

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 Committee on Education

BILL: SB 950

INTRODUCER: Senator Stargel

SUBJECT: Educator Certification

DATE: March 10, 2014

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	deMarsh-Mathues	Klebacha	ED	Pre-meeting
2.			AED	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 950 revises K-12 educator certification requirements to authorize the use of additional assessment options, align competencies across preparation program types, and provide flexibility for training and inservice requirements.

The bill authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt in rule additional examinations that may be used by teacher certification applicants to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge.

The bill requires that scientifically based reading instruction must be included in a district competency-based professional development certification program

With respect to renewal of a professional certificate, the bill provides that an applicant may renew a subject area specialization by passing a state-board approved subject area test or another standardized examination in lieu of college course credit or inservice points.

In addition, the bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules that would expand training for renewal of professional certificates for educators who must complete training in teaching students with disabilities.

The bill provides an effective date of July 1, 2014.

II. Present Situation:

Educator Certification

An educator in a traditional public school, including a charter school, must hold a certificate issued by the Florida Department of Education (DOE).¹ The DOE issues professional certificates,² temporary certificates,³ and athletic coaching certificates.⁴ In addition, school districts are authorized to issue adjunct teaching certificates to part-time teachers who have expertise in the subject area to be taught.⁵ An adjunct teaching certificate is valid through the term of the annual contract between the educator and the school district.⁶

To be eligible to seek certification, a person must meet the following basic eligibility requirements:⁷

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Sign an affidavit attesting that the applicant will uphold the U.S. and State Constitutions and provide true, accurate, and complete information;
- Earn a bachelor's or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher learning⁸ or from a nonaccredited institution identified by the DOE as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's or higher degree;⁹
- Submit to fingerprinting and background screening and not have a criminal history that requires the applicant's disqualification from certification or employment;
- Be of good moral character; and
- Be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator.

Eligibility Requirements for a Temporary Certificate

To be eligible for a temporary certificate, an applicant must:

- Meet the basic eligibility requirements for certification;¹⁰

¹ Sections 1012.55(1) and 1002.33(12)(f), F.S. District school boards and charter school governing boards are authorized to hire noncertified individuals to serve in an instructional capacity or as paraprofessionals. Rule 6A-1.0502, F.A.C., and ss. 1002.33(12)(f) and 1012.55(1)(c),

² Section 1012.56(7)(a), F.S. and Rule 6A-4.004(1), F.A.C. The professional certificate is valid for five years and is renewable. Section 1012.56(7)(a), F.S., and Rule 6A-4.004(3), F.A.C.

³ Section 1012.56(7), F.S., and Rule 6A-4.004(1)(a), F.A.C. The temporary certificate is valid for three years and is nonrenewable.

⁴ Rule 6A-4.004(4), F.A.C.

⁵ Section 1012.57(1), F.S.

⁶ Section 1012.57(4), F.S.

⁷ Sections 1012.32, 1012.315 and 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

⁸ Section 1012.56(2)(c), F.S., and Rule 6A-4.003(1), F.A.C.

⁹ For initial certification, an applicant must attain at least a 2.5 overall grade point average on a 4.0 scale in the applicant's major field of study. Section 1012.56(2)(c), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f) and (7)(b), F.S.

- Obtain full-time employment in a position that requires a Florida educator certificate by a school district or private school that has a DOE-approved professional education competence demonstration program;¹¹ and
- Either:
 - Demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge (*e.g.*, passage of the appropriate subject area exam);¹² or
 - Complete the subject content requirements specified in State Board of Education rule.¹³

An educator who is employed under a temporary certificate must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge within one calendar year of the date of employment.¹⁴ If the educator is employed under contract, the calendar year deadline for demonstrating mastery of general knowledge may be extended through the end of the school year.¹⁵

Eligibility Requirements for a Professional Certificate

To be eligible for a professional certificate, an applicant must:

- Meet the basic eligibility requirements for certification;¹⁶
- Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge;¹⁷
- Demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge;¹⁸ and
- Demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence.¹⁹

Demonstration of Mastery of General Knowledge

Mastery of general knowledge may be demonstrated through any of the following methods:

- Achieving a passing score on the General Knowledge Test;²⁰
- Achieving a passing score on the College-Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) taken before July 1, 2002;²¹

¹¹ Rule 6A-4.004(1)(a)2., F.A.C.

¹² Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S., and Rule 6A-4.0021(9), F.A.C. *See also Subject Area Knowledge*, Department of Education http://www.fl DOE.org/edcert/mast_sub.asp (last visited March 7, 2014)

¹³ Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 1012.56(7), F.S.

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f) and (7)(b), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1012.56(2)(g) and (3), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1012.56(2)(h) and (5), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1012.56(2)(i) and (6), F.S.

