By Senator Diaz

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

1213

1415

1617

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

2627

28

29

36-00619C-19 20191444

A bill to be entitled An act relating to education; amending s. 1001.10, F.S.; requiring the Department of Education to maintain a disqualification list; providing requirements for the disqualification list; requiring the department to provide certain staff with access to information from such disqualification list; amending s. 1002.33, F.S.; prohibiting individuals who are on the disqualification list from being employed or contracted by a charter school or serving as a member of a charter school governing board; amending s. 1002.421, F.S.; revising requirements for private schools relating to employment; authorizing the Commissioner of Education to deny or revoke the authority of an owner or operator of a private school to establish or operate a private school under specified conditions; requiring the commissioner to include such individuals on the disqualification list; amending s. 1012.315, F.S.; expanding ineligibility for educator certification or employment to persons who are on the disqualification list; amending s. 1012.795, F.S.; expanding the authority of the Education Practices Commission to discipline instructional personnel and school administrators; amending s. 1012.796, F.S.; requiring the department to investigate certain complaints involving misconduct by employees or contracted personnel of specified entities; expanding penalties that may be imposed by the commission; prohibiting individuals on the

disqualification list from serving or applying to serve as an employee or contract personnel at any public school or private school; providing criminal penalties; providing an effective date.

333435

30

31

32

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

3637

38

39

40

41

42

4344

4546

47

48 49

50

51

52

53

5455

56

57

58

Section 1. Subsections (4) and (5) of section 1001.10, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1001.10 Commissioner of Education; general powers and duties.—

- (4) The Department of Education shall:
- (a) Provide technical assistance to school districts, charter schools, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, and private schools that accept scholarship students who participate in a state scholarship program under chapter 1002 in the development of policies, procedures, and training related to employment practices and standards of ethical conduct for instructional personnel and school administrators, as defined in s. 1012.01.
- (b) Maintain a state disqualification list, which must include the following information:
- 1. The name of any individual who has been placed on the list by the Education Practices Commission pursuant to s. 1012.796(7), or whose educator certificate has been permanently revoked by the commission pursuant to s. 1012.796; and
- 2. The names of individuals who have been permanently disqualified from participation in a scholarship program by the department pursuant to s. 1002.421.

36-00619C-19 20191444

(5) The Department of Education shall provide authorized staff of school districts, charter schools, the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind, and private schools that accept scholarship students who participate in a state scholarship program under chapter 1002 with access to electronic verification of information from the following employment screening tools:

- (a) The Professional Practices' Database of Disciplinary Actions Against Educators; and
- (b) The Department of Education's Teacher Certification Database; and
- (c) The Department of Education's disqualification list maintained pursuant to paragraph (4)(b).

This subsection does not require the department to provide these staff with unlimited access to the databases. However, the department shall provide the staff with access to the data necessary for performing employment history checks of the instructional personnel and school administrators included in the databases.

Section 2. Paragraph (g) of subsection (12) of section 1002.33, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

- 1002.33 Charter schools.-
- (12) EMPLOYEES OF CHARTER SCHOOLS.-
- (g)1. A charter school shall employ or contract with employees who have undergone background screening as provided in s. 1012.32. Members of the governing board of the charter school shall also undergo background screening in a manner similar to that provided in s. 1012.32. An individual may not be employed

89

90

91

92

93

94

95

9697

98

99

100

101

102

103

104

105

106

107

108

109

110

111

112113

114115

116

36-00619C-19 20191444

as an employee or contract personnel of a charter school, or serve as a member of a charter school governing board, if the individual is on the disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant to s. 1001.10(4)(b).

- 2. A charter school shall disqualify instructional personnel and school administrators, as defined in s. 1012.01, from employment in any position that requires direct contact with students if the personnel or administrators are ineligible for such employment under s. 1012.315.
- 3. The governing board of a charter school shall adopt policies establishing standards of ethical conduct for instructional personnel and school administrators. The policies must require all instructional personnel and school administrators, as defined in s. 1012.01, to complete training on the standards; establish the duty of instructional personnel and school administrators to report, and procedures for reporting, alleged misconduct by other instructional personnel and school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student; and include an explanation of the liability protections provided under ss. 39.203 and 768.095. A charter school, or any of its employees, may not enter into a confidentiality agreement regarding terminated or dismissed instructional personnel or school administrators, or personnel or administrators who resign in lieu of termination, based in whole or in part on misconduct that affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student, and may not provide instructional personnel or school administrators with employment references or discuss the personnel's or administrators' performance with prospective employers in another educational setting, without

36-00619C-19 20191444

disclosing the personnel's or administrators' misconduct. Any
part of an agreement or contract that has the purpose or effect
of concealing misconduct by instructional personnel or school
administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a
student is void, is contrary to public policy, and may not be
enforced.

