

<b>Tab 3</b>		<b>SB 556</b> by <b>Berman</b> ; Similar to CS/H 00453 Requirements for a Standard High School Diploma				
766280	A	S	FAV	ED, Berman	btw L.13 - 14:	01/14 11:59 AM

<b>Tab 2</b>		<b>SB 420</b> by <b>Burgess</b> ; Identical to H 00371 Patriotic Displays in Classrooms				

<b>Tab 1</b>		<b>SB 206</b> by <b>Harrell</b> ; Identical to H 00851 Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder				
651894	D	S	RCS	ED, Harrell	Delete everything after	01/14 11:59 AM
478802	AA	S	RCS	ED, Harrell	Delete L.5 - 19.	01/14 11:59 AM

**The Florida Senate**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**

**EDUCATION PRE-K - 12**

Senator Simon, Chair

Senator Calatayud, Vice Chair

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, January 13, 2026

**TIME:** 1:30—3:30 p.m.

**PLACE:** Pat Thomas Committee Room, 412 Knott Building

**MEMBERS:** Senator Simon, Chair; Senator Calatayud, Vice Chair; Senators Berman, Burgess, Davis, Gaetz, Osgood, and Yarborough

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
1	<b>SB 206</b> Harrell (Identical H 851, Compare H 717)	Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder; Requiring, rather than authorizing, the State Board of Education to adopt certain rules; requiring that such rules include a requirement related to autism spectrum disorder for certain K-12 teachers, etc.  ED 01/13/2026 Fav/CS AED AP	Fav/CS Yea 6 Nays 0
2	<b>SB 420</b> Burgess (Identical H 371)	Patriotic Displays in Classrooms; Requiring each district school board to adopt rules to require the display of portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in certain classrooms, etc.  ED 01/13/2026 Favorable AED RC	Favorable Yea 6 Nays 1
3	<b>SB 556</b> Berman (Identical H 453)	Requirements for a Standard High School Diploma; Providing that students with disabilities may participate in the Special Olympics to meet the physical education requirement for a standard high school diploma, etc.  ED 01/13/2026 Fav/CS CF RC	Fav/CS Yea 6 Nays 0

TAB	OFFICE and APPOINTMENT (HOME CITY)	FOR TERM ENDING	COMMITTEE ACTION
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**Senate Confirmation Hearing:** A public hearing will be held for consideration of the below-named executive appointment to the office indicated.

**Commission for Independent Education**

5	Euliano, John (Winter Springs)	06/30/2028	Recommend Confirm Yea 6 Nays 0
6	Stefano, Troy A. (Wellington)	06/30/2027	Recommend Confirm Yea 6 Nays 0
7	Lynn, Christopher (Winter Garden)	06/30/2027	Recommend Confirm Yea 6 Nays 0

**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**

Education Pre-K - 12

Tuesday, January 13, 2026, 1:30—3:30 p.m.

TAB	OFFICE and APPOINTMENT (HOME CITY)	FOR TERM ENDING	COMMITTEE ACTION
<b>Education Practices Commission</b>			
4	Monteagudo, Omar ()	09/30/2027	Recommend Confirm Yea 6 Nays 0
TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION

Other Related Meeting Documents

The Florida Senate  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Pre-K -12

BILL: CS/SB 556

INTRODUCER: Senator Berman

SUBJECT: Requirements for a Standard High School Diploma

DATE: January 14, 2026 REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Sabitsch	Bouck	ED	Fav/CS
2.		CF	
3.		RC	

**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

## I. Summary:

CS/SB 556 allows a student with a disability to meet the required one credit of physical education for a standard high school diploma by participating in the Special Olympics.

Additionally, the bill allows completion of two year of marching band to substitute for both physical education and fine or performing arts towards a standard high school diploma.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

## II. Present Situation:

### Florida Graduation Requirements

Florida's graduation requirements for receiving a standard high school diploma are outlined in statute.<sup>1</sup> Florida students entering grade nine may choose from one of five options to earn a standard diploma. The five options are:<sup>2</sup>

- 24-credit program.
- 18-credit program, Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning or ACCEL.
- A Career and Technical Education (CTE) Pathway.

<sup>1</sup> Sections 1003.4282, and 1002.3105, F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Florida Department of Education, Student Support Services, *Graduation Requirements*, <https://www.fl DOE.org/schools/k-12-public-schools/ssss/graduation-requirements/> (last visited Jan. 10, 2026).

- An International Baccalaureate (IB) curriculum.
- An Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) curriculum.

To be awarded a standard high school diploma under the 24-credit program requires students entering the ninth grade in 2023-2024 or later must earn the following credits:<sup>3</sup>

- Four credits in English Language Arts (ELA).
- Four credits in mathematics.
- Three credits in science.
- Three credits in social studies.
- One credit in fine or performing arts, speech and debate, or career and technical education.
- One credit in physical education, which includes the integration of health.<sup>4</sup>
- Seven and one-half credits in electives.
- One-half credit in personal financial literacy.

Students may choose to substitute the required one credit in physical education through participation in an interscholastic sport at the junior varsity or varsity level for two full seasons. Participation in two years of marching band may satisfy one credit of physical education or one credit in fine or performing arts. Students may also satisfy one-half of the credit for physical education by completing one semester and earning a “C” or better in a marching band class, a physical activity class that requires participation in marching band activities, or a dance class.<sup>5</sup> Students may also substitute the required one credit in physical education through completion of two years of Reserve Officer Training Corps (R.O.T.C) class.

In each circumstance where students may choose a substitute for the one credit in physical education, Florida law does not allow the substitution to be used to satisfy the personal fitness requirement or the requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual education plan (IEP) or 504 plan.<sup>6</sup>

### **Special Olympics**

The mission of the Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.<sup>7</sup>

The origins of the Special Olympics can be traced to the first Camp Shriver that was founded by Eunice Kennedy Shriver in the early 1960's on her Maryland farm. Her vision was that through sports, the lives of people with intellectual disabilities would be transformed and public perceptions would be changed forever.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Section 1003.4282(3), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1003.4282(3)(f), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> *Id.*

<sup>6</sup> *Id.*

<sup>7</sup> Special Olympics, *About Page*, <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/mission> (last visited Jan. 6, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Special Olympics, *Camp Shriver – The Beginning of a Movement*, <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/history/camp-shriver> (last visited Jan. 7, 2026).

The establishment of these camps gathered momentum that led to the first International Special Olympics Summer Games held at Soldier Field in Chicago as a joint venture between the Kennedy Foundation and the Chicago Park District. About 1,000 athletes with intellectual disabilities from the United States and Canada competed in the first Special Olympics International Summer Games in Chicago. The event was so successful that Eunice Kennedy Shriver soon pledged that more games would be held in 1970 and every two years thereafter in a "Biennial International Special Olympics."<sup>9</sup>

Today the Special Olympics has grown to be a worldwide organization with 256 national and state programs in 207 countries and jurisdictions. In 2024, there were 4,660,299 participants that included 3.8 million athletes with intellectual disabilities that were joined by over 800,000 unified partners (individuals without an intellectual disability who may or may not have another type of disability).<sup>10</sup>

Through the Special Olympics there are more than 30 Olympic-style individual and team sports that provide meaningful training and competition opportunities for persons with intellectual disabilities. Sports offered are varied and include such diverse activities as:<sup>11</sup>

- Alpine Skiing;
- Basketball;
- Bowling;
- Competitive Cheer;
- Cycling;
- Equestrian;
- Figure Skating;
- Judo;
- Kayaking; and
- Powerlifting.

The Special Olympics also supports Unified Sports, which joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. Young people with disabilities do not often get a chance to play on their school sports teams. U.S. states are adopting the Unified Sports approach that Special Olympics pioneered. Special Olympics Unified Champion Schools® programming is in more than 10,800 schools in 50 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Special Olympics, *The Beginning of a Worldwide Movement*, <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/history/camp-shriver> (last visited Jan. 7, 2026).

<sup>10</sup> Special Olympics, *Global Reach Report* (2024), available at: <https://www.specialolympics.org/about/reports>.

<sup>11</sup> Special Olympics, *Sports*, <https://www.specialolympics.org/what-we-do/sports/sports-offered> (last visited January 7, 2026).

<sup>12</sup> Special Olympics, *Unified Sports*, <https://www.specialolympics.org/what-we-do/sports/unified-sports> (last visited Jan. 7, 2026).

### ***Special Olympics in Florida***

The Special Olympics in Florida consists of 69,453 registered athletes and unified partners (2023) supported by 15,521 coaches and 45,225 volunteers. There are 23 different individual and team sports offered.<sup>13</sup>

Currently, there are 303 public high schools participating in the Special Olympics United Champion Schools and Developmental Sports Program that include 4,664 athletes and 1,144 unified partners. Additionally, there are 1,330 high school level programs taking place in Florida communities outside of public schools that include 4,664 athletes and 1,144 unified partners.<sup>14</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

CS/SB 556 amends s. 1003.4282, F.S., to allow students with disabilities who participate in the Special Olympics to substitute that participation for the required one credit of physical education to earn a standard high school diploma.

The provision requires one year of participation in the Special Olympics as determined by the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP) team.

The bill allows the completion of two years of marching band to satisfy the one-credit requirement in physical education and the one-credit requirement in fine or performing arts to earn a standard high school diploma, rather than just one credit in either physical education or fine or performing arts.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

### **IV. Constitutional Issues:**

#### **A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

#### **B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

#### **C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

#### **D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

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<sup>13</sup> Special Olympics, *Florida Fact Sheet*, available at: <https://media.specialolympics.org/resources/leading-a-program/program-profiles/SONA/Florida-FactSheet-2024.pdf>.

<sup>14</sup> Email, Special Olympics Florida (January 6, 2026).

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

This bill does not have a fiscal impact on state revenues or expenditures.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends s. 1003.4282 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes** (Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)**CS by Education Pre-K – 12 Committee on January 13, 2026:**

The committee substitute modifies s. 1003.4282, F.S., to allow a student to substitute completion of two years of marching band for the one-credit requirement in physical education and the one-credit requirement in fine or performing arts to earn a standard high school diploma instead of just one of the two requirements.

**B. Amendments:**

None.



LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: FAV	.	
01/14/2026	.	
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	.	

The Committee on Education Pre-K - 12 (Berman) recommended the following:

1                   **Senate Amendment (with directory and title amendments)**

2                   Between lines 13 and 14

3                   insert:

4                   (3) STANDARD HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA; COURSE AND ASSESSMENT  
5                   REQUIREMENTS.—

6                   (f) *One credit in physical education.*—Physical education  
7                   must include the integration of health. Participation in an  
8                   interscholastic sport at the junior varsity or varsity level for  
9                   two full seasons shall satisfy the one-credit requirement in



766280

11 physical education. A district school board may not require that  
12 the one credit in physical education be taken during the 9th  
13 grade year. Completion of 2 years of marching band shall satisfy  
14 the one-credit requirement in physical education and ~~or~~ the one-  
15 credit requirement in performing arts. This credit may not be  
16 used to satisfy the personal fitness requirement or the  
17 requirement for adaptive physical education under an individual  
18 education plan (IEP) or 504 plan. Completion of one semester  
19 with a grade of "C" or better in a marching band class, in a  
20 physical activity class that requires participation in marching  
21 band activities as an extracurricular activity, or in a dance  
22 class shall satisfy one-half credit in physical education or  
23 one-half credit in performing arts. This credit may not be used  
24 to satisfy the personal fitness requirement or the requirement  
25 for adaptive physical education under an IEP or 504 plan.  
26 Completion of 2 years in a Reserve Officer Training Corps  
27 (R.O.T.C.) class, a significant component of which is drills,  
28 shall satisfy the one-credit requirement in physical education  
29 and the one-credit requirement in performing arts. This credit  
30 may not be used to satisfy the personal fitness requirement or  
31 the requirement for adaptive physical education under an IEP or  
32 504 plan.

