cuba With FORCE Act*](#)

[*CBS Miami: Trump begins sweeping immigration overhaul, raising concerns in South Florida*](#)

[*Democrat: President Trump stiff-arming efforts to fight climate change has echoes in Florida*](#)

[*Sun-Sentinel: South Florida lawmakers and the top roles they'll have on committees*](#)

[*Politico: Florida's takeover of Washington is only just beginning*](#)

[*Times: What Trump's executive order on birthright citizenship could mean for Florida*](#)

[*News4JAX: Gov. DeSantis issues state of emergency ahead of winter storm, warns Floridians of hazardous driving conditions*](#)

[*WUSF: Possible ice, snow nixes legislative meetings in Tallahassee*](#)

[*WUSF: Florida teacher shortage continues to improve, as number of uncertified teachers rises*](#)

[*WUSF: Florida's growing school voucher program has a high price tag, analysts say*](#)

[*Democrat: Florida bill targets growing 'traq' drug crisis with tougher penalties as its use surges*](#)

[*The Floridian: DeSantis Quickly Refers to Trump's 'Gulf of America' in Latest Executive Order*](#)

[*FlaPol: Jennifer Bradley files bill to revert school start time rules*](#)

[*Sentinel: New bill targets start times for Florida middle schools, high schools*](#)

[*Democrat: Florida AG Ashley Moody activates price gouging hotline for severe winter weather*](#)

[*DBNJ: Trump pardons Jan. 6 Florida rioters including Enrique Tarrío, commutes sentence for Joe Biggs*](#)

[*Ledger: Polk County's eight Jan. 6 defendants get their pardons from Trump. Here's a look at their cases*](#)

[*Sentinel: Aaron De Groft, whose Basquiat exhibit triggered a scandal at Orlando museum, dies at 59*](#)

About the Briefing

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The Briefing is compiled to provide information to elected officials and staff in counties that are members of the Small County Coalition and the Small School District Council Consortium. It is also sent to Professional Colleagues and Associates. For Questions Email [*_cdoolin@DoolinandAssoc.com*](mailto:_cdoolin@DoolinandAssoc.com)

If you want to see all of the latest briefings – you can go www.smallcountycoalition.org or www.ssdcc.org and click on the red **Briefing** button

