

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Rules

BILL: SB 1718

INTRODUCER: Senator Calatayud

SUBJECT: Educator Preparation and Certification

DATE: February 23, 2026

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	<u>Jahnke</u>	<u>Bouck</u>	<u>ED</u>	Favorable
2.	<u>Gray</u>	<u>Elwell</u>	<u>AED</u>	Favorable
3.	<u>Jahnke</u>	<u>Kruse</u>	<u>RC</u>	Pre-meeting

I. Summary:

SB 1718 increases flexibility and efficiency in educator preparation, certification, and professional learning. The bill allows educator preparation institute participants to complete coursework while obtaining a statement of status of eligibility, expands access to temporary certification for certain educators with expired professional certificates, and streamlines the reinstatement process by removing duplicative subject area examination requirements while maintaining existing eligibility safeguards.

The bill also updates statutory references relating to the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence and expands the Center's responsibilities to provide no-cost professional learning and administrative support to educators seeking to renew or reinstate their certificates.

This bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact on state revenues and expenditures. **See Section V., Fiscal Impact Statement.**

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

II. Present Situation:

Teacher Preparation Programs

Teacher preparation programs are accountable for producing individuals with the competencies and skills necessary to achieve the state education goals. State-approved teacher preparation programs are offered by Florida public and private postsecondary institutions, public school districts, and private providers, through 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.¹

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

- Initial Teacher Preparation programs in public and private colleges and universities that require candidates to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge² in one or more specific subject areas, mastery of general knowledge,³ and mastery of professional preparation and education competence. Program completers qualify for a professional educator certificate.
- Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) that offer 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 Professional Educator Certificate and require mastery of general knowledge, subject-area knowledge, and 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, through which instructional staff can satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements. In addition to completing the district program, candidates must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge and subject area knowledge.⁴

Educator Preparation Institute Participant Criteria

Each EPI participant must:

- Meet certification application requirements, including obtaining a statement of eligibility, established in law, and meet all basic eligibility requirements for an educator certificate before participating in field experiences. Generally, a student must receive a statement of eligibility for a certificate prior to enrollment in an EPI.
- Demonstrate competency and participate in field experiences that are appropriate to the participant's educational plan, including completion of all competencies for a reading endorsement when seeking certification in a certificate area that includes reading instruction or interventions in kindergarten through grade six.
- Before completion of the program, fully demonstrate his or her ability to teach the subject area for which he or she is seeking certification by documenting a positive impact on student learning growth in a prekindergarten through grade 12 setting.

¹ Section 1004.04, F.S. See Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited Feb. 5, 2026). See also Rule 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

² Florida Department of Education, *Subject Area Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/subject-area-knowledge.stml> (last visited Feb. 5, 2026).

³ Florida Department of Education, *General Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.stml> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026).

⁴ Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited Feb. 5, 2026). See also Rule 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

- Achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination,⁵ the General Knowledge Test, and the subject area examination for the subject area certification, as required by the State Board of Education (SBE) rule.⁶

Educator Certification

To serve as an educator in a traditional public school, charter school, virtual school, or other publicly operated school, a person must hold a certificate issued by the DOE.⁷ 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.”⁸

To be eligible for an educator certificate, a person must meet the following basic eligibility requirements:

- 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 learning or from a non-accredited institution identified by the DOE as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor’s or higher degree and have attained at least a 2.5 overall grade point average in the applicant’s major field of study;⁹
- 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; and
- Be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of a teacher.¹⁰

Temporary Educator Certificate

A temporary teaching certificate is valid for five school years and is nonrenewable.¹¹ the Department of Education (DOE) is required to issue a temporary certificate to a qualifying applicant within 14 calendar days after receipt of a request from an employer and is required to electronically notify the applicant’s employer that the temporary certificate has been issued and provide the applicant with an official statement of status of eligibility at the time the certificate is issued.¹²

The DOE must issue a temporary certificate to any applicant who:

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements for certification:¹³

⁵ Section 1012.56(7), F.S. An individual who completes an educator preparation institute and is rated highly effective by his or her performance evaluation is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination in order to be awarded a professional certificate.

⁶ Section 1004.85(3)(b), F.S.

⁷ Sections 1012.55(1) and 1002.33(12)(f), F.S.

⁸ Section 1012.54, F.S. See Rule 6A-4.001(1), F.A.C

⁹ Rule 6A-4.003(2), F.A.C.

¹⁰ Section 1012.56(2), F.S.