33

34 ===== D I R E C T O R Y C L A U S E A M E N D M E N T =====

35 And the directory clause is amended as follows:

36 Delete lines 11 - 12

37 and insert:

38 Section 1. Paragraph (f) of subsection (3) and paragraph  
39 (b) of subsection (8) of section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes,



40 are amended to read:

41

42 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

43 And the title is amended as follows:

44 Between lines 3 and 4

45 insert:

46 that students can substitute marching band experience  
47 for physical education and performing fine arts credit  
48 requirements for a standard high school diploma;  
49 providing

By Senator Berman

26-00148-26

2026556

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to requirements for a standard high school diploma; amending s. 1003.4282, F.S.; providing that students with disabilities may participate in the Special Olympics to meet the physical education requirement for a standard high school diploma; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (8) of section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.4282 Requirements for a standard high school diploma.—  
(8) STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.—Beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2014-2015 school year, this subsection applies to a student with a disability.

(b) The following options, in addition to the other options specified in this section, may be used to satisfy the standard high school diploma requirements, as specified in the student's individual education plan:

1. For a student with a disability for whom the IEP team has determined that the Florida Alternate Assessment is the most appropriate measure of the student's skills:

a. A combination of course substitutions, assessments, industry certifications, other acceleration options, or occupational completion points appropriate to the student's unique skills and abilities that meet the criteria established by State Board of Education rule.

b. A portfolio of quantifiable evidence that documents a

Page 1 of 3

**CODING:** Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

26-00148-26

2026556

student's mastery of academic standards through rigorous metrics established by State Board of Education rule. A portfolio may include, but is not limited to, documentation of work experience, internships, community service, and postsecondary credit.

2. A student with a disability may participate in the Special Olympics as a course substitution for the physical education requirement under paragraph (3)(f). A student who chooses this option must participate in the Special Olympics for one school year, as determined by the student's IEP team.

3. For a student with a disability for whom the IEP team has determined that mastery of academic and employment competencies is the most appropriate way for a student to demonstrate his or her skills:

a. Documented completion of the minimum high school graduation requirements, including the number of course credits prescribed by rules of the State Board of Education.

b. Documented achievement of all annual goals and short-term objectives for academic and employment competencies, industry certifications, and occupational completion points specified in the student's transition plan. The documentation must be verified by the IEP team.

c. Documented successful employment for the number of hours per week specified in the student's transition plan, for the equivalent of 1 semester, and payment of a minimum wage in compliance with the requirements of the federal Fair Labor Standards Act.

d. Documented mastery of the academic and employment competencies, industry certifications, and occupational

Page 2 of 3

**CODING:** Words ~~stricken~~ are deletions; words underlined are additions.

26-00148-26

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59 completion points specified in the student's transition plan.  
60 The documentation must be verified by the IEP team, the  
61 employer, and the teacher. The transition plan must be developed  
62 and signed by the student, parent, teacher, and employer before  
63 placement in employment and must identify the following:  
64 (I) The expected academic and employment competencies,  
65 industry certifications, and occupational completion points;  
66 (II) The criteria for determining and certifying mastery of  
67 the competencies;  
68 (III) The work schedule and the minimum number of hours to  
69 be worked per week; and  
70 (IV) A description of the supervision to be provided by the  
71 school district.

72 4.3. Any change to the high school graduation option  
73 specified in the student's IEP must be approved by the parent  
74 and is subject to verification for appropriateness by an  
75 independent reviewer selected by the parent as provided in s.  
76 1003.572.

77  
78 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules under ss.  
79 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement this subsection, including  
80 rules that establish the minimum requirements for students  
81 described in this subsection to earn a standard high school  
82 diploma. The State Board of Education shall adopt emergency  
83 rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54.

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



LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: FAV	.	
01/14/2026	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

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45 insert:

46 that students can substitute marching band experience  
47 for physical education and performing fine arts credit  
48 requirements for a standard high school diploma;  
49 providing



The Florida Senate

## Committee Agenda Request

**To:** Senator Corey Simon, Chair  
Committee on Education Pre-K -12

**Subject:** Committee Agenda Request

**Date:** December 10, 2025

---

I respectfully request that **Senate Bill #556**, relating to Requirements for a Standard High School Diploma, be placed on the:

- committee agenda at your earliest possible convenience.
- next committee agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lori Berman".

---

Senator Lori Berman  
Florida Senate, District 26

cc:  
Senator Alexis Calatayud, Vice Chair  
Matthew Bouck, Staff Director

1/13/2026

Meeting Date

ED Pre K12

Committee

Name Marquise McMILLER

Phone 407 405 2050

Address 445 Amelia St

Street

Orlando

FL

32301

City

State

Zip

Speaking:



Against

Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:



In Support

Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](https://www.flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

01/13/2026

Meeting Date

Sen, Education Pre K-12

Committee

Name Jacob Littlefield

SB 556

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Address 6002 Grand Palm Dr Apt 432 Email jacoblittlefield19@gmail.com  
StreetCity TampaState FLZip 33647Speaking:  For  Against  Information**OR**Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:** I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship. I am a registered lobbyist, representing: I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](https://flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf)

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S-001 (08/10/2021)

1/13/2026

Meeting Date

Education Pre k-12

Committee

Name Jean Federico

Address 3911 Fonce de Leon Blvd  
Street Sebring FL

City

State Zip 33872

The Florida Senate

## APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

SB 556

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Phone 863-873-4531

Email jfederico940@gmail.com

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

### PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](https://flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf)

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S-001 (08/10/2021)

The Florida Senate

# APPEARANCE RECORD

01/13/20

Meeting Date

Pre-K-12 Education

Committee

Name Liz Plego (De-Te-gui)

Phone 850-273-1043

Address 215 S. Monroe Street, Suite 710 Email [liz@floridapromise.org](mailto:liz@floridapromise.org)  
Street

Tallahassee FL 32301  
City State Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

## PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

The Foundation for Florida's Future

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](https://www.flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf)

This form is part of the public

S-001 (08/10/2021)

13 Jan 26  
The Florida Senate

## APPEARANCE RECORD

Meeting Date  
Education Pre-K  
Committee

Name Nicole Grabner

Address 8506 Laguna Cir  
Street  
Sebastian FL 32976  
City State Zip

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

SB 556

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Phone 940-867-7534

Email ngabner01@gmail.com

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR** Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

### PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

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This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

## The Florida Senate

**APPEARANCE RECORD**

Meeting Date

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

Committee

Name

Marquise McMiller Orange County Public Schools

Phone

Address

445 W. Amelia St.

Email

Street

Orlando

FL

32301

City

State

Zip

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S-001 (08/10/2021)

556

Bill Number or Topic

I

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Pre-K -12

BILL: SB 420

INTRODUCER: Senator Burgess

SUBJECT: Patriotic Displays in Classrooms

DATE: January 12, 2026 REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Sabitsch	Bouck	ED	<b>Favorable</b>
2.		AED	
3.		RC	

## **I. Summary:**

SB 420 requires each school district to adopt rules to require the display of portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in each social studies classroom and in each kindergarten through grade-5 classroom.

The bill requires the Department of Education to select the portraits and make them available to each school district.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Patriotic Programs**

Florida law addresses patriotic programs in schools by allowing school districts to adopt rules to require programs of a patriotic nature to encourage greater respect for the government of the United States and its national anthem and flag.<sup>1</sup> The same law addresses behavior when the national anthem is played and requires that the pledge of allegiance be recited at the beginning of the day in all public elementary, middle and high schools in the state. A student's parent may request in writing that the student be excused from reciting the pledge.<sup>2</sup>

Each district school board may allow any teacher or administrator to read, or to post in a public school building or classroom or at any school-related event, any excerpt or portion of the following historic materials, subject to limitations specified in law:<sup>3</sup>

- The national motto;

<sup>1</sup> Section 1003.44(1), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> Section 1003.44(2), F.S.

- The national anthem;
- The pledge of allegiance;
- The Constitution of the State of Florida, including the Preamble;
- The Constitution of the United States, including the Preamble;
- The Bill of Rights;
- The Declaration of Independence;
- The Mayflower Compact;
- The Emancipation Proclamation;
- The writings, speeches, documents, and proclamations of the presidents of the United States, the signers of the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence, and civil rights leaders; and
- The decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

Florida law encourages all public schools within the state to coordinate, at all grade levels, instruction related to the nation's founding fathers during "American Founders' Month"<sup>4</sup> which is designated as the month of September each year.<sup>5</sup>

Florida law requires the DOE to assist stakeholders in preparing students to be civically responsible and knowledgeable adults in the following ways:<sup>6</sup>

- Develop or approve an integrated civic education curriculum that school districts and charter schools are required to incorporate as part of regular schoolwork in kindergarten through grade 12. The curriculum must assist students in developing:
  - An understanding of their shared rights and responsibilities as residents of the state and of the founding principles of the United States.
  - A sense of civic pride and desire to participate regularly with government at the local, state, and federal levels.
  - An understanding of the process for effectively advocating before government bodies and officials.
  - An understanding of the civic-minded expectations, developed by the State Board of Education, of an upright and desirable citizenry that recognizes and accepts responsibility for preserving and defending the blessings of liberty inherited from prior generations and secured by the United States Constitution.
- Curate oral history resources to be used along with the civic education curriculum which provide portraits in patriotism based on the personal stories of diverse individuals who demonstrate civic-minded qualities. These resources constitute the Portraits in Patriotism Act.
- Approve integrated civic education curricula submitted by school districts and charter schools.

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<sup>4</sup> Section 683.145, F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1003.44(3), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1003.44(6), F.S.

## School and Classroom Displays

Each school district is required to adopt rules to require that all schools and buildings used by the school district display the state motto of “In God We Trust” in a conspicuous location.<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, each public K-20 educational institution in Florida must display daily in each classroom the flag of the United States. The flag must be made in the United States, must be at least 2 feet by 3 feet, and must be properly displayed in accordance with applicable federal law. The principal, director, or president of each educational institution must attempt to acquire the flags through donations or fundraising for 1 year prior to securing other funding sources or allocating funds for the purchase of flags.<sup>8</sup>

## George Washington and Abraham Lincoln

George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are both iconic figures in American history that shaped the History of the United States of America.

### *George Washington*

George Washington was an American general and commander in chief of the colonial armies during the American revolution and subsequently the first president of the United States of America, and is commonly referred to as the father of the nation.<sup>9</sup> He was born on February 22, 1732, in Westmoreland county, Virginia and died on December 14, 1799, at his home in Mount Vernon, Virginia at the age of 67.

### *Abraham Lincoln*

Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States who preserved the Union during the American Civil War and brought about the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States of America earning him the nickname “The Great Emancipator.” He was born in 1809 in a one-room cabin near Hodgenville, Kentucky where his youth was marked by the struggles of frontier life and almost no formal education. Later in life he was self-educated and became a lawyer and public figure. Lincoln was assassinated at the Ford Theatre in Washington D.C. in 1865 at 56 years of age.<sup>10</sup>

## III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 420 amends s. 1003.44, F.S., to require that portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln are displayed in a conspicuous place in each public school classroom<sup>11</sup> that is primarily used for social studies instruction as well as in each classroom serving kindergarten through grade 5.

