

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FINAL BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [CS/CS/HB 875](#)

TITLE: Educator Preparation

SPONSOR(S): Rizo, Snyder

COMPANION BILL: [CS/SB 1590](#) (Burgess)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

FINAL HOUSE FLOOR ACTION: 91 Y's 22 N's **GOVERNOR'S ACTION:** Pending

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill begins the process of aligning the core principles, standards, and content of Florida's different types of teacher preparation programs. The Department of Education (DOE) must convene a workgroup to review and revise the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices. The State Board of Education (SBE) must adopt a rule establishing the uniform core curricula for all teacher preparation programs, including two mandatory courses and the DOE must create the Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching (CERT) Program as a competency-based educator certification pathway. The bill standardizes requirements for teacher mentors and clinical educators, requires the DOE to develop criteria for clinical educator training, and provides that specified educator certification requirements can be satisfied with completion of teacher preparation programs using the new uniform core curricula.

The bill establishes, subject to appropriation, The Florida Center of Teaching Excellence, housed at Miami-Dade College. The bill requires school districts to establish minimum qualifications for part-time, nondegreed teachers of fine and performing arts and requires professional learning activities to be linked to student learning and provide professional growth for instructional and administrative staff. Also, the DOE must create a flexible pathway for school counselors to assist candidates in completing the mandatory internship to become certified school counselors.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill begins the process of aligning the core principles, standards, and content of Florida's different types of [teacher preparation programs](#). The DOE must establish a workgroup for the review and revision of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAP) that includes representatives of teacher preparation programs, school district personnel, classroom teachers, and other educational stakeholders. The revision of the FEAP must be completed by July 1, 2026. The revised FEAP and the new teacher preparation program uniform core curricula must go before the State Board of Education (SBE) by August 1, 2026. By July 1, 2027, the DOE must begin development of the Teacher Excellence Examination, which must align with the revised FEAP and serve as a measure of educator readiness for professional certification. Upon adoption of the revised FEAP and the uniform core curricula the DOE must submit a report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House that provides an implementation plan and schedule for aligning Florida's teacher preparation programs to the revised FEAP and the Florida Teacher Excellence Examination and includes any recommended changes to existing statutes necessary to implement such alignment. (Section [1](#)).

All teacher preparation programs must provide a uniform core curricula aligned with the FEAP, which establishes the standards and expectation for quality instruction and professional responsibility. The SBE must adopt a rule establishing the uniform core curricula that must, at a minimum, meet the following standards:

STORAGE NAME: h0875z

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- May not distort significant historical events or include curriculum or instruction that teaches identity politics, violate the Florida Educational Equity Act (FEEA), or be based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, and economic inequities.
- Must afford candidates the opportunity to think critically, achieve mastery of academic program content, learn instructional strategies, and demonstrate competence.
- Must use state-approved academic standards to guide instruction.
- Must provide training on the use of high-quality instructional materials including when and how to use intervention materials.
- Must include scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies grounded in the science of reading which improve reading performance for all students.
- Must include content literacy and mathematics practices.
- Must include strategies for differentiated instruction to meet student needs, including English language learners and students with disabilities, while maintaining grade-level expectations.
- Must include strategies and practices to support effective, evidence-based assessment and grading practices aligned to the state's academic standards.
- Must require the completion of a mastery-based clinical experience in classroom settings to provide direct application of program content and instruction and mastery of the components of teaching as outlined in the FEAP.

Additionally, the core curricula must include two mandatory courses: an introduction to education course and a classroom management course. (Section [4](#)).

The Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching (CERT) Program, is a competency-based training and [educator certification](#) pathway that may be implemented by school districts, charter schools and charter management organizations. A CERT program must include all of the following:

- A teacher mentorship and induction component.
- An assessment of teaching performance aligned to the district, charter school, or charter management organization system for personnel evaluation that provides for:
 - An initial evaluation of each educator's competencies to determine an appropriate individualized professional learning plan.
 - A summative evaluation to assure successful completion of the program.
- Professional learning tailored to each educator's growth and learning needs according to observational data and feedback.
- Required achievement of passing scores on the subject area examination required by SBE rule.
- Required successful completion of all competencies for a reading endorsement, including completion of the endorsement practicum, for a candidate certification in a coverage area that includes reading instruction or intervention for any students in kindergarten through grade 6.
- Provide guidance and on-the-job training in the classroom on mastering the FEAP. (Section [6](#)).

