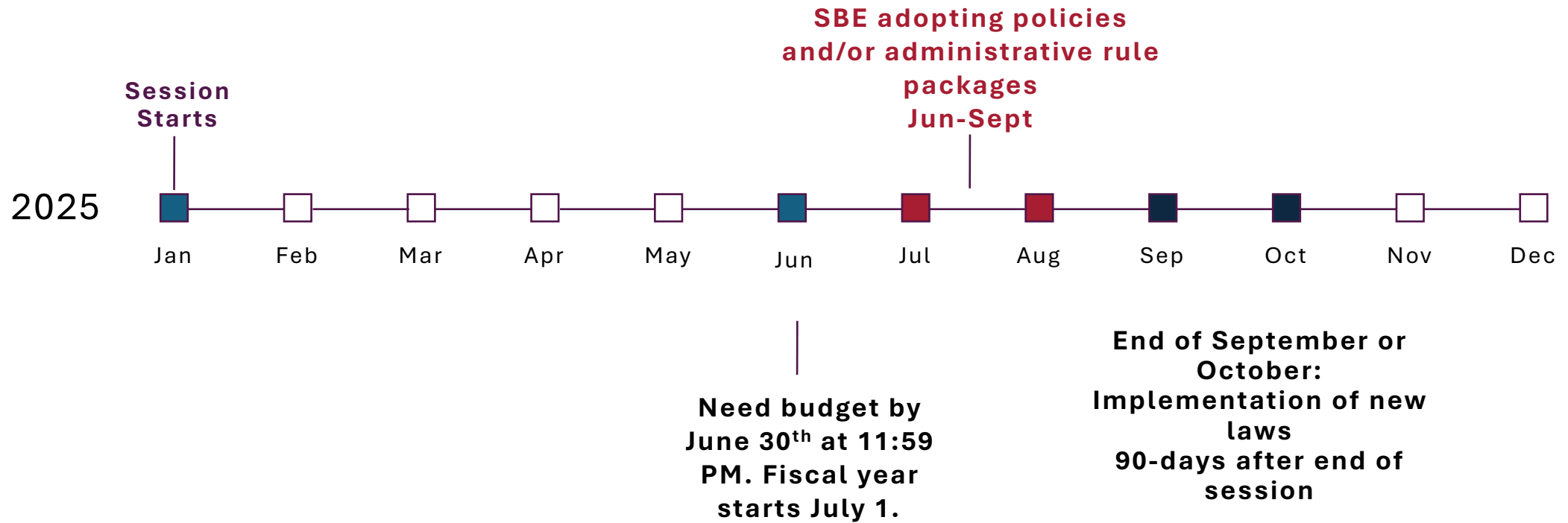




Professional Preparation Board
Legislative Preview
Rebecca Beebe, Director of Governmental Affairs.

Timeline

- January 13th – opening day of the legislative session
- January 17th – Governor Budget Recommendation
- Committee hearings begin
- Budget must pass by July 1st.
- Bills become effective 90 days after Sine Die.
- Sine Die is the last day of the legislative session.



LEGISLATIVE PROCESS AND IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

2024 Voucher/School Choice Election Results

- In 2024, school choice and vouchers amendments **FAILED** in 3 states.
- Colorado – The language was complicated. A ballot initiative amending their constitution to add a right to “school choice and innovative”, which would pave the way for public dollars to go to private schools, **failed**.
- Nebraska – Almost all 93 counties voted to **repeal an existing voucher program**.
- Kentucky – A voucher program was **defeated 65% to 35%** (the inverse of by which Trump won Kentucky.)
- What does this mean?
- Voters support **public dollars going to public schools**. Voters do not want public dollars going to unaccountable, private schools that can discriminate against children based on things like religion, ability/disability, and sexual orientation.
- Voters understand this simple message and they also believe that vouchers drain public school resources.
- At the end of the day, people support and speak positively of their local public school and that translated into these big wins.

What to expect

- Election reform – possible mandate that district's serve as polling places.
- Accountability and outcomes – academic and financial.
- **Teacher pay!**
- Administrative expenses, superintendent salaries.
- Negative comments about both and possible superintendent contract reform.
- Expulsion readmission – mandating that districts accept students previously expelled from a different district or charter.
- Building Renewal grants – lack of state resources.
- School safety – Efforts to expand access to the School Safety Grant program that funds Social Work, School Counselor, and SRO positions to vendors and facilities upgrades.
- MAG – minimum adequacy guidelines update, school safety.
- Various mandates: defibrillators on campuses, child abuse prevention education, internet safety, fentanyl, grooming issues.
- Expanding SBE investigative authority over non-certified staff, including paraprofessionals.
- Statewide assessment changes, Menu of Assessment, minimum passing score on high school test
- School facilities and declining enrollment.

