

<b>Tab 1</b>	<b>SB 564</b> by <b>Yarborough</b> ; Identical to H 00461 Student Volunteers at Polling Locations				
861108	A	S	ED, Yarborough	Delete L.31:	01/26 03:22 PM

<b>Tab 2</b>	<b>SB 1062</b> by <b>Brodeur (CO-INTRODUCERS) Burgess, Gaetz</b> ; Similar to H 01059 Speech and Debate				
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<b>Tab 3</b>	<b>SB 1340</b> by <b>Harrell</b> ; Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring				
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<b>Tab 4</b>	<b>SB 1646</b> by <b>Simon</b> ; Compare to H 01321 Educational Facilities				
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<b>Tab 5</b>	<b>SB 1718</b> by <b>Calatayud</b> ; Similar to H 00561 Educator Preparation and Certification				
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**The Florida Senate**  
**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**

**EDUCATION PRE-K - 12**  
**Senator Simon, Chair**  
**Senator Calatayud, Vice Chair**

**MEETING DATE:** Tuesday, January 27, 2026**TIME:** 3:30—5:30 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 564</b> Yarborough (Identical H 461)	Student Volunteers at Polling Locations; Providing that specified high school students who volunteer to assist poll workers are not subject to provisions prohibiting certain agencies and state and local officials from soliciting, accepting, or otherwise using private funds or certain personal services for election-related expenses, etc.	EE 01/13/2026 Favorable ED 01/27/2026 RC
2	<b>SB 1062</b> Brodeur (Similar H 1059)	Speech and Debate; Citing this act as the "Florida Speech and Debate Education Act"; creating the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame; designating Florida Speech and Debate Week each year in November; designating the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) as the official statewide speech and debate organization; authorizing a certified teacher to earn an endorsement in speech and debate; requiring the Florida Virtual School to establish the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation, etc.	ED 01/27/2026 AED FP
3	<b>SB 1340</b> Harrell	Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring; Specifying requirements for a school district if a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia; providing circumstances under which a student is required to undergo further screening for dyslexia or dyscalculia, etc.	ED 01/27/2026 AHS RC

**COMMITTEE MEETING EXPANDED AGENDA**

Education Pre-K - 12

Tuesday, January 27, 2026, 3:30—5:30 p.m.

TAB	BILL NO. and INTRODUCER	BILL DESCRIPTION and SENATE COMMITTEE ACTIONS	COMMITTEE ACTION
4	<b>SB 1646</b> Simon (Compare H 1321)	Educational Facilities; Revising the formula to calculate funds for remodeling, renovation, maintenance, repairs, and site improvement of existing facilities; requiring a board to prioritize a specified amount of funds to correct unsafe, unhealthy, or unsanitary conditions; requiring the Department of Education to participate in a design review process; authorizing a district school board to enter into a contingency construction contract, etc.  ED 01/27/2026 AED AP	
5	<b>SB 1718</b> Calatayud (Similar H 561)	Educator Preparation and Certification; Authorizing an educator preparation institute to allow certain program participants to enroll in introductory coursework; revising the criteria for the award of a temporary educator certification to include certain persons with expired professional certificates; requiring that subject area coverages and endorsements for a certificateholder be reinstated with the certificateholder's professional certificate; requiring the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence to collaborate with the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching for specified purposes, etc.  ED 01/27/2026 AED RC	
TAB	OFFICE and APPOINTMENT (HOME CITY)	FOR TERM ENDING	COMMITTEE ACTION
<b>Senate Confirmation Hearing:</b> A public hearing will be held for consideration of the below-named executive appointment to the office indicated.			
<b>State Board of Education</b>			
6	Collins, Layla ()	12/31/2028	
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.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Ethics and Elections

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BILL: SB 564

INTRODUCER: Senator Yarborough

SUBJECT: Student Volunteers at Polling Locations

DATE: January 26, 2026

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Biehl	Roberts	EE	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	Palazesi	Bouck	ED	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
3.			RC	

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## **I. Summary:**

SB 564 revises an existing prohibition against use of private funds for election-related expenses by authorizing Florida high school students who are registered or preregistered to vote to volunteer to assist poll workers for the purpose of receiving community service hours.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Poll Workers**

Poll workers are short-term employees of supervisors of elections who staff voting sites, assist voters, and work in the elections office. Before beginning service as a poll worker, a person must complete a training curriculum developed by the Department of State.<sup>1</sup>

### **Use of Private Funds for Election-Related Expenses**

Current law prohibits an agency or a state or local official responsible for conducting elections from soliciting, accepting, using, or disposing of any donation in the form of money, grants, property, or personal services from an individual or nongovernmental entity for the purpose of funding any type of expenses related to election administration. Such expenses include, but are not limited to, voter education, voter outreach, voter registration programs, or the cost of any litigation related to election administration.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 102.014(1), F.S.

<sup>2</sup> Section 97.0291, F.S.

The prohibition does not include the donation and acceptance of space to be used for a polling room or an early voting site.<sup>3</sup>

### **Qualifications to Register or Vote**

A person may become a registered voter only if that person:

- Is at least 18 years of age;
- Is a citizen of the United States;
- Is a legal resident of the State of Florida;
- Is a legal resident of the county in which that person seeks to be registered; and
- Registers pursuant to the Florida Election Code.<sup>4</sup>

A person who is otherwise qualified may preregister on or after that person's 16th birthday and may vote in any election occurring on or after that person's 18th birthday.<sup>5</sup> Because registration books must be closed on the 29th day before each election and remain closed until after that election,<sup>6</sup> preregistration allows a person to ensure that he or she will be able to vote in an election that may occur soon after his or her 18th birthday.

### **Community Service Hours**

High school students in Florida may use community service hours to satisfy certain requirements for various educational programs. Florida law encourages school districts to initiate service learning which is a student-centered, research-based teaching and learning strategy that engages students in meaningful service activities in their schools or communities.<sup>7</sup> Service hours that high school students devote to course-based service-learning activities may be counted toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and community service requirements for participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. School districts are also encouraged to include service learning as part of any course or activity required for high school graduation.<sup>8</sup> Some school districts require community service or service learning hours as part of their high school graduation requirement. For example, Broward County Public Schools and the School District of Palm Beach County require students seeking a standard high school diploma to complete, 40 and 20 hours of community service hours, respectively.<sup>9</sup>

Another educational program with a community service component is the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (BFSP). The Florida BFSP is a lottery-funded initiative that supports high school graduates pursuing degrees, certificates, or applied technology programs at eligible

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<sup>3</sup> Section 97.0291, F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 97.041(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 97.041(1)(b), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 97.055(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1003.497,(1), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* at (3)(b).

<sup>9</sup> Broward County Public Schools, *Student Activities and Volunteer Service Learning Hours*, available at <https://www.browardschools.com/bcps-departments/student-activities/student-activities-and-volunteer-service-learning-hours> (last visited Jan 21, 2026). The School District of Palm Beach County, *Community Service*, available at <https://www.palmbeachschools.org/studentsparents/grades-and-graduation-requirements/graduation-requirements/community-service> (last visited Jan 21, 2026).

postsecondary institutes.<sup>10</sup> The BFSP has four distinct scholarship awards that require volunteer service hours, paid work hours, or a combination of both:<sup>11</sup>

- Florida Academic Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 100 volunteer hours; 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.
- Florida Medallion Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 75 volunteer hours; 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.
- Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 30 volunteer hours; 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.
- Goal Seal Cape Scholarship: Requires an applicant to complete 30 volunteer hours; 100 paid work hours; or a combination of 100 total hours of volunteer and work hours.

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

SB 564 revises the prohibition against the use of private funds for election-related expenses. Specifically, the bill provides that the section does not prohibit high school students in this state who are registered or preregistered to vote from volunteering to assist poll workers for the purpose of receiving community service hours.

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.

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<sup>10</sup> Section 1009.53, F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program, *Scholarship Awards*, available at <https://floridabrightfutures.gov/#Scholarship%20Awards> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026).

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

None.

**B. Private Sector Impact:**

None.

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 97.0291, 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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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

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

**Senate Amendment**

Delete line 31  
and insert:  
workers for the purpose of receiving community service hours to  
meet community service requirements for high school graduation  
or postsecondary financial aid.



By Senator Yarborough

4-00196A-26

2026564

1 A bill to be entitled  
 2 An act relating to student volunteers at polling  
 3 locations; amending s. 97.0291, F.S.; providing that  
 4 specified high school students who volunteer to assist  
 5 poll workers are not subject to provisions prohibiting  
 6 certain agencies and state and local officials from  
 7 soliciting, accepting, or otherwise using private  
 8 funds or certain personal services for election-  
 9 related expenses; providing an effective date.  
 10  
 11 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
 12  
 13 Section 1. Section 97.0291, Florida Statutes, is amended to  
 14 read:  
 15 97.0291 Prohibition on use of private funds for election-  
 16 related expenses.—  
 17 (1) An ~~No~~ agency or a state or local official responsible  
 18 for conducting elections, including, but not limited to, a  
 19 supervisor of elections, may not solicit, accept, use, or  
 20 dispose of any donation in the form of money, grants, property,  
 21 or personal services from an individual or a nongovernmental  
 22 entity for the purpose of funding any type of expenses related  
 23 to election administration, including, but not limited to, voter  
 24 education, voter outreach, voter registration programs, or the  
 25 cost of any litigation related to election administration.  
 26 (2) This section does not prohibit:  
 27 (a) The donation and acceptance of space to be used for a  
 28 polling room or an early voting site.  
 29 (b) High school students in this state who are registered

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

4-00196A-26

2026564

30 or preregistered to vote from volunteering to assist poll  
 31 workers for the purpose of receiving community service hours.  
 32 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

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

**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.)

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

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BILL: SB 1062

INTRODUCER: Senator Brodeur and others

SUBJECT: Speech and Debate

DATE: January 26, 2026

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1. Sabitsch	Bouck	ED	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2. _____	_____	AED	_____
3. _____	_____	FP	_____

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**I. Summary:**

SB 1062 creates the “Florida Speech and Debate Education Act” that includes the following provisions:

- Designates the Florida Debate Initiative (FDI), Inc. as the official statewide organization responsible for speech and debate programs and outlines requirements, authorized expenditures, and reporting requirements of the organization.
- Requires the Department of Education (DOE) to collaborate with the FDI to establish regional traveling debate teams and outlines requirements for teams and expenditures.
- Provides annual reporting requirements for district school boards regarding speech and debate competitions.
- Creates the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame.
- Designates a week in November at the “Florida Speech and Debate Week” and describes the purposes of the week.
- Allows a certified teacher to earn an endorsement in speech and debate.
- Requires the Florida Virtual School to establish the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation and provides requirements for the institute.
- Requires the development of undergraduate and graduate coursework, certificates and micro-credentials in speech and debate education.
- Requires the DOE to approve specific speech and debate courses for inclusion in dual enrollment programs.

The bill provides \$4.6 million to implement these provisions. See Section V. Fiscal Impact Statement.

The bill takes effect on January 1, 2027.

