

THE FLORIDA SENATE
2013 SUMMARY OF LEGISLATION PASSED
Committee on Education

CS/CS/SB 1664 — Education Personnel

by Appropriations Committee; Education Committee; and Senator Legg

The bill revises criteria for evaluating classroom teachers, other instructional personnel, and school administrators for purposes of the performance pay schedule in s. 1012.22, F.S. The bill also revises requirements for state-approved educator preparation programs, educator and principal certification, and the Florida Teachers Lead Program.

Performance Evaluations and Assessments

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE), through the performance evaluation system approval process, to ensure that the provisions of the bill are implemented.

The bill reiterates existing law authorizing the percentage of a classroom teacher's or school administrator's performance evaluation that is based upon student performance to be reduced from 50 percent to 40 percent, if less than three years of student data are available. The bill requires the DOE to approve district-determined factors that are used in the remaining portion of performance evaluations.

Classroom Teachers

The student learning growth portion of a classroom teacher's evaluation must be based only on the performance of his or her students. For courses associated with a statewide assessment, a student achievement measure may be used, if there is no approved statewide growth formula for the assessment. For courses associated with a school district assessment, a student achievement measure may be used if it is a more appropriate measure of performance. The remaining portion of the evaluation would continue to be based on instructional practice.

Other Instructional Personnel

The student learning growth portion of evaluations for other instructional personnel would be based on student performance data that reflects their actual contributions to the performance of students assigned to their areas of responsibility. The remaining portion of their evaluations would continue to be based on instructional practice and professional and job responsibilities.

School Administrators

The student learning growth portion of a school administrator's performance evaluation would be based on the performance of the students attending his or her school. The remainder of the evaluation would continue to be based on indicators that include the recruitment and retention of effective or highly effective teachers, improvement in the percentage of classroom teachers evaluated at the effective or highly effective level, other leadership practices that result in improved student outcomes, and professional responsibilities.

Assessments

The student assessment data used in performance evaluations would continue to be based on statewide assessments or school district assessments. Under the bill, a school district would be required to approve and publish district-mandated testing administration schedules on its website and report the schedules to the Department of Education by October 1, annually.

State-Approved Educator Preparation Programs

The bill provides a new accountability framework for the approval of teacher preparation programs that is based on performance outcome metrics. The bill requires the Commissioner of Education to determine continued approval of each program based on specific metrics including placement rate data, retention rate data, student performance by subgroups, and critical teacher shortage.

Traditional programs

The bill requires each state-approved teacher preparation program to include in its uniform core curricula: Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, state-adopted student content standards, reading instruction, content literacy and mathematical practices, strategies for the instruction of English language learners and students with disabilities, and school safety. Institutions must annually report to the DOE the status of each candidate who is admitted into the program under a waiver of admission requirements.

The bill requires each candidate to:

- Be instructed and assessed on the uniform core curriculum in his or her program concentration.
- Demonstrate his or her ability to positively impact student learning growth during a field experience prior to program completion.
- Demonstrate sufficient mastery of general knowledge as a prerequisite for admission into the undergraduate program, and a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution for admission into graduate level programs.
- Pass all portions of the Florida Teacher Certification examination prior to program completion.

For clinical instructors and sites, the bill:

- Specifies the qualifications for instructors in postsecondary teacher preparation programs who instruct or supervise field experience courses or internships in which candidates demonstrate an impact on student learning growth.
- Specifies the qualifications for district and instructional personnel who supervise or direct teacher preparation students during field experience courses or internships.
- Requires that the candidate's pre-service field experiences include a diverse population of students in a variety of settings.
- Requires the selection of school sites for pre-service field experiences to be based on the qualifications of supervisory personnel and the needs of candidates.

For each teacher preparation program, the bill:

- Requires each institutional program evaluation plan to include how the institution addresses continuous program improvement.
- Revises the current requirement that each teacher preparation program provide additional training to a graduate who is employed in a Florida public school. For a graduate who receives a rating of “developing” or “unsatisfactory” on his or her performance evaluation two years immediately following completion of the program or initial certification, his or her teacher preparation program would be required to provide additional training by the program at no expense to the educator or employer.
- Requires that the continued approval of a program is contingent upon specific performance measures for programs and program completers.
- Requires institutions and their programs to provide evidence of their capacity to meet requirements for continued approval.

Educator Preparation Institutes

The bill provides criteria for the DOE to approve an institute’s competency-based certification program. An educational plan is required 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. The bill requires students to have field experiences with a diverse population of students in a variety of settings. Personnel who instruct or supervise field experiences must meet additional qualifications.

The bill authorizes qualified private providers to offer competency-based certification programs, if approved by the Department of Education, based on a proven history of delivering high-quality teacher preparation. The provider must submit evidence from other state recipients of its services and data showing the successful performance of its completers based on student achievement.

District Programs

The bill allows rather than requires each school district to provide a competency-based professional development certification program. The bill authorizes the Commissioner of Education to determine continued approval of each district’s program based upon specified performance measures for programs, as well as program completers.

The bill specifies the professional content knowledge for each district program participant and requires passing scores on subject area and professional education competency examinations, as well as mastery of general knowledge.

The bill also establishes new requirements for peer mentors of district programs. A peer mentor must hold a valid educator certificate, provide evidence of proven effectiveness, have at least three years of teaching experience, or be a peer evaluator under a school district’s evaluation system.

Professional Certification

The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules authorizing an individual to be eligible for a temporary certificate in educational leadership if he or she passes the Florida Educational Leadership Examination, holds a bachelor's degree or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary institution, provides evidence of successful executive management or leadership experience, and is mentored by a state-certified school administrator. Additionally, the bill allows the State Board of Education to adopt rules to provide for the acceptance of college course credits recommended by the American Council for Education (ACE) to satisfy specific certification requirements shown on an official ACE transcript.

Florida Teachers Lead Program

The bill changes the name of the program to the Florida Teachers Classroom Supply Assistance Program and requires that local contributions be added to the funds allocated by the state when calculating each teacher's proportionate share.

Professional Development System

The bill allows rather than requires each school principal to establish and maintain a professional development plan for each employee assigned to the school.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2013.

Vote: Senate 29-6; House 110-7