

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 903 Educator Certifications and Training

SPONSOR(S): Daley

TIED BILLS: None. **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 992

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR or BUDGET/POLICY CHIEF
1) Education Quality Subcommittee	17 Y, 0 N	Collins	Sanchez
2) PreK-12 Appropriations Subcommittee	15 Y, 0 N	Bailey	Potvin
3) Education & Employment Committee			

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

Educator preparation programs are accountable for producing individuals with the competencies and skills necessary to achieve state education goals. Current law requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules to establish uniform core curricula for each state-approved educator preparation program.

The bill establishes additional requirements for the core curricula of educator preparation programs and the Educator Preparation Institutes' competency-based certification programs. The bill requires that the core curricula address strategies and practices related to mass casualty incidents.

The bill specifies that to be eligible to seek an educator certification, including a professional certificate, temporary certificate, temporary apprentice certificate, or adjunct educator certificate, the individual must have received training relating to mass casualty incidents.

Additionally, the bill requires the Department of Education to develop a list of approved trainings to prepare instructional personnel for mass casualty incidents. The training must be included in the requirements for continuing education or in-service training of instructional personnel.

The bill does not have a fiscal impact.

The bill has an effective date of July 1, 2024.

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Present Situation

Educator Preparation Programs

Educator preparation programs are accountable for producing individuals with the competencies and skills necessary to achieve the state education goals.¹ State-approved educator preparation programs are offered by Florida public and private postsecondary institutions, public school districts, and private providers by which candidates for educator certification can, depending on the type of program, demonstrate mastery of general knowledge, professional preparation and education competence, and subject area knowledge for purposes of attaining an educator certificate.²

There are various state-approved educator preparation programs that individuals may use to receive the training needed to attain teaching credentials, including:³

- Initial Educator Preparation programs
- Educator Preparation Institutes
- District Professional Development Certification and Education Competency Programs.

Initial Educator Preparation Programs

Initial educator preparation programs are offered at postsecondary institutions and typically culminate in a bachelor's or master's degree. This is a traditional pathway to eligibility for educator certification. The General Knowledge (GK) Examination may be waived for graduate level degrees. Program completers qualify for a professional educator certificate.⁴

Educator Preparation Institutes

Educator preparation institutes (EPI) are alternative certification programs offered by postsecondary institutions and qualified private providers for baccalaureate degree holders as an alternative route to educator certification for career changers and college graduates. The GK Examination may be waived for master's degree or higher; or, subsequent to failing the GK exam, if the educator was provided three or more years of support or instruction designed to help the educator pass the examination, and the final summative rating was either effective or highly effective for each of the three most recent years the educator was rated. Additionally, the Professional Education Competency Exam may be waived if most recent evaluation is highly effective. Program completers qualify for a professional educator certificate.

District Professional Development Certification and Education Competency Programs

District professional development certification and education competency program are cohesive competency-based professional preparation certification programs offered by school districts, charter schools, and charter management organizations by which the instructional staff can satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements.⁵ In addition to completing the

¹ Section 1004.04(1)(b), F.S.

² See Florida Department of Education, *Professional Development in Florida*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-dev/> (last visited Jan. 16, 2024). See also rule 6A-5.066, F.A.C.; ss. 1004.04(3)(a) and 1004.85(1), F.S.

³ Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024). See also r. 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

⁴ Rule 6A-5.066(1)(r), F.A.C.

⁵ Section 1012.56(8)(a), F.S.

program, candidates must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge⁶ and subject area knowledge.⁷ The GK Examination may be waived for master's degree or higher; or, subsequent to failing the exam, the educator was provided three or more years of support or instruction designed to help the educator pass the exam, and the final summative rating was either effective or highly effective for each of the three most recent years the educator was rated.

Educator Preparation Program Uniform Core Curricula

The State Board of Education (SBE) must adopt rules to establish uniform core curricula for each state-approved educator preparation program.⁸ These rules must include, at a minimum, the following:⁹

- The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices.¹⁰
- The state-adopted content standards.
- Scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies that improve reading performance for all students, including explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and multisensory intervention strategies.
- Content literacy and mathematics practices.
- Strategies appropriate for the instruction of English language learners.
- Strategies appropriate for the instruction of students with disabilities.
- Strategies to differentiate instruction based on student needs.
- Strategies and practices to support evidence-based content aligned to state standards and grading practices.
- Strategies appropriate for the early identification of a student in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge and the referral of such student to a mental health professional for support.
- Strategies to support the use of technology in education and distance learning.
- Strategies and practices to support effective, research-based assessment and grading practices aligned to the state's academic standards.