## II. Present Situation:

### Debate and Public Speaking

#### *History*

Debate is an ancient form of argumentation. It was first used as a way to resolve quarrels, but it soon became apparent that it could also be used as a tool to teach people how to think critically and argue effectively. It originated in Greece, around 500 B.C. There, Socrates used it in his philosophy classes at the Academy in Athens.<sup>1</sup>

The Roman orators Cicero and Quintilian were masters of debate. They taught their students how to argue both sides of an issue so well that their opponents didn't even know they were being argued into a corner until it was too late!<sup>2</sup>

Medieval scholars also used debate as a method of discussing important ideas with each other in order to come up with new ways of thinking, from science to religion.<sup>3</sup>

The development of public speaking as a specific skill is strongly linked to the development of democracy in Ancient Greece. Starting in 621 B.C. in Athens, laws began to convert from an oral tradition heavily controlled by nobility to a written form that could be applied equally and consistently. This codification (creating an organized system of laws) took power from the nobility and moved it into the courts. Assemblies were formed to review, revise, and create laws. Accordingly, there had to be substantive debate and persuasion to reach agreements on how to manage this evolution of legal doctrine, and those coming before the courts needed to engage in public speaking to advocate for their position.<sup>4</sup>

Democracy demands public speaking as a tool for self-governance. Since being proficient in public speaking was so valuable, the study of how it works likewise became important, emerging as the study of rhetoric.<sup>5</sup>

#### *Movements in the United States and Florida*

As a working democracy, speech and debate have had profound effects on the United States, highlighted by the selected examples below:

- Alexander Hamilton-Thomas Jefferson debates after the Constitution was ratified in 1788 in their clash over the Bank of the United States became a defining moment in shaping America's economic direction and in clarifying the meaning of the Constitution.<sup>6</sup>
- The Lincoln-Douglas debates were a series of seven debates during the 1858 Illinois senatorial campaign that largely centered on the issue of extending slavery into the new U.S.

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<sup>1</sup> Learning Leaders, *The History of Debate*, <https://www.learningleaders.com/insights/the-history-of-debate-from-ancient-greece-to-remote-learning> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

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

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Boise State University, *A Brief History of Public Speaking*, <https://boisestate.pressbooks.pub/soc122/chapter/10-1-a-brief-history-of-public-speaking/> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

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

<sup>6</sup> The Federalist Society, *Hamilton V. Jefferson: The Central Bank Debate*, <https://fedsoc.org/commentary/videos/hamilton-v-jefferson-the-central-bank-debate-policybrief> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

territories following the Mexican War and would have a profound effect on the future of the United States.<sup>7</sup>

- The Kennedy-Nixon debates in 1960 when a debate for the presidency was presented for the first time on television and reached an estimated 70 million people.<sup>8</sup>

The National Speech and Debate Association provides recognition and support to high school students participating in speech and debate activities. Established in 1925, the Association held its first national tournament in 1931 with 49 schools from 17 states. Recent membership from 2023-2024 shows 141,132 students on school rosters with 3,152 high school members.<sup>9</sup> The association reported 200 Florida high school members with 10,344 students participating.<sup>10</sup>

There are two organizations that facilitate and promote speech and debate in Florida, the Florida Debate Initiative (FDI) and the Florida Civics & Debate Initiative (FCDI).

The FDI is a Florida not-for-profit corporation. It began as the Central Florida Debate Initiative from 2014 to 2019 and later became the FDI. The FDI is dedicated to fostering a new generation of leaders by providing access to exceptional civics education resources, debate programs, and expertly trained teachers. Programs offered by the FDI include:<sup>11</sup>

- The American Dream Debate (a bilingual debate tournament);
- Civic immersion experience in Washington, D.C.;
- DebateED 201(instruction for coaches);
- DebateED 101 (resources for educators);
- Speech and Debate Learning Retreat (for educators);
- Pro Camps FDI (student workshop);
- Salute to Service (leadership program);
- FDI Fellow Program (internship for college students);
- Florida Speech and Debate Summer Camp; and
- Turning Tides (a partnership program to empower youth in the juvenile justice system).<sup>12</sup>

The program is funded with a specific appropriation in the Florida budget of \$2.4 million in the 2025-2026 fiscal year.<sup>13</sup>

The FCDI is a program under the Department of Education (DOE) and the Florida Education Foundation. The FCDI was created in response to an Executive Order by the Governor that called for a comprehensive review of academic standards that included opportunities to equip high school graduates with sufficient knowledge of American Civics.<sup>14</sup> In 2020 the Governor

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<sup>7</sup> Britannica, *Lincoln-Douglas debates*, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Lincoln-Douglas-debates> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

<sup>8</sup> Britannica, *The Kennedy-Nixon debates*, <https://www.britannica.com/art/television-in-the-United-States/The-Kennedy-Nixon-debates> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

<sup>9</sup> National Speech & Debate Association, *Membership at a Glance*, <https://www.speechanddebate.org/membership-database/> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026).

<sup>10</sup> Email, National Speech & Debate Association (Jan. 21, 2026).

<sup>11</sup> Florida Debate Initiative, *Programs*, <https://www.floridadebate.org/programs> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> Specific Appropriation 106, s. 2, ch. 2025-198, Laws of Fla.

<sup>14</sup> Executive Order 19-32 (2019)

announced the establishment of the FCDI along with funding from the Marcus foundation for elevating civic knowledge, civic skills and civic disposition for middle and high school students. The Marcus Foundation<sup>15</sup> committed \$5 million over a three-year period towards the initiative with the following goals:<sup>16</sup>

- Promote the expansion of middle and high school debate and speech programs to all of Florida's public school districts;
- Increase middle school civics end of course state passage rates;
- Increase high school U.S. History end of course state passage rates;
- Implement a National Civics, Speech, and Debate competition for all students; and
- Make Florida a nationwide leader in training Florida high school teachers and train other states to continue or begin to successfully run competitive school speech and debate teams.<sup>17</sup>

The FDI contributes both financial resources and programmatic support to the FCDI to help advance FCDI's statewide goals of increasing civic literacy, amplifying student voice, and preparing the next generation of active, informed citizens. As FCDI's educational support organization, FDI focuses on:

- Educating and training coaches and students;
- Training judges and volunteers;
- Promoting educational competition opportunities;
- Leading training and leadership development experiences; and
- Establishing competition standards.<sup>18</sup>

### Special Observances in Florida

The legislature has designated specific days, weeks or months to provide special appreciation, celebration, or remembrance for various purposes. For each designation the day, week or month is described and in some cases either allows or requires the Governor to issue a proclamation for the observance.<sup>19</sup> Florida Law designates the following example observances:

- American Founders Month;<sup>20</sup>
- Holocaust Remembrance Day;<sup>21</sup>
- Responsible Fatherhood Month;<sup>22</sup>
- Foster Family Appreciation Week;<sup>23</sup> and
- Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (Ronshay Dugans Act).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>15</sup> The Marcus Foundation, *About the Marcus Foundation*, <https://marcusfoundation.org/about-the-marcus-foundation/> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026).

<sup>16</sup> Office of the Governor Press Release (Jan. 27, 2020), available at: <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2020/governor-ron-desantis-announces-florida-civics-and-debate-initiative-marcus>.

<sup>17</sup> Office of the Governor Press Release (Jan. 27, 2020), available at: <https://www.flgov.com/eog/news/press/2020/governor-ron-desantis-announces-florida-civics-and-debate-initiative-marcus>.

<sup>18</sup> [https://5400622c-3214-4001-887b-8a6328c71885.filesusr.com/ugd/ab06c2\\_3136dad194a64b39abf6fedbc941d5a2.pdf](https://5400622c-3214-4001-887b-8a6328c71885.filesusr.com/ugd/ab06c2_3136dad194a64b39abf6fedbc941d5a2.pdf), at 5.

<sup>19</sup> Chapter 683, F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Section 683.1455, F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Section 683.196, F.S.

<sup>22</sup> Section 683.3341, F.S.

<sup>23</sup> Section 683.333, F.S.

<sup>24</sup> Section 683.332, F.S.

## Florida Educator Certificate Endorsements

Florida law allows the Department of Education (DOE) to adopt endorsements as add-ons to an existing educator certificate.<sup>25</sup> Endorsements demonstrate specialized expertise in a subject area, instructional strategy or specific student population. The following are current adopted endorsements:

- American sign language;
- Athletic coaching;
- Autism spectrum disorders;
- Driver education;
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL);
- Gifted;
- Orientation and mobility;
- Prekindergarten disabilities;
- Reading; and
- Severe or profound disabilities.<sup>26</sup>

## Florida Virtual School

The Florida Virtual School (FLVS) was established in 1997<sup>27</sup> as a pilot project to create Florida first internet -based public high school. Currently, as a fully accredited, statewide public school district, FLVS offers more than 190 online courses to kindergarten through grade 12 students and has enrolled more than 4.6 million students. The FLVS exists as a not-for-profit corporation.<sup>28</sup>

Features of the FLVS include the following:<sup>29</sup>

- The FLVS is included in Florida's accountability system and receives a school grade based on the same criteria as other public schools.
- Florida school districts may choose to enter an agreement with FLVS to operate a district franchise/district virtual school.
- FLVS Flex Offers more than 190 tuition-free courses to Kindergarten-Grade 12 public, private, charter, and homeschool Florida students with year-round enrollment and 24/7 course availability. Students take FLVS courses to get ahead or graduate early, to allow flexibility for extracurricular activities, or to take courses not offered by their district.
- FLVS Full Time offers a comprehensive, full-time curriculum to Kindergarten-Grade 12 students in the state and follows the traditional 180-day academic calendar. FLVS Full Time combines the structure of a traditional school with the flexibility of online learning.
- Students enrolled in FLVS Flex and FLVS Full Time are funded based on courses successfully completed.

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<sup>25</sup> Section 1012.586, F.S.

<sup>26</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Educator Certification-Certificate Subjects*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/certificate-subjects/> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026).

<sup>27</sup> Section 1002.37, F.S.

<sup>28</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Florida Virtual School*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/florida-virtual-school/> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026).

<sup>29</sup> Florida Department of Education, *General Information About Florida Virtual School*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/florida-virtual-school/general-info-flvs.html> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026),

- Students attending a private school can enroll in FLVS Flex courses when their school affiliates with FLVS.<sup>30</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1062 creates the “Florida Speech and Debate Education Act,” and creates s. 1000.09, F.S., to provide legislative findings as follows:

- That speech and debate significantly improve literacy, critical thinking, research ability, civic knowledge, and leadership for students.
- That the state’s civics and debate expansion has become a national model, increasing access to this instruction in all regions and that sustaining and improving this success requires a permanent statewide organization with specialized expertise, program capacity, and year-round operational support.
- That the Florida Debate Initiative (FDI) has demonstrated statewide effectiveness and is uniquely positioned to ensure continuity, equitable access, quality programming, tournament infrastructure, and instructional rigor and that it is the intent of the Legislature to establish a comprehensive statewide infrastructure, under the FDI’s direction, that expands, supports, and elevates K–20 speech and debate education.

The section designates the FDI as the official statewide speech and debate organization and is given the following tasks:

- Manage the official Florida Speech and Debate League and its regional teams.
- Establish statewide competition rules, ballots, judging standards, and tournament calendars.
- Operate or supervise district, regional, and state tournaments.
- Train and certify coaches, judges, volunteers, and tournament staff.
- Provide statewide programmatic support, including student programs, educator training, and public service initiatives.
- Maintain statewide data reporting and annual accountability.
- Work constructively with nonstate-sanctioned leagues while upholding Florida’s civic and patriotic development goals.

Additionally, the FDI is required to implement and maintain a comprehensive suite of statewide programs, including all of the following:

- Student speech and debate programs.
- Student leadership and service programs.
- Competitive speech and debate training for students.
- Educator training.
- Postsecondary and workforce internships.
- Operation of speech and debate tournaments.

The section additionally authorizes the FDI to expend funds for the following:

- Administrative operations, including staffing, insurance, compliance, reporting, and statewide infrastructure.

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<sup>30</sup> Florida Department of Education, *General Information About Florida Virtual School*, <https://www.fldoe.org/schools/school-choice/virtual-edu/florida-virtual-school/general-info-flvs.html> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026),

- Programmatic operations, including curriculum, training, summer programs, workshops, camps, and mentorship programs.
- Tournament operations, including logistics, staff, judge training, technology, awards, and regional team operations.
- Travel, lodging, training, and transportation for participants.
- Public-private partnership development, including sponsorship and philanthropic support.