- 4. Before employing instructional personnel or school administrators in any position that requires direct contact with students, a charter school shall conduct employment history checks of each of the personnel's or administrators' previous employers, screen the instructional personnel or school administrators through use of the educator screening tools described in s. 1001.10(5), and document the findings. If unable to contact a previous employer, the charter school must document efforts to contact the employer.
- 5. The sponsor of a charter school that knowingly fails to comply with this paragraph shall terminate the charter under subsection (8).

Section 3. Paragraph (o) of subsection (1) and subsection (3) of section 1002.421, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1002.421 State school choice scholarship program accountability and oversight.—

(1) PRIVATE SCHOOL ELIGIBILITY AND OBLIGATIONS.—A private school participating in an educational scholarship program established pursuant to this chapter must be a private school as defined in s. 1002.01(2) in this state, be registered, and be in compliance with all requirements of this section in addition to private school requirements outlined in s. 1002.42, specific requirements identified within respective scholarship program

laws, and other provisions of Florida law that apply to private schools, and must:

(o) Before employing an individual instructional personnel or school administrators in any position that requires direct contact with students, conduct employment history checks of each of the personnel's or administrators' previous employers, screen the individual personnel or administrators through use of the educator screening tools described in s. 1001.10(5), and document the findings. If unable to contact a previous employer, the private school must document efforts to contact the employer. The school must deny employment to any individual whose educator certificate is revoked, who is barred from reapplication, or who is on the disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant to s. 1001.10(4)(b).

The department shall suspend the payment of funds to a private school that knowingly fails to comply with this subsection, and shall prohibit the school from enrolling new scholarship students, for 1 fiscal year and until the school complies. If a private school fails to meet the requirements of this subsection or has consecutive years of material exceptions listed in the report required under paragraph (q), the commissioner may determine that the private school is ineligible to participate in a scholarship program.

- (3) COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION AUTHORITY AND OBLIGATIONS.—
  The Commissioner of Education:
- (a) Shall deny, suspend, or revoke a private school's participation in a scholarship program if it is determined that the private school has failed to comply with this section or

36-00619C-19 20191444

exhibits a previous pattern of failure to comply. However, if the noncompliance is correctable within a reasonable amount of time, not to exceed 45 days, and if the health, safety, or welfare of the students is not threatened, the commissioner may issue a notice of noncompliance which provides the private school with a timeframe within which to provide evidence of compliance before taking action to suspend or revoke the private school's participation in the scholarship program.

- (b) May deny, suspend, or revoke a private school's participation in a scholarship program if the commissioner determines that an owner or operator of the private school is operating or has operated an educational institution in this state or in another state or jurisdiction in a manner contrary to the health, safety, or welfare of the public or if the owner or operator has exhibited a previous pattern of failure to comply with this section or specific requirements identified within respective scholarship program laws. For purposes of this subsection, the term "owner or operator" has the same meaning as provided in paragraph (1) (p).
- (c) May permanently deny or revoke the authority of an owner or operator to establish or operate a private school in this state if the commissioner decides that the owner or operator is operating or has operated an educational institution in this state or another state or jurisdiction in a manner contrary to the health, safety, or welfare of the public, and shall include such individuals on the disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant to s. 1001.10(4)(b).
- $\underline{\text{(d)}}_{\text{(c)}}1$ . In making such a determination, may consider factors that include, but are not limited to, acts or omissions

205

206

207

208

209

210

211

212213

214

215

216

217

218

219

220

221

222

223

224

225

226227

228

229

230

231

232

36-00619C-19 20191444

by an owner or operator which led to a previous denial, suspension, or revocation of participation in a state or federal education scholarship program; an owner's or operator's failure to reimburse the department or scholarship-funding organization for scholarship funds improperly received or retained by a school; the imposition of a prior criminal sanction related to an owner's or operator's management or operation of an educational institution; the imposition of a civil fine or administrative fine, license revocation or suspension, or program eligibility suspension, termination, or revocation related to an owner's or operator's management or operation of an educational institution; or other types of criminal proceedings in which an owner or operator was found guilty of, regardless of adjudication, or entered a plea of nolo contendere or guilty to, any offense involving fraud, deceit, dishonesty, or moral turpitude.