²⁰ Section 1012.56(3)(a), F.S. The General Knowledge Test is part of the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations and is administered as four subtests: Reading, English Language Skills, English Essay, and Mathematics. Rule 6A-4.0021(7), F.A.C.

²¹ Section 1012.56(3)(b), F.S.

- Having a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state,²² by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS),²³ or a national educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education;²⁴
- Completing two semesters of successful teaching in a Florida College System institution, state university, or private college or university that awards an associate or higher degree and is an accredited institution or an institution of higher education identified by the DOE as having a quality program.²⁵

Demonstration of Mastery of Subject Area Knowledge

Mastery of subject area knowledge may be demonstrated through any of the following methods:²⁶

- Achieving a passing score on the appropriate subject area exam required by State Board of Education rule;²⁷
- Attaining oral and written proficiency scores above the intermediate level on exams administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and completing a bachelor's or higher degree;²⁸ or
- For certification in any subject area for which there is no subject area exam, completing the specialization requirements specified in State Board of Education rule and verification of subject area competence by the district school superintendent or, for a state-supported or private school, the school's chief administrative officer.²⁹
- For a subject coverage requiring a master's or higher degree, achieving a passing score on the subject area examination specified in State Board of Education rule and completing the subject area specialization requirements specified in State Board of Education rule or;³⁰
- Holding a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued for a subject area by another state, by NBPTS, or by an educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education.³¹

²² Section 1012.56(3)(c), F.S.

²³ Section 1012.56(3)(d), F.S.

²⁴ *Id.*

²⁵ Section 1012.56(3)(e), F.S.

²⁶ The DOE has identified subject areas and the corresponding subject area exams. See *Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE)* <https://app1.fl doe.org/ftce/Portal/FtceTests.aspx> (last visited March 8, 2014), and *Florida Certification Coverages*, <http://www.fl doe.org/edcert/sublist.asp> (last visited March 8, 2014).

²⁷ Section 1012.56(5)(a), F.S. Rule 6A-4.0243, F.A.C., specifies the specialization requirements for certification in the following world languages: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish. There are subject area exams for French, German, Latin, and Spanish. See http://www.fl doe.org/edcert/sub_exams.asp (last visited March 8, 2014).

²⁸ Section 1012.56(5)(b), F.S. and Rule 6A-4.0243(1)(e), F.A.C.; See American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), *Certified Proficiency Testing Program*, <http://www.actfl.org/professional-development/certified-proficiency-testing-program> (last visited March 8, 2014); Language Testing International (ACTFL Language Testing Office), *ACTFL Certified Proficiency Testing Program: Oral And Writing Proficiency Testing for State of Florida Prospective Teachers*, http://dev5.lti-inc.net/acad_fl2n.cfm (last visited March 8, 2014).

²⁹ Section 1012.56(5)(c), F.S.

³⁰ Section 1012.56(5)(d), F.S.

³¹ Section 1012.56(5)(e) and (f), F.S. and Rule 6A-4.002(1)(i)-(j), F.A.C. See also *NBPTS Certificate Subjects and Corresponding Subjects in Florida*, <http://www.fl doe.org/edcert/nbpts-chart.asp> (last visited March 8, 2014).

Demonstration of Mastery of Professional Preparation and Education Competence

Mastery of professional preparation and education competence may be demonstrated through any of the following methods:

- Achieving a passing score on the professional education competency exam required by State Board of Education rule and:
 - Completing an approved teacher preparation program at a Florida or out-of-state postsecondary educational institution;³²
 - Completing a competency-based professional development certification program offered by a school district or completing an Educator Preparation Institute program;³³ or
 - Completing professional preparation courses specified in State Board of Education rule and completing an approved professional education competence demonstration program;³⁴
- Holding a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state, NBPTS, or a national educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education;³⁵ or
- Documenting completion of two semesters of successful college teaching experience in a Florida College System institution, state university, or an accredited private college or university that awards an associate's or higher degree or at a nonaccredited institution of higher education identified by the DOE as having a quality program.³⁶

Professional Certificate Renewal and Reinstatement

A state-issued professional certificate must be renewed every five years.³⁷ An educator must submit an application,³⁸ pay a fee,³⁹ and earn at least six college credits or 120 inservice points to renew professional certification.⁴⁰ At least three college credits or equivalent inservice points must be earned in each subject area for which renewal is sought.⁴¹

An expired professional certificate may be reinstated if the applicant:⁴²

³² Section 1012.56(6)(a) and (b), F.S.

³³ Section 1012.56(6)(g) and (8)(a)6., F.S.

³⁴ Section 1012.56(6)(f), F.S.

³⁵ Section 1012.56(6)(c) and (d), F.S.

³⁶ Section 1012.56(6)(e), F.S.

³⁷ Section 1012.585(2)(a), F.S.

