

By Senator Burgess

20-00922A-22

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to educator certification pathways for
3 veterans; amending s. 1012.56, F.S.; expanding
4 eligibility to seek educator certification to
5 specified military servicemembers who have completed a
6 specified education requirement; authorizing the
7 Department of Education to issue a temporary
8 certificate to specified military servicemembers who
9 have completed a specified education requirement;
10 specifying the duration of a temporary certificate for
11 specified military servicemembers; amending s.
12 1012.59, F.S.; making a technical change; providing an
13 effective date.

14
15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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17 Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) and subsection
18 (7) of section 1012.56, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

19 1012.56 Educator certification requirements.—

20 (2) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—To be eligible to seek
21 certification, a person must:

22 (c)1. Document receipt of a bachelor's or higher degree
23 from an accredited institution of higher learning, or a
24 nonaccredited institution of higher learning that the Department
25 of Education has identified as having a quality program
26 resulting in a bachelor's degree, or higher. Each applicant
27 seeking initial certification must have attained a minimum
28 cumulative ~~at least a 2.5 overall~~ grade point average of 2.5 on
29 a 4.0 scale in the applicant's major field of study; or

20-00922A-22

2022896__

30 2. Document 48 months of active-duty military service with
31 an honorable discharge or a medical separation and completion of
32 60 college credits with a minimum cumulative grade point average
33 of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as provided by one or more accredited
34 institutions of higher learning or a nonaccredited institution
35 of higher learning identified by the Department of Education as
36 having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree or
37 higher.

38
39 The applicant may document the required education by submitting
40 official transcripts from institutions of higher education or by
41 authorizing the direct submission of such official transcripts
42 through established electronic network systems. The bachelor's
43 or higher degree may not be required in areas approved in rule
44 by the State Board of Education as nondegreed areas. The State
45 Board of Education may adopt rules that, for purposes of
46 demonstrating completion of specific certification requirements,
47 allow for the acceptance of college course credits recommended
48 by the American Council for Education (ACE), as posted on an
49 official ACE transcript.

50 (7) TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.—

51 (a) The Department of Education shall issue a professional
52 certificate for a period not to exceed 5 years to any applicant
53 who fulfills one of the following:

54 1. Meets all the applicable requirements outlined in
55 subsection (2).

56 2. For a professional certificate covering grades 6 through
57 12:

58 a. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2) (a)-

20-00922A-22

2022896__

59 (h).

60 b. Holds a master's or higher degree in the area of
61 science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

62 c. Teaches a high school course in the subject of the
63 advanced degree.

64 d. Is rated highly effective as determined by the teacher's
65 performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, based in part on
66 student performance as measured by a statewide, standardized
67 assessment or an Advanced Placement, Advanced International
68 Certificate of Education, or International Baccalaureate
69 examination.

70 e. Achieves a passing score on the Florida professional
71 education competency examination required by state board rule.

72 3. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2)(a)-
73 (h) and completes a professional preparation and education
74 competence program approved by the department pursuant to
75 paragraph (8)(c) or an educator preparation institute approved
76 by the department pursuant to s. 1004.85. An applicant who
77 completes one of these programs and is rated highly effective as
78 determined by his or her performance evaluation under s. 1012.34
79 is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the
80 professional education competency examination in order to be
81 awarded a professional certificate.

82 (b) The department shall issue a temporary certificate to
83 any applicant who:

84 1. Completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs
85 (2)(a)-(f); and

86 2. Completes the subject area content requirements
87 specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject

20-00922A-22

2022896__

88 area knowledge pursuant to subsection (5); and

89 3.a. Holds an accredited degree or a degree approved by the
90 Department of Education at the level required for the subject
91 area specialization in state board rule; or

92 b. For a subject area specialization for which the state
93 board otherwise requires a bachelor's degree, has completed 48
94 months of active-duty military service with an honorable
95 discharge or medical separation and 60 college credits with a
96 minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as
97 provided by one or more accredited institutions of higher
98 learning or a nonaccredited institution of higher learning that
99 the Department of Education has identified as having a quality
100 program resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher.

101 (c) The department shall issue one nonrenewable 2-year
102 temporary certificate and one nonrenewable 5-year professional
103 certificate to a qualified applicant who holds a bachelor's
104 degree in the area of speech-language impairment to allow for
105 completion of a master's degree program in speech-language
106 impairment.

107 (d)1. Except for a temporary certificate issued under sub-
108 subparagraph (b)3.b., each temporary certificate is valid for 3
109 school fiscal years and is nonrenewable.

110 2. Each temporary certificate issued under sub-subparagraph
111 (b)3.b. is valid for 5 school fiscal years and is nonrenewable.

112

113 At least 1 year before an individual's temporary certificate is
114 set to expire, the department shall electronically notify the
115 individual of the date on which his or her certificate will
116 expire and provide a list of each method by which the

20-00922A-22

2022896__

117 qualifications for a professional certificate can be completed.
118 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow the
119 department to extend the validity period of a temporary
120 certificate for 2 years when the requirements for the
121 professional certificate were not completed due to the serious
122 illness or injury of the applicant, the military service of an
123 applicant's spouse, other extraordinary extenuating
124 circumstances, or if the certificateholder is rated highly
125 effective in the immediate prior year's performance evaluation
126 pursuant to s. 1012.34 or has completed a 2-year mentorship
127 program pursuant to s. 1012.56(8). The department shall extend
128 the temporary certificate upon approval by the Commissioner of
129 Education. A written request for extension of the certificate
130 shall be submitted by the district school superintendent, the
131 governing authority of a university lab school, the governing
132 authority of a state-supported school, or the governing
133 authority of a private school.

134 Section 2. Paragraph (c) of subsection (3) of section
135 1012.59, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

136 1012.59 Certification fees.—

137 (3) The State Board of Education shall waive initial
138 general knowledge, professional education, and subject area
139 examination fees and certification fees for:

140 (c) An honorably discharged veteran of the United States
141 Armed Forces or a veteran of a reserve component thereof ~~who~~
142 ~~served on active duty~~ and the spouse or surviving spouse of such
143 a veteran.

144 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2022.