- 2. The commissioner's determination is subject to the following:
- a. If the commissioner intends to deny, suspend, or revoke a private school's participation in the scholarship program, the department shall notify the private school of such proposed action in writing by certified mail and regular mail to the private school's address of record with the department. The notification shall include the reasons for the proposed action and notice of the timelines and procedures set forth in this paragraph.
- b. The private school that is adversely affected by the proposed action shall have 15 days after receipt of the notice of proposed action to file with the department's agency clerk a

36-00619C-19 20191444

request for a proceeding pursuant to ss. 120.569 and 120.57. If the private school is entitled to a hearing under s. 120.57(1), the department shall forward the request to the Division of Administrative Hearings.

- c. Upon receipt of a request referred pursuant to this subparagraph, the director of the Division of Administrative Hearings shall expedite the hearing and assign an administrative law judge who shall commence a hearing within 30 days after the receipt of the formal written request by the division and enter a recommended order within 30 days after the hearing or within 30 days after receipt of the hearing transcript, whichever is later. Each party shall be allowed 10 days in which to submit written exceptions to the recommended order. A final order shall be entered by the agency within 30 days after the entry of a recommended order. The provisions of this sub-subparagraph may be waived upon stipulation by all parties.
- (e) (d) May immediately suspend payment of scholarship funds if it is determined that there is probable cause to believe that there is:
- 1. An imminent threat to the health, safety, or welfare of the students;
- 2. A previous pattern of failure to comply with this section; or
- 3. Fraudulent activity on the part of the private school. Notwithstanding s. 1002.22, in incidents of alleged fraudulent activity pursuant to this section, the department's Office of Inspector General is authorized to release personally identifiable records or reports of students to the following persons or organizations:

36-00619C-19 20191444

a. A court of competent jurisdiction in compliance with an order of that court or the attorney of record in accordance with a lawfully issued subpoena, consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g.

- b. A person or entity authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction in compliance with an order of that court or the attorney of record pursuant to a lawfully issued subpoena, consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g.
- c. Any person, entity, or authority issuing a subpoena for law enforcement purposes when the court or other issuing agency has ordered that the existence or the contents of the subpoena or the information furnished in response to the subpoena not be disclosed, consistent with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. s. 1232g, and 34 C.F.R. s. 99.31.

The commissioner's order suspending payment pursuant to this paragraph may be appealed pursuant to the same procedures and timelines as the notice of proposed action set forth in <a href="subparagraph"><u>subparagraph</u></a> (d)2.</a>

Section 4. Section 1012.315, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.315 Disqualification from employment.—A person is ineligible for educator certification or employment in any position that requires direct contact with students in a district school system, charter school, or private school that accepts scholarship students who participate in a state scholarship program under chapter 1002 if the person <u>is on the disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant to</u>

292

293

294

295

296

297

298

299

300301

302

303304

305306

307

308309

310

311

312

313

314

315316

317

318

319

36-00619C-19 20191444

s. 1001.10(4)(b) or has been convicted of:

- (1) Any felony offense prohibited under any of the following statutes:
- (a) Section 393.135, relating to sexual misconduct with certain developmentally disabled clients and reporting of such sexual misconduct.
- (b) Section 394.4593, relating to sexual misconduct with certain mental health patients and reporting of such sexual misconduct.
- (c) Section 415.111, relating to adult abuse, neglect, or exploitation of aged persons or disabled adults.
  - (d) Section 782.04, relating to murder.
- (e) Section 782.07, relating to manslaughter, aggravated manslaughter of an elderly person or disabled adult, aggravated manslaughter of a child, or aggravated manslaughter of an officer, a firefighter, an emergency medical technician, or a paramedic.
  - (f) Section 784.021, relating to aggravated assault.
  - (g) Section 784.045, relating to aggravated battery.
- (h) Section 784.075, relating to battery on a detention or commitment facility staff member or a juvenile probation officer.
  - (i) Section 787.01, relating to kidnapping.
  - (j) Section 787.02, relating to false imprisonment.
- (k) Section 787.025, relating to luring or enticing a child.
- (1) Section 787.04(2), relating to leading, taking, enticing, or removing a minor beyond the state limits, or concealing the location of a minor, with criminal intent pending

custody proceedings.

320

321

322

323

324

325

326

327

328

329

330

331

332

333

334

335

336

337

338

339

342343

344345

346

(m) Section 787.04(3), relating to leading, taking, enticing, or removing a minor beyond the state limits, or concealing the location of a minor, with criminal intent pending dependency proceedings or proceedings concerning alleged abuse or neglect of a minor.