Each educator-candidate must be instructed and assessed on the uniform core curricula in his or her program concentration area during course work and field experiences. Additionally, each candidate must participate in field experience and pass the Florida Teacher Certification Examination.¹¹

Educator Certification

While there are several certification pathways, any individual seeking certification must meet specific eligibility requirements:¹²

- be at least 18 years of age;
- sign an affidavit attesting that the applicant will uphold the United States and State Constitutions;

⁶ See Florida Department of Education, *General Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.shtml> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024).

⁷ Florida Department of Education, *Subject Area Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/subject-area-knowledge.shtml> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024).

⁸ Section 1004.04(2)(a), F.S.

⁹ Section 1004.04(2)(b)1-11, F.S.

¹⁰ Florida Department of Education, *The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs)*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-dev/the-fl-educator-accomplished-practices.shtml> (last visited Jan 22, 2024). The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices (FEAPs) are Florida's core standards for effective educators and provide valuable guidance to Florida's public-school educators and educator preparation programs throughout the state on what educators are expected to know and be able to do.

¹¹ Section 1004.04(2)(c)-(d), F.S.

¹² Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

- earn a bachelor's or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher learning,¹³ or from a nonaccredited institution identified by the Department of Education (DOE) as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's or higher degree;¹⁴
- submit to fingerprinting and background screening and not have a criminal history that requires the applicant's disqualification from certification or employment;
- be of good moral character; and
- be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of a teacher.

After meeting eligibility requirements, an individual may choose a certification route. The DOE issues three types of educator certificates:

- Professional Certificate: Florida's highest type of full-time educator certification;¹⁵ valid for five years and renewable.¹⁶
- Temporary Certificate: covers employment in full-time positions for which educator certification is required;¹⁷ generally valid for five years and nonrenewable.¹⁸ This includes traditional certificates and military veterans certificate.¹⁹
- Adjunct Certificate: covers three years of full time (or equivalent part-time) occupational experience; only valid for the school district or charter school who issued adjunct teaching certificate.²⁰

An applicant seeking a professional certification must:

- meet the basic eligibility requirements for certification;²¹
- demonstrate mastery of general knowledge;²²
- demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge;²³ and
- demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence.²⁴

An applicant seeking a temporary certification must:

- meet the basic eligibility requirements for certification;²⁵

¹³ Section 1012.56(2)(c), F.S.; r. 6A-4.003(1), F.A.C. (approved accrediting agencies); *see also* 34 C.F.R. ss. 602.1-602.50; United States Department of Education, *Accreditation in the United States*, https://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid/accred/accreditation_pg3.html#RegionalInstitutional (last visited Jan. 22, 2024) (list of accrediting agencies approved by the United States Department of Education).

¹⁴ Section 1012.56(2)(c), F.S.; r. 6A-4.003(2), F.A.C. (criteria for approval of nonaccredited institutions of higher learning). For initial certification, an applicant must attain at least a 2.5 overall grade point average on a 4.0 scale in the applicant's major field of study. Section 1012.56(2)(c), F.S.

¹⁵ Rule 6A-4.004(3), F.A.C.

¹⁶ 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 schoolfiscal 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(4), F.A.C.

¹⁷ Rule 6A-4.004(1)(a)2., F.A.C.

¹⁸ Section 1012.56(7)(f), F.S. (validity period is expressed in schoolfiscal 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)(e)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.

¹⁹ Florida House of Representatives Education Quality Subcommittee, *November 15, 2023 Meeting Packet*, available at <https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3245&Session=2024&DocumentType=Meeting+Packets&FileName=eqs+11-15-23.pdf> at pg. 28.

²⁰ Florida House of Representatives Education Quality Subcommittee, *November 15, 2023 Meeting Packet*, available at <https://www.myfloridahouse.gov/Sections/Documents/loaddoc.aspx?PublicationType=Committees&CommitteeId=3245&Session=2024&DocumentType=Meeting+Packets&FileName=eqs+11-15-23.pdf> at pg. 29.

²¹ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

²² Section 1012.56(2)(g) and (3), F.S.; Florida Department of Education, *General Knowledge*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.stml> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024).

²³ Section 1012.56(2)(h) and (5), F.S.