The bill creates, subject to an appropriation, The Florida Center of Teaching Excellence (Center), housed at Miami-Dade College, for the purpose of preparing high-quality teachers in this state through rigorous, evidence-based programs grounded in cognitive science, high-impact teaching strategies, and the implementation of knowledge-rich curricula. The Center, in collaboration with the University of South Florida, must do the following:

- Develop and deliver evidence-based professional learning opportunities aligned to the FEAP.
- Develop and deliver educator training programs that integrate high-quality instructional materials included on the state-adopted instructional materials list, materials evaluated and identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office, and materials developed by or under the direction of the DOE. These programs must focus on the effective use of knowledge-based curricula, highlighting when and how to incorporate intervention materials, and emphasize the importance of background knowledge in building advanced reading comprehension grounded in the science of reading and critical thinking skills.
- Develop and design models of high-quality clinical experiences, for aspiring teachers. These model experiences shall serve as a standard that institutions providing approved teacher preparation programs can adopt or adapt, enabling participants to demonstrate mastery of instructional techniques, classroom

management strategies, and the application of high-impact teaching strategies in authentic educational settings.

- Collaborate with school districts and other educational stakeholders to identify emerging needs in teacher preparation and align Center programs accordingly, conducting gap analyses to provide comprehensive coverage of the science of learning, high-impact teaching strategies, and knowledge-rich curriculum implementation.
- Establish a statewide network of teachers and instructional leaders equipped with the knowledge and skills to mentor and support aspiring and current educators participating in the Center's programs. This network shall model effective pedagogical practices and facilitate professional growth.
- Conduct research and disseminate findings on high-impact teaching practices and the implementation of knowledge-based curricula to inform policy, improve classroom instruction, and address the importance of background knowledge in student achievement.
- Report to the department the completion of professional learning by individuals who are not employed by entities with an approved professional learning system.

The Center is authorized to submit a professional learning system to the DOE for approval. The Center is authorized to apply for and receive federal, state, or local agency grants that support its work. The Miami-Dade College Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the DOE, must establish policies for the supervision, administration and governance of the Center. (Section [5](#)).

Inservice activities must provide training to teacher mentors and clinical educators and requires the DOE to develop criteria for the initial review and continued approval of clinical educator and mentor training that must include, at a minimum:

- Instruction and assessment in the FEAP.
- Effective communication strategies to guide reflection and personal growth.
- Effective modeling of high-impact teaching practices and skills.
- Fostering resilience in educators.

Additionally, [professional learning](#) activities must be linked to student learning, provide professional growth for instructional and administrative staff and meet the following updated requirements:

- For school administrators, utilize materials aligned to the Florida Educational Leadership Standards adopted in rule by the SBE.
- Provide training on the use of high-quality instructional materials including when and how to use intervention materials. (Section [9](#)).

School boards must adopt qualifications for part-time, [nondegree teachers](#) of fine and performing arts that require:

- The filing of a complete set of fingerprints in the same manner as required for other instructional personnel.
- Documentation of education and successful experience, including documentation of:
 - A high school diploma or the equivalent.
 - Completion of 3 years of full-time successful experience or the equivalent of part-time experience in the teaching specialization area. (Section [3](#)).

The DOE must create a flexible pathway for school counselors by assisting candidates that are enrolled in postsecondary school counseling programs to become certified school counselors as well as provide flexibility in internship requirements to all candidates. The DOE must reduce the internship hour requirements for certification as a school counselor from 600 hours to 300 hours for candidates who are classroom teachers that have been teaching for 5 years and whose three most recent evaluations were effective or highly effective. Additionally, the SBE and the Board of Governors (BOG) must adopt by rule and regulation, respectively, guidelines and programs to provide flexibility in meeting the internship requirements for students enrolled in a postsecondary school counseling program. The programs adopted by the SBE and the BOG may, subject to appropriation, include scholarship programs, tuition reimbursement program, or other incentive programs. The guidelines adopted by the SBE and the BOG may include any of the following:

- Establishing acceptable internship settings and supervision requirements.
- Establishing criteria for adjustments to internship requirements based on the student's personal circumstances.
- Establishing credit equivalencies that count toward internship hours for such students.
- Flexibility in meeting the internship hours for such students. (Section [2](#)).

The requirements for mentor teacher in the Teacher Apprenticeship Program are aligned with the general requirements for other mentor teachers in the educator certification process. (Section [7](#)).

Effective July 1, 2029, the bill authorizes demonstration of mastery of general knowledge through successful completion of the two new teacher preparation program courses included in the uniform core curricula and demonstration of mastery of professional preparation and education competence through completion of a CERT program. A passing score on the professional education competency examination shall not be required of candidates who have successfully completed a teacher preparation program approved, after July 1, 2029. (Section [8](#)).

Subject to the Governor's veto powers and except as otherwise provided, the effective date of the bill is upon becoming law. (Section [10](#)).

RULEMAKING:

The SBE must adopt rules to implement the new teacher preparation program uniform core curricula.

