

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K - 12 Appropriations Committee

BILL: CS/CS/SB 1062

INTRODUCER: Senate Committee on Education Pre-K-12 Appropriations, Education Pre-K-12 Committee and Senator Dockery

SUBJECT: Foreign Language Certification

DATE: April 8, 2008 REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Carrouth</u>	<u>Matthews</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2.	<u>Armstrong</u>	<u>Hamon</u>	<u>EA</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____	_____	_____	_____

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... Statement of Substantial Changes

B. AMENDMENTS..... Technical amendments were recommended

Amendments were recommended

Significant amendments were recommended

I. Summary:

The bill provides additional options for teacher certification candidates to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge in the following world languages: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian. In lieu of the Department of Education developing subject area examinations for these languages, the bill provides that a bachelor's degree, combined with the attainment of certain proficiency scores on approved world language examinations, may be used to demonstrate subject area mastery for which there are no Florida-developed exams.

In addition, the bill revises the time frame for a teacher with a temporary certificate to meet the general education requirement for professional certification from within one calendar year of the date of employment to the three fiscal year period covered by the temporary certificate.

This bill amends section 1012.56 of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

The DOE has currently developed foreign language subject area examinations for Spanish, French, German, and Latin. Florida-developed subject area examinations in Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Italian, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, and Hebrew are not available at this time and would require additional funding and substantial time to develop.

Currently, many Florida foreign language teachers in these increasingly popular world languages have, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree and certification in another subject area. Other educators with expertise in these emerging world languages have been approved by their local school district as experts in the field of the respective languages for which there is currently no statewide certification available. Additionally, some districts rely on visiting exchange teachers in these foreign language subjects, some of whom are not U.S. citizens.¹

On average, development and administration of certification examinations costs approximately \$85 per examinee. However, for low-incidence certification areas such as those in emerging world languages, state development of examinations is not cost effective because small numbers of currently potential examinees would not provide for significant amortization.²

The DOE estimates that it would take approximately six months to develop, fund, and execute contract amendments for new examinations in emerging world languages. In addition, it would require approximately 18 months for test development of written and performance tests and upwards of 2.5 years before initial test administration could be made. In contrast, approving additional means of establishing subject competency could take six months or less.³

Also, s. 1012.56(6), Florida Statutes, provides that a teacher holding a temporary certificate, which is valid for three fiscal years, has one calendar year from the date of employment to satisfy the general education requirement for professional certification.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill authorizes, but does not require, the Department of Education to establish passing scores for subject area examinations required for teacher certification in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The department currently has Florida-developed subject area certification examinations in Spanish, French, and German.

In lieu of developing additional examinations, the bill provides that an educator can demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge for teacher certification purposes by attaining a bachelor's degree and passing scores on the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) for subject areas for which there is no Florida-developed examination. The bill defines passing scores to mean proficiency above the intermediate level on the oral interview and written test administered by ACTFL.

¹ Department of Education, bill analysis – November 26, 2007.

² DOE Deputy Chancellor for K-12 Educator Quality – January 25, 2008

³ *Id.*

In addition, the bill revises the time frame for a teacher with a temporary certificate to meet the general education requirement for professional certification from within one calendar year of the date of employment to the three fiscal year period covered by the temporary certificate.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Individuals wishing to take these exams must pay the fees for teacher certification examinations provided by the state or the fees for exams offered by other organizations. Costs for currently available subject area exams provided by the department average between \$25 and \$150 per examinee.⁴ Fees for language exams provided by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages are comparable to the state developed exams, ranging from \$50 to \$134 per examinee.

C. Government Sector Impact:

There is no fiscal impact to the state as a result of this bill.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

⁴ Meeting with Deputy Chancellor and Legislative Affairs staff.

VIII. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS for CS by the Education Pre-K – 12 Appropriations Committee on April 8, 2008:

- makes a clarifying revision to the bill, and
- revises the time frame for a teacher with a temporary certificate to meet the general education requirement for professional certification from within one calendar year of the date of employment to the three fiscal year period covered by the temporary certificate

CS by the Education Pre-K – 12 Committee on February 20, 2008:

The CS removes the requirement by the Department of Education to develop additional foreign language subject area examinations and instead allows for individuals who hold a bachelor's degree to verify attainment of oral and written proficiency scores on examinations offered by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages for certification purposes.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.