

1                   A bill to be entitled  
2       An act relating to private school facilities; amending  
3       s. 1002.42, F.S.; providing that certain private  
4       schools are considered permitted use in all zoning  
5       districts under certain circumstances; authorizing  
6       certain private schools to operate in facilities that  
7       meet specified requirements; requiring certain private  
8       schools operating in specified facilities to meet  
9       specified requirements relating to the Florida  
10      Building Code and Florida Fire Prevention Code;  
11      requiring certain private schools to have automatic  
12      sprinkler systems under specified circumstances;  
13      providing an exception to such requirements; requiring  
14      a fire official to use specified fire safety  
15      evaluation systems for existing private school  
16      facilities; providing an effective date.

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

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20       **Section 1. Subsections (19) and (20) of section 1002.42,**  
21 **Florida Statutes, are renumbered as subsections (20) and (21),**  
22 **respectively, paragraphs (d) and (e) are added to present**  
23 **subsection (19), and a new subsection (19) and is added to that**  
24 **section, to read:**

25       1002.42 Private schools.—

26        (19) LAND USE.—A private school with a capacity for 150  
27 students or fewer shall be considered a permitted use in all  
28 zoning districts within a county or municipality, other than a  
29 residential district, without rezoning or obtaining a special  
30 exception or a land use change, and without complying with any  
31 mitigation requirements, conditions, performance standards,  
32 ordinances, rules, codes, or policies.

33        (20)-(19) FACILITIES.—

34        (d) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a private  
35 school with a capacity for 150 students or fewer may operate in  
36 a facility that is subject to and complies with the same  
37 occupancy requirements as a class A-1, A-3, B, or M occupancy,  
38 as defined by the Florida Building Code, and may not be  
39 subjected to any additional state and local health, safety, and  
40 welfare laws, codes, or rules beyond those applicable to such  
41 class of occupancy within the Florida Building Code.

42        (e)1. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a  
43 private school with a capacity for 150 students or fewer may  
44 operate in a facility that is an existing assembly, day care,  
45 mercantile, or business occupancy, as defined in by the Florida  
46 Fire Prevention Code. A private school operating in such a  
47 facility must meet the standards for existing educational  
48 occupancy requirements under chapter 15 of the Florida Fire  
49 Prevention Code for automatic sprinkler and detection, alarm,  
50 communications systems, and requirements for hazardous areas,

51 except that an automatic sprinkler system shall be provided for  
52 such educational occupancies as follows:

53 a. Throughout all group E fire areas greater than 12,000  
54 square feet in area.

55 b. Throughout every portion of educational buildings below  
56 the level of exit discharge.

57  
58 Notwithstanding subparagraphs 1. and 2., an automatic sprinkler  
59 system is not required in any fire area or area below the level  
60 of exit discharge if every classroom throughout the building has  
61 at least one exterior exit door at ground level without  
62 intervening corridors, passageways, interior exit stairways or  
63 ramps, or exit passageways.

64 2. For purposes of this paragraph, the local fire official  
65 must use the fire safety evaluation systems found in NFPA 101A:  
66 Guide on Alternative Approaches to Life Safety for existing  
67 facilities as low-cost, reasonable alternatives to fire safety  
68 evaluation system standards.

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