

OPPOSE HB 4416 (Evans)/SB 3286 (Villivalam) - Unemployment Insurance

HB 4416 would make educational support personnel — including paraprofessionals, custodians, bus drivers, and food service staff — eligible for unemployment benefits during scheduled school breaks beginning June 1, 2026. Education support professionals are valued and essential members of our school communities. However, this proposal creates significant fiscal and operational concerns for districts statewide:



Unfunded Mandate

- Expands unemployment eligibility without state funding.
- Increases district unemployment insurance costs and contribution rates.
- Shifts financial responsibility to local property taxpayers.
- Diverts limited dollars from classrooms and student services.

There is no comprehensive statewide fiscal analysis detailing short- or long-term impact.

Districts are already managing:

- Inflation and rising operational costs.
- Proration of Mandated Categoricals (MCATs) especially regular and special education transportation.
- Staffing shortages

This permanent expansion of unemployment benefits creates a significant and ongoing unfunded mandate and will result in financial volatility, making responsible multi-year budgeting more difficult for school districts.

Loss of Local Control:

School districts vary widely in:

- Size and staffing models
- School calendars
- Collective bargaining agreements

A statewide mandate removes local flexibility to structure employment agreements based on community needs.

Why This Matters for Students:

Every new mandate without funding results in:

- Increased pressure on property taxpayers
- Reduced classroom resources
- Fewer program investments
- Less financial flexibility during emergencies

Well-intended policy should not unintentionally reduce support for students.

Our Request:

1. Do not call HB 4416/SB 3286 until a full statewide fiscal impact analysis is completed. Send the measure to the Professional Review Panel (PRP) or the appropriate State agency to complete the fiscal impact on EBF.
2. If pursued, make the bill subject to appropriations so the State — not local taxpayers — bears the cost.
3. Engage school district stakeholders in structured discussions before moving forward.