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<sup>7</sup> Section 1003.44(4), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1000.06(2), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Britannica, *George Washington*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Washington> (last visited Jan. 5, 2026).

<sup>10</sup> Britannica, *Abraham Lincoln*, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abraham-Lincoln> (last visited Jan. 8, 2026).

<sup>11</sup> This requirement likely does not apply to charter schools. Charter schools are exempt from most statutes, except those specified in s. 1002.33(16), F.S. Section 1003.44, F.S., which contains the requirements of this bill, is not listed as a statute charter schools must follow; this section of law does contain a charter school requirement, but it is limited to adoption of and submission to the DOE an integrated civic education curriculum, which would not appear to include a display of portraits.

The bill requires the Department of Education (DOE) to select the portraits and make them available to each school district. The bill does not specify the method or format by which the DOE must make these portraits available.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

**A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

This bill could have a significant negative fiscal impact on the DOE or school districts in order to make the portraits available to each specified classroom. The cost to either entity depends on the method the portraits are made available.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends s. 1003.44 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:****A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

**B. Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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**By Senator Burgess**

23-00134B-26

2026420

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

Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 1003.44, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1003.44 Patriotic programs; rules.—

(4) Each district school board shall adopt rules to require, in all of the schools of the district and in each building used by the district school board:<sup>7</sup>

(a) The display of the state motto, "In God We Trust," designated under s. 15.0301, in a conspicuous place.

(b) The display of portraits of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln in a conspicuous place in each classroom that is primarily used for social studies instruction, and in each kindergarten through grade 5 classroom. The department shall select the portraits and make them available to each school district.

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



The Florida Senate

## Committee Agenda Request

**To:** Senator Corey Simon, Chair  
Committee on Education Pre-K -12

**Subject:** Committee Agenda Request

**Date:** November 24, 2025

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I respectfully request that **Senate Bill #420**, relating to Patriotic Displays in Classrooms, be placed on the:

- committee agenda at your earliest possible convenience.
- next committee agenda.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Danny".

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Senator Danny Burgess  
Florida Senate, District 23

CC: Matthew Bouck, Staff Director  
CC: Secret Williams, Committee Administrative Assistant

The Florida Senate

01/13/2026

Meeting Date

Sen, Education PreK-12

Committee

## APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

SB 420

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Name Jacob Littlefield

Phone (617) 997-8600

Address 6002 Grand Palm Dr Apt 432

Street

Email jacoblittlefield19@gmail.com

Tampa

FL

33647

City

State

Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

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This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

The Florida Senate  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Education Pre-K -12

BILL: CS/SB 206

INTRODUCER: Education Pre-K - 12 Committee and Senator Harrell

SUBJECT: Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

DATE: January 14, 2026 REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. <u>Brick</u>	<u>Bouck</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Fav/CS</u>
2. _____	_____	<u>AED</u>	_____
3. _____	_____	<u>AP</u>	_____

**Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

## I. Summary:

CS/SB 206 revises educator preparation, credentialing, professional learning, and incentives related to autism spectrum disorder and other specified disabilities. The bill:

- Requires the autism microcredential for specified exceptional student education certification and teacher preparation pathways.
- Aligns the uniform core curricula, professional certificate renewal, and district professional learning to evidence-based practices for autism spectrum disorder and other specified disabilities.
- Creates the Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness Program to provide student loan repayment assistance for eligible special education teachers serving as the primary teacher in a public school classroom in which a majority of students have autism spectrum disorder.
- Revises district compensation provisions to include completion of the Autism Spectrum Disorder endorsement in salary supplements and to authorize incentives for certain eligible teachers.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

## II. Present Situation:

### **Educator Preparation and Training**

#### ***Uniform Core Curricula***

Beginning August 1, 2027, each state-approved teacher preparation program must provide uniform core curricula courses aligned with the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices, as established by State Board of Education (SBE) rule.<sup>1</sup> Minimum uniform core curricula standards include training on differentiated instruction to meet student needs, including the needs of students with disabilities.<sup>2</sup>

#### ***Educator Preparation Institutes***

An “educator preparation institute” (EPI) is created by a postsecondary institution or a qualified private provider and approved by the Department of Education (DOE).<sup>3</sup> Accredited or approved postsecondary institutions may seek DOE approval to create an EPI to provide specified forms of instruction, including instruction for baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers and additional professional learning and instructional offerings identified in statute.<sup>4</sup>

Educator preparation institutes may offer competency-based certification programs designed for noneducation major baccalaureate degree holders to meet educator certification requirements.<sup>5</sup> To approve a certification program, the department must find evidence the EPI can implement a competency-based program that instructs and assesses each candidate in required areas, including the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices and state academic standards, and requires an educational plan, field experiences, and a certification ombudsman.<sup>6</sup>

Each program participant must meet specified requirements, including obtaining a statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area and satisfying specified prerequisites before participating in field experiences.<sup>7</sup> A participant who completes an approved certification program receives a credential from the sponsoring institution and is eligible for educator certification through the department upon satisfaction of statutory certification requirements.<sup>8</sup>

The SBE must adopt rules for the continued approval of each EPI program approved under s. 1004.85, F.S., and each institute must submit annual performance evaluations measuring program effectiveness.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1012.551(1), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1012.551(2)(g), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1004.85(1), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1004.85(2)(a)1.-6., F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1004.85(3), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1004.85(3)(a)1.-4., F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1004.85(3)(b)1.-3., F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1004.85(3)(c), F.S.; s. 1012.56(2), F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Section 1004.85(4)-(5), (8), F.S.

### ***CERT Program***

The DOE is required to create the Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching (CERT) Certification Program as an alternative pathway to professional certification, and specified entities may implement CERT programs that meet statutory requirements.<sup>10</sup> A CERT program must include specified mentorship, assessment, and professional learning components aligned to applicable evaluation and professional learning systems.<sup>11</sup>

### ***Autism Microcredential***

The University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment (UF-CAN) is required to develop an autism microcredential that provides specialized training in supporting students with autism.<sup>12</sup> The microcredential must be stackable with the autism endorsement and must be competency-based and offered at no cost to eligible participants.<sup>13</sup>

The microcredential is required to be available to specified categories of personnel, including instructional personnel and specified early learning personnel.<sup>14</sup> Individuals who complete the microcredential are eligible for a one-time stipend, as determined in the General Appropriations Act (GAA), and the center administers the stipend.<sup>15</sup>

In Fiscal Year 2025-2026, the GAA appropriated \$10 million in General Revenue for the UF-CAN. The appropriation includes:<sup>16</sup>

- Up to \$4.5 million for costs associated with the UF-CAN's role as the statewide coordinating body, administrator, and fiscal agent for programs and services, including the microcredential.
- The remaining funds to support and implement programs that include the administration of the microcredential and stipend, based on actual participation and demonstrated need.

### ***State Financial Assistance Programs Tied to Employment in a Profession***

The SBE is required to annually identify high-demand teacher needs areas based on the supply of graduates of state-approved teacher preparation programs and the number of vacant positions in a teaching discipline or positions filled by out-of-field teachers. The latest report indicates that the certification in highest demand is exceptional student education.<sup>17</sup>

Florida offers the Autism Endorsement Tuition Support Program to provide financial assistance to add the appropriate endorsement for ESE teachers who are teaching students identified as having autism spectrum disorders (ASD) in a Florida public school. The program provides up to

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<sup>10</sup> Section 1012.552(1), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1012.552(2), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 1004.551(1)(f), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 1004.551(1)(f), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Section 1004.551(1)(f), F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 1004.551(1)(f), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Chapter 2025-198, Laws of Fla., s. 2, Specific Appropriation 162A.

<sup>17</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Identification of High Demand Teacher Needs Areas for 2025-26*, available at <https://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/20808/urlt/17-2.pdf>, at 1-2.

\$1000 per course for tuition support from federal funds. The applicant must be ESE certified and be teaching students with ASD.<sup>18</sup>

The DOE administers the ESE training grant program, which provides financial assistance to teachers for special training in exceptional student education to meet professional requirements.<sup>19</sup> Grant amounts are determined based on rates established by the DOE, and the program is administered under SBE rules.<sup>20</sup> Grants are limited to teachers who:<sup>21</sup>

- Hold a full-time contract to teach in a district school system, a state-operated or state-supported program, or an entity under contract with the DOE.
- Hold a valid Florida educator certificate that does not reflect an ESE coverage or endorsement appropriate for the teacher's assignment.
- Satisfactorily complete eligible courses.

A state loan repayment assistance model exists in the Nursing Student Loan Forgiveness Program, which makes repayments toward certain nursing education loans to encourage employment and retention of nurses in designated facilities.<sup>22</sup> Eligibility includes graduation from an accredited or approved nursing program and Florida licensure as a licensed practical nurse, registered nurse, or advanced practice registered nurse.<sup>23</sup> Loans covered under the program are limited to tuition, books, and living expenses, up to \$4,000 for each year of education toward the degree obtained.<sup>24</sup>

### **Autism Endorsements and Certificate Additions**

An endorsement is a credential added to an educator certificate to reflect specialized training and qualifications in a particular instructional area.<sup>25</sup> SBE rules establish requirements for endorsements, including the Endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorders<sup>26</sup> and the Endorsement in Severe or Profound Disabilities.<sup>27</sup> Those rules specify eligibility prerequisites and completion requirements, which generally include required coursework and supervised field experience.

A professional educator certificate is issued for a period not to exceed five years to an applicant who meets statutory eligibility criteria.<sup>28</sup> A district may process applications through the DOE system for certain certificate transactions for public school employees, including adding a subject coverage or endorsement to a valid Florida certificate.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Student Education, *Autism Endorsement Tuition Support Program*, available at [https://florida-ese.org/docs/Autism\\_Application\\_Revised%2010\\_8\\_21.pdf](https://florida-ese.org/docs/Autism_Application_Revised%2010_8_21.pdf) (last visited Jan. 13, 2026).

<sup>19</sup> Section 1009.62(1), F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Section 1009.62(3)-(4), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Section 1009.62(2), F.S.

<sup>22</sup> Section 1009.66(1), F.S.

<sup>23</sup> Section 1009.66(2), F.S.

<sup>24</sup> Section 1009.66(3), F.S.

<sup>25</sup> Florida Department of Education, Educator Certification, *Certificate Additions*, <https://www.fl DOE.org/teaching/certification/additions/> (last visited Jan. 13, 2026).

<sup>26</sup> Rule 6A-4.01796, F.A.C.

<sup>27</sup> Rule 6A-4.01793, F.A.C.

<sup>28</sup> Section 1012.56, F.S.; s. 1012.586(1), F.S.

<sup>29</sup> Section 1012.586(1), F.S.