Lawmaking is a legislative power; however, the Legislature may delegate a portion of such power to executive branch agencies to create rules that have the force of law. To exercise this delegated power, an agency must have a grant of rulemaking authority and a law to implement.

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Teacher Preparation Programs

Teacher preparation programs are accountable for producing individuals with the competencies and skills necessary to achieve the state education goals.¹ State-approved teacher preparation programs are offered by Florida public and private postsecondary institutions, public school districts, and private providers by which candidates for educator certification can, depending on the type of program, demonstrate mastery of general knowledge, professional preparation and education competence, and/or subject area knowledge for purposes of attaining an educator certificate.²

There are various state-approved teacher preparation programs that individuals may use to receive the training needed to attain an educator certificate, including:³

- Initial Teacher Preparation programs in public and private colleges and universities requiring candidates to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge in one or more specific subject areas(s), mastery of general knowledge, and mastery of professional preparation and education competence. Program completers qualify for a professional educator certificate.⁴
- Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) offering alternative certification programs by postsecondary institutions and qualified private providers for baccalaureate degree holders. These programs provide professional preparation for career-changers and recent college graduates who do not already possess a

¹ Section [1004.04\(1\)\(b\)](#), F.S.

² See Florida Department of Education, *Florida's Coordinated System of Professional Learning*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-dev/> (last visited May 5, 2025). See also r. 6A-5.066, F.A.C.; ss. [1004.04\(3\)\(a\)](#) and [1004.85\(1\)](#), F.S.

³ Florida DOE, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited May 5, 2025). See also r. 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

⁴ Rule 6A-5.066(1)(r), F.A.C.

Professional Educator Certificate and require mastery of general knowledge, mastery of subject area knowledge, and mastery of professional preparation and education competence.

- District professional learning certification and education competency programs. Such programs are cohesive competency-based professional preparation certification programs offered by school districts, charter schools, and charter management districts by which the instructional staff can satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements.⁵ In addition to completing the district program, candidates must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge⁶ and subject area knowledge.⁷

Teacher preparation program courses are prohibited from distorting significant historical events or including a curriculum or instruction that teaches identity politics, violates the FEEA, or is based on theories that systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege are inherent in the institutions of the United States and were created to maintain social, political, and economic inequities. Teacher Preparation courses must afford candidates the opportunity to think critically, achieve mastery of academic program content, learn instructional strategies, and demonstrate competence.⁸

Initial Teacher Preparation Program

Each candidate enrolled in a teacher preparation program must receive instruction and be assessed on the uniform core curricula in his or her area of program concentration during course work and field experiences. A candidate for certification in a coverage area that includes reading instruction or interventions in kindergarten through grade 6 must successfully complete all competencies for a reading endorsement.⁹

The SBE must establish, in rule, uniform core curricula for each state-approved teacher preparation program including, but not limited to:¹⁰

- Candidate instruction and assessment in the FEAP¹¹ across content areas;
- The use of state-adopted content standards to guide curricula and instruction;¹²
- Scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies that improve reading performance for all students;¹³
- Content literacy and mathematical practices;
- Strategies appropriate for instruction of English language learners;
- Strategies appropriate for instruction of students with disabilities;
- Strategies to differentiate instruction based on student needs;
- Strategies and practices to support evidence-based content aligned to state standards and grading practices;
- 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;
- Strategies to support the use of technology in education and distance learning; and
- Strategies and practices to support effective, research-based assessment and grading practices aligned to the state's academic standards.

⁵ Section [1012.56\(8\)\(a\), F.S.](#) Florida Department of Education. *State-Approved Educator Preparation Programs, Approved Add-on Programs*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation/initial-teacher-preparation-programs/approved-teacher-edu-programs.shtml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁶ See Florida DOE, *General Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.shtml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁷ Florida DOE, *Subject Area Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/subject-area-knowledge.shtml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁸ Section [1004.04\(2\)\(e\), F.S.](#)

⁹ Section [1004.04\(2\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

¹⁰ Section [1004.04\(2\)\(b\)1.-10., F.S.](#)

¹¹ Florida DOE, *Professional Development The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAP)*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-dev/the-fl-educator-accomplished-practices.shtml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

¹² The SBE has adopted the state academic standards, which establish the core content of the curricula taught in the state and specify the core content knowledge and skills that K-12 public school students are expected to acquire. Rule 6A-1.09401(1), F.A.C.; [s. 1003.41\(1\), F.S.](#)

¹³ The Just Read, Florida! Office must assist teacher preparation programs and EPIs with this requirement. Section [1001.215\(11\), F.S.](#)

In addition, before program completion, each candidate must demonstrate his or her ability to positively impact student learning growth in the candidate's area(s) of program concentration during a prekindergarten through grade 12 field experience and must pass each portion of the Florida Teacher Certification Examination required for a professional certificate in the area(s) of program concentration.¹⁴

Educator Preparation Institutes

Postsecondary institutions that are accredited or approved by the DOE to award degrees and credits for educator certification may seek approval from the DOE to create EPIs for the purpose of providing all or any of the following:¹⁵

- 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 noneducation baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers in order to increase routes to the classroom for mid-career professionals; and
- Instruction and professional development for part-time and full-time non-degreed teachers of career programs.

