

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 934

INTRODUCER: Senator Wright

SUBJECT: Education

DATE: March 1, 2021

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Westmark	Bouck	ED	Pre-meeting
2.			AED	
3.			AP	

I. Summary:

SB 934 modifies provisions related to educator certification and nondegreed career teacher qualifications, teacher preparation programs and educator preparation institutes (EPIs), and school leadership. Specifically, the bill:

- Modifies the uniform core curricula for state-approved teacher preparation programs.
- Removes the General Knowledge Test as an admission requirement to a teacher preparation program.
- Provides that completion of an EPI may demonstrate education and successful occupational experience for nondegreed teachers of career education, and also professional preparation and education competence toward an educator certificate.
- Specifies that a master’s degree or higher degree may demonstrate mastery of general knowledge toward an educator certificate.
- Modifies the William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders to expand the definition of an educational leader and expand the collaborative network.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.

II. Present Situation:

Educator Certification Requirements

Initial Eligibility

To be eligible to seek certification of an educator in Florida, a person must:¹

- Meet general eligibility criteria to ensure competence and capability to perform the duties, functions, and responsibilities as an educator, including a minimum age, an oath of loyalty, demonstration of a bachelor’s or higher degree, and background screening.

¹ Section 1012.56(2), F.S.

- Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge if the person serves as a classroom teacher.
- Demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge.
- Demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence.

Mastery of General Knowledge

To demonstrate mastery of general knowledge to meet educator certification requirements, the following means are acceptable:²

- Achievement of passing scores on the general knowledge examination required by State Board of Education (SBE) rule;
- Documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state;
- Documentation of a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator credentialing board approved by the SBE;
- Documentation of two semesters of successful, full-time or part-time teaching in a Florida College System (FCS) 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 Department of Education (DOE) as having a quality program; or
- Achievement of passing scores, identified in SBE rule, on national or international examinations that test comparable content and relevant standards in verbal, analytical writing, and quantitative reasoning skills, including, but not limited to, the verbal, analytical writing, and quantitative reasoning portions of the Graduate Record Examination.

Mastery of Subject Area Knowledge

Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of subject area knowledge to meet educator certification requirements include:³

- For a subject requiring only a baccalaureate degree, a passing score on an examination specified in SBE rule,⁴ and may include passing scores on foreign language proficiency examinations, if applicable, or verification of the attainment of subject matter competencies.
- For a subject requiring a master's or higher degree, completion of the subject area specialization requirements specified in SBE rule and achievement of a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination or a standardized examination specified in SBE rule;
- Documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state;
- Documentation of a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator credentialing board approved by the SBE;
- Documentation of successful completion of a United States Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center program; or

² Section 1012.56(3), F.S. A school district that employs an individual who does not achieve passing scores on any subtest of the general knowledge examination must provide information regarding the availability of state-level and district-level supports and instruction to assist him or her in achieving a passing score. Such information must include, but need not be limited to, state-level test information guides, school district test preparation resources, and preparation courses offered by state universities and Florida College System institutions. Section 1012.56(3)(e), F.S.

³ Section 1012.56(5), F.S.

⁴ Subject area examinations are required to be aligned to the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. Section 1012.56(4), F.S.

- Documentation of a passing score on the Defense Language Proficiency Test.

Mastery of Professional Preparation

Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of professional preparation and education competence to meet educator certification requirements are:⁵

- Successful completion of an approved teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution within Florida and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule;
- Successful completion of a teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution outside Florida and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule;
- Documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state;
- Documentation of a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator credentialing board approved by the SBE;
- Documentation of two semesters of successful, full-time or part-time teaching in a FCS 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 and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule;
- Successful completion of professional preparation courses as specified in state board rule, successful completion of a specified professional preparation and education competence program, and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule;
- Successful completion of a specified professional development certification and education competency program; or
- Successful completion of a specified competency-based certification program and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by rule of the SBE.