For 2023-24, district-reported certification data show 2,614 Autism Spectrum Disorders endorsements; endorsements are counted once per teacher per certification area.<sup>30</sup>

### **Compensation, Salary Supplements, And Incentives**

District school boards adopt salary schedules, including a performance salary schedule.<sup>31</sup> The performance salary schedule provides annual salary adjustments for instructional personnel and school administrators based on performance.<sup>32</sup> In addition to salary adjustments, each district school board provides salary supplements for specified activities.<sup>33</sup> Collective bargaining may not preclude a district school board from providing incentives to effective and highly effective teachers.<sup>34</sup>

### **Certificate Renewal Requirements**

An educator must renew his or her professional certificate every five years. An applicant for renewal of a professional certificate is required to satisfy continuing education requirements of a minimum of 6 college credits or 120 inservice points or a combination thereof, including at least one college credit or the equivalent inservice points in the area of instruction for teaching students with disabilities.<sup>35</sup>

### **District Professional Learning Systems.**

#### ***The School Community Professional Learning Act***

The School Community Professional Learning Act requires each district to maintain a professional learning system meeting statutory requirements and subject to DOE review and approval.<sup>36</sup> District systems include, among other components:

- Maintaining a district professional learning catalog for inservice activities, updated annually.<sup>37</sup>
- Providing inservice activities with follow-up support aligned to district and school improvement goals.<sup>38</sup>

### ***Regional Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities.***

Regional Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) serve individuals with autism in assigned geographic service areas throughout the state.<sup>39</sup> Each center provides technical

<sup>30</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Identification of High Demand Teacher Needs Areas for 2025-26* (report) (explaining that certifications are counted once per teacher per subject area and providing certification subject code totals) (p. 2; Appendix C, pp. 69-70 (subject code 1078, Autism Spectrum Disorders)), available at <https://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/20808/urll/17-2.pdf>.

<sup>31</sup> Section 1012.22(1)(c)5., F.S.

<sup>32</sup> Section 1012.22(1)(c)5.b., F.S.; Section 1012.34, F.S.

<sup>33</sup> Section 1012.22(1)(c)5.c., F.S.

<sup>34</sup> Section 1012.22(3)(a)1., F.S.

<sup>35</sup> Section 1012.585(3)(e), F.S.

<sup>36</sup> Section 1012.98(5)(b), F.S.

<sup>37</sup> Section 1012.98(5)(b)5., F.S.

<sup>38</sup> Section 1012.98(5)(b)3., F.S.

<sup>39</sup> Section 1004.55(1), F.S.

assistance and consultation services, including intervention and assistance for a client, the client's family, and the school district.<sup>40</sup> Each center also develops, provides, and evaluates professional training programs, including preservice and inservice training in state-of-the-art practices for personnel who work with the populations served by the centers and their families.<sup>41</sup>

### **Personnel Evaluation Procedures and Ratings**

Each district school superintendent must establish procedures for evaluating the performance of duties and responsibilities of instructional, administrative, and supervisory personnel employed by the school district.<sup>42</sup>

The DOE must approve each school district's instructional personnel and school administrator evaluation systems and must monitor district implementation for compliance with statutory requirements.<sup>43</sup> Evaluation systems must differentiate among four levels of performance:<sup>44</sup>

- Highly effective.
- Effective.
- Needs improvement, or developing for certain instructional personnel in the first three years of employment.
- Unsatisfactory.

Statewide, districts reported that 157,905 classroom teachers received an evaluation in 2023-24, and 114,950 of those teachers (72.8 percent) were rated highly effective.<sup>45</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

CS/SB 206 revises educator preparation, credentialing, professional learning, and incentives related to autism spectrum disorder and other specified disabilities. The bill:

- Requires the autism microcredential for specified exceptional student education certification and teacher preparation pathways.
- Aligns the uniform core curricula, professional certificate renewal, and district professional learning to evidence-based practices for autism spectrum disorder and other specified disabilities.
- Creates the Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness Program to provide student loan repayment assistance for eligible special education teachers serving as the primary teacher in a public school classroom in which a majority of students have autism spectrum disorder.
- Revises district compensation provisions to include completion of the Autism Spectrum Disorder endorsement in salary supplements and to authorize incentives for certain eligible teachers.

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<sup>40</sup> Section 1004.55(4)(c), F.S.

<sup>41</sup> Section 1004.55(4)(d), F.S.

<sup>42</sup> Section 1012.34(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>43</sup> Section 1012.34(1)(b), F.S.

<sup>44</sup> Section 1012.34(2)(e), F.S.

<sup>45</sup> Florida Department of Education, 2023-24 District Educator Evaluation Ratings (Excel spreadsheet) (Classroom Teachers - % by Dist worksheet, Statewide Total row), available at <https://www.fl DOE.org/file/7503/2324DistEduEvalRate.xlsx>.

## **Educator Preparation and Training**

The bill modifies s. 1004.85, F.S., related to postsecondary educator preparation institutes (EPIs). The bill requires:

- An EPI program participant who is certified in exceptional student education to complete the autism microcredential created by the University of Florida Center for Autism and Neurodevelopment.
- By August 1, 2027, as a condition of continued EPI program approval, each EPI to offer instruction and training on evidence-based practices for teaching students with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disabilities, consistent with the uniform core curricula developed by the Department of Education.

The bill modifies s. 1012.551, F.S., related to teacher preparation core principles and uniform core curricula. The bill:

- Requires the uniform core curricula to include training aligned with evidence-based practices for supporting students with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disabilities, applicable across all levels of support.
- Requires each state-approved teacher preparation program using the uniform core curricula to include the autism microcredential, which must count for at least 1 semester hour toward program completion.

The bill modifies s. 1012.552, F.S., related to Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching (CERT) Program. The bill requires successful completion of the autism microcredential for a candidate seeking certification in exceptional student education through a CERT program.

## **Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness Program**

The bill creates s. 1009.636, F.S., establishing the Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness Program to provide student loan repayment assistance for eligible special education teachers who serve as the primary teacher in a public school classroom in which a majority of the students have autism spectrum disorder.

### ***Program Eligibility and Benefits***

The bill establishes eligibility pathways based on degree level and endorsements and provides loan repayment assistance up to \$17,500 over 5 years, capped at \$3,500 per year. The bill requires annual payments to be made directly to the participant's lender.

### ***Conditions for Annual Payment***

The bill conditions each annual payment on the teacher:

- Completing a full year of service in the qualifying position.
- Receiving an effective or highly effective evaluation rating under s. 1012.34, F.S.
- Meeting specified certificate-related eligibility requirements which include a teacher holding an active loan balance who has earned a bachelor's degree with a specified endorsement, or a master's degree in special or exceptional education.

### ***Administration and Rulemaking***

The bill requires the State Board of Education to adopt rules to administer the program.

### **Compensation, Salary Supplements, and Incentives**

The bill modifies s. 1012.22, F.S., related to teacher compensation, salary supplements, and incentives. The bill:

- Adds completion of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement to the activities that must be included in district salary supplements under the performance salary schedule.
- Provides that collective bargaining may not preclude a district from providing incentives to exceptional student education teachers who complete the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement, in addition to any stipend funded in the General Appropriations Act for completion of the endorsement, and who serve as the primary teacher in a classroom in which a majority of the students have autism spectrum disorder.

### **Certificate Renewal Requirements**

The bill modifies s. 1012.585, F.S., related to the process for renewal of professional certificates. Beginning August 1, 2027, the bill:

- Specifies that the renewal requirement for instruction for teaching students with disabilities must include autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disabilities.
- Requires an applicant certified in exceptional student education to earn the autism microcredential for renewal, provides that it counts as 3 college credits or the equivalent inservice points, and provides that once earned it is not required again for additional renewal periods.

### **Stipend Authorization**

The bill modifies s. 1012.586, F.S., to provide that personnel certified in exceptional student education who complete the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement are eligible for a stipend as specified in the General Appropriations Act.

### **District Professional Learning Systems**

The bill modifies s. 1012.98, F.S., to require each district professional learning system to provide at least one autism-specific professional development opportunity annually for instructional personnel and school-based administrators. The professional development must be developed and delivered in coordination with the district's assigned Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and must include evidence-based practices for supporting students with autism spectrum disorder across all levels of need, including academic instruction, behavioral supports, communication strategies, and inclusive practices.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:****A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:**

None.

**B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:**

None.

**C. Trust Funds Restrictions:**

None.

**D. State Tax or Fee Increases:**

None.

**E. Other Constitutional Issues:**

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:****A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

The bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact to state expenditures related to administration and funding of the Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness Program. The bill may also have an indeterminate fiscal impact related to implementing new educator preparation, certificate renewal and district professional learning requirements. Stipends are contingent on amounts provided in the General Appropriations Act.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

## **VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1004.85; 1012.22; 1012.551; 1012.552; 1012.585; 1012.586; and 1012.98.

This bill creates section 1009.636 of the Florida Statutes.

## **IX. Additional Information:**

### **A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

#### **CS by Education Pre-K – 12 on January 13, 2026:**

The committee substitute deletes the bill's amendments to s. 1012.582, F.S., related to a teacher holding the Endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorders in a class in which at least 50 percent of students have autism spectrum disorder.

The committee substitute creates s. 1009.636, F.S., related to the Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness Program. The committee substitute:

- Creates a student loan repayment assistance program for eligible special education teachers who serve as the primary teacher in a public school classroom in which a majority of the students have autism spectrum disorder.
- Provides eligibility pathways based on degree level and endorsements and limits repayment assistance to a total of \$17,500 over 5 years, with annual payments capped at \$3,500 and paid directly to the lender.
- Establishes loan repayment assistance payments (up to \$3,500 per year, \$17,500 total) and conditions annual payments on a full year of service, an effective or highly effective evaluation rating, and no certificate-related disciplinary action.
- Requires State Board of Education rulemaking to administer the Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness Program.

The committee substitute adds to the bill provisions amending:

- Section 1004.85, F.S., related to training at Postsecondary Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs):
  - Requires ESE-certified program participants to complete the autism microcredential created under s. 1004.551(1)(f), F.S.
  - Requires each EPI, by August 1, 2027, as a condition of continued program approval, to offer training on evidence-based practices for teaching students with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disabilities, consistent with the uniform core curricula developed by the department.
- Section 1012.22, F.S., related to district school board duties related to compensation and bargaining. The committee substitute:
  - Adds completion of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement to the activities that must be included in salary supplements under the performance salary schedule.

- Provides that collective bargaining may not preclude incentives to ESE teachers who complete the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement (in addition to any General Appropriations Act stipend for completion) and who serve as the primary teacher in a classroom in which a majority of the students have autism spectrum disorder.
- Section 1012.551, F.S., related to teacher preparation core principles and uniform core curricula. The committee substitute:
  - Requires the uniform core curricula to include training aligned to evidence-based practices for supporting students with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disabilities, applicable across all levels of support.
  - Requires state-approved teacher preparation programs using the uniform core curricula to include the autism microcredential, which must count for at least 1 semester hour toward program completion.
- Section 1012.552, F.S., related to CERT Program requirements. The committee substitute requires a candidate for certification in exceptional student education through a Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching (CERT) program to successfully complete the autism microcredential.
- Section 1012.585, F.S., related to renewal of professional certificates. The committee substitute:
  - Beginning August 1, 2027, specifies that the required disability-training credit must include autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral disabilities.
  - Beginning August 1, 2027, requires applicants certified in exceptional student education to earn the autism microcredential for renewal, provides it counts as 3 college credits or the equivalent inservice points, and provides that once earned it is not required again for additional renewal periods.
- Section 1012.586, F.S., related to stipend authorization. The committee substitute authorizes personnel certified in exceptional student education who complete the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement to be eligible for a stipend as specified in the General Appropriations Act.
- Section 1012.98, F.S., related to district professional learning systems. The committee substitute requires:
  - Each district professional learning system to provide at least one autism-specific professional development opportunity annually for instructional personnel and school-based administrators.
  - The training to be developed and delivered in coordination with the district's assigned Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) and to cover evidence-based practices across levels of need.

