

By Senator Calatayud

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A bill to be entitled
An act relating to private schools; amending s.
1002.42, F.S.; requiring a private school that enrolls
a certain number of students to be considered a
permitted use for zoning purposes; providing that
certain private schools may not be subject to
additional building codes; requiring a fire official
to use specified firesafety evaluation systems for
existing private school facilities; providing that
certain private schools are subject to specified fire
code requirements; requiring that a sprinkler system
that meets specified requirements be installed for
certain private schools; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (d) is added to subsection (19) of
section 1002.42, Florida Statutes, to read:

1002.42 Private schools.—

(19) FACILITIES.—

(d)1. A private school enrolling 150 or fewer students is
considered a permitted use in all zoning districts, except
residential districts, within a county or a municipality without
rezoning or obtaining a special exception or a land use change
and without complying with any mitigation requirements,
conditions, performance standards, ordinances, rules, codes, or
policies.

2. A private school enrolling 150 or fewer students may
operate in a facility that is subject to and complies with the

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30 same occupancy requirements as a class A-1, A-3, B, or M
31 occupancy as defined by the Florida Building Code and may not be
32 subjected to any additional state or local health, safety, or
33 welfare laws, codes, or rules beyond those applicable to a class
34 A-1, A-3, B, or M occupancy facility.

35 3. The local fire official shall use the firesafety
36 evaluation systems found in NFPA 101A: Guide on Alternative
37 Approaches to Life Safety for existing facilities as low cost,
38 reasonable alternatives to firesafety evaluation system
39 standards.

40 4. A private school enrolling 150 or fewer students opening
41 inside, or moving operations to, an existing assembly, day care,
42 mercantile, or business occupancy, as defined by the Florida
43 Fire Prevention Code, must meet standards for existing
44 educational occupancy requirements under chapter 15 of the
45 Florida Fire Prevention Code for automatic sprinkler, detection,
46 alarm, and communications systems and requirements for hazardous
47 areas, except that an automatic sprinkler system must be
48 provided for educational occupancies as follows:

49 a. Throughout all Group E fire areas greater than 12,000
50 square feet, as defined by the International Building Code.

51 b. Throughout every portion of educational buildings below
52 the level of exit discharge.

53 c. An automatic sprinkler system is not required in any
54 fire area or area below the level of exit discharge where every
55 classroom throughout the building has at least one exterior exit
56 door at ground level without intervening corridors, passageways,
57 interior exit stairways or ramps, or exit passageways.

58 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.