

By Senator Klein

28-763A-00

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to teacher certification;
3 creating the Alternative Certification Program;
4 requiring an applicant to possess certain
5 educational credentials and aptitudes;
6 requiring participating schools to coordinate
7 activities required by the program; providing
8 for demonstration of accomplished practices for
9 educators; creating the Transition to Teaching
10 pilot program; encouraging participation by
11 postsecondary education institutions and
12 organizations that represent employees or
13 employ eligible applicants; providing for grant
14 proposals and applications; authorizing the
15 Department of Education to define terms;
16 authorizing certain exceptions; requiring an
17 evaluation; authorizing the State Board of
18 Education to adopt rules; amending s. 231.15,
19 F.S.; deleting authority for school districts
20 to design alternative certification programs;
21 providing an effective date.

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23 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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25 Section 1. Alternative Certification Program.--The
26 Legislature recognizes the advantage of statewide consistency
27 in the certification process and finds that school districts
28 benefit from innovations designed by other school districts
29 and adopted by the state. Therefore, the Alternative
30 Certification Program is created and is modeled upon a program
31 similar in design and implemented by the Department of

1 Education and Hillsborough County District School Board. The
2 purpose of the program is to allow school districts to employ
3 instructional personnel who possess a baccalaureate degree and
4 an aptitude for teaching but who have not completed all the
5 requirements for a professional teaching certificate. The
6 program is not intended to place novice teachers into
7 difficult teaching situations, but to create a route to
8 professional certification that is rich in classroom
9 experience, meets individual needs, and exploits the unique
10 accomplishments of experienced adults.

11 (1) The purpose of the Alternative Certification
12 Program is to enable school districts to employ
13 college-educated people who do not hold a professional
14 teaching certificate but whose experience and aptitude are
15 recognized by an accomplished team of educators. An applicant
16 for the program must:

17 (a) Be an instructional employee of the school
18 district whose teaching assignment does not vary from day to
19 day.

20 (b) Possess a baccalaureate degree and meet the
21 subject-area requirements in a subject area for which a
22 professional certificate may be issued.

23 (c) Be employed by a principal who agrees to
24 coordinate the Alternative Certification Program at his or her
25 school.

26 (d) Meet any additional requirements to be eligible
27 for a 2-year temporary certificate.

28 (2) The program consists of at least 180 days of
29 teaching under the supervision of a clinical educator and
30 trained support team consisting of the principal, a mentor
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1 teacher, and a representative of a state-approved
2 educator-preparation program.

3 (a) The Department of Education shall provide
4 technical assistance and oversight for the training of the
5 support teams. During the Alternative Certification Program,
6 the applicant shall demonstrate competency in each of the
7 accomplished practices established by the Education Standards
8 Commission and adopted by the State Board of Education. The
9 Department of Education shall identify the accomplished
10 practices that may be demonstrated in the classroom and those
11 that must be achieved through professional development or
12 classroom instruction.

13 (b) The school district shall establish a process to
14 assess the applicant's demonstration of the accomplished
15 practices that are evident by observation of classroom
16 management, by testing, or by evaluation of work products.

17 (c) Each school district may evaluate the
18 qualifications of an applicant and prescribe additional
19 classroom instruction based on the applicant's education and
20 experience.

21 (3) The Transition to Teaching pilot program is
22 created to provide financial assistance to participants in the
23 Alternative Certification Program and to encourage
24 professional associations, business and trade groups, unions,
25 and other organizations to assist their employees who want to
26 be teachers.

27 (a) A community college, state university, or
28 independent college or university that contains a
29 state-approved educator-preparation program is eligible for a
30 grant to implement the pilot program by working with firms
31 that employ professionals or that represent employees. The

1 Commissioner of Education shall design the process for
2 receiving and evaluating grant proposals in accordance with
3 state and federal appropriations guidelines. Grants may be
4 awarded only to the extent that funding is provided.

5 (b) To be eligible for the pilot program, an applicant
6 must be eligible for the Alternative Certification Program or
7 be capable of earning a teaching certificate upon completing a
8 maximum of 15 college credit hours.

9 (c) An applicant to the Transition to Teaching pilot
10 program shall apply to the Commissioner of Education as the
11 commissioner requires. Participating postsecondary education
12 institutions and firms representing employees shall inform and
13 assist applicants in the process.