The FDI is required to make publicly available and submit to the DOE a report by December 31 of each year that includes the following:

- Student participation in statewide programs, by district and demographics.
- The number of active student teams in statewide speech and debate programs.
- Competitive and educational outcomes of statewide programs.
- A categorized summary of all expenditures.

The section allows a certified teacher to earn an endorsement in speech and debate and requires the DOE to adopt the requirements for the endorsement that include the following:

- Completion of coursework approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) in argumentation, rhetoric, communication, or debate instruction;
- Completion of professional development offered by the FDI or equivalent professional development offered by a Florida College System institution or state university;
- Competency, as determined by the SBE, in the rules, events, and competitive standards of scholastic debate.

The section requires the DOE to collaborate with the FDI to establish regional traveling debate teams to represent Florida in national competitions. Teams must be accessible to students at Title I and rural schools. Teams are required to provide competitive training and coaching for speech and debate. The bill permits all travel costs to be covered through legislative appropriation, public-private partnerships, and sponsorships and permits school districts to use school buses to transport students to and from speech and debate competitions.

The bill creates s. 265.0042, F.S., establishing the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame on the Plaza Level of the Capitol Building in Tallahassee. The bill requires the Department of Management Services to coordinate with the Department of Education (DOE) and the Commissioner of Education on the design and requires the hall of fame to do the following:

- Honor distinguished students, coaches, educators, alumni, veterans, public servants, benefactors, and supporters who have elevated speech and debate in this state.
- Preserve the history, impact, and cultural significance of competitive debate.
- Inspire future generations of Florida students to pursue speech, debate, public leadership, and civic excellence.
- Convene a committee to establish procedures to nominate and select individuals to be featured.

The bill creates s. 683.221, F.S., to designate that the week that includes the first Tuesday of November be designated as “Florida Speech and Debate Week” with the following purposes:

- To recognize the academic, civic, and leadership value of competitive speech and debate.
- To honor educators, coaches, judges, and school districts that support debate programming.



- To inspire students statewide to participate in debate as a pathway to civic engagement.
- To promote Florida's role as the national leader in scholastic speech and debate.

The bill modifies s. 1001.42, F.S., to require district school boards to make publicly available online and submit to the DOE an annual report by a date set by the DOE that includes the following:

- The number of active speech and debate teams.
- Student participation rates.
- Competitive performance and public service engagement.
- Transportation, facilities, and administrative support provided.
- Resources needed to expand the program.

The bill modifies s. 1002.37, F.S., to require the Florida Virtual School to establish the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation (ISDI). The institute is required to:

- Develop online curriculum, micro-credentials, and instructional modules for speech and debate.
- Create artificial intelligence-based coaching tools, digital judging tutorials, and analytics dashboards.
- Produce virtual reality and augmented reality simulations for competitive practice.
- Ensure equitable access for districts lacking onsite coaching capacity.

The bill creates s. 1004.0983, F.S., to require the Board of Governors (BOG) and the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop undergraduate and graduate coursework, certificates, and micro-credentials in speech and debate education, coaching, and tournament operations. The BOG and the SBE are permitted to collaborate with the FDI to develop coursework which may include the following:

- Rhetoric, argumentation, and communication theory.
- Coaching methods and competitive event instruction.
- Tournament management and adjudication.
- Public speaking pedagogy.

The bill creates an undesignated section of law that requires the DOE to approve postsecondary courses developed by the BOG and SBE pursuant to s. 1004.0983, F.S., created in the bill, for inclusion in dual enrollment programs for an eligible secondary student or home education student as provided in Florida Law.<sup>31</sup>

The bill takes effect January 1, 2027.

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

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

None.

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<sup>31</sup> Section 1007.271(1), F.S.

**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 provides a total appropriation of \$4.6 million for the 2026-2027 fiscal year as follows:

- \$2.4 million in recurring funds to be appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to support the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc.'s responsibilities including administrative, programmatic, and tournament operation duties.
- \$250,000 in recurring funds to be appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to support FDI's responsibilities for regional traveling debate teams to support their training, coaching, lodging, and competition costs.
- \$700,000 in recurring funds to be appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to school districts for travel costs to attend speech and debate competitions.
- \$500,000 in recurring funds to be appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the State Board of Education to develop the teacher endorsement and to support the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame.
- \$750,000 in recurring funds to be appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Virtual School to support the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends sections 1001.42 and 1002.37 of the Florida Statutes.  
This bill creates sections 265.0042, 683.221, 1000.09, and 1004.0983 of the Florida Statutes.  
The bill creates two undesignated sections of Florida Law.

**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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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

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

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Delete everything after the enacting clause  
and insert:

Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Florida Speech and  
Debate Education Act."

Section 2. Section 265.0042, Florida Statutes, is created  
to read:

265.0042 Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame.—

(1) There is created the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of



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Fame. The Department of Management Services shall set aside an area on the plaza level of the Capitol Building and shall consult with the Florida Education Foundation and the Commissioner of Education regarding the design and theme of the area.

(2) The hall of fame shall do all of the following:

(a) Honor distinguished students, coaches, educators, alumni, veterans, public servants, benefactors, and supporters who have elevated speech and debate in this state.

(b) Preserve the history, impact, and cultural significance of competitive debate.

(c) Inspire future generations of Florida students to pursue speech, debate, public leadership, and civic excellence.

(3) The hall of fame shall convene a committee to establish procedures to nominate and select individuals to be featured. The committee must include at least one member or his or her designee from the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc.

Section 3. Section 683.221, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

683.221 Florida Speech and Debate Week.—

(1) February 1 through February 7 shall be annually designated as "Florida Speech and Debate Week."

(2) Florida Speech and Debate Week shall be observed for all of the following purposes:

(a) To recognize the academic, civic, and leadership value of competitive speech and debate.

(b) To honor educators, coaches, judges, and school districts that support debate programming.

(c) To inspire students statewide to participate in debate



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as a pathway to civic engagement.

(d) To promote Florida's role as the national leader in scholastic speech and debate.

(3) Public and charter schools, state agencies, and other entities may observe Florida Speech and Debate Week.

Section 4. Section 1000.09, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1000.09 Competitive speech and debate.—

(1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—

(a) The Legislature finds that speech and debate significantly improve literacy, critical thinking, research ability, civic knowledge, and leadership for students of this state.

(b) The Legislature also finds that this state's civics and debate expansion has become a national model, increasing access to this instruction in all regions. Sustaining and improving upon this success requires a permanent statewide organization with specialized expertise, program capacity, and year-round operational support.

(c) The Legislature further finds that the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) has demonstrated statewide effectiveness and is uniquely positioned to ensure continuity, equitable access, quality programming, tournament infrastructure, and instructional rigor. It is the intent of the Legislature to establish a comprehensive statewide infrastructure, under FDI's direction, that expands, supports, and elevates K-20 speech and debate education.

(2) CREATION, DESIGNATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—FDI is designated as the official statewide speech and debate



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organization responsible for managing, developing, and expanding  
K-20 speech and debate programs.

(a)1. FDI shall do all of the following:

a. Manage the official Florida Speech and Debate League and  
its regional teams.

b. Establish statewide competition rules, ballots, judging  
standards, and tournament calendars.

c. Operate or supervise district, regional, and state  
tournaments.

d. Train and certify coaches, judges, volunteers, and  
tournament staff.

e. Provide statewide programmatic support, including  
student programs, educator training, and public service  
initiatives.

f. Maintain statewide data reporting and annual  
accountability.

g. Work constructively with nonstate-sanctioned leagues  
while upholding Florida's civic and patriotic development goals.

2. This paragraph may not be construed to prohibit schools,  
districts, or students from participating in speech and debate  
activities, leagues, or competitions not operated or supervised  
by FDI.

(b) FDI may establish and maintain partnerships with school  
districts, charter schools, state agencies, postsecondary  
institutions, nonprofit organizations, private entities, and  
national or international organizations to achieve the purposes  
of this section.

(3) STATEWIDE PROGRAMS.—FDI shall implement and maintain a  
comprehensive suite of statewide programs, including all of the



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following:

(a) Student speech and debate programs.

(b) Student leadership and service programs.

(c) Competitive speech and debate training for students.

(d) Educator training.

(e) Postsecondary and workforce internships.

(f) Operation of speech and debate tournaments.

(4) AUTHORIZED USES OF FUNDS.—FDI may expend program funds on all of the following:

(a) Administrative operations, including staffing, insurance, compliance, reporting, and statewide infrastructure.

(b) Programmatic operations, including curriculum, training, summer programs, workshops, camps, and mentorship programs.

(c) Tournament operations, including logistics, staff, judge training, technology, awards, and regional team operations.

(d) Travel, lodging, training, and transportation for participants.

(e) Public-private partnership development, including sponsorship and philanthropic support.

(f) Memberships, affiliations, and participation fees related to civics education, speech, debate, leadership, and academic competition programs, provided such memberships advance the purposes of this section.

(5) ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING.—FDI shall make publicly available online and submit, no later than December 31, an annual report to the Department of Education which includes all of the following:





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(a) Student participation in statewide programs, by district and demographics.

(b) The number of active student teams in statewide speech and debate programs.

(c) Competitive and educational outcomes of statewide programs.

(d) A categorized summary of all expenditures.

(6) ENDORSEMENT IN SPEECH AND DEBATE.—Pursuant to s. 1012.56 and State Board of Education rule, a certified teacher may earn an endorsement in speech and debate if he or she demonstrates all of the following:

(a) Completion of coursework approved by the state board in argumentation, rhetoric, communication, or debate instruction.

(b) Completion of professional development offered by the FDI or equivalent professional development offered by a Florida College System institution or state university.

(c) Competency, as determined by the board, in the rules, events, and competitive standards of scholastic debate.

(7) REGIONAL TRAVELING DEBATE TEAMS.—The department shall collaborate with FDI to establish regional traveling debate teams to represent this state in national competitions. Teams must be accessible to students at Title I and rural schools. Teams must provide competitive training and coaching for speech and debate.

(a) All travel costs may be covered through legislative appropriation, public-private partnerships, and sponsorships.

(b) A school district may use school buses to transport students to and from speech and debate competitions.

(8) DEBATE ACROSS THE CURRICULUM PILOT PROGRAM.—



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(a) The Debate Across the Curriculum Pilot Program is created within the department, in collaboration with FDI. The purpose of the pilot program is to develop and integrate structured debate and argumentation into core academic subjects. The pilot program must include curriculum development, professional development, instructional materials, and program evaluation.

(b) This subsection expires June 30, 2027.

(9)(a) FLORIDA SPEECH AND DEBATE ACADEMY.—FDI shall establish and operate a charter school under s. 1002.33 named the Florida Speech and Debate Academy.

(b) The charter school shall provide a rigorous academic program emphasizing civics education, leadership development, speech, debate, rhetoric, and public service.

Section 5. Present subsection (29) of section 1001.42, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (30), and a new subsection (29) is added to that section, to read:

1001.42 Powers and duties of district school board.—The district school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below:

(29) SPEECH AND DEBATE COMPETITION REPORTING.—Each district school board shall annually publish online and submit to the Department of Education, by a date set by the department, a report that includes all of the following information:

(a) The number of active speech and debate teams.

(b) Student participation rates.

(c) Competitive performance and public service engagement.

(d) Transportation, facilities, and administrative support provided.



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(e) Resources needed to expand the program.

Section 6. Present subsection (11) of section 1002.37, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (12), and a new subsection (11) is added to that section, to read:

1002.37 The Florida Virtual School.—

(11) The Florida Virtual School shall establish the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation. The institute shall do all of the following:

(a) Develop an online curriculum, micro-credentials, and instructional modules for speech and debate.

(b) Create artificial intelligence-based coaching tools, digital judging tutorials, and analytics dashboards.

(c) Produce virtual reality and augmented reality simulations for competitive practice.