A private provider that has a proven history of delivering high-quality educator preparation may also seek approval to offer a competency-based certification program. The DOE approval must be based upon evidence provided from other state recipients of the provider's services and data showing the successful performance of completers based upon student achievement.¹⁶

EPIs may offer competency-based certification programs specifically designed for non-education major baccalaureate degree holders to enable program participants to meet educator certification. The DOE must approve a certification program if the EPI provides evidence of the EPI's capacity to implement a competency-based program that includes each of the following:¹⁷

- Participant instruction and assessment in the FEAP across content areas.
- The use of state-adopted student content standards to guide curriculum 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 mathematical practices.
- Strategies appropriate for instruction of English language learners.
- Strategies appropriate for instruction of students with disabilities.
- Strategies to differentiate instruction based on student needs.
- Strategies and practices to support evidence-based content aligned to state standards and grading practices.
- Strategies appropriate for the early identification of a student in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge and the referral of such student to a mental health professional for support.
- Strategies to support the use of technology in education and distance learning.
- An educational plan for each participant to meet certification requirements and demonstrate his or her ability to teach the subject area for which the participant is seeking certification, which is based on an assessment of his or her competency in specified areas.
- Field experiences appropriate to the certification subject area.

¹⁴ Section [1004.04\(2\)\(d\), F.S.](#)

¹⁵ Section [1004.85\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

¹⁶ Section [1004.85\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

¹⁷ Section [1004.85\(3\), F.S.](#) See also s. [1004.04\(2\), F.S.](#)

- A certification ombudsman to facilitate the process and procedures required for participants who complete the program to meet any requirements related to the background screening and educator professional or temporary certification.

Requirements for Individuals Supervising or Directing Teacher Preparation Field Experiences

All school district personnel and instructional personnel who supervise or direct teacher preparation program students during field experience courses or internships taking place in this state in which candidates demonstrate an impact on student learning growth must have:

- Evidence of “clinical educator” training;
- A valid professional certificate;
- At least 3 years of teaching experience in prekindergarten through grade 12;
- Earned an effective or highly effective rating on the prior year’s performance evaluation or be a peer evaluator under the district’s evaluation system; and
- For all such personnel who supervise or direct teacher preparation students during internships in kindergarten through grade 3 or who are enrolled in a teacher preparation program for a certificate area includes reading instruction or intervention for any students in kindergarten through grade 6, a certificate or endorsement in reading.

Professional Learning Certification Programs

School districts, charter schools and charter management organizations may offer a professional learning certification program that must be approved by the DOE. The program must include:¹⁸

- a minimum period of initial preparation before becoming the teacher of record;
- an option to collaborate with other agencies or educational entities for implementation;
- a teacher mentorship and induction component;
- an assessment of teaching performance aligned with the district’s personnel evaluation system;
- professional educational preparation content knowledge which must be included in the mentoring and induction activities;
- required passing scores on the general knowledge, subject area and the professional education competency test; and
- completion of all competencies for a reading endorsement for all candidates for certification in coverage areas that include reading instruction or interventions in kindergarten through grade 6.

As required by law, the DOE adopted standards for the approval of professional learning certification programs, including standards for the teacher mentorship and induction component.¹⁹ The standards for the teacher mentorship and induction component must include:²⁰

- program administration and evaluation;
- mentor roles, selection, and training;
- beginning teacher assessment and professional development; and
- teacher content knowledge and practices aligned to the FEAP.

To serve as a mentor in a professional learning certification program an individual must:

- hold a valid professional certificate;
- have earned at least 3 years of teaching experience in prekindergarten through grade 12;
- have completed training in clinical supervision and participate in ongoing mentor training provided through the coordinated system of professional learning;
- have earned an effective or highly effective rating on the prior year’s performance evaluation; and
- May be a peer evaluator under the district’s evaluation system.²¹

Educator Certification

¹⁸ Section [1012.56\(8\)\(a\)1.-7., F.S.](#)

¹⁹ See r. 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

²⁰ Section [1012.56\(8\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

²¹ Section [1012.56\(8\)\(a\)2.a., F.S.](#)