Nondegreed Teachers of Career Education

Qualifications for part-time and full-time nondegreed teachers of career programs are based primarily on successful occupational experience rather than academic training.⁶ The qualifications for such teachers require:⁷

- The filing of a complete set of fingerprints as specified in law.
- Documentation of education and successful occupational experience, including:
 - A high school diploma or the equivalent.
 - Completion of six years of full-time successful occupational experience or the equivalent of part-time experience in the teaching specialization area.⁸
 - Completion of career education training conducted through the local school district inservice master plan.

⁵ Section 1012.56(6), F.S.

⁶ Section 1012.39(1)(c), F.S.

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ The district school board may establish alternative qualifications for teachers with an industry certification in the career area in which they teach. *Id.*

- For full-time teachers, completion of professional education training in teaching methods, course construction, lesson planning and evaluation, and teaching special needs students.⁹
- Demonstration of successful teaching performance.
- Documentation of industry certification when state or national industry certifications are available and applicable.

Teacher Preparation Programs

The SBE maintains a system for development and approval of teacher preparation programs,¹⁰ and each teacher preparation program must be approved by the DOE as specified in law.¹¹ Continued approval of a teacher preparation program is based on evidence that the program continues to implement the requirements for initial approval and upon significant, objective, and quantifiable measures of the program and the performance of the program completers.¹²

The SBE establishes in rule uniform core curricula for each state-approved teacher preparation program.¹³ Such rules must include, but are not limited to, the following:¹⁴

- Candidate instruction and assessment in the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices across content areas.
- The use of state-adopted content standards to guide curricula and instruction.
- Scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies that improve reading performance for all students, including explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and multisensory intervention strategies.
- Content literacy and mathematics practices.
- Strategies appropriate for the instruction of English language learners.
- Strategies appropriate for the instruction of students with disabilities.
- Strategies to differentiate instruction based on student needs.
- The use of character-based classroom management.

Each teacher preparation program approved by the DOE must require students to meet, at a minimum, the following as prerequisites for admission into the program:¹⁵

- Have a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale in coursework and at an institution specified in law.
- Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge sufficient for entry into the program, including the ability to read, write, and perform in mathematics, by passing the General Knowledge Test of the Florida Teacher Certification Examination or, for a graduate level program, obtain a baccalaureate degree from an institution that is accredited or approved pursuant to the rules of the SBE.

⁹ This training may be completed through coursework from an accredited or approved institution or an approved district teacher education program. *Id.*

¹⁰ Section 1004.04(1)(b), F.S.

¹¹ Section 1004.04(3)(c), F.S.

¹² Section 1004.04(4), F.S.

¹³ Section 1004.04(2)(a), F.S.

¹⁴ Section 1004.04(2)(b), F.S.

¹⁵ Section 1004.04(3)(b), F.S.

Postsecondary Educator Preparation Institutes

Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) provide an alternate route to teacher certification.¹⁶ EPIs are created by a postsecondary institution or a qualified private provider and approved by the DOE.¹⁷ Postsecondary institutions that are accredited or approved as described in SBE rule may seek approval from the DOE to create EPIs for the purpose of providing:¹⁸

- Professional development instruction to assist teachers in improving classroom instruction and in meeting certification or recertification requirements.
- Instruction to assist potential and existing substitute teachers in performing their duties.
- Instruction to assist paraprofessionals in meeting education and training requirements.
- Instruction for baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers as provided in this section in order to increase routes to the classroom for mid-career professionals who hold a baccalaureate degree and college graduates who were not education majors.

A private provider that has a proven history of delivering high-quality teacher preparation may also seek approval to offer a competency-based certification program specifically designed for noneducation major baccalaureate degree holders to enable program participants to meet educator certification requirements.¹⁹

School Leadership Programs

Public accountability and state approval of school leader preparation programs are outlined in law,²⁰ and their purpose is to:²¹

- Increase the supply of effective school leaders in the public schools of this state.
- Produce school leaders who are prepared to lead the state's diverse student population in meeting high standards for academic achievement.
- Enable school leaders to facilitate the development and retention of effective and highly effective classroom teachers.
- Produce leaders with the competencies and skills necessary to achieve the state's education goals.
- Sustain the state system of school improvement and education accountability.