(d) Ensure equitable access for districts lacking onsite coaching capacity.

(e) Coordinate and operate with the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., and enter a formal partnership to coordinate curriculum, instructional resources, competition preparation, and statewide access to speech and debate programming.

Section 7. Paragraph (i) is added to subsection (3) of section 1003.4282, Florida Statutes, to read:

1003.4282 Requirements for a standard high school diploma.—

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

(i) One-half credit in speech and debate.—Beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2028-2029 school year, a student must successfully complete at least one-half credit in speech, debate, argumentation, or rhetoric as a requirement for



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high school graduation.

Section 8. Section 1004.0983, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1004.0983 Speech and debate training pathways.—The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education shall develop undergraduate and graduate coursework, certificates, and micro-credentials in speech and debate education, coaching, and tournament operations.

(1) Coursework may include all of the following:

(a) Rhetoric, argumentation, and communication theory.

(b) Coaching methods and competitive event instruction.

(c) Tournament management and adjudication.

(d) Public speaking pedagogy.

(2) The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education may collaborate with the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., to develop coursework.

Section 9. The Department of Education shall approve courses developed pursuant to s. 1004.0983, Florida Statutes, for inclusion in dual enrollment programs under s. 1007.271, Florida Statutes.

Section 10. (1) For the 2026-2027 fiscal year:

(a) The sum of \$2.4 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to support the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc.'s responsibilities assigned under s. 1000.09(4), Florida Statutes, including administrative, programmatic, and tournament operation duties.

(b) The sum of \$250,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to support the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc.'s responsibilities assigned under s.



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1000.09(7), Florida Statutes, including for regional traveling debate teams to support their training, coaching, lodging, and competition costs.

(c) The sum of \$1 million in nonrecurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Department of Education for the Debate Across the Curriculum Pilot Program under s. 1000.09(8), Florida Statutes.

(2) The sum of \$700,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to school districts for travel costs to attend speech and debate competitions pursuant to s. 1000.09, Florida Statutes.

(3) The sum of \$500,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the State Board of Education to develop the teacher endorsement under s. 1000.09(6), Florida Statutes, and to support the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame under s. 265.0042, Florida Statutes.

(4) The sum of \$750,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Virtual School to support the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation pursuant to s. 1002.37(11), Florida Statutes.

(5) For the 2027-2028 fiscal year:

(a) The sum of \$3.8 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Speech and Debate Academy under s. 1000.09(9), Florida Statutes, for teachers and teacher assistants.

(b) The sum of \$1.5 million in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Speech and Debate Academy under s. 1000.09(9), Florida Statutes, for other instructional personnel.



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(c) The sum of \$708,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Speech and Debate Academy under s. 1000.09(9), Florida Statutes, for the administration.

(d) The sum of \$991,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Speech and Debate Academy under s. 1000.09(9), Florida Statutes, for the operation and maintenance of facilities.

(e) The sum of \$256,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Speech and Debate Academy under s. 1000.09(9), Florida Statutes, for materials, supplies, and capital outlay.

(f) The sum of \$485,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund to the Florida Speech and Debate Academy under s. 1000.09(9), Florida Statutes, for food service.

Section 11. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

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

And the title is amended as follows:

Delete everything before the enacting clause  
and insert:

A bill to be entitled  
An act relating to speech and debate education;  
providing a short title; creating s. 265.0042, F.S.;  
creating the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame;  
requiring the Department of Management Services to set  
aside an area on a specified level in the Capitol  
Building; requiring the department to consult with the  
Florida Education Foundation and the Commissioner of



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Education for a certain purpose; providing the duties of the hall of fame; requiring the hall of fame to convene a committee for specified purposes; requiring the committee to include at least one member or his or her designee from the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc; creating s. 683.221, F.S.; designating Florida Speech and Debate Week annually in February; providing purposes for the annual observance; authorizing specified entities to observe Florida Speech and Debate Week; creating s. 1000.09, F.S.; providing legislative findings and intent; designating the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) as the official statewide speech and debate organization; providing the duties of FDI; providing construction; authorizing FDI to establish and maintain certain partnerships; requiring FDI to implement and maintain specified statewide programs; providing authorized uses of funds for FDI; requiring FDI to publish online and submit annually by a specified date to the Department of Education a specified report; specifying requirements for the report; authorizing a certified teacher to earn an endorsement in speech and debate; specifying requirements for the endorsement; requiring the department to collaborate with FDI to establish regional traveling debate teams; requiring that teams be accessible to students at specified schools; requiring teams to provide certain training and coaching; providing for coverage of travel costs; authorizing a school district to use school buses to



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transport students to and from speech and debate competitions; creating the Debate Across the Curriculum Pilot Program within the department, in collaboration with FDI; providing the purpose of the pilot program; requiring the pilot program to include certain elements; providing an appropriation; providing for expiration of the pilot program; requiring FDI to establish and operate a charter school for a certain purpose; amending s. 1001.42, F.S.; requiring each district school board to annually publish online and submit to the department a report; specifying requirements for the report; amending s. 1002.37, F.S.; requiring the Florida Virtual School to establish the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation; providing duties of the institute; requiring the institute to enter into a formal partnership with FDI; amending s. 1003.4282, F.S.; requiring that students complete at least one-half credit in speech and debate as a requirement for high school graduation, beginning in a specified school year; creating s. 1004.0983, F.S.; requiring the Board of Governors of the State University System and the State Board of Education to develop specified undergraduate and graduate coursework, certificates, and micro-credentials; authorizing the Board of Governors and the State Board of Education to collaborate with FDI to develop coursework; requiring the department to approve specified dual enrollment courses; providing appropriations; providing an





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effective date.

By Senator Brodeur

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1 A bill to be entitled  
 2 An act relating to speech and debate; providing a  
 3 short title; creating s. 265.0042, F.S.; creating the  
 4 Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame; requiring the  
 5 Department of Management Services to set aside an area  
 6 in the Capitol Building; requiring the department to  
 7 consult with the Florida Education Foundation and the  
 8 Commissioner of Education; providing the duties for  
 9 the hall of fame; requiring the hall of fame to  
 10 convene a committee for specified purposes; creating  
 11 s. 683.221, F.S.; designating Florida Speech and  
 12 Debate Week each year in November; providing purposes  
 13 for the annual observance; authorizing specified  
 14 entities to observe Florida Speech and Debate Week;  
 15 creating s. 1000.09, F.S.; providing legislative  
 16 findings and intent; designating the Florida Debate  
 17 Initiative, Inc., (FDI) as the official statewide  
 18 speech and debate organization; providing the duties  
 19 of FDI; requiring FDI to implement and maintain  
 20 specified statewide programs; providing authorized  
 21 uses of funds for FDI; requiring FDI to publish online  
 22 and submit annually to the Department of Education a  
 23 specified report; authorizing a certified teacher to  
 24 earn an endorsement in speech and debate; specifying  
 25 requirements for the endorsement; requiring the  
 26 department to collaborate with FDI to establish  
 27 regional traveling debate teams; authorizing a school  
 28 district to use school buses to transport students to  
 29 speech and debate competitions; amending s. 1001.42,

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

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30 F.S.; requiring each district school board annually to  
 31 publish online and submit to the department a report;  
 32 specifying requirements for the report; amending s.  
 33 1002.37, F.S.; requiring the Florida Virtual School to  
 34 establish the Institute for Speech and Debate  
 35 Innovation; providing duties of the institute;  
 36 creating s. 1004.0983, F.S.; requiring the Board of  
 37 Governors of the State University System and the State  
 38 Board of Education to develop specified undergraduate  
 39 and graduate coursework, certificates, and micro-  
 40 credentials; authorizing the Board of Governors and  
 41 the State Board of Education to collaborate with FDI  
 42 to develop coursework; requiring the department to  
 43 approve specified dual enrollment courses; providing  
 44 appropriations; providing an effective date.  
 45  
 46 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
 47  
 48 Section 1. This act may be cited as the "Florida Speech and  
 49 Debate Education Act."  
 50 Section 2. Section 265.0042, Florida Statutes, is created  
 51 to read:  
 52 265.0042 Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame.—  
 53 (1) There is created the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of  
 54 Fame. The Department of Management Services shall set aside an  
 55 area on the Plaza Level of the Capitol Building and shall  
 56 consult with the Florida Education Foundation and the  
 57 Commissioner of Education regarding the design and theme of the  
 58 area.

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

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59 (2) The hall of fame shall do all of the following:  
 60 (a) Honor distinguished students, coaches, educators,  
 61 alumni, veterans, public servants, benefactors, and supporters  
 62 who have elevated speech and debate in this state.  
 63 (b) Preserve the history, impact, and cultural significance  
 64 of competitive debate.  
 65 (c) Inspire future generations of Florida students to  
 66 pursue speech, debate, public leadership, and civic excellence.  
 67 (3) The hall of fame shall convene a committee to establish  
 68 procedures to nominate and select individuals to be featured.  
 69 Section 3. Section 683.221, Florida Statutes, is created to  
 70 read:  
 71 683.221 Florida Speech and Debate Week.—  
 72 (1) The week that includes the first Tuesday of November  
 73 shall be designated as "Florida Speech and Debate Week."  
 74 (2) Florida Speech and Debate Week shall be observed for  
 75 all of the following purposes:  
 76 (a) To recognize the academic, civic, and leadership value  
 77 of competitive speech and debate.  
 78 (b) To honor educators, coaches, judges, and school  
 79 districts that support debate programming.  
 80 (c) To inspire students statewide to participate in debate  
 81 as a pathway to civic engagement.  
 82 (d) To promote Florida's role as the national leader in  
 83 scholastic speech and debate.  
 84 (3) Public and charter schools, state agencies, and other  
 85 entities may observe Florida Speech and Debate Week.  
 86 Section 4. Section 1000.09, Florida Statutes, is created to  
 87 read:

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88 1000.09 Competitive speech and debate.—  
 89 (1) LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS.—  
 90 (a) The Legislature finds that speech and debate  
 91 significantly improve literacy, critical thinking, research  
 92 ability, civic knowledge, and leadership for students of this  
 93 state.  
 94 (b) The Legislature also finds that this state's civics and  
 95 debate expansion has become a national model, increasing access  
 96 to this instruction in all regions. Sustaining and improving  
 97 this success requires a permanent statewide organization with  
 98 specialized expertise, program capacity, and year-round  
 99 operational support.  
 100 (c) The Legislature further finds that the Florida Debate  
 101 Initiative has demonstrated statewide effectiveness and is  
 102 uniquely positioned to ensure continuity, equitable access,  
 103 quality programming, tournament infrastructure, and  
 104 instructional rigor. It is the intent of the Legislature to  
 105 establish a comprehensive statewide infrastructure, under the  
 106 Florida Debate Initiative's direction, that expands, supports,  
 107 and elevates K-20 speech and debate education.  
 108 (2) CREATION, DESIGNATION, AND RESPONSIBILITIES.—The  
 109 Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., (FDI) is designated as the  
 110 official statewide speech and debate organization responsible  
 111 for managing, developing, and expanding K-20 speech and debate  
 112 programs.  
 113 (b) FDI shall do all of the following:  
 114 1. Manage the official Florida Speech and Debate League and  
 115 its regional teams.  
 116 2. Establish statewide competition rules, ballots, judging

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standards, and tournament calendars.

3. Operate or supervise district, regional, and state tournaments.

4. Train and certify coaches, judges, volunteers, and tournament staff.

5. Provide statewide programmatic support, including student programs, educator training, and public service initiatives.

6. Maintain statewide data reporting and annual accountability.

7. Work constructively with nonstate-sanctioned leagues while upholding Florida's civic and patriotic development goals.

(3) STATEWIDE PROGRAMS.—FDI shall implement and maintain a comprehensive suite of statewide programs, including all of the following:

(a) Student speech and debate programs.