In order for a person to serve as an educator in a traditional public school, charter school, virtual school, or other publicly operated school, the person must hold a certificate issued by the DOE.²² Persons seeking employment at a public school as a school supervisor, principal, teacher, library media specialist, counselor, athletic coach, or in other instructional capacity must be certified.²³ The purpose of certification is to require school-based personnel to “possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to allow the opportunity for a high-quality education in the public schools.”²⁴

The DOE issues three main types of educator certificates:

- Professional Certificate: The professional certificate is Florida’s highest type of full-time educator certification.²⁵ The professional certificate is valid for 5 years and is renewable.²⁶
- Temporary Certificate: The temporary certificate covers employment in full-time positions for which educator certification is required.²⁷ Generally, a temporary certificate is valid for 5 years and is nonrenewable.²⁸
- Athletic Coaching Certificate: The athletic coaching certificate covers full-time and part-time employment as a public school’s athletic coach.²⁹ The DOE issues two types of athletic coaching certificates – one is valid for 5 years and may be issued for subsequent 5-year periods while the other is valid for 3 years and may be issued only once.³⁰ The 5-year certificate requires satisfaction of certain specialization requirements established in rule.³¹

Professional Certificate Requirements

To be eligible for a professional certificate, a person must:³²

- be at least 18 years of age;
- sign an affidavit attesting that the applicant will uphold the U.S. and State Constitutions;
- earn a bachelor’s or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher learning³³ or from a nonaccredited institution identified by the DOE as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor’s or higher degree;³⁴
- 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;
- be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of a teacher;

²² Sections [1012.55\(1\)](#) and [1002.33\(12\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

²³ Sections [1002.33\(12\)\(f\)](#) (charter school teachers) and [1012.55\(1\), F.S.](#) District school boards and charter school governing boards are authorized to hire non-certified individuals who possess expertise in a given field to serve in an instructional capacity. Rule 6A-1.0502, F.A.C.; ss. [1002.33\(12\)\(f\)](#) and [1012.55\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#) Occupational therapists, physical therapists, audiologists, and speech therapists are not required to be certified educators. Rule 6A-1.0502(10) and (11), F.A.C.

²⁴ Section [1012.54, F.S.](#); see r. 6A-4.001(1), F.A.C.

²⁵ Rule 6A-4.004(5), F.A.C.

²⁶ Section [1012.56\(7\)\(a\), F.S.](#); see r. 6A-4.0051(3)(d), F.A.C. (validity period is expressed as 5 years from July 1 of the school fiscal year). The DOE also issues a nonrenewable 5-year professional certificate that allows an applicant with a bachelor’s degree in the area of speech-language impairment to complete a master’s degree in speech-language impairment. Section [1012.56\(7\)\(c\), F.S.](#); r. 6A-4.004(6), F.A.C.

²⁷ Rule 6A-4.004(1)(a)2., F.A.C.

²⁸ Section [1012.56\(7\)\(f\), F.S.](#) (validity period is expressed in school fiscal years); r. 6A-4.004(1)(a), F.A.C. The veteran’s pathway to educator certification authorizes a 5-year nonrenewable temporary certificate. Section [1012.56\(7\)\(b\)2., F.S.](#) The DOE also issues a nonrenewable temporary certificate, which is valid for 2 years in the area of speech-language impairment. Section [1012.56\(7\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

²⁹ Section [1012.55\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

³⁰ Rule 6A-4.004(7), F.A.C. (validity periods expressed in school fiscal years).

³¹ See r. 6A-4.0282, F.A.C.

³² Section [1012.56\(2\)\(a\)-\(j\), F.S.](#)

³³ Section [1012.56\(2\)\(c\), F.S.](#); r. 6A-4.003(1), F.A.C. (approved accrediting agencies); see also 34 C.F.R. ss. 602.1-602.50; U.S. Department of Education, *Institutional Accrediting Agencies*, <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-34/subtitle-B/chapter-VI/part-602> (last visited May 5, 2025).

³⁴ Section [1012.56\(2\)\(c\), F.S.](#); r. 6A-4.003(2), F.A.C. (criteria for approval of nonaccredited institutions of higher learning). 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.](#)

- demonstrate mastery of general knowledge;³⁵
- demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge;³⁶ and
- demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence, if the person serves as a classroom teacher or school administrator.³⁷

Demonstrating 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;³⁸
- achieving passing scores established in SBE rule on national or international examinations that test comparable content and relevant standards in verbal, analytical writing, and quantitative reasoning skills (e.g., the verbal, analytical writing, and quantitative reasoning portions of the Graduate Record Examination);³⁹
- providing documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another U.S. state or territory,⁴⁰ by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS),⁴¹ or by the American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence (ABCTE);⁴²
- completing two semesters of successful, part-time or full-time 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 identified by the DOE as having a quality program;⁴³ and
- documentation of receipt of a master's or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary institution that the DOE has identified as having a quality program resulting in a baccalaureate degree or higher.⁴⁴

