

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [HB 921](#)

TITLE: Required Instruction in Cursive Writing

SPONSOR(S): Overdorf

COMPANION BILL: [SB 1394](#) (Grall)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

[Student Academic Success](#)

17 Y, 0 N



[Education & Employment](#)

21 Y, 0 N

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill requires all public schools to provide cursive writing instruction to students in grades 2 through 5. By grade 5, every student must demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing cursive through an evaluation of written work.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None

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ANALYSIS

EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill adds [cursive writing](#) to the [statutorily required instruction](#) for students in grades 2 through 5. Under the bill, students must be taught how to form cursive letters, proper spacing and alignment, and must practice writing complete words and sentences in cursive. (Section [1](#)).

The bill requires each student to demonstrate proficiency in cursive writing through a written evaluation by the end of grade 5. The bill defines “proficiency in cursive writing” as the ability to write upper and lowercase letters in cursive, writing words and sentences legibly with proper spacing and alignment, and the ability to read and apply cursive writing so as to support literacy development, including writing essays and other assignments in cursive in accordance with [state academic standards](#). (Section [1](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2025. (Section [2](#)).

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

[Required Instruction](#)

Florida Law mandates that students be taught certain topics.¹ For example, students must be taught about the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Holocaust, African American history, and the history of Asian Americans and Pacific islanders.² Those topics are general requirements with no specified grade level, but some topics must be taught to specific grades.³

[Florida's Academic Standards](#)

¹ Section [1003.42\(2\), F.S.](#)

² Section [1003.42\(2\)\(a\)-\(i\), F.S.](#)

³ See e.g. Section [1003.42\(o\), F.S.](#)

STORAGE NAME: h0921c.EEC

DATE: 3/20/2025

Statutorily required instruction is a small fraction of the content that schools must incorporate into curriculum. Florida law requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop academic standards that establish the core content of curricula and the knowledge and skills that K-12 public school students are expected to acquire in English Language Arts (ELA), science, mathematics, social studies, visual and performing arts, physical education, health, and foreign languages.⁴ Those academic standards must provide for the logical, sequential progression of core curricular content that incrementally increases a student’s knowledge and skills over time.⁵

On February 12, 2020, the SBE approved the adoption of new student academic standards for K-12 ELA and mathematics called the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards.⁶ The Department of Education fully implemented the B.E.S.T standards in the 2022-2023 school year when the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST)—the statewide standardized assessment for VPK through grade 10 ELA and VPK through grade 8 mathematics—became aligned with the new standards.⁷

Florida law requires each district school board to provide appropriate instruction that ensures that students meet state academic standards.⁸ As a result, most of the content schools are required to teach comes from the academic standards adopted by the SBE, including the B.E.S.T. standards for ELA and mathematics.

[Cursive Writing Instruction in Florida](#)

In line with the adoption of Common Core standards, Florida dropped cursive writing from state academic standards in 2010.⁹ However, in 2014, the SBE reinstated cursive instruction requirements in its academic standards.¹⁰

Though cursive writing is not explicitly mentioned in Florida’s statutorily required instruction,¹¹ cursive writing is included in the B.E.S.T. English Language Arts (ELA) standards for grades 3 through 5.¹² Therefore, schools are required to teach cursive in grades 3 through 5. The current B.E.S.T. ELA standards require public schools to teach:

- Grade 3—How to write all upper- and lower-case letters in cursive;
- Grade 4—How to produce cursive writing that can be consistently read by others; and
- Grade 5—How to produce legible cursive writing in the same time frame that students would use for writing in print.¹³

Under the B.E.S.T. standards, schools are not explicitly required to ensure that students can read and comprehend cursive writing. Moreover, Florida law does not require schools to give any cursive writing examinations or evaluations and neither cursive writing nor comprehension is assessed on the grades 3 through 5 FAST assessments.¹⁴

⁴ Section [1003.41, F.S.](#)

⁵ Section 1003.41(1), F.S.

⁶ See Florida Department of Education, *Florida ESSA State Plan* (Aug. 2, 2023), at 7, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/14196/urlt/fl-essa-stateplan080223.pdf>; r. 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.

⁷ Florida Department of Education, *Adoption and Implementation of the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards* (Feb. 13, 2020), available at <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-8838/dps-2020-26.pdf>.

⁸ Section [1003.42\(2\), F.S.](#)

⁹ See Patch, *What’s Behind Cursive Comeback in 22 States, Including Florida*, <https://patch.com/florida/stpete/whats-behind-cursive-comeback-22-states-including-florida> (last visited Mar. 4, 2025). For a progression of changes to Florida’s academic standards since 1999, see Florida Department of State, *Rule Title: Student Performance Standards*, <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?title=FINANCE%20AND%20ADMINISTRATION&ID=6A-1.09401> (last visited March 5, 2025) (providing a sequence of links to proposed and adopted amendments to r. 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ See Section [1003.42\(2\), F.S.](#)

¹² CPALMS, *ELA 3.C.1.1*, <https://www.cpalms.org/PreviewStandard/Preview/15220> (last visited Mar. 4, 2025); CPALMS, *ELA 4.C.1.1*, <https://www.cpalms.org/PreviewStandard/Preview/14968> (last visited Mar. 4, 2025); CPALMS, *ELA 5.C.1.1*, <https://www.cpalms.org/PreviewStandard/Preview/15017> (last visited Mar. 4, 2025). CPALMS, short for Curriculum Planning and Learning Management System, is the state of Florida’s official source for standards. Florida Department of Education, *Standards and Instructional Support*, <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/> (last visited Mar. 4, 2025).

¹³ CPALMS, *supra* note 9.

¹⁴ See Florida Department of Education, *Test Design Summary and Blueprint: FAST ELA Reading and B.E.S.T. Writing* (updated June 2024) available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20102/urlt/TDS-FAST-ELA.pdf>. The Test Design Summary

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Student Academic Success Subcommittee	17 Y, 0 N	3/11/2025	Sanchez	Blank
Education & Employment Committee	21 Y, 0 N	3/20/2025	Hassell	Blank

and Blueprint provides a comprehensive list of standards tested on FAST ELA assessments; cursive writing standards are not included. *Id.*