(b) Student leadership and service programs.

(c) Competitive speech and debate training for students.

(d) Educator training.

(e) Postsecondary and workforce internships.

(f) Operation of speech and debate tournaments.

(4) AUTHORIZED USES OF FUNDS.—FDI may expend program funds on all of the following:

(a) Administrative operations, including staffing, insurance, compliance, reporting, and statewide infrastructure.

(b) Programmatic operations, including curriculum, training, summer programs, workshops, camps, and mentorship programs.

(c) Tournament operations, including logistics, staff,

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judge training, technology, awards, and regional team operations.

(d) Travel, lodging, training, and transportation for participants.

(e) Public-private partnership development, including sponsorship and philanthropic support.

(5) ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPORTING.—FDI shall make publicly available online and submit, no later than December 31, an annual report to the Department of Education which includes all of the following:

(a) Student participation in statewide programs, by district and demographics.

(b) The number of active student teams in statewide speech and debate programs.

(c) Competitive and educational outcomes of statewide programs.

(d) A categorized summary of all expenditures.

(6) ENDORSEMENT IN SPEECH AND DEBATE.—Pursuant to s. 1012.56 and State Board of Education rule, a certified teacher may earn an endorsement in speech and debate if he or she demonstrates all of the following:

(a) Completion of coursework approved by the state board in argumentation, rhetoric, communication, or debate instruction.

(b) Completion of professional development offered by the FDI or equivalent professional development offered by a Florida College System institution or state university.

(c) Competency, as determined by the board, in the rules, events, and competitive standards of scholastic debate.

(7) REGIONAL TRAVELING DEBATE TEAMS.—The department shall

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collaborate with FDI to establish regional traveling debate teams to represent Florida in national competitions. Teams must be accessible to students at Title I and rural schools. Teams must provide competitive training and coaching for speech and debate.

(a) All travel costs may be covered through legislative appropriation, public-private partnerships, and sponsorships.

(b) A school district may use school buses to transport students to and from speech and debate competitions.

Section 5. Present subsection (29) of section 1001.42, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (30), and a new subsection (29) is added to that section, to read:

1001.42 Powers and duties of district school board.—The district school board, acting as a board, shall exercise all powers and perform all duties listed below:

(29) SPEECH AND DEBATE COMPETITION REPORTING.—Each district school board shall annually make available online and submit to the Department of Education, by a date set by the department, a report that includes all of the following information:

(a) The number of active speech and debate teams.

(b) Student participation rates.

(c) Competitive performance and public service engagement.

(d) Transportation, facilities, and administrative support provided.

(e) Resources needed to expand the program.

Section 6. Present subsection (11) of section 1002.37, Florida Statutes, is redesignated as subsection (12), and a new subsection (11) is added to that section, to read:

1002.37 The Florida Virtual School.—

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(11) The Florida Virtual School shall establish the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation (ISDI). The ISDI shall do all of the following:

(1) Develop online curriculum, micro-credentials, and instructional modules for speech and debate.

(2) Create artificial intelligence-based coaching tools, digital judging tutorials, and analytics dashboards.

(3) Produce virtual reality and augmented reality simulations for competitive practice.

(4) Ensure equitable access for districts lacking onsite coaching capacity.

Section 7. Section 1004.0983, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1004.0983 Speech and debate training pathways.—The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education shall develop undergraduate and graduate coursework, certificates, and micro-credentials in speech and debate education, coaching, and tournament operations.

(1) Coursework may include all of the following:

(a) Rhetoric, argumentation, and communication theory.

(b) Coaching methods and competitive event instruction.

(c) Tournament management and adjudication.

(d) Public speaking pedagogy.

(2) The Board of Governors and the State Board of Education may collaborate with the Florida Debate Initiative, Inc., to develop coursework.

Section 8. The Department of Education shall approve courses developed pursuant to s. 1004.0983, Florida Statutes, for inclusion in dual enrollment programs under s. 1007.271,

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233 Florida Statutes.

234 Section 9. (1) For the 2026-2027 fiscal year, the sum of:

235 (a) \$2.4 million in recurring funds is appropriated from  
236 the General Revenue Fund to support the Florida Debate  
237 Initiative, Inc.'s responsibilities assigned under s.  
238 1000.09(4), Florida Statutes, including administrative,  
239 programmatic, and tournament operation duties.

240 (b) \$250,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the  
241 General Revenue Fund to support FDI's responsibilities assigned  
242 under s. 1000.09(7), Florida Statutes, including for regional  
243 traveling debate teams to support their training, coaching,  
244 lodging, and competition costs.

245 (2) \$700,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the  
246 General Revenue Fund to school districts for travel costs to  
247 attend speech and debate competitions pursuant to s. 1000.09,  
248 Florida Statutes.

249 (3) \$500,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the  
250 General Revenue Fund to the State Board of Education to develop  
251 the teacher endorsement under s. 1000.09(6), Florida Statutes,  
252 and to support the Florida Speech and Debate Hall of Fame under  
253 s. 265.0042, Florida Statutes.

254 (4) \$750,000 in recurring funds is appropriated from the  
255 General Revenue Fund to the Florida Virtual School to support  
256 the Institute for Speech and Debate Innovation pursuant to s.  
257 1002.37(11), Florida Statutes.

258 Section 10. This act shall take effect January 1, 2027.

**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.)

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

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BILL: SB 1340

INTRODUCER: Senator Harrell

SUBJECT: Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring

DATE: January 26, 2026

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Brick	Bouck	ED	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			AHS	
3.			RC	

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## **I. Summary:**

SB 1340 revises district responsibilities when screening indicates that a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia. The bill:

- Requires specified district action when screening indicates that a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia.
- Requires the district to promptly pursue parental consent for an initial evaluation for exceptional student education when a screening provides reasonable suspicion that the student may be a student with a disability.
- Revises further screening requirements within the statewide coordinated screening and progress monitoring framework and requires State Board of Education rulemaking.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Specific Learning Disabilities – Dyslexia and Dyscalculia**

A child with a disability includes a child with a specific learning disability, defined as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes that may manifest as difficulty listening, thinking, speaking, reading, writing, spelling, or doing mathematical calculations, including dyslexia.<sup>1</sup> An “exceptional student” includes a student with a disability determined eligible for a special program in accordance with State Board of Education (SBE) rules, including a student with a specific learning disability.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 34 C.F.R. s. 300.8(c)(10)(i).

<sup>2</sup> Section 1003.01(9)(a), F.S.

Dyslexia is a specific learning disability in basic reading skills that ranges in severity and is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities, typically resulting from a deficit in the phonological component of language.<sup>3</sup> Dyscalculia is an associated condition of a specific learning disability and generally refers to difficulty learning and comprehending mathematics, including number sense and computation.<sup>4</sup>

### **Statewide Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring System**

A statewide coordinated screening and progress monitoring (CSPM) system is required for use in public school Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program (VPK) and public schools.<sup>5</sup> The system must:<sup>6</sup>

- Measure student progress in early literacy skills, early mathematics skills, and the English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics standards to inform instruction.
- Provide screening and diagnostic capabilities.
- Identify students with substantial deficiencies in reading or mathematics.
- Identify students with characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia.

Results must be provided to teachers within one week after completion of the assessment period and to parents within two weeks after administration of the progress monitoring assessment.<sup>7</sup> A student identified by the CSPM system as having characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia must undergo further screening.<sup>8</sup>

The statewide CSPM program is implemented as the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), administered in three progress monitoring windows each school year, using Renaissance Star assessments in kindergarten through grade 2 and Cambium testing and reporting systems for grades 3 through 10 ELA Reading and grades 3 through 8 Mathematics.<sup>9</sup>

### **Student Progression and Monitoring Plans**

Each district school board adopts and implements a comprehensive program for student progression that addresses promotion, retention, remediation, and the use of assessment results to identify and assist students who are not meeting performance expectations.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Rule 6A-6.053(7), F.A.C.

<sup>4</sup> American Psychiatric Association, “What Is Specific Learning Disorder?,” Psychiatry.org (Mar. 2024), <https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/specific-learning-disorder/what-is-specific-learning-disorder> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026).

<sup>5</sup> Section 1008.25(9)(a), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1008.25(9)(a)1.-4., F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1008.25(9)(b)-(c), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1008.25(9)(a)3., F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), 2025–26 Statewide Assessment Administration Schedule (Progress Monitoring)*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/5663/2526StatewideAssessmentSched.pdf>; Florida Department of Education, *Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST), 2025–26 Grades K–2 Fact Sheet*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/20102/2526FASTK2FS.pdf>; and Florida Department of Education, *Coordinated Screening & Progress Monitoring System Overview* (Mar. 21, 2022), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/7506/FOILStatewideAssessment.pdf>, at 6, 9, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1008.25(2), F.S.



A student who is not meeting district or state requirements for satisfactory performance in ELA or mathematics must be covered by at least one of the following:<sup>11</sup>

- A federally required student plan (for example, an individual education plan (IEP)).
- A schoolwide system of progress monitoring for all students, subject to specified exemptions.
- An individualized progress monitoring plan.

A student with a substantial deficiency in reading or a substantial deficiency in mathematics must be covered by a federally required student plan, an individualized progress monitoring plan, or both, as necessary.<sup>12</sup> An individualized progress monitoring plan must be developed within 45 days after the CSPM results become available.<sup>13</sup>

At a minimum, an individualized progress monitoring plan must include:<sup>14</sup>

- The student's identified reading or mathematics skill deficiency.
- Goals and benchmarks for growth in reading or mathematics.
- The measures used to evaluate and monitor progress.
- For a substantial reading deficiency, the evidence-based literacy instruction grounded in the science of reading that will be provided.
- Strategies, resources, and materials to be provided to the parent to support the student's progress.
- Any additional services that the teacher deems available and appropriate to accelerate the student's skill development.

### **Reading and Mathematics Deficiencies**

Reading and mathematics deficiencies, and characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia, may be identified using screening, diagnostic, progress monitoring, or assessment data; statewide assessments; or teacher observations.<sup>15</sup> Once a student is identified as having a substantial deficiency in early literacy skills, reading, or mathematics, the applicable interventions must begin immediately.<sup>16</sup>

For a student who exhibits characteristics of dyslexia, as defined in SBE rule, dyslexia-specific interventions must be provided.<sup>17</sup> Appropriate, evidence-based interventions must be initiated upon receipt of documentation from a licensed psychologist demonstrating that the student has been diagnosed with dyslexia or dyscalculia, and initiation may not wait for completion of an exceptional student education eligibility evaluation.<sup>18</sup>

Written parent notification is required when a student has been identified as having a substantial deficiency in reading or mathematics and must include specified information about the deficiency, current services, proposed interventions, and home-based supports and resources as

<sup>11</sup> Section 1008.25(4)(b)1.-3., F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 1008.25(4)(c), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 1008.25(4)(c), F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Section 1008.25(4)(c)1.-6., F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 1008.25(5)(a) and (6)(a), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 1008.25(5)(a) and (6)(a)1., F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Section 1008.25(5)(a)1., F.S.; Rule 6A-6.053(7), F.A.C.

