

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to educational support employee and
 3 paraprofessional teacher certification; creating the
 4 Growing Teachers from Within Pilot Program within the
 5 Department of Education, contingent upon legislative
 6 appropriation; providing a purpose for the pilot
 7 program; requiring school districts to apply to the
 8 department by a specified date in order to participate
 9 in the pilot program; requiring the Commissioner of
 10 Education to select participating school districts
 11 based on specified criteria to participate in the
 12 pilot program; requiring the commissioner to
 13 coordinate with certain state universities; specifying
 14 eligibility requirements for participation by school
 15 employees in the pilot program; requiring that funding
 16 for the pilot program be used in a specified manner;
 17 requiring participating school districts to submit a
 18 report to the commissioner on an annual basis;
 19 authorizing the State Board of Education to adopt
 20 rules; providing for expiration; providing an
 21 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. Growing Teachers from Within Pilot Program.—

26 (1) Contingent upon legislative appropriation, the Growing
27 Teachers from Within Pilot Program is created within the
28 Department of Education. The purpose of the pilot program is to
29 assist school district employees who work in a public school but
30 are not employed as instructional personnel by removing barriers
31 to their obtaining a teaching certificate in order to help
32 alleviate the growing teacher shortage throughout this state.

33 (2) In order to participate in the pilot program, school
34 districts must submit an application to the department by
35 October 1, 2023. The Commissioner of Education shall select up
36 to three school districts for participation in the pilot
37 program. The commissioner shall select one school district of a
38 county with a population less than 100,000 as of the most recent
39 decennial census, one school district of a county with a
40 population between 100,000 and 500,000 as of the most recent
41 decennial census, and one school district of a county with a
42 population exceeding 500,000 as of the most recent decennial
43 census. The commissioner shall coordinate with state
44 universities in proximity of the selected school districts to
45 assist in the department's administration of the pilot program.

46 (3) To be eligible to participate in the pilot program, an
47 employee of a participating school district must:

48 (a) Be employed as an educational support employee or as
49 an education paraprofessional and have received an associate
50 degree or successfully completed 60 semester credit hours at a

51 postsecondary institution.

52 (b) Commit to teach in the school district for a minimum
53 of 2 years or a pro rata number of years after obtaining a
54 teaching certificate.

55 (4) Funds appropriated for the pilot program must be used
56 for all of the following:

57 (a) Establishing a customized coursework schedule to allow
58 for flexibility for participating school district employees to
59 complete credit hours toward earning a bachelor's degree while
60 maintaining employment with the school district and ultimately
61 attaining a teacher certification.

62 (b) Financial support for tuition, credentials,
63 technology, and instructional materials for participating school
64 district employees.

65 (5) Participating school districts shall submit a report
66 to the Commissioner of Education by June 1 of each year for the
67 duration of the pilot program which includes, but is not limited
68 to, detailing findings regarding the pilot program's
69 implementation and whether it is meeting its intended goal of
70 servicing as a recruitment tool and a strategy to retain school
71 district employees in order to alleviate the growing teacher
72 shortage in this state.

73 (6) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to
74 administer this section.

75 (7) This section expires June 30, 2026.

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76 | Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2023. |