**B. Amendments:**

None.



LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
01/14/2026	.	
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The Committee on Education Pre-K - 12 (Harrell) recommended the following:

1                   **Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

2  
3                   Delete everything after the enacting clause  
4 and insert:

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

7                   393.063 Definitions.—For the purposes of this chapter, the  
8 term:

9                   (5) "Autism" or "autism spectrum disorder" means a  
10 condition as defined by the most recent edition of the



651894

11     Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders published  
12     by the American Psychiatric Association pervasive,  
13     neurologically based developmental disability of extended  
14     duration which causes severe learning, communication, and  
15     behavior disorders with age of onset during infancy or  
16     childhood. Individuals with autism exhibit impairment in  
17     reciprocal social interaction, impairment in verbal and  
18     nonverbal communication and imaginative ability, and a markedly  
19     restricted repertoire of activities and interests.

20       Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section  
21 1004.85, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection (9) is  
22 added to that section, to read:

23       1004.85 Postsecondary educator preparation institutes.—

24       (3) Educator preparation institutes approved pursuant to  
25 this section may offer competency-based certification programs  
26 specifically designed for noneducation major baccalaureate  
27 degree holders to enable program participants to meet the  
28 educator certification requirements of s. 1012.56. An educator  
29 preparation institute choosing to offer a competency-based  
30 certification program pursuant to the provisions of this section  
31 must implement a program developed by the institute and approved  
32 by the department for this purpose. Approved programs shall be  
33 available for use by other approved educator preparation  
34 institutes.

35       (b) Each program participant must:

36       1. Meet certification requirements pursuant to s.  
37 1012.56(1) by obtaining a statement of status of eligibility in  
38 the certification subject area of the educational plan and meet  
39 the requirements of s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f) before participating in



40 field experiences.

41       2. Demonstrate competency and participate in field  
42 experiences that are appropriate to his or her educational plan  
43 prepared under paragraph (a). Beginning with candidates entering  
44 an educator preparation institute in the 2022-2023 school year,  
45 a candidate for certification in a coverage area identified  
46 pursuant to s. 1012.585(3)(f) must successfully complete all  
47 competencies for a reading endorsement, including completion of  
48 the endorsement practicum through the candidate's field  
49 experience, in order to graduate from the program.

50       3. Before completion of the program, fully demonstrate his  
51 or her ability to teach the subject area for which he or she is  
52 seeking certification by documenting a positive impact on  
53 student learning growth in a prekindergarten through grade 12  
54 setting and, except as provided in s. 1012.56(7)(a)3., achieving  
55 a passing score on the professional education competency  
56 examination, the basic skills examination, and the subject area  
57 examination for the subject area certification which is required  
58 by state board rule.

59       4. For each participant who is certified in exceptional  
60 student education, complete the autism micro-credential created  
61 pursuant to s. 1004.551(1)(f).

62       (9) By August 1, 2027, as a condition for continued program  
63 approval, each educator preparation institute must offer  
64 instruction and training on evidence-based practices for  
65 teaching students with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome,  
66 other developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral  
67 disabilities, consistent with the uniform core curricula  
68 developed by the department.



69       Section 3. Section 1009.636, Florida Statutes, is created  
70 to read:

71       1009.636 Autism educator loan forgiveness program.—  
72       (1) The Legislature finds that an adequate supply of  
73 special education teachers is critical to provide students who  
74 have a neurodevelopmental disability, such as autism spectrum  
75 disorder, with individualized education to foster essential  
76 social-emotional skills, provide positive interventions, and  
77 build life skills for independence. The Autism Educator Loan  
78 Forgiveness Program is created to recruit and retain qualified  
79 individuals to serve as special education teachers for students  
80 with autism spectrum disorder.

81       (2) To be eligible, an individual must:

82       (a) 1. Have earned a master's or higher degree in special  
83 education or exceptional student education from an accredited  
84 institution and have an active student loan balance from  
85 completion of that degree, and hold a temporary or professional  
86 certificate; or

87       2. Have earned a bachelor's or higher degree from an  
88 accredited institution and have an active student loan balance  
89 from completion of that degree, hold a temporary or professional  
90 certificate, and hold the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement  
91 or Severe or Profound Disabilities Endorsement; and

92       (b) Serve as the primary teacher in a public school  
93 classroom in which a majority of the students have autism  
94 spectrum disorder.

95       (3) Eligible participants may receive up to \$17,500 in  
96 total student loan repayment assistance over 5 years, disbursed  
97 in annual payments not to exceed \$3,500 per year. Payments must



651894

98 be made directly to the lender servicing the participant's  
99 student loan.

100 (4) In order for the department to release each annual  
101 payment, a teacher must:

102 (a) Have completed a full year of service pursuant to  
103 paragraph (2) (c).

104 (b) Have received a rating of effective or highly effective  
105 pursuant to s. 1012.34.

106 (c) Not have had any disciplinary action taken by the  
107 school district or by the department against the teacher's  
108 certificate.

109 (5) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to  
110 administer this section.

111 Section 4. Paragraph (c) of subsection (1) and paragraph  
112 (a) of subsection (3) of section 1012.22, Florida Statutes, are  
113 amended to read:

114 1012.22 Public school personnel; powers and duties of the  
115 district school board.—The district school board shall:

116 (1) Designate positions to be filled, prescribe  
117 qualifications for those positions, and provide for the  
118 appointment, compensation, promotion, suspension, and dismissal  
119 of employees as follows, subject to the requirements of this  
120 chapter:

121 (c) *Compensation and salary schedules.*—

122 1. Definitions.—As used in this paragraph:

123 a. "Adjustment" means an addition to the base salary  
124 schedule that is not a bonus and becomes part of the employee's  
125 permanent base salary and shall be considered compensation under  
126 s. 121.021(22).



651894

127        b. "Grandfathered salary schedule" means the salary  
128 schedule or schedules adopted by a district school board before  
129 July 1, 2014, pursuant to subparagraph 4.

130        c. "Instructional personnel" means instructional personnel  
131 as defined in s. 1012.01(2) (a)-(d), excluding substitute  
132 teachers.

133        d. "Performance salary schedule" means the salary schedule  
134 or schedules adopted by a district school board pursuant to  
135 subparagraph 5.

136        e. "Salary schedule" means the schedule or schedules used  
137 to provide the base salary for district school board personnel.

138        f. "School administrator" means a school administrator as  
139 defined in s. 1012.01(3) (c).

140        g. "Supplement" means an annual addition to the base salary  
141 for the term of the negotiated supplement as long as the  
142 employee continues his or her employment for the purpose of the  
143 supplement. A supplement does not become part of the employee's  
144 continuing base salary but shall be considered compensation  
145 under s. 121.021(22).

146        2. Cost-of-living adjustment.—A district school board may  
147 provide a cost-of-living salary adjustment if the adjustment:

148            a. Does not discriminate among comparable classes of  
149 employees based upon the salary schedule under which they are  
150 compensated.

151            b. Does not exceed 50 percent of the annual adjustment  
152 provided to instructional personnel rated as effective.

153        3. Advanced degrees.—A district school board may use  
154 advanced degrees in setting a salary schedule for instructional  
155 personnel or school administrators if the advanced degree is



651894

156 held in the individual's area of certification.

157 4. Grandfathered salary schedule.—

158 a. The district school board shall adopt a salary schedule  
159 or salary schedules to be used as the basis for paying all  
160 school employees hired before July 1, 2014. Instructional  
161 personnel on annual contract as of July 1, 2014, shall be placed  
162 on the performance salary schedule adopted under subparagraph 5.  
163 Instructional personnel on continuing contract or professional  
164 service contract may opt into the performance salary schedule if  
165 the employee relinquishes such contract and agrees to be  
166 employed on an annual contract under s. 1012.335. Such an  
167 employee shall be placed on the performance salary schedule and  
168 may not return to continuing contract or professional service  
169 contract status. Any employee who opts into the performance  
170 salary schedule may not return to the grandfathered salary  
171 schedule.

172 b. In determining the grandfathered salary schedule for  
173 instructional personnel, a district school board must base a  
174 portion of each employee's compensation upon performance  
175 demonstrated under s. 1012.34 and shall provide differentiated  
176 pay for both instructional personnel and school administrators  
177 based upon district-determined factors, including, but not  
178 limited to, additional responsibilities, school demographics,  
179 high-demand teacher needs areas, and level of job performance  
180 difficulties.

181 5. Performance salary schedule.—By July 1, 2014, the  
182 district school board shall adopt a performance salary schedule  
183 that provides annual salary adjustments for instructional  
184 personnel and school administrators based upon performance



651894

185 determined under s. 1012.34. Employees hired on or after July 1,  
186 2014, or employees who choose to move from the grandfathered  
187 salary schedule to the performance salary schedule shall be  
188 compensated pursuant to the performance salary schedule once  
189 they have received the appropriate performance evaluation for  
190 this purpose.

191 a. Base salary.—The base salary shall be established as  
192 follows:

193 (I) The base salary for instructional personnel or school  
194 administrators who opt into the performance salary schedule  
195 shall be the salary paid in the prior year, including  
196 adjustments only.

197 (II) Instructional personnel or school administrators new  
198 to the district, returning to the district after a break in  
199 service without an authorized leave of absence, or appointed for  
200 the first time to a position in the district in the capacity of  
201 instructional personnel or school administrator shall be placed  
202 on the performance salary schedule.

203 b. Salary adjustments.—Salary adjustments for highly  
204 effective or effective performance shall be established as  
205 follows:

206 (I) The annual salary adjustment under the performance  
207 salary schedule for an employee rated as highly effective must  
208 be at least 25 percent greater than the highest annual salary  
209 adjustment available to an employee of the same classification  
210 through any other salary schedule adopted by the district.

211 (II) The annual salary adjustment under the performance  
212 salary schedule for an employee rated as effective must be equal  
213 to at least 50 percent and no more than 75 percent of the annual



214 adjustment provided for a highly effective employee of the same  
215 classification.

216 (III) A salary schedule shall not provide an annual salary  
217 adjustment for an employee who receives a rating other than  
218 highly effective or effective for the year.

219 c. Salary supplements.—In addition to the salary  
220 adjustments, each district school board shall provide for salary  
221 supplements for activities that must include, but are not  
222 limited to:

223 (I) Assignment to a Title I eligible school.

224 (II) Assignment to a school that earned a grade of "F" or  
225 three consecutive grades of "D" pursuant to s. 1008.34 such that  
226 the supplement remains in force for at least 1 year following  
227 improved performance in that school.

228 (III) Certification and teaching in high-demand teacher  
229 needs areas. Statewide high-demand teacher needs areas shall be  
230 identified by the State Board of Education under s. 1012.07.  
231 However, the district school board may identify other areas of  
232 high-demand needs within the school district for purposes of  
233 this sub-sub-subparagraph and may remove areas identified by the  
234 state board which do not apply within the school district.

235 (IV) Assignment of additional academic responsibilities.

236 (V) Completion of the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement.

238 If budget constraints in any given year limit a district school  
239 board's ability to fully fund all adopted salary schedules, the  
240 performance salary schedule shall not be reduced on the basis of  
241 total cost or the value of individual awards in a manner that is  
242 proportionally greater than reductions to any other salary



651894

243 schedules adopted by the district. Any compensation for  
244 longevity of service awarded to instructional personnel who are  
245 on any other salary schedule must be included in calculating the  
246 salary adjustments required by sub subparagraph b.

