

By Senator Jones

34-00331-26

2026574__

A bill to be entitled
An act relating to the recruitment and retention of
speech-language pathologists; creating s. 1012.02,
F.S.; requiring the Department of Education to develop
and maintain a statewide strategic plan for the
recruitment and retention of speech-language
pathologists and the provision of quality services;
providing requirements for such plan; providing
department requirements relating to completing and
publishing the plan; providing school district and
charter school requirements relating to submitting
specified data for the plan; requiring the department
to provide specified updates to certain committees of
the Legislature; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 1012.02, Florida Statutes, is created to
read:

1012.02 Statewide strategic plan for the recruitment and
retention of speech-language pathologists and the provision of
quality services.-

(1) The Department of Education shall develop and maintain
a statewide strategic plan for recruiting and retaining speech-
language pathologists and assuring that quality services are
provided to students with speech-language disabilities. At a
minimum, the plan must include, but is not limited to, all of
the following:

(a) The analysis of relevant data to determine the specific

34-00331-26

2026574__

staffing needs of school districts and charter schools. Such analysis must be ongoing throughout the school year and must include:

1. The total number of public schools, disaggregated by school district and charter school.

2. The number of speech-language pathologists employed at each school and school district, including speech-language pathologists who are contracted personnel.

3. The number of employees and contracted personnel per school district or charter school who are:

a. Doctoral-level speech-language pathologists.

b. Master-level speech-language pathologists.

c. Bachelor-level speech-language therapists.

d. Speech-language pathology assistants.

4. An examination of the caseloads and compensation of such employees and contracted personnel and a comparison of such caseloads and compensation between school districts and charter schools and in contiguous states.

(b) Tracking the changes in the number of employees and contracted personnel listed in subparagraph (a)3. from year to year, including resignations and retirements.

(c) An examination of strategies for addressing challenges school districts and charter schools face in the recruitment and retention of the employees and contracted personnel listed in subparagraph (a)3., including, but not limited to:

1. Tuition assistance programs.

2. Continuing education opportunities.

3. Expanding opportunities for such employees and contracted personnel to work full-time, part-time, or on another

34-00331-26

2026574__

59 hybrid schedule with continued benefits.

60 4. Establishing hybrid work environments.

61 5. Establishing differentiated pay for speech-language
62 pathologists.

63 6. Expanding mentorships for speech-language pathologists
64 for newly employed speech-language pathologists.

65 (d) An estimation of the costs to implement the strategies
66 outlined in paragraph (c), including the extent to which
67 federal, state, and local funds could be used to support such
68 implementation.

69 (e) The development and implementation of a weighted
70 calculation methodology for determining a caseload and workload
71 plan for speech-language pathologists. The plan must be based on
72 an analysis of the activities and populations for which the
73 speech-language pathologists are responsible and, at a minimum,
74 must include sufficient time for all of the following:

75 1. Individualized therapeutic instruction and interventions
76 for students.

77 2. Diagnostic and evaluation-specific speech, language, and
78 literacy.

79 3. Consultation services and collaboration among staff
80 members.

81 4. Attendance at individual education plan meetings and
82 other staff conferences, as appropriate.

83 5. Required documentation and reporting.

84 6. Medicaid billing and related activities.

85 7. Response to student interventions.

86 (f) The amount of Medicaid revenue that is annually:

87 1. Generated by speech-language pathologist activities.

34-00331-26

2026574__

88 2. Obtained through speech-language pathologist activities
89 and is transferred to the school district's or charter school's
90 general revenue fund.

91 3. Used for speech-language pathologists' pay supplements,
92 stipends, continued professional training, and therapeutic
93 materials.

94 (2)(a) The department shall create a survey for each school
95 district and charter school to complete to gather the data
96 required under subsection (1).

97 (b) Each school district and charter school must complete
98 and submit such survey to the department no later than October
99 31 of each year.

100 (c) No later than November 30 of each year, the department
101 shall publish the statewide strategic plan on its website, which
102 includes the integration of school district and charter school
103 data and information, and provide an update on the department's
104 progress in developing and implementing the statewide strategic
105 plan to the appropriate substantive committees of the Senate and
106 House of Representatives.

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