<sup>18</sup> Section 1008.25(5)(a)2. and (6)(a)4., F.S.

applicable.<sup>19</sup> After the initial notification, written progress updates must be provided at least monthly and must include an explanation of any additional interventions implemented when progress is insufficient, with additional meetings and supports provided upon request.<sup>20</sup>

The reading intervention and parent notification requirements apply to students in public school VPK through grade 3.<sup>21</sup> The mathematics intervention and parent notification requirements apply to students in public school VPK through grade 4.<sup>22</sup>

### **Evaluation and IEP Timelines**

Each district school board must provide exceptional student education and include professional services for diagnosis and evaluation.<sup>23</sup> The initial evaluation process is triggered when the school district has reasonable suspicion that a student may have a disability and need special education and related services.<sup>24</sup> Response-to-intervention strategies may not be used to delay or deny an evaluation for a child suspected of having a disability.<sup>25</sup>

A full and individual initial evaluation must be conducted before the initial provision of exceptional student education, and either a parent or the school district may initiate a request for an initial evaluation.<sup>26</sup>

When a parent requests, or when the school district suspects that a student may have a disability, parental consent for an evaluation must be requested within 30 days, unless the parent and school agree otherwise in writing, or the district rejects the parent's request.<sup>27</sup>

Before a school district requests an initial evaluation for a K-12 student suspected of having a disability, school personnel must document one of the following determinations in the student's educational record.<sup>28</sup>

- General education intervention procedures have been implemented and the data indicate that the student may be a student with a disability who needs special education and related services.
- The evaluation was initiated at parent request and the general education intervention activities will be completed concurrently with the evaluation, but before the determination of the student's eligibility for special education and related services.
- The nature or severity of the student's areas of concern makes the general education intervention procedures inappropriate in addressing the student's immediate needs.

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<sup>19</sup> Section 1008.25(5)(d) and (6)(c), F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Section 1008.25(5)(d) and (6)(c), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Section 1008.25(5)(a)1., F.S.; Rule 6A-6.053(5)(b), F.A.C.

<sup>22</sup> Section 1008.25(6)(a)1., F.S.; Rule 6A-6.0533(7)(a)1., F.A.C.

<sup>23</sup> Section 1003.57(1)(a)-(b), F.S.

<sup>24</sup> 34 C.F.R. s. 300.111(c)(1); *Leigh Ann H. v. Riesel Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 18 F.4th 788, 796 n.6 (5th Cir. 2021) (citing *Krawietz ex rel. Parker v. Galveston Indep. Sch. Dist.*, 900 F.3d 673, 676 (5th Cir. 2018)).

<sup>25</sup> Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education, *OSEP Memorandum 11-07, "A Response to Intervention (RTI) Process Cannot Be Used to Delay-Deny an Evaluation for Eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)"* (Jan. 21, 2011).

<sup>26</sup> Rule 6A-6.0331(3), F.A.C.

<sup>27</sup> Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(b)-(c), F.A.C.

<sup>28</sup> Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(d)1.-3., F.A.C.

Initial evaluations must be completed within 60 calendar days after receipt of parental consent, excluding specified school holidays and breaks and summer vacation, and subject to specified exceptions and extensions.<sup>29</sup> An IEP must be developed within 30 days after a determination that the child needs special education and related services, and services must be made available as soon as possible following IEP development.<sup>30</sup>

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

SB 1340 revises district responsibilities when screening indicates that a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia. The bill:

- Requires specified district action when screening indicates that a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia.
- Requires the district to promptly pursue parental consent for an initial evaluation for exceptional student education when a screening indication provides reasonable suspicion that the student may be a student with a disability.
- Revises further screening requirements within the statewide coordinated screening and progress monitoring framework and requires State Board of Education (SBE) rulemaking.

#### **Student Progression and Monitoring Plans**

The bill modifies s. 1008.25, F.S., to require a school district to take specified actions when the statewide coordinated screening and progress monitoring system, or a district-approved screening instrument, indicates that a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia.

When a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia, the district must ensure the student is covered by the progress monitoring plan already required for students who need intervention supports. The plan must include evidence-based interventions specific to the identified characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia. The interventions must be aligned, as appropriate, with the required reading intervention framework and the required mathematics intervention framework for students with the specific learning disabilities.

The bill also requires the district to treat the screening indication as reasonable suspicion that the student may be a student with a disability for purposes of the initial evaluation process for exceptional student education, and to promptly seek parental consent to conduct an initial evaluation consistent with SBE rule and applicable federal law.

In addition, the bill requires screening activities and required intervention procedures to occur concurrently with the evaluation process and prohibits using those activities or procedures to delay or deny an appropriate evaluation to determine eligibility for exceptional student education and related services.

#### **Statewide Coordinated Screening and Progress Monitoring System**

The bill retains the requirement for further screening when the statewide coordinated screening and progress monitoring (CSPM) system indicates that a student exhibits characteristics of

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<sup>29</sup> Rule 6A-6.0331(3)(g), F.A.C.

<sup>30</sup> 34 C.F.R. s. 300.323(c)(1)-(2).

dyslexia or dyscalculia. The bill adds a further screening requirement when the system is not capable of identifying characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia and a student meets performance thresholds established by SBE rule.

The bill specifies that further screening is used to refine instructional planning and parent communication and is not a prerequisite to the intervention and evaluation obligations in the bill. The bill requires further screening activities to occur concurrently with required interventions and the evaluation process and prohibits using screening activities to delay or deny an appropriate evaluation.

The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules establishing timelines, performance thresholds, and parental notification requirements for further screening required under the CSPM system provisions governing identification of characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia.

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:

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 1008.25 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.

By Senator Harrell

31-01183-26

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to coordinated screening and progress monitoring; amending s. 1008.25, F.S.; specifying requirements for a school district if a student exhibits characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia; providing circumstances under which a student is required to undergo further screening for dyslexia or dyscalculia; requiring the State Board of Education to adopt rules; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (d) is added to subsection (4) of section 1008.25, Florida Statutes, and paragraph (a) of subsection (9) of that section is amended, to read:

1008.25 Public school student progression; student support; coordinated screening and progress monitoring; reporting requirements.—

(4) ASSESSMENT AND SUPPORT.—

(d) If the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system under subsection (9), or any district-approved screening instrument, identifies a student as exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia, the school district shall:

1. Ensure that the student is covered by a plan under paragraph (b) which includes evidence-based interventions that are specific to the identified characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia and that are aligned, as appropriate, with the interventions required under subsection (5) for reading and subsection (6) for mathematics.

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

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2. Treat the screening result as reasonable suspicion that the student may be a student with a disability for purposes of s. 1003.57 and promptly seek parental consent to conduct an initial evaluation consistent with state board rule and applicable federal law.

3. Ensure that screening activities and intervention procedures, including interventions required under this subsection and subsections (5) and (6), occur concurrently with the evaluation process and are not used to delay or deny an appropriate evaluation.

(9) COORDINATED SCREENING AND PROGRESS MONITORING SYSTEM.—

(a) The Department of Education, in collaboration with the Office of Early Learning, shall procure and require the use of a statewide, standardized coordinated screening and progress monitoring system for the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program and public schools. The system must:

1. Measure student progress in meeting the appropriate expectations in early literacy and mathematics skills and in English Language Arts and mathematics standards as required by ss. 1002.67(1)(a) and 1003.41 and identify the educational strengths and needs of students.

2. For students in the Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program through grade 3, measure student performance in oral language development, phonological and phonemic awareness, knowledge of print and letters, decoding, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, as applicable by grade level, and, at a minimum, provide interval level and norm-referenced data that measures equivalent levels of growth.

3. Be a valid, reliable, and developmentally appropriate

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computer-based direct instrument that provides screening and diagnostic capabilities for monitoring student progress; identifies students who have a substantial deficiency in reading or mathematics, including identifying students with characteristics of dyslexia, dyscalculia, and other learning disorders; and informs instruction. Any student identified by the system as having characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia shall undergo further screening. Any student whose performance in the system meets thresholds established by State Board of Education rule in circumstances in which the system is not capable of identifying characteristics of dyslexia or dyscalculia must undergo further screening. The further screening required under this subparagraph is used to refine instructional planning and parental communication and is not a prerequisite to the interventions or evaluation obligations described in subsection (4). The State Board of Education shall adopt rules establishing timelines, performance thresholds, and parental notification requirements for further screening under this subparagraph. Screening activities under this subsection shall occur concurrently with the interventions and evaluation obligations described in subsection (4) and may not be used to delay or deny an appropriate evaluation. Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system must be computer-adaptive.

4. Provide data for Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program accountability as required under s. 1002.68.

5. Provide Voluntary Prekindergarten Education Program providers, school districts, schools, teachers, and parents with data and resources that enhance differentiated instruction and

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parent communication.

6. Provide baseline data to the department of each student's readiness for kindergarten. The determination of kindergarten readiness must be based on the results of each student's initial progress monitoring assessment in kindergarten. The methodology for determining a student's readiness for kindergarten must be developed by the department and aligned to the methodology adopted pursuant to s. 1002.68(4).

7. Assess how well educational goals and curricular standards are met at the provider, school, district, and state levels and provide information to the department to aid in the development of educational programs, policies, and supports for providers, districts, and schools.

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

**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.)

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

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BILL: SB 1646

INTRODUCER: Senator Simon

SUBJECT: Educational Facilities

DATE: January 26, 2026

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Brick	Bouck	ED	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			AED	
3.			AP	

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## **I. Summary:**

SB 1646 revises provisions relating to Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO) allocations for district maintenance needs and the Department of Education's (DOE) Special Facility Construction program. The bill revises:

- The health and safety set-aside within the annual district allocation by shifting the one-tenth standard from a spending mandate to a prioritization standard.
- Special Facilities eligibility and administration by replacing the preapplication review request process with an application process and expanding the site eligibility criterion to incorporate the local government coordination framework.
- Special Facilities program administration and oversight by expanding DOE involvement in design, procurement, and construction monitoring, adjusting certain project and contracting timelines, and removing the Phase I plan approval deadline tied to the application year.
- The cost-per-student-station requirements by extending the exemption from the cost-per-student-station limitation.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Public Education Capital Outlay and Capital Outlay and Debt Service Funding Streams**

The State Constitution dedicates specified proceeds from motor vehicle license revenues to district and community college capital outlay and debt service purposes, with the revenues deposited monthly into a capital outlay and debt service fund in the state treasury and used as provided in the constitutional provision.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Section 9(d)(3), Art. XII, Fla. Const.



The State Constitution also authorizes public education capital outlay funding derived from gross receipts taxes, with the proceeds deposited into the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO) and appropriated, as provided by law, for public education capital outlay purposes.<sup>2</sup>

For the 2025-26 fiscal year, \$10,536,509 in PECO funds was appropriated for public school projects.<sup>3</sup>

### **Funds for Remodeling, Renovation, Maintenance, Repairs, and Site Improvement**

Appropriations from the PECO for remodeling, renovation, maintenance, repairs, and site improvement of existing satisfactory facilities receive priority consideration and are distributed to district school boards by multiplying the building value times the building age over the sum of the years' digits.<sup>4</sup> The Department of Education (DOE) compiles a sum-of-the-digits report reflecting the statutory calculation and the resulting relative shares used in the PECO allocation process.<sup>5</sup>

The statutory formula is based on:<sup>6</sup>

- Building value, calculated using assignable square footage, the net-to-gross conversion rate in State Board of Education rule, and the current average new construction cost.
- Building age, calculated using the prior year's age adjusted by the prior year distribution relative to building value, with an annual increment.
- Assumed building life spans that vary by facility type, including 50 years for permanent facilities, 35 years for modular noncombustible facilities, and 20 years for relocatable facilities.

Two expenditure limitations apply to funds received under this distribution:<sup>7</sup>

- The funds may not be used to supplant funds in the district's current fiscal year approved operating budget.
- Budgeted funds must be expended at a similar rate not less than the amount that would have been expended had the district not received the distribution.

A portion of each district's annual allocation is directed to health and safety needs. At least one-tenth of the annual allocation is spent to correct unsafe, unhealthy, or unsanitary conditions in educational facilities, or a lesser amount sufficient to correct all deficiencies cited in annual comprehensive safety inspection reports.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Section 9(a)(2), Art. XII, Fla. Const.

