

1 A bill to be entitled  
2 An act relating to autism spectrum disorder; amending  
3 s. 393.063, F.S.; revising the definition of the term  
4 "autism"; amending s. 1012.582, F.S.; requiring,  
5 rather than authorizing, the State Board of Education  
6 to adopt certain rules; requiring that such rules  
7 include a requirement related to autism spectrum  
8 disorder for certain K-12 teachers; providing an  
9 effective date.

10  
11 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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13 **Section 1. Subsection (5) of section 393.063, Florida**  
14 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

15 393.063 Definitions.—For the purposes of this chapter, the  
16 term:

17 (5) "Autism" and "autism spectrum disorder" mean ~~means~~ a  
18 condition as defined by the most recent edition of the  
19 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders of the  
20 American Psychiatric Association ~~pervasive, neurologically based~~  
21 ~~developmental disability of extended duration which causes~~  
22 ~~severe learning, communication, and behavior disorders with age~~  
23 ~~of onset during infancy or childhood. Individuals with autism~~  
24 ~~exhibit impairment in reciprocal social interaction, impairment~~  
25 ~~in verbal and nonverbal communication and imaginative ability,~~

26 ~~and a markedly restricted repertoire of activities and~~  
27 ~~interests.~~

28 **Section 2. Subsection (4) of section 1012.582, Florida**  
29 **Statutes, is amended to read:**

30 1012.582 Continuing education and inservice training for  
31 teaching students with developmental and emotional or behavioral  
32 disabilities.—

33 (4) (a) The State Board of Education shall ~~may~~ adopt rules  
34 pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement this section.

35 (b) Such rules must require a K-12 teacher who teaches a  
36 class with at least 50 percent of students having autism  
37 spectrum disorder to hold an Autism Spectrum Disorder  
38 Endorsement.

39 (c) Such rules must allow for an exception to the Autism  
40 Spectrum Disorder Endorsement requirement in paragraph (b) if a  
41 teacher holds an Endorsement in Severe or Profound Disabilities,  
42 has taught students with autism spectrum disorder for a minimum  
43 of 3 years, and has been rated as highly effective in the  
44 preceding 3-year period pursuant to s. 1012.34.

45 **Section 3.** This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.