William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders

The William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders was established to provide high standards and sustained support for principals as instructional leaders.²² The program consists of a collaborative network of state and national professional leadership organizations and supports the human-resource development needs of principals, principal leadership teams, and candidates for principal leadership positions using the framework

¹⁶ Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs)*, <http://www.fldoe.org/schools/higher-ed/fl-college-system/academic-student-affairs/educator-preparation-institutes-epis/> (last visited Feb. 26, 2021).

¹⁷ Section 1004.85(1), F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1004.85(2)(a), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1004.85(2)(b), F.S.

²⁰ Section 1012.562, F.S.

²¹ Section 1012.562(1), F.S.

²² Section 1012.986(1), F.S.

of leadership standards adopted by the SBE, the Southern Regional Education Board, and the National Staff Development Council.²³

The DOE coordinates the network as specified in law,²⁴ and the goal of the network leadership program is to:²⁵

- Provide resources to support and enhance the principal's role as the instructional leader.
- Maintain a clearinghouse and disseminate data-supported information related to enhanced student achievement, based on educational research and best practices.
- Build the capacity to increase the quality of programs for preservice education for aspiring principals and inservice professional development for principals and principal leadership teams.
- Support best teaching and research-based instructional practices through dissemination and modeling at the preservice and inservice levels for both teachers and principals.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 934 modifies s. 1004.04, F.S., to add to the uniform core curricula for each state-approved teacher preparation program, strategies:

- Appropriate for the early identification of students in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge and the referral of such student to a mental health professional for support.
- To support the use of technology in education and distance learning.

The bill makes it easier for a student to be admitted to an approved teacher preparation program. Specifically, the bill alters the admissions requirement to a program, which requires students to demonstrate mastery of general knowledge by passing the General Knowledge Test, instead requiring the test to be passed by the time of graduation. However, the bill removes the option to waive admissions requirements for up to 10 percent of admitted students and provide assistance to those who receive waivers to demonstrate competencies, as well as report the status of these annually to the Department of Education (DOE).

The bill modifies provisions relating to educator preparation institutes (EPIs). Specifically, the bill modifies:

- Section 1004.85, F.S., to expand the purpose for which a postsecondary institution may seek DOE approval for an EPI, to include instruction and professional development for part-and full-time nondegree teachers of career programs.
- Section 1012.39, F.S., to add completion of an EPI program approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) as a means of documenting education and successful occupational experience, in addition to completion of career education training conducted through the local school district inservice master plan.

The bill modifies s. 1012.56, F.S., relating to educator certification requirements to:

- Add, as an acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of general knowledge, documentation of receipt of a master's or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary educational

²³ Section 1012.986(1), F.S.

²⁴ Section 1012.986(2), F.S.

²⁵ Section 1012.986(1), F.S.

institution that the DOE has identified as having a quality program resulting in a baccalaureate degree or higher.

- Add completion of an EPI approved by the DOE as an optional means to demonstrate professional preparation and education competence. Additionally, a student who meets the requirement through an EPI is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination to be awarded a professional certificate.

The bill modifies s. 1012.986, F.S., relating to the William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders. The bill:

- Alters the purpose of the program to specify high-quality standards for educational leaders, and expands the definition of an “educational leader” from a principal to include also teacher leaders, assistant principals, or school district leaders.
- Expands the program collaborative network to include school districts, state-approved educational leadership programs, regional consortia, and charter management organizations.
- The bill removes the Southern Regional Education Board and the National Staff Development Council as adopters of the framework of leadership standards, but retains adoption by the SBE.
- Modifies the goal of the network leadership program to:
 - Provide resources to support educational leaders and increase the capacity of educational leadership programs.
 - Expand the information maintained by the program to specify continued enhancement of learning, civic education, coaching and mentoring, mental health awareness, technology in education, distance learning, and school safety.
 - Support evidence-based leadership practices for educational leaders.
- Modifies the delivery systems by which the DOE must coordinate program components to add universities and educational leadership coaching and mentoring, and specifies that local leadership academies are educational.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2021.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

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: 1004.04, 1004.85, 1012.39, 1012.56, and 1012.986.

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.