<sup>3</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2025-26 Capital Projects Plan, Table 1* (Elementary and Secondary Education), "Public School Projects", available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/7501/2526CPP.pdf>, at 3.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1013.64(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1013.64(1)(a), F.S.; see, e.g., State University System of Florida, Board of Governors, *PECO allocation for Maintenance, Repair, Renovation and Remodeling aka: "Sum of Digits"*, available at <https://www.flbog.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-25-Maintenance-Repair-Renovation-Remodel-MRRR-Sum-of-Digits-Board-Request-v2.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1013.64(1)(a), F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1013.64(1)(b), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1013.64(1)(f), F.S.; s. 1013.12(2), F.S.

### Special Facility Construction Account

A separate account within the PECO, the Special Facility Construction Account, is used to provide construction funds to eligible school districts with urgent construction needs that lack sufficient current resources and cannot reasonably anticipate sufficient resources within the next 3 years from specified projected capital outlay revenue sources.<sup>9</sup>

Project selection and prioritization are routed through the Special Facility Construction Committee, and a project must be deemed a critical need and recommended for funding by the committee.<sup>10</sup>

A district request is limited in scope and frequency. A district submits one specific construction project, not to exceed one complete educational plant, and may not receive funding for more than one approved project in any 3-year period or while any portion of the district's participation requirement remains outstanding.<sup>11</sup>

To be considered for funding, statutory criteria include, among other items:

- Committee review and critical need determination, based on factors that include facility capacity and utilization information and the district's growth and capital outlay enrollment projections.<sup>12</sup>
- Survey and priority list alignment, including that the construction project is recommended in the most recent educational plant survey or survey amendment and appears on the district's approved project priority list.<sup>13</sup>
- Site selection and planning coordination. The district selects and has an approved site for the construction project through the state site selection process and State Board of Education rules. Site planning and selection is coordinated with local governments through the interlocal agreement framework to ensure consistency with applicable local comprehensive plans and land development regulations.<sup>14</sup>
- Space utilization demonstration, including a district-adopted facilities list showing facilities do not exceed the norm for net square feet occupancy requirements under the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, using programmatic combinations for multiple uses of space to obtain maximum daily use.<sup>15</sup>
- Phase I plans are approved by the district school board as being in compliance with the building and life safety codes before June 1 of the year the application is made.<sup>16</sup>

Two program guardrails relevant to project administration include cost controls and timing controls:

- Cost Controls.

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<sup>9</sup> Section 1013.64(2), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)1., F.S.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1013.64(2), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)1., F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)2., F.S.

<sup>14</sup> Sections 1013.33(4)-(6) and 1013.36(1) and (6), F.S.

<sup>15</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)5., F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)12., F.S.

- Total cost per student station, including change orders, may not exceed the applicable maximum cost per student station unless the committee approves the excess costs. Allowable exceedance categories may include specified legal and administrative fees, certain site improvements or related offsite improvements, public shelter and hurricane hardening costs, disaster-related cost overruns, security enhancements approved by the school safety specialist, and unforeseeable circumstances beyond the district's control.<sup>17</sup>
- An unfinished new construction project that was started on or before July 1, 2028, is exempt from the total cost per student station limitation.<sup>18</sup>
- Timing Controls. The district signs an agreement stating that it will advertise for bids within 30 days after receipt of its encumbrance authorization from the DOE. If a contract is not signed within 90 days after advertising of bids, the project funding reverts to the Special Facility New Construction Account for reallocation, but the commissioner may grant an additional 90 days (maximum 180 days after bid advertisement).<sup>19</sup>

For the 2025-26 fiscal year, \$144,419,602 was appropriated for Special Facility Construction Account projects for six district school boards.<sup>20</sup>

### **Local Participation Requirement and Referenced Local Revenue Authority**

For projects before the 2019-2020 fiscal year, eligibility is tied to levying the maximum discretionary capital outlay millage authorized, or raising an equivalent amount from the school capital outlay surtax, at the time the request is made and continuing for the period necessary to meet the participation requirement. For projects beginning in the 2019-2020 fiscal year and thereafter, eligibility is tied to levying the maximum discretionary capital outlay millage authorized, or raising an equivalent amount from the school capital outlay surtax, for at least 3 years before submitting the request and continuing for the period necessary to meet the participation requirement.<sup>21</sup>

District school boards are authorized to levy discretionary capital outlay millage not to exceed 1.5 mills for specified capital outlay and related purposes, including new construction and remodeling, site acquisition and improvement, lease-purchase payments, and leasing or renting facilities and sites.<sup>22</sup> Counties may levy, subject to referendum approval, a school capital outlay surtax of up to 0.5 percent for authorized fixed capital outlay purposes.<sup>23</sup>

For districts with a new or active project funded under the special facilities program, no more than the value of 1 mill per year is budgeted to the project until the participation requirement is satisfied.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)6., F.S.; s. 252.34(2), F.S.

<sup>18</sup> Section 1013.64(6)(e), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)7. and 9., F.S.

<sup>20</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2025-26 Capital Projects Plan, Table 1* (Elementary and Secondary Education), "Special Facility Construction Account", available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/7501/2526CPP.pdf>, at 3.

<sup>21</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)8., F.S.; s. 1011.71(2), F.S.; s. 212.055(6), F.S.

<sup>22</sup> Section 1011.71(2), F.S.

<sup>23</sup> Section 212.055(6), F.S.

<sup>24</sup> Section 1013.64(2)(a)8., F.S.

District school boards budgeted \$5,091,671,664.40 in revenue from the district local capital improvement tax for fiscal year 2024-25.<sup>25</sup>

### III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

SB 1646 revises provisions relating to Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO) allocations for district maintenance needs and the Department of Education's (DOE) Special Facility Construction program. The bill revises:

- The health and safety set-aside within the annual district allocation by shifting the one-tenth standard from a spending mandate to a prioritization standard.
- Special Facilities eligibility and administration by replacing the preapplication review request process with an application process and expanding the site eligibility criterion to incorporate the local government coordination framework.
- Special Facilities program administration and oversight by expanding DOE involvement in design, procurement, and construction monitoring, adjusting certain project and contracting timelines, removing the Phase I plan approval deadline tied to the application year.
- The cost-per-student-station requirements by extending the exemption from the cost-per-student-station limitation.

#### Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund (PECO) Allocations

The bill amends s. 1013.64(1)(a), F.S., to make technical and clarifying revisions to the description of the calculation used to allocate PECO funds for remodeling, renovation, maintenance, repairs, and site improvements for existing satisfactory facilities, without substantively changing the allocation methodology.

The bill amends s. 1013.64(1)(f), F.S., relating to the portion of a district school board's annual allocation used to address unsafe, unhealthy, or unsanitary conditions in educational facilities, to:

- Replace the requirement that at least one-tenth of the annual allocation be spent for corrective purposes with a requirement that the board prioritize a minimum of one-tenth of the annual allocation for those purposes.
- Conform and clarify existing language regarding use of a lesser amount when sufficient to correct all deficiencies cited in the board's annual comprehensive safety inspection reports.

#### Special Facility Construction Account – Application and Criteria

The bill amends s. 1013.64(2)(a)1., F.S., relating to Special Facility Construction Committee consideration of proposed facility projects, to:

- Replace the existing preapplication review request process with an application process for committee consideration.
- Require the district school board to submit the application via letter to the Special Facility Construction Committee Chair or the Director of Educational Facilities, rather than requesting a preapplication review by the committee or a project review subcommittee.

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<sup>25</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Finance Data Base, District Summary Budget*, Section XIII (Capital Projects Funds 300), Fiscal Year 2024-25 State Cumulative Totals (run date Jan. 24, 2025), (account 3413, "District Local Capital Improvement Tax"), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7507/urlt/StateTotalBUD2425.pdf>, at 39.

- Make conforming and clarifying changes to reflect the application terminology and reorganize existing language regarding timelines and subcommittee composition.

The bill amends s. 1013.64(2)(a)2., F.S., relating to criteria for Special Facility Construction Committee consideration of a construction project, to specify that, for a Special Facility Construction project to be considered, the district's selected and approved site must reflect completion of the required local government coordination and consistency review steps applicable to school facility planning and siting.

The bill amends s. 1013.64(2)(a), F.S., relating to requirements for participation in the special facility construction program, to:

- Require the DOE to participate in the design review process for program projects.
- Require a project to be disqualified from the program, with the district required to reapply, if the Office of Educational Facilities determines during the design phase that the project goes beyond the scope of the original requested project, including a change in site location, and the request is not corrected.
- Require the DOE to conduct construction site visits throughout the construction process.
- Require the district school board's signed bid-advertising agreement to be kept on file with the DOE.
- Revise the bid-advertising requirement by requiring the district school board to advertise for bids no later than 30 days after receipt of the encumbrance authorization for design and construction, rather than within 30 days after receipt of the encumbrance authorization from the DOE.

### **Special Facility Construction Account – Procurement and Contracting Requirements**

The bill creates additional requirements governing procurement and contracting for special facility construction projects by:

- Requiring a district school board, when selecting an architect or construction manager through a request for qualifications or request for proposals process, to use the DOE's process, including the DOE's scoresheets, submittal requirements, and selection procedures.
- Requiring the DOE to collect and review all architect and construction manager selection documentation and authorizing the DOE to provide feedback or take action in the selection process, including overriding the district school board's selection and making a new selection.
- Authorizing district school boards to enter into a contingency construction contract for an amount up to the higher of the full construction amount initially requested at the Special Facility Construction Committee meeting or the final guaranteed maximum price, and requiring the contract to include a clause making subsequent years contingent on funding.
- Prohibiting an elected state official from participating in the architect or construction manager selection process, except to approve the selection committee's recommendation.

### **Special Facility Construction Account – Timelines and Participation**

The bill revises the contract execution timeline by extending the period before project funds must revert from 90 days to 120 days after bid advertisement, while reducing the commissioner's

discretionary extension from 90 days to 60 days. However, the maximum time permitted to execute a construction contract after bid advertisement remains 180 days.

The bill removes the requirement that Phase I plans be approved by the district school board as complying with applicable building and life safety codes by June 1 of the year in which the application is made.

#### **Cost Per Student Station**

The bill extends the exemption from the total cost per student station limitation for an unfinished new construction project that was started on or before July 1 by moving the applicable start-date deadline from July 1, 2028, to July 1, 2030.

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 does not appear to have a fiscal impact. The department can absorb any associated costs within its existing resources.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1013.64 and 1013.62.

**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.

By Senator Simon

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to educational facilities; amending s. 1013.64, F.S.; revising the formula to calculate funds for remodeling, renovation, maintenance, repairs, and site improvement of existing facilities; requiring a board to prioritize a specified amount of funds to correct unsafe, unhealthy, or unsanitary conditions; revising criteria for a district school board to request funds from the Special Facility Construction Account; requiring the Department of Education to participate in a design review process; requiring the department to conduct construction site visits; deleting obsolete language; requiring the department to keep a specified agreement on file; requiring a school district to use a specified process to select an architect and construction manager; authorizing a district school board to enter into a contingency construction contract; prohibiting elected state officials from participating in the selection process; deleting a requirement that certain plans be approved by the district school board as being in compliance with specified safety codes; revising the requirements for a construction project to be exempt from certain cost requirements; amending s. 1013.62, F.S.; conforming a cross-reference; providing an effective date.

