

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/CS/HB 1503](#)

**TITLE:** Computer Science Education and Certification

**SPONSOR(S):** Giallombardo

**COMPANION BILL:** [CS/SB 1694](#) (Avila)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

## Committee References

[Careers & Workforce](#)

16 Y, 0 N, As CS



[Education & Employment](#)

19 Y, 0 N, As CS

## SUMMARY

### **Effect of the Bill:**

The bill requires general education core courses that integrate technology to include specific instruction on artificial intelligence and digital literacy and competency and, when applicable to the subject matter of the course, robotics, software engineering, computer networks, database systems, and cyber security. Additionally, the bill requires that instruction on artificial intelligence be included in the computer science courses school districts are required to offer in high schools.

The bill requires the Department of Education to develop additional educator certificate coverage areas for computer science (grades K-5) and computer science (grades 6-12), while maintaining the existing computer science (grades K-12) coverage area.

### **Fiscal or Economic Impact:**

The bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact on the state. *See FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT, below.*

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## ANALYSIS

### **EFFECT OF THE BILL:**

The bill requires any [general education core course](#) that integrates the use of technology to provide students with the following:

- opportunities to improve digital literacy and competency;
- instruction on the application of artificial intelligence tools to the course; and
- related instruction on robotics, software engineering, computer networks, database systems, and cyber security, as applicable to the course. (Section [1](#))

Additionally, the bill requires that school districts provide students opportunities to take [high school computer science courses](#) that include instruction on artificial intelligence. The proposed changes serve to highlight the importance of emerging technologies around artificial intelligence and provide Florida students in public high schools and public postsecondary institutions opportunities to learn about and engage with artificial intelligence. (Sections [2](#)).

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to establish or maintain, as appropriate, the following [subject area coverages](#):

- Computer science (grades K-5);
- Computer science (grades 6-12); and
- Computer science (grades K-12).

**STORAGE NAME:** h1503a.EEC

**DATE:** 2/17/2026

The DOE must present recommended competencies and skills for the grades K–5 and grades 6–12 coverages to the State Board of Education (SBE) for approval by September 1, 2026, and then coordinate development, piloting, and standard-setting for the examinations for administration beginning no later than January 1, 2028. The bill requires the SBE to adopt competencies and skills and designate corresponding examinations by rule. (Section [2](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [3](#)).

#### **RULEMAKING:**

The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to establish the specialization requirements for computer science (grades K-5) and computer science (grades 6-12). Additionally, existing SBE rules will require amendments to incorporate the associated subject area examinations.

***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.***

#### **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

##### STATE GOVERNMENT:

The development and maintenance of certification coverages and examinations is covered by examination fees charged by the DOE. It is unclear if the fees collected for the additional examinations associated with the new coverages would cover the development costs under the DOE's current fee structure, therefore, the fiscal impact on the DOE is indeterminate.

## **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

#### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

##### **General Education Core Courses**

Current law requires that general education core course options shall consist of a maximum of five courses within each of the subject areas of communication, mathematics, social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences.<sup>1</sup> Each general education core course option must contain high-level academic and critical thinking skills and common competencies that students must demonstrate to successfully complete the course.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, general education core courses may not distort significant historical events or include a curriculum that teaches identity politics, violates the Florida Educational Equity Act, 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.<sup>3</sup>

General education core courses must meet the following standards:

- Communication courses must afford students the ability to communicate effectively, including the ability to write clearly and engage in public speaking.
- Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

<sup>1</sup> Section [1007.25\(3\)\(a\), F.S.](#) The core courses may be revised, or the five-course maximum within each subject area may be exceeded, if approved by the State Board of Education and the Board of Governors, as recommended by the subject area faculty committee and approved by the Articulation Coordinating Committee as necessary for a subject area.

<sup>2</sup> Section [1007.25\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>3</sup> Section [1007.25\(3\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

- Social science courses must afford students an understanding of the basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavior and past and present social, political, and economic issues.
- Natural science courses must afford students the ability to critically examine and evaluate the principles of the scientific method, model construction, and use the scientific method to explain natural experiences and phenomena.
- Mathematics courses must afford students a mastery of foundational mathematical and computation models and methods by applying such models and methods in problem solving.<sup>4</sup>

### Computer Science Courses

Florida law defines computer science as “the study of computers and algorithmic processes, including their principles, hardware and software designs, applications, and their impact on society.”<sup>5</sup> Computer science also includes computer coding and computer programming.