Culture Wars

- 10 years ago, it was Common Core.
- Right now in K12 it's: book bans, CRT scare tactics, attacks on teachers' speech, distractions related to LGBTQ students (gender-affirming care at school rumors), attacks on superintendents pay and contracts. etc.
- The current shift in the Culture Wars is away from race (CRT) and towards LGBTQ issues, specifically transgender issues. (Book Bans and the perception that books about topics in American history like slavery were being banned, are very unpopular with voters. So, the Culture Wars pivoted.)
- Sexual abuse/predatory behavior in schools
 - Narrative around teachers and support staff
 - Narrative around school culture protecting abusers

SBE/ADE investigations and enforcement

- As a solution:
- Current law requires that certain classified, non-certified staff are subject to state board investigation and discipline. This includes any staff who is non-certificated and is either required or allowed to provide services directly to pupils without supervision by a certificated employee.
- Current law does not include in this requirement the following classified staff: a transportation employee, a food service employee or contractor, a maintenance worker, and an employee or contractor that is not required to possess a valid fingerprint card,
- Instructional aids and paraprofessionals are typically considered to not be subject to SBE investigative authority because they usually aren't providing services without the supervision of a certificated employee.
- The bill will expand SBE authority to any classified staff who provides services to pupils with supervision. The other exemptions will remain in law.
- Like the process for certificated staff, SBE must investigate written complaints alleging that a noncertificated person has engaged in immoral or unprofessional conduct. Enforcement action is tied to their Fingerprint Clearance Card.

State of the State

- Governor Hobbs gave her State of the State (STOTS) yesterday to the Arizona legislature. She mentioned the following priorities:
 - **Proposition 123** must be renewed before it expires because it provides critical funding for teachers and schools. If we fail to renew it, then we are throwing away a crucial opportunity to fund teacher pay raises and provide funding for children to have a world-class education. Prop 123 was originally bi-partisan, so we should prioritize a bi-partisan extension to provide more funding for schools without raising taxes.
 - The **Aggregate Expenditure Limit (AEL)** needs to be addressed to make sure that schools stay open.
 - **Empower Scholarship Accounts** need to be reigned in as they are close to costing Arizona \$1 billion and the program is scamming Arizonans. We need to institute responsible income caps on qualifying for the ESA program, and we need to pass accountability measures to ensure taxpayers know where their money is going.

Prop 123

- Proposition 123 provides roughly \$300 million annually to Arizona schools.
- It was passed by Arizona voters in May 2016 to settle the inflation funding lawsuit.
- Prop 123 expires at the end of this fiscal year, June 30 2025.
- When this expires, the Land Trust Disbursement will return to 2.5% (from 6.9%) and the General Fund will have to pick up the cost.
- This is built into the enacted budget to be picked up by the state general fund next fiscal year. The General Fund must cover Prop 123.
- The state must fund for inflation, unless we hit a trigger (next slide).
- We support renewing Prop 123 as new money in addition to the General Fund.

Prop 123 Triggers

- If K-12 spending surpasses 49%-50% of the total state General Fund Appropriation:
 - Allows the legislature to suspend the inflation increase and allows them to cut k-12 funding equal to inflation for the next fiscal year (Basically, this is a 4% cut)
 - 2% inflation increase suspension + 2% inflation cut = 4%
- If K-12 spending surpasses 50% of the total state General Fund Appropriation:
 - Allows the legislature to suspend the inflation increase and allows them to cut k-12 funding by twice the amount of inflation. (Basically, this is a 6% cut.)
 - 2% inflation increase suspension + (2 x inflation cut) = 6%
- We are somewhere roughly between 46%-48%. This can change every year with the budget.
- This trigger remains even when Prop 123 expires.
- The triggers should be reformed. Any reform must be passed by the voters at the ballot.
- **ASA is advocating for requiring a 2/3rds vote of the legislature to enact the triggers, further protecting inflation funding from cuts.**

Aggregate Expenditure Limit (AEL)

- The AEL is an outdated spending cap for statewide school district spending. It is based on 1980 spending, adjusts for inflation and student count, but is based on the unweighted ADM, essentially special ed, gifted, FRPL, and Group B funding is considered extra money outside the AEL.
- If the AEL isn't waived with a 2/3rd vote of the Legislature by March 1, districts must cut their budgets by April 1st.
- The last two sessions the state legislature has waived the AEL one school year in advance.
- The AEL for the current school year, 2024-2025 is waived. Not subject to the March 1 deadline anymore.
- The AEL is in the state constitution, so it cannot be changed by the legislature and must be changed by the voters.
- The AEL doesn't match the budget appropriated to schools by the legislature.
- **ASA is advocating for a proactive waiver of the AEL for the 2025-2026 school year.**
- **ASA supports a bill to “match” the AEL to whatever K-12 budget is approved by the legislature.**

Other School Funding Priorities

- **Poverty Funding:**
 - Increase poverty funding ongoing by \$37 million.
 - Group B weights provide additional funding to the base-level, per-pupil amount. The state created a Group-B FRPL weight in 2022, formally recognizing poverty and its impact on a student's school experience for the first time.
 - When it was created there were three planned, ongoing increases to the Poverty Weight. We are advocating for the last increase to continue ongoing, instead of just one-time.
- **District Additional Assistance**
 - Increase DAA by \$23 million.
 - DAA is a per-pupil amount meant for things like soft capital, smart boards, textbooks/curriculum, computers, chairs, desks, etc.
 - It was only funded at 15% of the statutory formula for many years.
 - Funding was restored in 2018 over the course of four years.
- **Legislators want to know why we need more money, as they have been investing in public schools for the last several years. You can help explain why.**



Questions?