14 (d) An applicant who wishes to teach elementary
15 education or another subject for which he or she does not meet
16 the subject area requirements is not required to be employed
17 by a school district to participate in the pilot program.
18 However, the applicant must obtain a commitment for employment
19 from a school district, contingent upon the applicant's
20 meeting the requirements within a designated period of time.

21 (e) Each eligible participant in the pilot program
22 must agree to serve in an eligible school district for at
23 least 3 years and to become fully certified within 2 years
24 after employment. The commissioner shall determine which
25 school districts are eligible and shall establish the
26 conditions under which a participant must repay all or a
27 portion of the training stipend if the participant fails to
28 complete his or her service obligation.

29 (f) Each district school board that employs a
30 pilot-program participant shall evaluate the program's
31 effectiveness using guidelines provided by the commissioner.

1 The commissioner shall coordinate the information provided in
2 each evaluation and provide the same information to the
3 President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of
4 Representatives, and the Governor.

5 (3) The State Board of Education may adopt rules under
6 sections 120.536(1) and 120.54, Florida Statutes, to implement
7 this section.

8 Section 2. Subsection (1) of section 231.15, Florida
9 Statutes, is amended to read:

10 231.15 Positions for which certificates required.--

11 (1) The State Board of Education shall classify school
12 services, designate the certification subject areas, establish
13 competencies, including the use of technology to enhance
14 student learning, and certification requirements for all
15 school-based personnel, and prescribe rules in accordance with
16 which the professional, temporary, and part-time certificates
17 shall be issued by the Department of Education to applicants
18 who meet the standards prescribed by such rules for their
19 class of service. The rules must allow the holder of a valid
20 professional certificate to add an area of certification
21 without completing the associated course requirements if the
22 certificateholder attains a passing score on an examination of
23 competency in the subject area to be added, and provides
24 evidence of at least 2 years of satisfactory performance
25 evaluations that considered the performance of students taught
26 by the certificateholder. ~~The rules must allow individuals who~~
27 ~~have specific subject area expertise, but who have not~~
28 ~~completed a standard teacher preparation program, to~~
29 ~~participate in a state-approved alternative certification~~
30 ~~program for a professional certificate. As appropriate, this~~
31 ~~program must provide for demonstration competencies in lieu of~~

1 ~~completion of a specific number of college course credit hours~~
2 ~~in the areas of assessment, communication, critical thinking,~~
3 ~~human development and learning, classroom management,~~
4 ~~planning, technology, diversity, teacher responsibility, code~~
5 ~~of ethics, and continuous professional improvement.~~The State
6 Board of Education shall consult with the State Board of
7 Independent Colleges and Universities, the State Board of
8 Nonpublic Career Education, the Board of Regents, and the
9 State Board of Community Colleges before adopting any changes
10 to training requirements relating to entry into the
11 profession. This consultation must allow the educational board
12 to provide advice regarding the impact of the proposed changes
13 in terms of the length of time necessary to complete the
14 training program and the fiscal impact of the changes. The
15 educational board must be consulted only when an institution
16 offering the training program falls under its jurisdiction.
17 Each person employed or occupying a position as school
18 supervisor, principal, teacher, library media specialist,
19 school counselor, athletic coach, or other position in which
20 the employee serves in an instructional capacity, in any
21 public school of any district of this state shall hold the
22 certificate required by law and by rules of the state board in
23 fulfilling the requirements of the law for the type of service
24 rendered. However, the state board shall adopt rules
25 authorizing school boards to employ selected noncertificated
26 personnel to provide instructional services in the
27 individuals' fields of specialty or to assist instructional
28 staff members as education paraprofessionals.

29 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2000.
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SENATE SUMMARY

Relates to teacher certification. Creates the Alternative Certification Program. Requires an applicant to possess certain educational credentials and aptitudes. Requires participating schools to coordinate activities required by the program. Provides for the demonstration of accomplished practices for educators. Creates the Transition to Teaching pilot program. Encourages participation by postsecondary education institutions and organizations that represent employees or employ eligible applicants. Provides for grant proposals and applications. Authorizes the Department of Education to define terms. Authorizes certain exceptions. Requires an evaluation. Authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt rules. Deletes from s. 231.15, F.S., authority for school districts to design alternative certification programs.