247 (3) (a) *Collective bargaining.*—Notwithstanding provisions of  
248 chapter 447 related to district school board collective  
249 bargaining, collective bargaining may not preclude a district  
250 school board from carrying out its constitutional and statutory  
251 duties related to the following:

252 1. Providing incentives to effective and highly effective  
253 teachers.

254 2. Implementing intervention and support strategies under  
255 s. 1008.33 to address the causes of low student performance and  
256 improve student academic performance and attendance.

257 3. Implementing student discipline provisions required by  
258 law, including a review of a student's abilities, past  
259 performance, behavior, and needs.

260 4. Implementing school safety plans and requirements.

261 5. Implementing staff and student recognition programs.

262 6. Distributing correspondence to parents, teachers, and  
263 community members related to the daily operation of schools and  
264 the district.

265 7. Providing any required notice or copies of information  
266 related to the district school board or district operations  
267 which is readily available on the school district's website.

268 8. The school district's calendar.

269 9. Providing incentives to exceptional student education  
270 teachers who complete the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement,  
271 in addition to any stipend funded in the General Appropriations



651894

272 Act for completion of the endorsement, and who serve as the  
273 primary teacher in classroom in which a majority of the students  
274 have autism spectrum disorder.

275 Section 5. Paragraph (g) of subsection (2) of section  
276 1012.551, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection (4) is  
277 added to that section to read:

278 1012.551 Teacher preparation core principles, standards,  
279 and content.—

280 (2) The uniform core curricula for each state-approved  
281 teacher preparation program must meet, at a minimum, the  
282 following standards:

283 (g) Must include strategies for differentiated instruction  
284 to meet student needs, including English language learners and  
285 students with disabilities, while maintaining grade-level  
286 expectations. The strategies must also include specific training  
287 aligned with evidence-based practices for supporting students  
288 with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other  
289 developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral  
290 disabilities applicable across all levels of support.

291 (4) Each state-approved teacher preparation program using  
292 the uniform core curricula developed pursuant to this section  
293 must include the autism micro-credential created pursuant to s.  
294 1004.551(1)(f), which shall count for at least 1 semester hour  
295 toward completion of the program.

296 Section 6. Paragraph (g) is added to subsection (2) of  
297 section 1012.552, Florida Statutes, to read:

298 1012.552 The Coaching for Educator Readiness and Teaching  
299 (CERT) Certification Program.—

300 (2) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—A CERT program must include all



301 of the following:

302 (g) Required successful completion of the autism micro-  
303 credential created pursuant to s. 1004.551(1)(f) for a candidate  
304 certification in exceptional student education.

305 Section 7. Paragraph (e) of subsection (3) of section  
306 1012.585, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

307 1012.585 Process for renewal of professional certificates.—

308 (3) For the renewal of a professional certificate, the  
309 following requirements must be met:

310 (e) Beginning July 1, 2014, an applicant for renewal of a  
311 professional certificate must earn a minimum of one college  
312 credit or the equivalent inservice points in the area of  
313 instruction for teaching students with disabilities. The  
314 requirement in this paragraph may not add to the total hours  
315 required by the department for continuing education or inservice  
316 training. Beginning August 1, 2027:

317 1. Instruction for teaching students with disabilities must  
318 include autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, other  
319 developmental disabilities, and emotional or behavioral  
320 disabilities.

321 2. An applicant certified in exceptional student education  
322 must earn the autism micro-credential created pursuant to s.  
323 1004.551(1)(f), which must count toward 3 college credits or the  
324 equivalent inservice points. Once earned, an applicant is not  
325 required to earn the micro-credential for additional renewal  
326 periods.

327 Section 8. Subsection (3) is added to section 1012.586,  
328 Florida Statutes, to read:

329 1012.586 Additions or changes to certificates; duplicate



certificates; reading endorsement pathways.—

(3) Personnel certified in exceptional student education who complete the Autism Spectrum Disorder Endorsement are eligible for a stipend as specified in the General Appropriations Act.

Section 9. Paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section 1012.98, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.98 School Community Professional Learning Act.—

(5) The Department of Education, school districts, schools, Florida College System institutions, and state universities share the responsibilities described in this section. These responsibilities include the following:

(b) Each school district shall develop a professional learning system as specified in subsection (4). The system shall be developed in consultation with teachers, teacher-educators of Florida College System institutions and state universities, business and community representatives, and local education foundations, consortia, and professional organizations. The professional learning system must:

1. Be reviewed and approved by the department for compliance with s. 1003.42(3) and this section. Effective March 1, 2024, the department shall establish a calendar for the review and approval of all professional learning systems. A professional learning system must be reviewed and approved every 5 years. Any substantial revisions to the system must be submitted to the department for review and approval. The department shall establish a format for the review and approval of a professional learning system.

2. Be based on analyses of student achievement data and



651894

359 instructional strategies and methods that support rigorous,  
360 relevant, and challenging curricula for all students. Schools  
361 and districts, in developing and refining the professional  
362 learning system, shall also review and monitor school discipline  
363 data; school environment surveys; assessments of parental  
364 satisfaction; performance appraisal data of teachers, managers,  
365 and administrative personnel; and other performance indicators  
366 to identify school and student needs that can be met by improved  
367 professional performance.

368       3. Provide inservice activities coupled with follow-up  
369 ~~followup~~ support appropriate to accomplish district-level and  
370 school-level improvement goals and standards. The inservice  
371 activities for instructional and school administrative personnel  
372 shall focus on analysis of student achievement data; ongoing  
373 formal and informal assessments of student achievement;  
374 identification and use of enhanced and differentiated  
375 instructional strategies that emphasize rigor, relevance, and  
376 reading in the content areas; enhancement of subject content  
377 expertise; integrated use of classroom technology that enhances  
378 teaching and learning; classroom management; parent involvement;  
379 and school safety.

380       4. Provide inservice activities and support targeted to the  
381 individual needs of new teachers participating in the  
382 professional learning certification and education competency  
383 program under s. 1012.56(8)(a).

384       5. Include a professional learning catalog for inservice  
385 activities, pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education,  
386 for all district employees from all fund sources. The catalog  
387 must be updated annually by September 1, must be based on input



651894

388 from teachers and district and school instructional leaders, and  
389 must use the latest available student achievement data and  
390 research to enhance rigor and relevance in the classroom. Each  
391 district inservice catalog must be aligned to and support the  
392 school-based inservice catalog and school improvement plans  
393 pursuant to s. 1001.42(18). Each district inservice catalog must  
394 provide a description of the training that middle grades  
395 instructional personnel and school administrators receive on the  
396 district's code of student conduct adopted pursuant to s.  
397 1006.07; integrated digital instruction and competency-based  
398 instruction and CAPE Digital Tool certificates and CAPE industry  
399 certifications; classroom management; student behavior and  
400 interaction; extended learning opportunities for students; and  
401 instructional leadership. District plans must be approved by the  
402 district school board annually in order to ensure compliance  
403 with subsection (1) and to allow for dissemination of research-  
404 based best practices to other districts. District school boards  
405 shall submit verification of their approval to the Commissioner  
406 of Education no later than October 1, annually. Each school  
407 principal may establish and maintain an individual professional  
408 learning plan for each instructional employee assigned to the  
409 school as a seamless component to the school improvement plans  
410 developed pursuant to s. 1001.42(18). An individual professional  
411 learning plan must be related to specific performance data for  
412 the students to whom the teacher is assigned, define the  
413 inservice objectives and specific measurable improvements  
414 expected in student performance as a result of the inservice  
415 activity, and include an evaluation component that determines  
416 the effectiveness of the professional learning plan.



651894

417        6. Include inservice activities for school administrative  
418 personnel, aligned to the state's educational leadership  
419 standards, which address updated skills necessary for  
420 instructional leadership and effective school management  
421 pursuant to s. 1012.986.

422        7. Provide for systematic consultation with regional and  
423 state personnel designated to provide technical assistance and  
424 evaluation of local professional learning programs.

425        8. Provide for delivery of professional learning by  
426 distance learning and other technology-based delivery systems to  
427 reach more educators at lower costs.

428        9. Provide for the continuous evaluation of the quality and  
429 effectiveness of professional learning programs in order to  
430 eliminate ineffective programs and strategies and to expand  
431 effective ones. Evaluations must consider the impact of such  
432 activities on the performance of participating educators and  
433 their students' achievement and behavior.

434        10. For all grades, emphasize:

435            a. Interdisciplinary planning, collaboration, and  
436 instruction.

437            b. Alignment of curriculum and instructional materials to  
438 the state academic standards adopted pursuant to s. 1003.41.

439            c. Use of small learning communities; problem-solving,  
440 inquiry-driven research and analytical approaches for students;  
441 strategies and tools based on student needs; competency-based  
442 instruction; integrated digital instruction; and project-based  
443 instruction.

444  
445 Each school that includes any of grades 6, 7, or 8 shall include



651894

446 in its school improvement plan, required under s. 1001.42(18), a  
447 description of the specific strategies used by the school to  
448 implement each item listed in this subparagraph.

449       11. Provide training to reading coaches, classroom  
450 teachers, and school administrators in effective methods of  
451 identifying characteristics of conditions such as dyslexia and  
452 other causes of diminished phonological processing skills;  
453 incorporating instructional techniques into the general  
454 education setting which are proven to improve reading  
455 performance for all students; and using predictive and other  
456 data to make instructional decisions based on individual student  
457 needs. The training must help teachers integrate phonemic  
458 awareness; phonics, word study, and spelling; reading fluency;  
459 vocabulary, including academic vocabulary; and text  
460 comprehension strategies into an explicit, systematic, and  
461 sequential approach to reading instruction, including  
462 multisensory intervention strategies. Such training for teaching  
463 foundational skills must be based on the science of reading and  
464 include phonics instruction for decoding and encoding as the  
465 primary instructional strategy for word reading. Instructional  
466 strategies included in the training may not employ the three-  
467 cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for  
468 teaching word reading. Such instructional strategies may include  
469 visual information and strategies which improve background and  
470 experiential knowledge, add context, and increase oral language  
471 and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to  
472 teach word reading. Each district must provide all elementary  
473 grades instructional personnel access to training sufficient to  
474 meet the requirements of s. 1012.585(3)(f).



651894

475        12. Provide at least one autism-specific professional  
476 development opportunity annually for instructional personnel and  
477 school-based administrators. The professional development must  
478 be developed and delivered in coordination with the district's  
479 assigned Center for Autism and Related Disabilities and must  
480 include evidence-based practices for supporting students with  
481 autism spectrum disorder across all levels of need, including  
482 academic instruction, behavioral supports, communication  
483 strategies, and inclusive practices.

