

# 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 #:** [HB 561](#)

**TITLE:** Educator Certifications

**SPONSOR(S):** Gerwig

**COMPANION BILL:** [SB 1718](#) (Calatayud)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

### Committee References

[Careers & Workforce](#)

15 Y, 0 N

[PreK-12 Budget](#)

13 Y, 0 N

[Education & Employment](#)

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill removes barriers to reinstatement of expired professional educator certificates, providing educators with a streamlined process for returning to the classroom. The bill also corrects a reference relating to the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence and requires the center to offer free professional learning to educators seeking to renew or reinstate their certificate.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

See FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT Section.

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## ANALYSIS

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

The bill requires an applicant for [reinstatement](#) of a [professional educator certificate](#) to complete certain statutory requirements,<sup>1</sup> but removes the current requirement<sup>2</sup> for an educator to pass a subject area exam for each subject included on the certificate since he or she already demonstrated mastery of subject area knowledge in order to receive the expired certificate.<sup>3</sup> When an expired certificate is reinstated, it must include each subject area and endorsement held at the time of expiration. The bill also stipulates that inservice points completed for issuance of the expired certificate may not be used to satisfy the requirements for reinstatement. (Section [2](#)).

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to issue a temporary certificate to such an educator so he or she can begin teaching while earning their required college credits or inservice points,<sup>4</sup> expediting the process of returning to the classroom and removing an additional cost barrier for educators. (Section [1](#)).

The bill corrects a reference to the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) at the University of South Florida (USF) as the collaborator entity with Miami Dade College on the newly created [Florida Center for Teaching Excellence](#) (Center).<sup>5</sup> Instead, the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching within USF will replace it.

<sup>1</sup> See s. [1012.56\(2\)\(a\) – \(f\), F.S.](#) 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.

<sup>2</sup> Section [1012.585\(5\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>3</sup> See s. [1012.56\(2\)\(h\), \(5\), and \(7\)\(a\)1., F.S.](#) In order to receive a professional certificate, an applicant must demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge.

<sup>4</sup> Section [1012.585\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Section [1012.981, F.S.](#) The Center was created by HB 875, which passed the Legislature in 2025.

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**DATE:** 2/4/2026

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. It also requires the Center to provide such educators with information on school district professional learning systems that provide access to inservice training to persons not employed by the school district. (Section [3](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [4](#)).

#### **RULEMAKING:**

Current law requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt rules relating to educator certification requirements and the process for reinstating an expired professional certificate. The bill modifies provisions of law already under the SBE's rulemaking authority, thus allowing the SBE to make rules to implement the bill.

***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 bill would result in an indeterminate loss of revenue for the DOE due to the deletion of the requirement that educators seeking reinstatement take a subject area exam. For Fiscal Year 2024-2025, there were 351 subject area exams taken by educators seeking reinstatement.<sup>6</sup> The typical cost for a subject area exam is \$150; therefore, it is estimated that the 351 subject area exams taken in Fiscal Year 2024-2025, generated approximately \$52,650 in fee revenue for the DOE. If the DOE cannot adjust their operating costs to absorb this loss in revenue, then the DOE would need to establish a revised fee schedule to align with the cost to implement the law with respect to the certification of school personnel.

##### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT:**

The bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact on public entities that charge fees for professional learning. The bill may have a positive fiscal impact on school districts by reducing the amount of professional learning they need to offer.

##### **PRIVATE SECTOR:**

The bill has a positive fiscal impact on educators since they will no longer have to pay to take a subject area exam in order to reinstate an expired professional certificate. The bill also benefits such educators by allowing them to earn the college credits or inservice points required for reinstatement at no personal cost while teaching under a temporary certificate and eventually through the Center. The bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact on private entities that charge fees for professional learning.

## **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

#### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

##### [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>7</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 capacity must be certified.<sup>8</sup> The purpose of certification is to require school-based personnel

<sup>6</sup> January 30, 2026, email sent from Amelia Johnson, Department of Education, to the PreK-12 Budget subcommittee staff.