¹¹ Section 1012.56(7), F.S.

¹² Section 1012.56(1), F.S.

¹³ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

- Completes applicable subject area content requirements or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge by, for example, successful completion of an approved exam; and
- Holds an accredited degree or a degree approved by the DOE at the level required for the subject area specialization in the SBE rule.¹⁴

Professional Educator Certificate

A professional certificate is valid for five school years and is renewable. A professional certificate is awarded to an applicant who meets the basic eligibility requirements for certification and demonstrates mastery of:

- General knowledge;
- Subject area knowledge; and
- Professional preparation and education competence.¹⁵

Reinstatement of Professional Educator Certificate

To reinstate an expired professional educator certificate, the certificate holder must submit an application; complete 6 college credits, 120 inservice points, or a combination thereof, in specified areas during the 5 years immediately preceding reinstatement; and pass a subject area exam for each subject to be shown on the reinstated certificate during those same prior 5 years.¹⁶ The requirements for reinstatement may not be satisfied by subject area exams or college credits completed for issuance of the expired certificate.¹⁷

The Florida Center for Teaching Excellence

The Florida Center for Teaching Excellence (Center) is established at Miami Dade College to prepare high-quality teachers in Florida through rigorous, evidence-based programs grounded in cognitive science, high-impact teaching strategies, and the implementation of knowledge-rich curricula. The Center works in collaboration with the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at the University of South Florida. Among other functions, the center is authorized to submit a professional learning system for approval under the School Community Professional Learning Act. The Miami-Dade College Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the DOE, is responsible for establishing policies governing the supervision, administration, and governance of the Center.¹⁸

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 1004.85, F.S., to authorize educator preparation institutes to enroll participants and allow them to complete coursework while the participants are working to obtain an “eligible” statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area included in the participant’s educational plan. Therefore, a student may begin coursework in an EPI prior to a determination of eligibility for a certificate.

¹⁴ Section 1012.56(7)(b) and (d), F.S. As specified in law, alternative pathways for a temporary certificate are available for military service members and participants in the Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

¹⁵ Section 1012.56(2), F.S.

¹⁶ Section 1012.585(5)(b), F.S. *See also* Section 1012.585(3)(a) and (e), F.S.

¹⁷ Section 1012.585, F.S.

¹⁸ Section 1012.981, F.S.

The bill amends s. 1012.56, F.S., to require the Florida Department of Education (DOE) to issue a temporary certificate to an educator whose previously issued professional certificate has expired, provided the educator meets basic eligibility requirements for certification.¹⁹ This allows the educator to begin teaching while completing required college coursework or inservice points without having to again demonstrate subject area mastery and may expedite the educator's return to the classroom.

The bill amends s. 1012.585, F.S., to require an applicant seeking reinstatement of a professional educator certificate to complete specified statutory certification eligibility requirements,²⁰ but removes the requirement that an educator retake subject area examinations for each subject included on the certificate when the educator has previously demonstrated mastery of subject area knowledge. Upon reinstatement, the professional certificate must include all subject area coverages and endorsements held at the time of expiration. The bill also specifies that inservice points that were earned in order to earn or renew a professional certificate that has since expired may not be used to satisfy reinstatement requirements.

The bill amends s. 1012.981, F.S., to update the name of the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at the University of South Florida with the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching as the required collaborating entity for the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence (Center).

The bill requires, rather than authorizes, the Center to submit to the DOE a professional learning system. The bill requires the Center to offer professional learning, at no cost, to certified educators seeking to renew or reinstate their certificate and to submit any inservice points earned to the DOE on the educator's behalf. The bill also requires the Center to provide such educators with information on school district professional learning systems that provide access to inservice training to individuals not employed by the school district.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

¹⁹ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

²⁰ *See Id.* To seek certification, a person must be at least 18 years old; swear allegiance to constitutional principles; hold a bachelor's or higher degree; submit to background screening; be of good moral character; and be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

None.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

The bill provides a positive fiscal impact to the individuals that would otherwise have to pay to take a fee-based exam in order to reinstate certifications, such as the Florida subject area or standard examinations.

C. Government Sector Impact:

The bill has a negative fiscal impact to the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence as the bill requires the center to allow individuals to utilize their system at no cost and to submit their in-service hours to the Department.

The bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact on the DOE, as it is unclear whether streamlining the reinstatement of certifications may provide an increase in the number of certifications issued by the Department.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1004.85, 1012.56, 1012.585, and 1012.981.

IX. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.