Demonstrating Mastery of Subject Area Knowledge

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

- **Bachelor's Degree Level** (for certification in a subject area for which SBE rule requires a bachelor's or higher degree):
 - If a Florida subject area examination has been developed, achieving a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination specified in SBE rule⁴⁵ or documentation of receipt of a

³⁵ Section [1012.56\(2\)\(g\) and \(3\), F.S.](#); DOE, *General Knowledge*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.stml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

³⁶ Section [1012.56\(2\)\(h\) and \(5\), F.S.](#)

³⁷ Section [1012.56\(2\)\(i\) and \(6\), F.S.](#); DOE, *Professional Preparation and Education Competence*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/professional-preparation-edu-competenc.stml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

³⁸ 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, Essay, and Mathematics. Rule 6A-4.0021(7), F.A.C.; *see also* DOE, *Competencies and Skills Required for Teacher Certification in Florida*, s. 82 (27th ed., 2022), *available at* <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7479/urlt/FTCE27thEdition22Rule.pdf> (competencies and skills measured by General Knowledge Test).

³⁹ Section [1012.56\(3\)\(e\), F.S.](#) The passing scores to be identified in state board rule must be at approximately the same level of rigor as is required to pass the General Knowledge Test. Rule 6A-4.002(4), F.A.C.

⁴⁰ Section [1012.56\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#); *see rr.* 6A-4.002(1)(i) and 6A-4.003, F.A.C. (flush-left provisions following r. 6A-4.003(2)(e), F.A.C.). Section [1012.56\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#) specifies that a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by *another state* is an acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of general knowledge. The DOE also recognizes certificates issued by U.S. territories. *See* DOE, *General Knowledge*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.stml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁴¹ Section [1012.56\(3\)\(c\), F.S.](#); *see r.* 6A-4.002(1)(j), F.A.C.; *see also* National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, <https://www.nbpts.org/> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁴² Section [1012.56\(3\)\(c\), F.S.](#); *see r.* 6A-4.002(1)(j), F.A.C.

⁴³ Section [1012.56\(3\)\(d\), F.S.](#); *see also r.* 6A-4.003(1)-(2), F.A.C. (approval of accredited and nonaccredited institutions of higher learning).

⁴⁴ Section [1012.56\(3\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

⁴⁵ Section [1012.56\(5\)\(a\), F.S.](#) The Florida Teacher Certification Examinations include 39 subject area tests. DOE, *Test Information Guides*, http://www.fl.nesinc.com/FL_TIGS.asp (last visited May 5, 2025); *see also* DOE, *Competencies and Skills Required for Teacher Certification in Florida*, ss. 1-63 (27th ed., 2022), *available at* <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7479/urlt/FTCE27thEdition22Rule.pdf>; *see also r.* 6A-4.0021(9), F.A.C. (scoring of subject area tests).

master's or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary institution that the DOE has identified as having a quality program resulting in a baccalaureate degree or higher in the certificate subject area as identified in SBE rule.⁴⁶

- If a Florida subject area examination has not been developed, achieving a passing score on a standardized examination specified in SBE rule, including passing scores on both the oral proficiency and written proficiency examinations administered by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages⁴⁷ or successful completion of a United States Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center program or a passing score on the Defense Language Proficiency Test.⁴⁸
- For certification in any other subject area for which there is no Florida subject area test or standardized examination specified in state board rule (e.g., Dance), completing the required bachelor's or higher degree and content courses specified in SBE rule⁴⁹ 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.⁵⁰
- **Master's Degree Level** (for certification in a subject area for which SBE rule requires a master's or higher degree): Completing the required master's or higher degree and content courses specified in SBE rule and achieving a passing score on the corresponding Florida-developed subject area test or standardized examination specified in SBE rule.⁵¹
- **Out-of-State Certification:** Providing documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued for a subject area by another U.S. state or territory or by NBPTS or ABCTE, if the certificate is comparable to the Florida professional certificate issued for the same subject area.⁵²

Demonstrating Mastery of Professional Preparation and Education Competence

Mastery of professional preparation and education competence may be demonstrated by:

- Successful completion of an approved teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution within this state and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by state board 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 state board rule;
- Documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state;
- Documentation of a valid certificate issued by the NBPTS or a national educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education;
- Documentation of two semesters of successful, full-time or part-time 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 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 professional education competence program, and documentation of 3 years of being rated effective or highly effective while holding a temporary certificate;
- Successful completion of a professional learning certification program; or

⁴⁶ Section [1012.56\(5\)\(i\), F.S.](#)

⁴⁷ Section [1012.56\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#); r. 6A-4.0243(1)(e), F.A.C.; see American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), *Assessments*, <https://www.actfl.org/assessments> (last visited May 5, 2025); Language Testing International (ACTFL Language Testing Office), *ACTFL*, <https://tms.languagetesting.com> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁴⁸ Section [1012.56\(5\)\(g\)-\(h\), F.S.](#)

⁴⁹ See, e.g., r. 6A-4.0123, F.A.C. (specialization requirements for certification in dance); see also DOE, *Florida Certificate Subjects*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/certificate-subjects/> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁵⁰ Section [1012.56\(5\)\(c\), F.S.](#); r. 6A-4.002(4), F.A.C.