Public schools are required to provide students in grades K-12 opportunities for learning computer science including, but not limited to, computer coding and computer programming.<sup>6</sup> Such opportunities may include:<sup>7</sup>

- instruction regarding computer coding in elementary and middle school;
- instruction to develop computer usage and digital literacy skills in middle school; and
- courses in computer science, computer coding, and computer programming in high school, including opportunities to earn industry certifications related to the courses.

Computer science courses must be offered to students in high school and middle school.<sup>8</sup> High school students must be provided opportunities to take computer science courses and earn technology-related industry certifications to satisfy high school graduation requirements. Computer science courses and technology-related industry certifications that are identified as eligible for meeting mathematics or science requirements for high school graduation must be included in the Course Code Directory.<sup>9</sup>

### Educator Certification

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.<sup>10</sup> Persons seeking employment at a public school as a school supervisor, principal, teacher, library media specialist, school counselor, athletic coach, or in other instructional capacities must be certified.<sup>11</sup> 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.”<sup>12</sup>

The DOE issues three main types of educator certificates:

- **Professional Certificate:** The professional certificate is Florida’s highest type of full-time educator certification.<sup>13</sup> The professional certificate is valid for 5 years and is renewable.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Section [1007.25\(3\)\(d\), F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Section [1007.2616\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> Section [1007.2616\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> Section [1007.2616\(6\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> Sections [1012.55\(1\)](#) and [1002.33\(12\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Section [1012.54, F.S.](#); see r. 6A-4.001(1), F.A.C.

<sup>13</sup> Rule 6A-4.004(5), F.A.C.

<sup>14</sup> 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

- **Temporary Certificate:** The temporary certificate covers employment in full-time positions for which educator certification is required.<sup>15</sup> Generally, a temporary certificate is valid for 5 years and is nonrenewable.<sup>16</sup>
- **Athletic Coaching Certificate:** The athletic coaching certificate covers full-time and part-time employment as a public school’s athletic coach.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup> The 5-year certificate requires satisfaction of certain specialization requirements established in SBE rule.<sup>19</sup>

**Computer Science Certification Specializations**

An individual holding an educator certification from the DOE may apply for an additional coverage<sup>20</sup> or endorsement<sup>21</sup> indicating advanced education or experience in a particular subject, area, or field.<sup>22</sup> The DOE offers a specialization for certification in computer science that can be earned under two plans:

- Plan One. A bachelor’s or higher degree with an undergraduate or graduate major in computer science or computer science education; or
- Plan Two. A bachelor’s or higher degree with thirty (30) semester hours in computer science or computer science education to include credit in the areas specified below:
  - Computer applications; and
  - Computer programming.<sup>23</sup>

Additionally, individuals seeking the computer science specialization must pass the Computer Science (grades K-12) subject area examination adopted by the SBE.<sup>24</sup>

**RECENT LEGISLATION:**

YEAR	BILL #/SUBJECT	HOUSE/SENATE SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2024	<a href="#">CS/CS/HB 1285</a> - Education	Canady/ <i>Burgess</i>	The bill became law on July 1, 2024.
2023	<a href="#">CS/CS/CS/SB 266</a> - Higher Education	Andrade/ <i>Grall</i>	The bill became law on July 1, 2023.

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.

<sup>15</sup> Rule 6A-4.004(1)(a)2., F.A.C.

<sup>16</sup> 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.](#)

<sup>17</sup> Section [1012.55\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>18</sup> Rule 6A-4.004(7), F.A.C. (validity periods expressed in school fiscal years).

<sup>19</sup> See r. 6A-4.0282, F.A.C.

<sup>20</sup> The term “coverage” as used SBE 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.”

<sup>21</sup> The term “endorsement” as used in SBE 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.

<sup>22</sup> Rule 6A-4.002(1)(e)-(f), F.A.C.

<sup>23</sup> Rule 6A-4.0121, F.A.C.

<sup>24</sup> See [s. 1012.56\(5\)\(d\), F.S.](#); r. 6A-4.002 and 6A-4.0021, F.A.C.

**BILL HISTORY**

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#">Careers &amp; Workforce Subcommittee</a>	16 Y, 0 N, As CS	1/28/2026	Kiner	Wolff
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarified requirements for postsecondary general education core courses that incorporate the use of technology.</li> <li>• Required computer science courses offered to high school students to include instruction on artificial intelligence.</li> <li>• Removed proposed changes to elective requirements for the standard high school diploma.</li> </ul>			
<a href="#">Education &amp; Employment Committee</a>	19 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/17/2026	Hassell	Wolff
THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Required instruction on robotics to be included in appropriate general education core courses that incorporate technology.</li> <li>• Required the DOE to develop, by specified dates, educator certificate coverage areas for Computer science (grades K-5) and Computer science (grades 6-12).</li> </ul>			

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**  
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