³⁸ Rule 6A-4.0051(3)(b), F.A.C. The DOE processes certification renewals for individuals who are not employed by district school boards. Section 1012.585(1)(b), F.S. District school boards are responsible for processing certificate renewals for school district employees. Section 1012.585(1)(a), F.S.

³⁹ Section 1012.585(1)(a), F.S.

⁴⁰ Section 1012.585(3)(a), F.S.

⁴¹ Section 1012.585(3)(a), F.S.

⁴² Sections 1012.32 and 1012.585(5), F.S. and Rule 6A-4.0051(7), F.A.C.

- Submits an application for reinstatement;
- Submits to fingerprinting and background screening; and
- In the five years immediately preceding the application for reinstatement, completes the college credit and inservice point requirements for renewal and passes the subject area exam for each subject area to be reinstated.

Postsecondary Educator Preparation Programs

Florida provides several pathways to meet professional teacher certification requirements, including traditional teacher preparation programs provided by universities and colleges for individuals seeking a degree.⁴³ The Educator Preparation Institutes (EPI) and school district competency-based professional development certification programs provide individuals who already have baccalaureate degrees with professional training on the competencies needed for professional certification.⁴⁴

The law provides special requirements for peer mentors and postsecondary instructors and school district personnel who instruct and supervise students during their clinical experiences.⁴⁵ During field experience courses or internships, all school district personnel and instructional personnel who supervise or direct teacher preparation students in traditional teacher preparation programs and educator preparation institutes must:

- Have evidence of “clinical educator” training;
- Hold a valid state-issued professional certificate;
- Have at least three years of teaching experience in prekindergarten through grade 12; and
- Have earned an “effective” or “highly effective” rating on the prior year’s performance evaluation or be a peer evaluator under the district’s approved evaluation system.⁴⁶

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 950 revises K-12 educator certification requirements to authorize the use of additional assessment options, align competencies across preparation program types, and provide flexibility for training and inservice requirements.

The bill deletes reference to the obsolete College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) that was used as a way to demonstrate mastery of general knowledge. According to the Department of Education (DOE), more than a decade has passed since this provision was enacted to provide a transition period for educator certification applicants who earned a passing score on the CLAST prior to July 1, 2002.⁴⁷

⁴³ Section s. 1004.04, F.S.

⁴⁴ Sections 1004.85 and 1012.56(8)(a), F.S.

⁴⁵ Sections 1004.04(5), 1004.85(6), and 1012.56(8)(a)3., F.S.

⁴⁶ Sections 1004.04(5)(b) and 1004.85(6), F.S.

⁴⁷ E-mail, Department of Education, March 7, 2014. On file with the Senate Education Committee.

The bill authorizes the State Board of Education to adopt in rule additional examinations that may be used by applicants to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge.⁴⁸ The State Board may adopt not only the world language exams administered by ACTFL, but also standardized subject area content knowledge examinations for which Florida has no examinations.

The bill requires that scientifically based reading instruction must be included in a district competency-based professional development program. According to the DOE, this provision aligns the program with the competencies required in other educator preparation programs approved by the department.⁴⁹

With respect to renewal of a professional certificate, the bill provides that an applicant may renew a subject area specialization by passing a state-board approved subject area test or another standardized examination in lieu of college course credit or inservice points.

In addition, the bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules that would expand training for renewal of professional certificates for educators who must complete training in teaching students with disabilities.⁵⁰ This will allow a teacher who holds a professional certificate to use college credits or inservice points earned through training in teaching students with disabilities, in excess of six semester hours during one certificate-validity period, toward renewal of the professional certificate during subsequent validity periods. For a teacher with a temporary certificate, the rules must allow college credits or inservice points earned through training in teaching of such students to be used toward renewal of the teacher's first professional certificate.

The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules that would require an applicant for reinstatement of an expired professional certificate to earn a minimum of one college credit, or the equivalent inservice points, in the area of instruction for teaching students with disabilities. The credit may be included as one of the six college credits or equivalent inservice points the applicant must earn during the five years immediately preceding reinstatement of the expired certificate.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

⁴⁸ *Id.*

⁴⁹ E-mail, Department of Education, March 7, 2014. On file with the Senate Education Committee.

⁵⁰ Pursuant to section 9 of chapter 2013-236, L.O.F., codified in s. 1012.585(3)(e), F.S., an applicant for renewal of a professional certificate must earn a minimum of one college credit or the equivalent inservice points in the area of instruction for teaching students with disabilities. The law also provides that this requirement may not add to the total hours required by the DOE for continuing education or inservice training. This requirement is effective beginning July 1, 2014. Rule 6A-4.0051(6) and (7)(e), F.A.C., specifies how an educator may satisfy the one credit or 20 inservice points required for renewal of the certificate.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1012.56, 1012.585.

IX. Additional Information:

A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.