²⁴ Section 1012.56(2)(i) and (6), F.S.; Florida Department of Education, *Professional Preparation and Education Competence*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/professional-preparation-edu-competenc.stml> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024).

²⁵ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f) and (7)(b), F.S.

- obtain full-time employment in a position that requires a Florida educator certificate by a school district or private school that has a DOE-approved professional education competence demonstration program;²⁶ and
- do one of the following:
 - demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge;²⁷ or
 - complete the required degree or content courses specified in the SBE rule for subject area specialization²⁸ and attain at least a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0 scale in the subject area courses.²⁹

To qualify for a temporary certificate, an applicant must meet subject area specialization requirements in at least one subject. Each subject area has specific degree or course requirements set in the SBE rule,³⁰ and select subject areas, including Reading, Speech-Language Impaired, School Counseling, School Psychology, and School Social Work, require a master's or specialist degree.³¹

An applicant seeking an adjunct teaching certificate must:

- meet all general requirements for educator certification;³² and
- demonstrate expertise in the area to be taught by passing a subject-area test.

A school district may issue an adjunct teaching certificate for a part-time or full-time teaching position.³³ An adjunct teaching certificate is valid through the term of the annual contract between the educator and the school district.³⁴

For all three certifications, educator-candidates must submit an application, satisfy general eligibility requirements³⁵ and certificate-specific requirements.

Effect of Proposed Changes

The bill provides additional requirements for the core curricula of teacher preparation programs and EPI competency-based certification programs. The bill requires that the core curricula address strategies and practices on identifying, preventing, preparing, addressing, and responding to mass casualty incidents.

The bill provides that to be eligible to seek an educator certification, including a professional certificate, temporary certificate, temporary apprentice certificate, or adjunct educator certificate, the individual must have received training relating to mass casualty incidents.

Additionally, the bill requires the DOE to develop a list of approved trainings to prepare instructional personnel in identifying, preventing, preparing for, addressing, and responding to mass casualty incidents. Beginning with the 2025-2026 school year, the DOE must include the training into existing requirements for continuing education or in-service training of instructional personnel. This required training may not add to the total hours required by the DOE for continued education or in-service training. The bill does not create a cause of action, a new duty of care, or basis of liability unless willful misconduct caused loss or damage. The SBE may adopt rules to implement this bill.

²⁶ Section 1012.56(1)(b), F.S.; r. 6A-4.004(1)(a), F.A.C.

²⁷ Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S.; Florida Department of Education, *Subject Area Knowledge* <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/subject-area-knowledge.shtml> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024).

²⁸ Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S. The degree and content requirements are specified in ch. 6A-4, F.A.C.

²⁹ Section 1012.56(2)(c), F.S.; see Florida Department of Education, *Certificate Types and Requirements*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024).

³⁰ Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S. The degree and content requirements are established in ch. 6A-4, F.A.C.

³¹ Florida Department of Education, Educator Certification, *Certificate Subjects*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/certificate-subjects/#degreed> (last visited Jan. 22, 2024).

³² Section 1012.57(4), F.S.

³³ Section 1012.57, F.S.

³⁴ Section 1012.57(4), F.S.

³⁵ Section 1012.56(2), F.S.

B. SECTION DIRECTORY:

- Section 1:** Amends s. 1004.04, F. S., revising the core curricula for certain teacher preparation programs to include training relating to mass casualty incidents.
- Section 2:** Amends s. 1004.85, F.S., requiring certain postsecondary educator preparation institution programs to include training relating to mass casualty incidents; conforming a cross-reference.
- Section 3:** Amends s. 1012.56, F. S., revising the certified educator eligibility criteria to require such persons to receive training in mass casualty incidents; conforming cross-references.
- Section 4:** Amends s. 1012.57, F. S., requiring persons who hold adjunct teaching certificates to receive training in mass casualty.
- Section 5:** Creates s. 1012.5841, F.S., requiring the DOE to develop a list of approved trainings relating to mass casualty incidents; beginning in a specified school year, requiring the department to include such trainings in existing continuing education and in-service training requirements for instructional personnel; providing applicability; authorizing the State Board of Education to adopt rules.
- Section 6:** Provides an effective date.

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:
None.
2. Expenditures:
None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:
None.
2. Expenditures:
None.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

None.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

None.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

The bill authorizes the SBE to adopt rules to implement the training required by the bill.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

None.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE CHANGES

None.