

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

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BILL #: [CS/HB 561](#)

TITLE: Educator Preparation and Certification

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](#)

20 Y, 0 N, As CS

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 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. The bill also authorizes educator preparation institutes to allow program participants to enroll in and complete coursework while working to obtain an eligible statement of status of eligibility.

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,¹ but removes the current requirement² 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.³ 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 [3](#)).

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,⁴ expediting the process of returning to the classroom and removing an additional [cost barrier](#) for educators. (Section [2](#)).

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).⁵ Instead, the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching at USF will replace it.

¹ 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.

² Section [1012.585\(5\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

³ 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.

⁴ Section [1012.585\(5\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

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

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DATE: 2/10/2026

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 [4](#)).

The bill also authorizes [educator preparation institutes](#) (EPIs) to allow program participants to enroll in and complete coursework while working to obtain an eligible statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area of the participant's educational plan. (Section [1](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section [5](#)).

RULEMAKING:

Current law requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to adopt rules relating to educator certification requirements, the process for reinstating an expired professional certificate, and educator preparation institutes. 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.⁶ 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.

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

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.⁷ 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.⁸ 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.”⁹

The DOE issues three main types of educator certificates:

- **Professional Certificate:** The professional certificate is Florida's highest type of full-time educator certification.¹⁰ The professional certificate is valid for 5 years and is renewable.¹¹
- **Temporary Certificate:** The temporary certificate covers employment in full-time positions for which educator certification is required.¹² Generally, a temporary certificate is valid for 5 years and is nonrenewable.¹³
- **Athletic Coaching Certificate:** The athletic coaching certificate covers full-time and part-time employment as a public school's athletic coach.¹⁴ 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.¹⁵ The 5-year certificate requires satisfaction of certain specialization requirements established in rule.¹⁶

Reinstating a Professional Educator Certificate

Under current law,¹⁷ 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 areas¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

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

⁸ 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.

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

¹⁰ Rule 6A-4.004(5), F.A.C.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Rule 6A-4.004(1)(a)2., F.A.C.

¹³ 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.](#)

¹⁴ Section [1012.55\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

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

¹⁶ See r. 6A-4.0282, F.A.C.

¹⁷ Section [1012.585\(5\), F.S.](#)

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

¹⁹ Section [1012.585\(5\), F.S.](#)

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.²⁰

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.
- 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.²¹

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.

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.²² For Fiscal Year 2025-26, \$11,234,798²³ 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.²⁴ The center will work in collaboration with the USF CITL institute.²⁵ Among other functions, the center is authorized to submit a professional learning system for approval, pursuant to the School Community Professional Learning Act.²⁶ 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.²⁷

Educator Preparation Institutes

EPIs are alternative certification programs offered 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, mastery of subject area knowledge, and mastery of professional preparation and education competence.²⁸

In order to be approved by the DOE, an EPI must provide evidence of its capacity to implement a competency-based program that includes:²⁹

- the areas addressed by the uniform core curricula for initial teacher preparation programs;³⁰

²⁰ Section [1012.59\(1\), F.S.](#)

²¹ *Id.*

²² Section [1010.75, F.S.](#)

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

²⁴ Section [1012.981\(1\), F.S.](#)

²⁵ Section [1012.981\(2\), F.S.](#)

²⁶ 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.*

²⁷ Section [1012.981\(5\), F.S.](#)

²⁸ Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fl DOE.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited Feb. 10, 2025). *See also* r. 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

²⁹ Section [1004.85\(3\)\(a\)1.-4., F.S.](#)

³⁰ *See s. 1004.04(2)(b), F.S.*

- an educational plan for each participant to meet certification requirements and demonstrate his or her ability to teach the subject area for which the participant is seeking certification, which is based on an assessment of his or her competency in the areas addressed by the uniform core curricula;
- field experiences appropriate to the certification subject area specified in the educational plan; and
- a certification ombudsman to facilitate the process and procedures required for participants who complete the program to meet any requirements related to the background screening requirements.

Program participants must:³¹

- meet certification application and eligibility requirements established in law, including obtaining a statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area of the educational plan,³² before participating in field experiences;
- 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 6;
- 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; and
- achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination,³³ the basic skills examination, and the subject area examination for the subject area certification which is required by state board rule.

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #/SUBJECT	HOUSE/SENATE SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2025	CS/CS/HB 875 - Educator Preparation	Rizo, Snyder / Burgess	Became law on May 30, 2025.
2024	CS/SB 7002 - Deregulation of Public Schools	Rizo / Hutson	Became law on May 9, 2024.

OTHER RESOURCES:

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

³¹ Section [1004.85\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

³² See s. [1012.56\(1\), F.S.](#)

³³ An individual that completes an EPI 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. Section [1012.575, F.S.](#)

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
Careers & Workforce Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	1/14/2026	Kiner	Blalock
PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee	13 Y, 0 N	2/4/2026	Potvin	Bailey
Education & Employment Committee	20 Y, 0 N, As CS	2/10/2026	Hassell	Blalock

THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:

- Authorize educator preparation institutes to allow program participants to enroll in and complete coursework while working to obtain an eligible statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area of the participant's educational plan.

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