484        Section 10. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

485  
486 ===== T I T L E   A M E N D M E N T =====  
487 And the title is amended as follows:

488        Delete everything before the enacting clause  
489 and insert:

490                    A bill to be entitled  
491        An act relating to students with autism spectrum  
492        disorder; amending s. 393.063, F.S.; revising the  
493        definition of the term "autism"; amending s. 1004.85,  
494        F.S.; requiring certain program participants at  
495        educator preparation institutes to complete the autism  
496        micro-credential; requiring each educator preparation  
497        institute to offer training on teaching students with  
498        certain disabilities; creating s. 1009.636, F.S.;  
499        providing legislative findings; creating the Autism  
500        Educator Loan Forgiveness Program; providing  
501        eligibility requirements; providing criteria for loan  
502        repayment assistance; providing requirements for  
503        teachers to receive an annual payment; requiring the



504        State Board of Education to adopt rules; amending s.  
505        1012.22, F.S.; revising salary supplements a district  
506        school board must provide; revising which district  
507        school board duties collective bargaining may not  
508        preclude; amending s. 1012.551, F.S.; revising core  
509        curricula for teacher preparation programs; requiring  
510        a teacher preparation program to include the autism  
511        micro-credential; amending s. 1012.552, F.S.;  
512        providing that the Coaching for Educator Readiness and  
513        Teaching Certification Program must include completion  
514        of the autism micro-credential; amending s. 1012.585,  
515        F.S.; revising requirements for the renewal of a  
516        professional certificate; amending s. 1012.586, F.S.;  
517        providing that personnel certified in exceptional  
518        student education who complete the Autism Spectrum  
519        Disorder Endorsement are eligible for a stipend;  
520        amending s. 1012.98, F.S.; requiring a professional  
521        learning system to provide at least one autism-  
522        specific professional development opportunity;  
523        providing requirements for the professional  
524        development; providing an effective date.



LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
01/14/2026	.	
	.	
	.	
	.	

---

The Committee on Education Pre-K - 12 (Harrell) recommended the following:

1       **Senate Amendment to Amendment (651894) (with title  
2 amendment)**

3           Delete lines 5 - 19.

4           ===== T I T L E    A M E N D M E N T =====  
5  
6           And the title is amended as follows:

7           Delete lines 492 - 493

8           and insert:

9           disorder; amending s. 1004.85,

By Senator Harrell

31-00391-26

2026206

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

12           Section 1. Subsection (4) of section 1012.582, Florida  
13 Statutes, is amended to read:

14 1012.582 Continuing education and inservice training for  
15 teaching students with developmental and emotional or behavioral  
16 disabilities.--

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

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

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

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



## THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

**COMMITTEES:**  
Appropriations Committee on Higher  
Education, *Chair*  
Health Policy, *Vice Chair*  
Appropriations  
Appropriations Committee on Health  
and  
Human Services  
Children, Families, and Elder Affairs  
Education Postsecondary  
Environment and Natural Resources  
Rules

**SENATOR GAYLE HARRELL**  
31st District

December 10, 2025

Senator Corey Simon, Chair  
Senate Committee on Education Pre-K - 12  
415 Knott Building  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Chair Simon,

I respectfully request that SB 206 – Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, be placed on the next available agenda for the Committee on Education Pre-K - 12.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact my office. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gayle".

Senator Gayle Harrell  
Senate District 31

Cc: Matthew Bouck, Staff Director  
Secret Williams, Committee Administrative Assistant

REPLY TO:

- 312 SE Denver Avenue, Stuart, Florida 34994 (772) 221-4019 FAX: (888) 263-7895
- 404 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5031

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**BEN ALBRITTON**  
President of the Senate

**JASON BRODEUR**  
President Pro Tempore

The Florida Senate

01/13/2026

Meeting Date

Sen, Education Prek-12

Committee

# APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

SB 206

Bill Number or Topic

Name Jacob Littlefield

Phone (617) 997-8600

Address 6002 Grand Palm Dr Apt 432  
Street

Email jacoblittlefield19@gmail.com

Tampa

FL

33647

City

State

Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

## PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](https://www.flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

01/13/2026

The Florida Senate

206

Meeting Date

Education Prek-K12

Bill Number or Topic

Committee

Name Victoria Zepp

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

8336188180

Address 310 West College Avenue

Email Victoria@team180.com

Street

Tallahassee

FL

32301

City

State

Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

OR

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

## PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

 I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship. I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

Family Support Services

 I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](https://www.leg.state.fl.us/2020-2022JointRules.pdf)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

1/13/2026

Meeting Date

Education Pre k-12

Committee

Name Jean Federico

Address 3911 Ponce de Leon Blvd

Street

Sebring

FL

33872

City

State

Zip

The Florida Senate

## APPEARANCE RECORD

Deliver both copies of this form to  
Senate professional staff conducting the meeting

SB 206

Bill Number or Topic

Amendment Barcode (if applicable)

Phone 863-873-4531

Email jfederico940@gmail.com

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

### PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without  
compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist,  
representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received  
something of value for my appearance  
(travel, meals, lodging, etc.),  
sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf \(flsenate.gov\)](http://flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

The Florida Senate

# APPEARANCE RECORD

13 Jan 2026

Meeting Date

Education RICL

Committee

Name

~~Nicole Grabner~~ Nicole Grabner

Phone

940-867-7534

Address

8506 Lagine Circle

Email

Street

Sebastian

FL

32976

City

State

Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

## PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf](http://flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf) (flsenate.gov)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

1/13/2026

Meeting Date

ED Pre K 12

Committee

Name Marquise McMiller Orange County Public Schools

Phone 407 405-2050

Address 445 W Amelia St  
Street

Email Marquise.mcmiller@ocps.net

City

State

Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

**OR**

Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1. [2020-2022JointRules.pdf](https://flsenate.gov/2020-2022JointRules.pdf) (flsenate.gov)

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

2/13/2026

Meeting Date

ED PRE K - 12

Committee

Name Marquise McMILLER Orange County Public Schools Phone 407-405-2050

Address 445 W. Amelia St Email marquise.mcmiller@ocps  
Street

Orlando

FL

32301

City

State

Zip

Speaking:  For  Against  Information

OR Waive Speaking:  In Support  Against

**PLEASE CHECK ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

I am appearing without compensation or sponsorship.

I am a registered lobbyist, representing:

I am not a lobbyist, but received something of value for my appearance (travel, meals, lodging, etc.), sponsored by:

While it is a tradition to encourage public testimony, time may not permit all persons wishing to speak to be heard at this hearing. Those who do speak may be asked to limit their remarks so that as many persons as possible can be heard. If you have questions about registering to lobby please see Fla. Stat. §11.045 and Joint Rule 1, [2020-2022JointRules.pdf](#) ([flsenate.gov](#))

This form is part of the public record for this meeting.

S-001 (08/10/2021)

600

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Division of Elections

I, Cord Byrd, Secretary of State,  
do hereby certify that

*Omar Monteagugo*

is duly appointed a member of the

**Education Practices Commission**

for a term beginning on the Thirteenth day of November, A.D., 2025, until the Thirtieth day of September, A.D., 2027 and is subject to be confirmed by the Senate during the next regular session of the Legislature.

If photocopied or chemically altered, the word "VOID" will appear.

"State of Florida" appears in small letters across the face of this 8 1/2 x 11" document.

*Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the  
State of Florida, at Tallahassee, the Capital, this  
the Tenth day of December, A.D., 2025.*



Secretary of State



Ryan Petty, Chair  
Esther Byrd, Vice Chair  
Members  
Grazie P. Christie  
Layla Collins  
Daniel P. Foganholl, Sr.  
Kelly Garcia  
MaryLynn Magar

November 19, 2025

The Honorable Cord Byrd  
Secretary of State  
R.A. Gray Building  
500 South Bronough Street, Room 316  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Secretary Byrd:

Please find below a listing of the Education Practices Commission's newly appointed member. Florida's State Board of Education officially appointed this member at its November 13, 2025, meeting. The appointee is now subject to Senate confirmation.

APPOINTEE	TERM BEGAN	SEAT FILLED	TERM EXPIRES	REPLACING
Omar Monteagudo	October 1, 2023	November 13, 2025	September 30, 2027	Benjamin Henry

CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Omar Monteagudo      Address: [REDACTED]  
Administrator      Phone: [REDACTED]

If I can assist you further, please do not hesitate to contact me at 850-245-0340. We look forward to this confirmation.

Sincerely,

Josey McDaniel, Ed.D.  
Deputy Chancellor of Educator Quality

JM/rk

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

# OATH OF OFFICE

(Art. II, § 5(b), Fla. Const.; § 92.50, Florida Statutes)

2025 DEC -8 PM 2:09

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

STATE OF FLORIDA

County of Broward

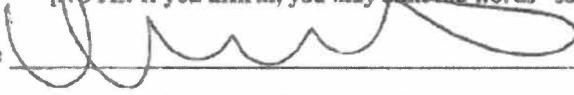
I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida; that I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the State, and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of

## Education Practices Commission

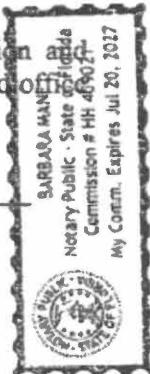
(Full Name of Office – Abbreviations Not Accepted)

on which I am now about to enter, so help me God.

[NOTE: If you affirm, you may omit the words "so help me God." See § 92.52, Fla. Stat.]

Signature 

Sworn to and subscribed before me by means of physical presence  OR online notarization   
this 5 day of December, 2025.



Signature of Officer Administering Oath or of Notary Public

(To be completed only by judges administering oath – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)

Print Name

Title

Court

(To be completed by officer administering oath, other than judges – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)

Affix Seal Below

Personally Known  OR Produced Identification

Type of Identification Produced Florida Driver License

## ACCEPTANCE

I accept the office listed in the above Oath of Office.

Mailing Address: Home  Office



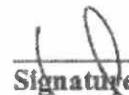
Street or Post Office Box



City, State, Zip Code

Omar Monteagudo

Print Name



1185

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Elections

I, Cord Byrd, Secretary of State,  
do hereby certify that

*John Euliano*

is duly appointed a member of the

**Commission for Independent Education**

for a term beginning on the Seventeenth day of October, A.D., 2025, until the Thirtieth day of June, A.D., 2028 and is subject to be confirmed by the Senate during the next regular session of the Legislature.

If photocopied or chemically altered, the word "VOID" will appear.

"State of Florida" appears in small letters across the face of this 8 1/2" x 11" document.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the State of Florida, at Tallahassee, the Capital, this the Fourteenth day of November, A.D., 2025.



*E. E. Euliano*

Secretary of State

DSDE 99 (3/03)

The original document has a reflective line mark in paper. Hold at an angle to view when checking.



**RON DeSANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

RECEIVED

2025 OCT 24 AM 10:35

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

October 17, 2025

Secretary Cord Byrd  
Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building, Room 316  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Secretary Byrd:

Please be advised I have made the following appointment under the provisions of Section 1005.21, Florida Statutes:

Mr. John Euliano  
1152 Queen Anne Court  
Winter Springs, Florida 32708

as a member of the Commission for Independent Education, filling a vacant seat previously occupied by Sharon Taylor Ellis, subject to confirmation by the Senate. This appointment is effective October 17, 2025, for a term ending June 30, 2028.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. DeSantis".

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

RD/dw

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

2025 NOV 12 PM 12:53

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

# OATH OF OFFICE

(Art. II. § 5(b), Fla. Const.; § 92.50, Florida Statutes)

STATE OF FLORIDA

County of Seminole

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida; that I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the State, and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of

## the Commission for Independent Education

(Full Name of Office – Abbreviations Not Accepted)

on which I am now about to enter, so help me God.

[NOTE: If you affirm, you may omit the words "so help me God." See § 92.52, Fla. Stat.]

Signature 

*Sworn to and subscribed before me by means of physical presence*  *OR online notarization*   
this 5 day of 11, 2025.