- (n) Section 790.115(1), relating to exhibiting firearms or weapons at a school-sponsored event, on school property, or within 1,000 feet of a school.
- (o) Section 790.115(2)(b), relating to possessing an electric weapon or device, destructive device, or other weapon at a school-sponsored event or on school property.
  - (p) Section 794.011, relating to sexual battery.
- (q) Former s. 794.041, relating to sexual activity with or solicitation of a child by a person in familial or custodial authority.
- (r) Section 794.05, relating to unlawful sexual activity with certain minors.
  - (s) Section 794.08, relating to female genital mutilation.
  - (t) Chapter 796, relating to prostitution.
- 340 (u) Chapter 800, relating to lewdness and indecent exposure.
  - (v) Section 800.101, relating to offenses against students by authority figures.
    - (w) Section 806.01, relating to arson.
    - (x) Section 810.14, relating to voyeurism.
    - (y) Section 810.145, relating to video voyeurism.
- 347 (z) Section 812.014(6), relating to coordinating the commission of theft in excess of \$3,000.

356

357

358

359

360

361

362

363

364

365

366

367

370

371

372

373

376

36-00619C-19 20191444

349 (aa) Section 812.0145, relating to theft from persons 65 350 years of age or older.

- 351 (bb) Section 812.019, relating to dealing in stolen property.
  - (cc) Section 812.13, relating to robbery.
- 354 (dd) Section 812.131, relating to robbery by sudden snatching.
  - (ee) Section 812.133, relating to carjacking.
  - (ff) Section 812.135, relating to home-invasion robbery.
  - (gg) Section 817.563, relating to fraudulent sale of controlled substances.
  - (hh) Section 825.102, relating to abuse, aggravated abuse, or neglect of an elderly person or disabled adult.
  - (ii) Section 825.103, relating to exploitation of an elderly person or disabled adult.
  - (jj) Section 825.1025, relating to lewd or lascivious offenses committed upon or in the presence of an elderly person or disabled person.
    - (kk) Section 826.04, relating to incest.
- 368 (11) Section 827.03, relating to child abuse, aggravated child abuse, or neglect of a child.
  - (mm) Section 827.04, relating to contributing to the delinquency or dependency of a child.
  - (nn) Section 827.071, relating to sexual performance by a child.
- (oo) Section 843.01, relating to resisting arrest with violence.
  - (pp) Chapter 847, relating to obscenity.
- (qq) Section 874.05, relating to causing, encouraging,

36-00619C-19 20191444

soliciting, or recruiting another to join a criminal street gang.

- (rr) Chapter 893, relating to drug abuse prevention and control, if the offense was a felony of the second degree or greater severity.
- (ss) Section 916.1075, relating to sexual misconduct with certain forensic clients and reporting of such sexual misconduct.
- (tt) Section 944.47, relating to introduction, removal, or possession of contraband at a correctional facility.
- (uu) Section 985.701, relating to sexual misconduct in juvenile justice programs.
- (vv) Section 985.711, relating to introduction, removal, or possession of contraband at a juvenile detention facility or commitment program.
- (2) Any misdemeanor offense prohibited under any of the following statutes:
- (a) Section 784.03, relating to battery, if the victim of the offense was a minor.
- (b) Section 787.025, relating to luring or enticing a child.
- (3) Any criminal act committed in another state or under federal law which, if committed in this state, constitutes an offense prohibited under any statute listed in subsection (1) or subsection (2).
- (4) Any delinquent act committed in this state or any delinquent or criminal act committed in another state or under federal law which, if committed in this state, qualifies an individual for inclusion on the Registered Juvenile Sex Offender

408

409

410

411

412

413

414

415416

417

418

419

420

421

422

423

424

425

426

427

428

429

430

431

432

433

434

435

36-00619C-19 20191444

List under s. 943.0435(1)(h)1.d.

Section 5. Subsection (1) of section 1012.795, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.795 Education Practices Commission; authority to discipline.—

(1) The Education Practices Commission may suspend the educator certificate of any instructional personnel or school administrator, as defined in s. 1012.01(2) or (3), for up to 5 years, thereby denying that person the right to teach or otherwise be employed by a district school board or public school in any capacity requiring direct contact with students for that period of time, after which the person may return to teaching as provided in subsection (4); may revoke the educator certificate of any person, thereby denying that person the right to teach or otherwise be employed by a district school board or public school in any capacity requiring direct contact with students for up to 10 years, with reinstatement subject to subsection (4); may permanently revoke the educator certificate of any person thereby denying that person the right to teach or otherwise be employed by a district school board or public school in any capacity requiring direct contact with students; may suspend a person's educator certificate, upon an order of the court or notice by the Department of Revenue relating to the payment of child support; may place an employee or contracted personnel of any public school, charter school, charter school governing board, or private school that accepts scholarship students who participate in a state scholarship program under chapter 1002 on the disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant to s. 1001.10(4)(b) if such conduct would