⁵¹ Section [1012.56\(5\)\(d\), F.S.](#); see DOE, *Florida Certificate Subjects*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/certificate-subjects/> (last visited May 5, 2025).

⁵² Section [1012.56\(5\)\(e\), F.S.](#), and (f), F.S.; r. 6A-4.002(1)(i)-(j), F.A.C.; DOE, *NBPTS Certificate Subjects and Corresponding Subjects in Florida*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/pathways-routes/nbpts-certificate-subjects-correspondi.stml> (last visited May 5, 2025).

- Successful completion of a competency-based certification program and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by rule of the SBE.⁵³

Educator Certification Specializations

An individual holding an educator certification from the DOE may apply for an additional coverage⁵⁴ or endorsement⁵⁵ indicating advanced education or experience in a particular subject, area, or field.⁵⁶ The DOE offers a specialization for certification in school counseling that can be earned in under two plans:

- Plan One. A master's or higher degree with a graduate major in guidance and counseling or school counseling that includes a minimum of six-hundred (600) clock hours of supervised internship serving school-aged students in a prekindergarten, an elementary or a secondary school setting; or
- Plan Two. A master's or higher degree with a graduate major in counseling other than guidance and counseling or school counseling that includes a minimum of six-hundred (600) clock hours of supervised internship with school-aged children and their families with at least nine semester hours of graduate credit to include the following areas:
 - Student appraisal and evaluation methods in prekindergarten, elementary and secondary schools including interpretation and analysis of standardized tests and other assessment results that assist students in career exploration, academic skills and personal and social skill development;
 - College and career planning for prekindergarten, elementary and secondary school students including college and career exploration and knowledge of financial aid and financing of postsecondary education options;
 - Principles, philosophy, organization and administration of a comprehensive school counseling program in prekindergarten, elementary and secondary schools; and
 - Consultation skills and techniques for conferring with groups such as agencies, teachers and parents.⁵⁷

Professional Education Competency Program

School districts must and private schools or state-supported public schools, including a charter school, may develop and maintain a system by which members of the instructional staff may demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence as required by law. Each program must:

- be based on classroom application of the FEAP and instructional performance; and,
- for public schools, must be aligned with the district's or state-supported public school's evaluation system.⁵⁸

The Commissioner of Education must determine the continued approval of programs, based upon the department's review of performance data. The department must review the performance data as a part of the periodic review of each school district's professional learning system.⁵⁹

Teacher Apprenticeship Program

⁵³ Section [1012.56\(6\), F.S.](#)

⁵⁴ The term "coverage" as used in Florida State Board of Education rules for educator certification purposes shall be defined as the designation on a Florida educator's certificate which indicates the area in which an individual has a content knowledge base. The term "coverage" shall be used synonymously with the terms "subject," "area," or "field."

⁵⁵ The term "endorsement" as used in Florida State Board of Education rules for educator certification purposes shall be defined as a rider on a Florida educator's certificate with a designated coverage. An endorsement shown on a certificate with a coverage signifies a pedagogical knowledge base which targets particular levels, stages of development, or circumstances.

⁵⁶ Rule 6A-4.002(1)(e)-(f), F.A.C.

⁵⁷ Rule 6A-4.0181, F.A.C. Applicants using Plan Two shall submit verification from the employing school district to attest that a school counselor with a state-issued professional certificate will be assigned as the applicant's mentor during the first 2 years of employment as a school counselor. Rule 6A-4.0181(3), F.A.C.

⁵⁸ Section [1012.56\(9\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

⁵⁹ Section [1012.56\(9\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

In 2023, the Legislature created the Teacher Apprenticeship Program (TAP).⁶⁰ The TAP was created as an alternative pathway for an individual to enter the teaching profession. The DOE is required to administer the program in accordance with legislative intent regarding apprenticeship training⁶¹ provided for in law.

To meet the minimum eligibility requirements to participate in the TAP, a candidate must have:⁶²

- Received an associate degree from an accredited postsecondary institution.
- Earned a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 in that degree program.
- Successfully passed a background screening pursuant to law.
- Received a temporary apprenticeship certificate.