  
Signature of Officer Administering Oath or of Notary Public

(To be completed only by judges administering oath – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)

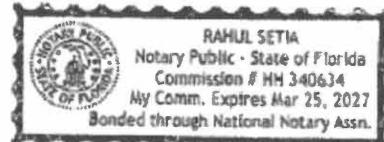
Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Court \_\_\_\_\_

(To be completed by officer administering oath, other than judges – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)

Affix Seal Below



Personally Known  OR Produced Identification   
Type of Identification Produced Florida Drivers License

# ACCEPTANCE

I accept the office listed in the above Oath of Office.

Mailing Address: Home  Office

1152 QUEEN ANNE COURT

Street or Post Office Box

WINTER SPRINGS, FL 32708

City, State, Zip Code

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_

1185

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Elections

I, Cord Byrd, Secretary of State,  
do hereby certify that

*Troy A. Stefano*

is duly appointed a member of the

**Commission for Independent Education**

for a term beginning on the First day of July, A.D., 2025, until  
the Thirtieth day of June, A.D., 2027 and is subject to be  
confirmed by the Senate during the next regular session of the  
Legislature.

State of Florida appears in small letters across the face of this 8 1/2 x 11" document.

Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the  
State of Florida, at Tallahassee, the Capital, this  
the Tenth day of December, A.D., 2025.



Secretary of State



**RON DESANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
2025 JUL -2 AM 10: 22  
DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

July 1, 2025

Secretary Cord Byrd  
Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building, Room 316  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Secretary Byrd:

Please be advised I have made the following reappointment under the provisions of Section 1005.21, Florida Statutes:

Mr. Troy Stefano  
4145 Wellington Shores Drive  
Wellington, Florida 33449

as a member of the Commission for Independent Education, subject to confirmation by the Senate. This appointment is effective July 1, 2025, for a term ending June 30, 2027.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Ron DeSantis.

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

RD/kf

# OATH OF OFFICE

(Art. II. § 5(b), Fla. Const.; § 92.50, Florida Statutes)

STATE OF FLORIDA

County of Lake County

RECEIVED  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
2025 DEC - 1 PM 2:51  
DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida; that I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the State, and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of

Commissioner, Commission for Independent Education  
(Full Name of Office – Abbreviations Not Accepted)

on which I am now about to enter, so help me God.

[NOTE: If you affirm, you may omit the words "so help me God." See § 92.52, Fla. Stat.]

Signature T. G. D.

Sworn to and subscribed before me by means of physical presence  OR online notarization   
this 25<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2025.

Susanna E Clark

Signature of Officer Administering Oath or of Notary Public

(To be completed only by judges administering oath – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)

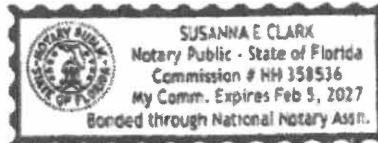
Print Name

Title

Court

(To be completed by officer administering oath, other than judges – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)

Affix Seal Below



Personally Known  OR Produced Identification

Type of Identification Produced Florida Driver License

# ACCEPTANCE

I accept the office listed in the above Oath of Office.

Mailing Address: Home  Office

4145 Wellington Shores Dr.  
Street or Post Office Box

Wellington, FL 33449  
City, State, Zip Code

Troy A. Stefano

Print Name

TAS  
Signature

1185

STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Elections

I, Cord Byrd, Secretary of State,  
do hereby certify that

*Christopher Lynn*

is duly appointed a member of the

**Commission for Independent Education**

for a term beginning on the Seventeenth day of October, A.D., 2025, until the Thirtieth day of June, A.D., 2027 and is subject to be confirmed by the Senate during the next regular session of the Legislature.

*Given under my hand and the Great Seal of the  
State of Florida, at Tallahassee, the Capital, this  
the Tenth day of December, A.D., 2025.*



*Cord Byrd*

Secretary of State



**RON DESANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

RECEIVED

2025 OCT 24 AM 10:35

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL



October 17, 2025

Secretary Cord Byrd  
Department of State  
R.A. Gray Building, Room 316  
500 South Bronough Street  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0250

Dear Secretary Byrd:

Please be advised I have made the following appointment under the provisions of Section 1005.21, Florida Statutes:

Dr. Christopher "Sam" Lynn  
512 Duff Drive  
Winter Garden, Florida 34787

as a member of the Commission for Independent Education, succeeding Judith Marty, subject to confirmation by the Senate. This appointment is effective October 17, 2025, for a term ending June 30, 2027.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Ron DeSantis in black ink.

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

RD/dw

RECEIVED

# OATH OF OFFICE

2025 DEC -8 PM 2:34

(Art. II, § 5(b), Fla. Const.; § 92.50, Florida Statutes)

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

STATE OF FLORIDA

County of Orange

I do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support, protect, and defend the Constitution and Government of the United States and of the State of Florida; that I am duly qualified to hold office under the Constitution of the State, and that I will well and faithfully perform the duties of

**the Commission for Independent Education**

(Full Name of Office – Abbreviations Not Accepted)

on which I am now about to enter, so help me God.

[NOTE: If you affirm, you may omit the words "so help me God." See § 92.52, Fla. Stat.]

Signature Christopher Lynn

Sworn to and subscribed before me by means of physical presence  OR online notarization   
this 5 day of December, 2025

<p>(To be completed only by judges administering oath – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)</p> <p>Print Name _____</p> <p>Title _____</p> <p>Court _____</p>		<p>(To be completed by officer administering oath, other than judges – see § 92.50, Florida Statutes.)</p> <p>Affix Seal Below</p> <p></p> <p>THALESH R. SAMSOONDAR Notary Public State of Florida Comm# HH607454 Expires 1/19/2029</p> <p>Personally Known <input type="checkbox"/> OR Produced Identification <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Type of Identification Produced <u>FL Drivers License</u></p>
---	--	---

## ACCEPTANCE

I accept the office listed in the above Oath of Office.

Mailing Address: Home  Office

512 Duff Dr

Street or Post Office Box

Winter Garden, FL 34787

City, State, Zip Code

Christopher Lynn

Print Name

Christopher Lynn

Signature



# THE FLORIDA SENATE

Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100

## COMMITTEES:

Ethics and Elections, *Chair*  
Finance and Tax, *Vice Chair*  
Appropriations Committee on Pre-K - 12 Education  
Education Pre-K - 12  
Fiscal Policy  
Health Policy  
Judiciary  
Rules

## JOINT COMMITTEE:

Joint Administrative Procedures Committee

**SENATOR DON GAETZ**  
1st District

January 13, 2026

**The Honorable Corey Simon**  
Chair, Committee on Education Pre-K 12  
201 The Capitol  
404 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

Dear Chair Simon,

I respectfully request an excused absence from January 13th, 2026, meeting of the Committee on Education Pre-K 12.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Senator Don Gaetz

### REPLY TO:

- 418 W. Garden Street, Fourth Floor, Pensacola, Florida 32502 (850) 595-1036
- Brackin Building, Third Floor, 302 N. Wilson Street, Crestview, Florida 32536
- 405 Senate Building, 404 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-1100 (850) 487-5001

Senate's Website: [www.flsenate.gov](http://www.flsenate.gov)

**BEN ALBRITTON**  
President of the Senate

**JASON BRODEUR**  
President Pro Tempore

# CourtSmart Tag Report

Room: KB 412

Caption: Senate K-12 Committee

Case No.:

Type:

Judge:

Started: 1/13/2026 1:32:45 PM

Ends: 1/13/2026 2:19:30 PM

Length: 00:46:45

1:32:46 PM Chair Simon calls meeting to order  
1:32:48 PM Roll call  
1:33:03 PM Chair Simon gives introductory announcements  
1:33:20 PM Tab 2: SB 420  
1:33:40 PM Chair Simon recognizes Sen Burgess to explain the bill  
1:33:43 PM Sen Burgess  
1:35:54 PM Chair Simon  
1:35:57 PM Questions:  
1:36:01 PM Sen Davis  
1:36:42 PM Sen Burgess  
1:36:44 PM Sen Davis  
1:37:25 PM Sen Burgess  
1:38:51 PM Sen Davis  
1:39:26 PM Sen Burgess  
1:40:24 PM Sen Davis  
1:41:01 PM Sen Burgess  
1:41:44 PM Sen Davis  
1:42:23 PM Sen Burgess  
1:43:54 PM Chair Simon  
1:43:57 PM Sen Osgood  
1:45:08 PM Sen Burgess  
1:47:00 PM Sen Osgood  
1:48:39 PM Sen Burgess  
1:49:40 PM Chair Simon  
1:49:45 PM Sen Davis  
1:51:02 PM Sen Burgess  
1:53:22 PM Chair Simon acknowledges waives speaking  
1:53:42 PM Chair Simon recognizes Sen Burgess to close on the bill  
1:53:45 PM Sen Burgess  
1:54:22 PM Roll call  
1:54:36 PM Chair Simon reports on SB 420  
1:54:42 PM Tab 1: SB 206  
1:54:54 PM Chair Simon recognizes Sen Harrell to explain am. 651894  
1:55:13 PM Sen Harrell  
1:58:23 PM Sen Harrell  
1:58:38 PM Chair Simon recognizes Sen Harrell to explain am. 478802  
1:59:23 PM Questions:  
1:59:27 PM Sen Berman  
1:59:40 PM Sen Harrell  
2:00:13 PM Chair Simon  
2:01:13 PM Questions:  
2:01:15 PM Sen Davis  
2:02:30 PM Sen Harrell  
2:02:33 PM Sen Davis  
2:03:00 PM Sen Harrell  
2:03:09 PM Sen Davis  
2:03:52 PM Sen Harrell  
2:05:20 PM Sen Davis  
2:05:43 PM Sen Harrell  
2:05:49 PM Sen Osgood  
2:06:56 PM Sen Harrell  
2:08:14 PM Appearance Cards:

**2:08:25 PM** Marquise McMiller, Orange County Public Schools  
**2:09:00 PM** Nicole Grabner  
**2:10:06 PM** Chair Simon acknowledges waives speaking  
**2:10:18 PM** Chair Simon recognizes Sen Harrell to close on the bill  
**2:10:23 PM** Sen Harrell  
**2:11:13 PM** Roll call  
**2:11:27 PM** Chair Simon reports on SB 206  
**2:11:34 PM** Tab 3: SB 556  
**2:11:41 PM** Chair Simon recognizes Sen Berman to explain the bill  
**2:11:44 PM** Sen Berman  
**2:13:13 PM** Chair Simon recognizes Sen Berman to explain am. 766280  
**2:13:22 PM** Sen Berman  
**2:13:57 PM** Chair Simon  
**2:14:18 PM** Chair Simon acknowledges waives speaking  
**2:15:24 PM** Appearance Cards:  
**2:15:28 PM** Nicole Grabner  
**2:16:02 PM** Chair Simon acknowledges waives speaking  
**2:16:16 PM** Debate:  
**2:16:19 PM** Sen Yarborough  
**2:16:50 PM** Chair Simon  
**2:17:05 PM** Chair Simon recognizes Sen Berman to close on the bill  
**2:17:07 PM** Sen Berman  
**2:17:33 PM** Roll call  
**2:17:46 PM** Chair Simon reports on SB 556  
**2:17:58 PM** Chair Simon  
**2:18:25 PM** Tab 4-7: Senate Confirmation Hearings  
**2:18:48 PM** Roll call  
**2:19:01 PM** Chair Simon reports on Tabs 4 through 7  
**2:19:15 PM** Chair Simon  
**2:19:24 PM** Adjournment