36-00619C-19 20191444

otherwise result in the permanent revocation of a certificate; or may impose any other penalty provided by law, if the person:

- (a) Obtained or attempted to obtain an educator certificate by fraudulent means.
- (b) Knowingly failed to report actual or suspected child abuse as required in s. 1006.061 or report alleged misconduct by instructional personnel or school administrators which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student as required in s. 1012.796.
- (c) Has proved to be incompetent to teach or to perform duties as an employee of the public school system or to teach in or to operate a private school.
- (d) Has been guilty of gross immorality or an act involving moral turpitude as defined by rule of the State Board of Education, including engaging in or soliciting sexual, romantic, or lewd conduct with a student or minor.
- (e) Has had an educator certificate or other professional license sanctioned by this or any other state or has had the authority to practice the regulated profession revoked, suspended, or otherwise acted against, including a denial of certification or licensure, by the licensing or certifying authority of any jurisdiction, including its agencies and subdivisions. The licensing or certifying authority's acceptance of a relinquishment, stipulation, consent order, or other settlement offered in response to or in anticipation of the filing of charges against the licensee or certificateholder shall be construed as action against the license or certificate. For purposes of this section, a sanction or action against a professional license, a certificate, or an authority to practice

36-00619C-19 20191444

a regulated profession must relate to being an educator or the fitness of or ability to be an educator.

- (f) Has been convicted or found guilty of, has had adjudication withheld for, or has pled guilty or nolo contendere to a misdemeanor, felony, or any other criminal charge, other than a minor traffic violation.
- (g) Upon investigation, has been found guilty of personal conduct that seriously reduces that person's effectiveness as an employee of the district school board.
- (h) Has breached a contract, as provided in s. 1012.33(2) or s. 1012.335.
- (i) Has been the subject of a court order or notice by the Department of Revenue pursuant to s. 409.2598 directing the Education Practices Commission to suspend the certificate as a result of noncompliance with a child support order, a subpoena, an order to show cause, or a written agreement with the Department of Revenue.
- (j) Has violated the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession prescribed by State Board of Education rules.
- (k) Has otherwise violated the provisions of law, the penalty for which is the revocation of the educator certificate.
- (1) Has violated any order of the Education Practices Commission.
- (m) Has been the subject of a court order or plea agreement in any jurisdiction which requires the certificateholder to surrender or otherwise relinquish his or her educator's certificate. A surrender or relinquishment shall be for permanent revocation of the certificate. A person may not

surrender or otherwise relinquish his or her certificate prior to a finding of probable cause by the commissioner as provided in s. 1012.796.

- (n) Has been disqualified from educator certification under s. 1012.315.
- (o) Has committed a third recruiting offense as determined by the Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA) pursuant to s. 1006.20(2)(b).
- (p) Has violated test security as provided in s. 1008.24. Section 6. Paragraph (g) of subsection (1), paragraph (i) of subsection (7), and paragraph (10) are added to section 1012.796, Florida Statutes, to read:
- 1012.796 Complaints against teachers and administrators; procedure; penalties.—

(1)

- (g) The department shall immediately investigate any legally sufficient complaint that involves misconduct by an employee or contracted personnel of any public school, charter school, charter school governing board, or private school that accepts scholarship students who participate in a state scholarship program under chapter 1002 which affects the health, safety, or welfare of a student and would otherwise result in the permanent revocation of a certificate, giving the complaint priority over other pending complaints.
- (7) A panel of the commission shall enter a final order either dismissing the complaint or imposing one or more of the following penalties:
- (i) Place an individual who is not a certificateholder on the disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant

36-00619C-19 20191444 523 to s. 1001.10(4)(b) if the conduct would meet the standard for permanent revocation of a certificate. 524 525 526 The penalties imposed under this subsection are in addition to, 527 and not in lieu of, the penalties required for a third 528 recruiting offense pursuant to s. 1006.20(2)(b). 529 (10) An individual on the disqualification list maintained by the department pursuant to s. 1001.10(4)(b) may not serve or 530 531 apply to serve as an employee or contracted personnel at any 532 public school or private school in this state. An individual who 533 violates this provision commits a felony of the third degree, 534 punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s. 775.083. 535 Section 7. This act shall take effect July 1, 2019.