As a condition of participating in the TAP, an apprentice teacher must be appointed by the district school board as an education paraprofessional and must commit to spending the first two years in the classroom of a mentor teacher using team teaching strategies as specified in law⁶³ and fulfilling the on-the-job training component of the registered apprenticeship and its associated standards.⁶⁴

A teacher who serves as a mentor in the TAP must:⁶⁵

- Have at least 5 years of teaching experience in this state.
- Be rated as highly effective in the three most recent value-added model (VAM) scores or on the three most recent available performance evaluations if the teacher does not generate a state VAM score.
- Satisfy any other requirements established by the DOE.

Mentors for Individuals with a Temporary Certificate

A person who is issued a temporary certificate must be assigned a teacher mentor for a minimum of 2 school years after commencing employment. Each teacher mentor must:

- hold a valid professional certificate;
- have earned at least 3 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.⁶⁶

Part-time and Full-time Nondegreed Teachers

Each district school board is required to establish the minimal qualifications for part-time and full-time non-degreed teachers of career programs. Non-degreed teachers of career programs must provide a complete set of fingerprints for background screening and are required to provide documentation of:⁶⁷

- A high school diploma or the equivalent.
- Completion of 3 years of full-time successful occupational experience or the equivalent of part-time experience in the teaching specialization area. The district school board may establish alternative qualifications for teachers with an industry certification in the career area in which they teach.
- For full-time teachers, completion of professional education training in teaching methods, course construction, lesson planning and evaluation, and teaching special needs students. This training may be completed through coursework from an accredited or approved institution or an approved district teacher education program.
- Documentation of industry certification when state or national industry certifications are available and applicable.

⁶⁰ Section 6, ch. 2023-38, L.O.F., *codified at* [s. 1012.555, F.S.](#); *see also* r. 6A-5.067, F.A.C.

⁶¹ Section [446.011, F.S.](#) provides that it is the intent of the State of Florida to provide educational opportunities for its residents so that they can be trained for trades, occupations, and professions suited to their abilities; to promote the mode of training known as apprenticeship in occupations throughout industry in the state that require physical manipulative skills.

⁶² Section [1012.555\(2\)\(a\)1.-4., F.S.](#)

⁶³ "Team teaching" or "co-teaching" means two or more teachers are assigned to a group of students and each teacher is responsible for all of the students during the entire class period. Section [1003.03\(5\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

⁶⁴ Section [1012.555\(2\)\(c\) and \(d\), F.S.](#)

⁶⁵ Section [1012.555\(3\), F.S.](#)

⁶⁶ Section [1012.56\(7\)\(e\), F.S.](#)

⁶⁷ Section [1012.39\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

District school boards are required to issue an adjunct teaching certificate to any applicant who meets background screening requirements and who has expertise in the subject area to be taught as evidenced by passage of a subject area test or has achieved an industry certification in the subject area to be taught.⁶⁸

Professional Learning Systems

Current law requires school districts to develop a professional learning system in consultation with classroom teachers, state colleges and universities, business and community representatives, and local education foundations, consortia, and professional organizations.⁶⁹ The system must be initially reviewed and approved by the DOE, and subsequently reviewed and approved every 5 years thereafter.⁷⁰ Among other things, the professional learning system must:⁷¹

- support and increase the success of educators through collaboratively developed school improvement plans;
- assist the school community in providing stimulating, scientific research-based educational activities that encourage and motivate students to achieve at the highest levels, and that prepare students for success at subsequent educational levels and the workforce;
- provide continuous support for all education professionals as well as temporary intervention for education professionals who need improvement in knowledge, skills, and performance; and
- provide training to teacher mentors as part of professional development certification and education competency programs.

An organization of private schools or consortium of charter schools which has no fewer than 10-member schools in this state, which publishes and files with the DOE copies of its standards, and the member schools comply with compulsory school attendance, or a public or private college or university with a teacher preparation program, may also develop a professional learning system.⁷² The system and in-service catalog must be submitted to the commissioner for approval.⁷³

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE SPONSOR(S)	SENATE SPONSOR	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	CS/HB 1291	Snyder, Jacques	Ingoglia	Became law on July 1, 2024.
2024	CS/SB 7002	Rizo	Hutson	Became law on July 1, 2024.
2023	CS/CS/SB 240	Melo	Hutson	Became law on July 1, 2023.

⁶⁸ Section [1012.57\(1\), F.S.](#)
⁶⁹ Section [1012.98\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#)
⁷⁰ Section [1012.98\(5\)\(b\)1., F.S.](#)
⁷¹ See s. [1012.98\(5\)\(b\)1.-11., F.S.](#)
⁷² Section [1012.98\(7\), F.S.](#)
⁷³ *Id.*