<sup>7</sup> Sections [1012.55\(1\)](#) and [1002.33\(12\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>8</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

to "possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to allow the opportunity for a high-quality education in the public schools."<sup>9</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>10</sup> The professional certificate is valid for 5 years and is renewable.<sup>11</sup>
- **Temporary Certificate:** The temporary certificate covers employment in full-time positions for which educator certification is required.<sup>12</sup> Generally, a temporary certificate is valid for 5 years and is nonrenewable.<sup>13</sup>
- **Athletic Coaching Certificate:** The athletic coaching certificate covers full-time and part-time employment as a public school's athletic coach.<sup>14</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>15</sup> The 5-year certificate requires satisfaction of certain specialization requirements established in rule.<sup>16</sup>

#### Reinstating a Professional Educator Certificate

Under current law,<sup>17</sup> 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<sup>18</sup> 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 5 years. The requirements may not be satisfied by subject area exams or college credits completed for issuance of the expired certificate.<sup>19</sup>

#### Certification Fees

The SBE is authorized to establish by rule separate fees for applications, examinations, certification, certification renewal, late renewal, record making, and recordkeeping and may establish procedures for scheduling and administering an examination upon an applicant's request. Unless otherwise specified in statute, each fee shall be based on the DOE's estimates of the revenue required to implement the law with respect to certification of school personnel.<sup>20</sup>

The rule promulgated by the SBE must specify an examination fee for the following:

- Initial registration for first-time test takers.
- Retake of the full battery of subtests of an examination, if applicable. The retake fee for the full battery of subtests may not exceed the fee for the initial registration.

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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>9</sup> Section [1012.54, F.S.](#); see r. 6A-4.001(1), F.A.C.

<sup>10</sup> Rule 6A-4.004(5), F.A.C.

<sup>11</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 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>12</sup> Rule 6A-4.004(1)(a)2., F.A.C.

<sup>13</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>14</sup> Section [1012.55\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>15</sup> Rule 6A-4.004(7), F.A.C. (validity periods expressed in school fiscal years).

<sup>16</sup> See r. 6A-4.0282, F.A.C.

<sup>17</sup> Section [1012.585\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>18</sup> Section [1012.585\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#) See also s. [1012.585\(3\)\(a\) and \(e\), F.S.](#)

<sup>19</sup> Section [1012.585\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>20</sup> Section [1012.59\(1\), F.S.](#)

- Retake for each subtest of an examination. The retake fee for each subtest must be prorated based on the number of subtests within the examination.<sup>21</sup>

Rule 6A-4.0021, Florida Administrative Code, is the rule that governs the written examinations for teacher certification. Inclusive in this rule is the fee schedule as established by the SBE.

#### *Teacher Certification Examination Trust Fund*

The proceeds from the certification examination fees levied pursuant to [S. 1012.59, F.S.](#), are remitted by the DOE to the Chief Financial Officer for deposit into and disbursed from the Teacher Certification Examination Trust Fund.<sup>22</sup> For Fiscal Year 2025-26, \$11,234,798<sup>23</sup> was appropriated from this trust fund to the DOE.

#### [The Florida Center for Teaching Excellence](#)

The center was established by the Legislature at Miami Dade College in 2025 for the purpose of preparing high-quality teachers for Florida through rigorous, evidence-based programs grounded in cognitive science, high-impact teaching strategies, and the implementation of knowledge-rich curricula.<sup>24</sup> The center will work in collaboration with the USF CITL institute.<sup>25</sup> Among other functions, the center is authorized to submit a professional learning system for approval, pursuant to the School Community Professional Learning Act.<sup>26</sup> The Miami Dade College Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the DOE, are responsible for establishing policies for the supervision, administration, and governance of the center.<sup>27</sup>

#### **RECENT LEGISLATION:**

YEAR	BILL #/SUBJECT	HOUSE/SENATE SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2025	<a href="#">CS/CS/HB 875</a> - Educator Preparation	Rizo, Snyder/ Burgess	Became law on May 30, 2025.

#### **OTHER RESOURCES:**

[Educator Preparation and Certification Fact Sheet](#), Education & Employment Committee

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*

<sup>22</sup> Section [1010.75, F.S.](#)

<sup>23</sup> Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Appropriations Act, chapter 2025-198, Laws of Florida.

<sup>24</sup> Section [1012.981\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>25</sup> Section [1012.981\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>26</sup> Section [1012.981\(3\), F.S.](#) The School Community Professional Learning Act was established to bring various education stakeholders together to work collaboratively to establish a coordinated system of professional learning. See [S. 1012.98, F.S.](#)

<sup>27</sup> Section [1012.981\(5\), F.S.](#)

**BILL HISTORY**

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<a href="#"><u>Careers &amp; Workforce Subcommittee</u></a>	15 Y, 0 N	1/14/2025	Kiner	Blalock
<a href="#"><u>PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee</u></a>	13 Y, 0 N	2/4/2026	Potvin	Bailey
<a href="#"><u>Education &amp; Employment Committee</u></a>				