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

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Section 1. Subsections (1) and (2) and paragraph (e) of subsection (6) of section 1013.64, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1013.64 Funds for comprehensive educational plant needs; construction cost maximums for school district capital projects.—Allocations from the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund to the various boards for capital outlay projects shall be determined as follows:

(1)(a) Funds for remodeling, renovation, maintenance, repairs, and site improvement for existing satisfactory facilities shall be given priority consideration by the Legislature for appropriations allocated to the boards from the total amount of the Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund appropriated. These funds must ~~shall~~ be calculated pursuant to the following basic formula: the building value multiplied by times the building age and divided by over the most current sum of the years' digits report. These calculations assume ~~assuming~~ a 50-year building life span for permanent. ~~For modular noncombustible facilities, a 35-year building life span for modular noncombustible facilities shall be used, and for relocatable facilities, a 20-year building life span for relocatable facilities shall be used.~~ The "building value" is calculated by multiplying each building's total assignable square feet by times the appropriate net-to-gross conversion rate found in state board rules and multiplying that product by times the current average new construction cost. The "building age" is calculated by multiplying the prior year's building age by times 1 minus the prior year's sum received from this subsection divided by the prior year's building value and

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then adding- to the net result ~~shall be added~~ the number 1. Each board shall receive the percentage generated by the preceding formula of the total amount appropriated for the purposes of this section.

(b) Each board is prohibited from using the funds received pursuant to this section to supplant funds in the current fiscal year approved operating budget, and all budgeted funds must ~~shall~~ be expended at a similar rate not less than the amount ~~that~~ would have been expended had the funds under this section not been received.

(c) Each remodeling, renovation, maintenance, repair, or site improvement project will expand or upgrade current educational plants to prolong the useful life of the plant.

(d) Each board shall maintain its fund accounting in a manner which will permit a detailed audit of the funds expended in this program.

(e) Remodeling projects shall be based on the recommendations of a survey pursuant to s. 1013.31.

(f) A board shall prioritize a minimum of ~~At least~~ one-tenth of ~~its a board's~~ annual allocation provided under this section ~~shall be spent~~ to correct unsafe, unhealthy, or unsanitary conditions in its educational facilities, as required by s. 1013.12, or ~~a lesser amount sufficient~~ to correct all deficiencies cited in its annual comprehensive safety inspection reports. A board may use less than one-tenth of its allocation if that amount satisfies all ~~This paragraph shall not be construed to limit the amount a board may expend to correct such~~ deficiencies.

(g) When an existing educational plant is determined to be

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unsatisfactory pursuant to the survey conducted under s. 1013.31, the board may, by resolution, designate the plant as a historic educational facility and may use funds generated for renovation and remodeling pursuant to this section to restore the facility for use by the board. The board shall agree to pay renovation and remodeling costs in excess of funds which such facility would have generated through the depreciation formula in paragraph (a) had the facility been determined to be satisfactory. The board shall further agree that the plant shall continue to house students. The board may designate a plant as a historic educational facility only if the Division of Historical Resources of the Department of State or the appropriate historic preservation board under chapter 266 certifies that:

1. The plant is listed or determined eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. s. 470;

2. The plant is designated historic within a certified local district pursuant to s. 48(g)(3)(B)(ii) of the Internal Revenue Code; or

3. The division or historic preservation board otherwise finds that the plant is historically significant.

(h) University boards of trustees may utilize funds appropriated pursuant to this section for replacement of minor facilities. Minor facilities may ~~not~~ be replaced from funds provided pursuant to this section if ~~unless~~ the board determines that the cost of repair or renovation is greater than or equal to the cost of replacement.

(2)(a) The department shall establish, as a part of the

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Public Education Capital Outlay and Debt Service Trust Fund, a separate account, in an amount determined by the Legislature, to be known as the "Special Facility Construction Account." The Special Facility Construction Account shall be used to provide necessary construction funds to school districts which have urgent construction needs but which lack sufficient resources at present, and cannot reasonably anticipate sufficient resources within the period of the next 3 years, for these purposes from currently authorized sources of capital outlay revenue. A school district requesting funding from the Special Facility Construction Account shall submit one specific construction project, not to exceed one complete educational plant, to the Special Facility Construction Committee. A district may not receive funding for more than one approved project in any 3-year period or while any portion of the district's participation requirement is outstanding. The first year of the 3-year period shall be the first year a district receives an appropriation. The department shall encourage a construction program that reduces the average size of schools in the district. The request must meet the following criteria to be considered by the committee:

1. The project must be deemed a critical need and must be recommended for funding by the Special Facility Construction Committee. Before developing construction plans for the proposed facility, the district school board must submit an application via letter to request a preapplication review by the Special Facility Construction Committee Chair or the Director of Educational Facilities ~~or a project review subcommittee convened by the chair of the committee to include two representatives of~~

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~~the department and two staff members from school districts not eligible to participate in the program.~~ A school district may ~~apply request a preapplication review~~ at any time; however, if the district school board seeks inclusion in the department's next annual capital outlay legislative budget request, the ~~district must apply preapplication review request must be made~~ before February 1. Within 90 days after receiving the ~~application preapplication review request~~, the committee or subcommittee must meet in the school district to review the project proposal and existing facilities. The committee or subcommittee, convened by the committee chair, must include two representatives from the department and two staff members from school districts not eligible to participate in the program. To determine whether the proposed project is a critical need, the committee or subcommittee shall consider, at a minimum, the capacity of all existing facilities within the district as determined by the Florida Inventory of School Houses; the district's pattern of student growth; the district's existing and projected capital outlay full-time equivalent student enrollment as determined by the demographic, revenue, and education estimating conferences established in s. 216.136; the district's existing satisfactory student stations; the use of all existing district property and facilities; grade level configurations; and any other information that may affect the need for the proposed project.

2. The construction project must be recommended in the most recent survey or survey amendment cooperatively prepared by the district and the department, and approved by the department under the rules of the State Board of Education. If a district

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employs a consultant in the preparation of a survey or survey amendment, the consultant may not be employed by or receive compensation from a third party that designs or constructs a project recommended by the survey.

~~a.3-~~ The construction project must appear on the district's approved project priority list under the rules of the State Board of Education.

~~b.4-~~ The district must have selected and ~~have an~~ ~~had~~ approved a site for the construction project in compliance with ~~ss. 1013.33 and 1013.36~~ ~~s. 1013.36~~ and the rules of the State Board of Education.

c. The district must have developed a district school board-adopted list of facilities that do not exceed the norm for net square feet occupancy requirements under the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, using all possible programmatic combinations for multiple uses of space to obtain maximum daily use of all spaces within the facility under consideration.

3.a. The department shall participate in the design review process in compliance with ss. 1013.04 and 1013.41. If at any time during the design phase the Office of Educational Facilities determines a project goes beyond the scope of the original requested project, to include changing site location, and the request is not corrected, the project is disqualified from the program and the district must reapply.

b. The department shall conduct construction site visits throughout the construction process in compliance with s. 1013.04.

~~5. The district shall have developed a district school~~

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~~board-adopted list of facilities that do not exceed the norm for net square feet occupancy requirements under the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, using all possible programmatic combinations for multiple use of space to obtain maximum daily use of all spaces within the facility under consideration.~~

~~4.6-~~ Upon construction, the total cost per student station, including change orders, must not exceed the cost per student station as provided in subsection (6) unless approved by the Special Facility Construction Committee. At the discretion of the committee, costs that exceed the cost per student station for special facilities may include legal and administrative fees, the cost of site improvements or related offsite improvements, the cost of complying with public shelter and hurricane hardening requirements, cost overruns created by a disaster as defined in s. 252.34(2), costs of security enhancements approved by the school safety specialist, and unforeseeable circumstances beyond the district's control.

~~5.7-~~ There shall be an agreement signed by the district school board and kept on file with the department stating that it will advertise for bids no later than within 30 days after of receipt of its encumbrance authorization for design and construction from the department.

6. The selection of an architect and construction manager will be as follows:

a. When selecting an architect and a construction manager through the "Request for Qualifications" or "Request for Proposals," the district shall use the process developed by the department, including scoresheets, submittal requirements, and

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selection process. The department shall collect and review all selection documentation and may provide feedback or take action in the selection process, up to and including overriding the board's selection and making a new selection.

b. District school boards may enter into a contingency construction contract for the full construction amount initially requested at the Special Facilities Construction Account Committee meeting or the final Guaranteed Maximum Price, whichever is higher. The contract must have a clause stating that subsequent years are contingent on funding.

c. An elected state official may not participate in the selection process other than approving the selection committee's recommendation.

~~7.8-~~ For construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought before the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the district shall, at the time of the request and for a continuing period necessary to meet the district's participation requirement, levy the maximum millage against its nonexempt assessed property value as allowed in s. 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6). Beginning with construction projects for which Special Facilities Construction Account funding is sought in the 2019-2020 fiscal year and thereafter, the district shall, for a minimum of 3 years before applying for a special facilities project ~~submitting the request~~ and for a continuing period necessary to meet its participation requirement, levy the maximum millage against the district's nonexempt assessed property value as authorized under s. 1011.71(2) or shall raise an equivalent

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amount of revenue from the school capital outlay surtax authorized under s. 212.055(6). Any district with a new or active project, funded under the provisions of this subsection, shall be required to budget no more than the value of 1 mill per year to the project until the district's participation requirement ~~of its maximum relating to the~~ local discretionary capital improvement millage pursuant to s. 1011.71(2) for 3 years or the equivalent amount of revenue from the school capital outlay surtax is satisfied.

~~8.9-~~ If a construction contract has not been signed ~~120~~ 90 days after the advertising of bids, the funding for the specific project ~~must~~ shall revert to the Special Facility New Construction Account to be reallocated to other projects on the list. However, an additional ~~60~~ 90 days may be granted by the commissioner.

~~9.10-~~ The department shall certify the inability of the district to fund the survey-recommended project over a continuous 3-year period using projected capital outlay revenue derived from s. 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution, as amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this section, and s. 1011.71(2).

~~10.11-~~ The district shall have on file with the department an adopted resolution acknowledging its commitment to satisfy its participation requirement, which is equivalent to all unencumbered and future revenue acquired from s. 9(d), Art. XII of the State Constitution, as amended, paragraph (3)(a) of this section, and s. 1011.71(2), in the year of the initial appropriation and for the 2 years immediately following the initial appropriation.

~~11.a.12-~~ Phase I plans must be approved by the district

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~~school board as being in compliance with the building and life safety codes before June 1 of the year the application is made.~~

~~(b)~~ The Special Facility Construction Committee shall be composed of the following: two representatives of the Department of Education, a representative from the Governor's office, a representative selected annually by the district school boards, and a representative selected annually by the superintendents. A representative of the department shall chair the committee.

~~b.~~~~(e)~~ The committee shall review the requests submitted from the districts, evaluate the ability of the project to relieve critical needs, and rank the requests in priority order. This statewide priority list for special facilities construction shall be submitted to the Legislature in the commissioner's annual capital outlay legislative budget request at least 45 days prior to the legislative session.

(6)

(e) Notwithstanding the requirements of this subsection, an unfinished construction project for new construction of educational plant space which ~~that~~ was started on or before July 1, 2030 ~~2028~~, is exempt from the total cost per student station requirements established in paragraph (b).

Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 1013.62, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1013.62 Charter schools capital outlay funding.—

(3) If the school board levies the discretionary millage authorized in s. 1011.71(2), the department shall use the following calculation methodology to determine the amount of revenue that a school district must distribute to each eligible charter school:

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(a) Reduce the total discretionary millage revenue by the school district's annual debt service obligation incurred as of March 1, 2017, which has not been subsequently retired, and any amount of participation requirement pursuant to s. 1013.64(2)(a)7. ~~s. 1013.64(2)(a)8.~~ that is being satisfied by revenues raised by the discretionary millage.

By October 1 of each year, each school district shall certify to the department the amount of debt service and participation requirement that complies with the requirement of paragraph (a) and can be reduced from the total discretionary millage revenue. The Auditor General shall verify compliance with the requirements of paragraph (a) and s. 1011.71(2)(e) during scheduled operational audits of school districts.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

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**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.)

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

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BILL: SB 1718

INTRODUCER: Senator Calatayud

SUBJECT: Educator Preparation and Certification

DATE: January 26, 2026

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Jahnke	Bouck	ED	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			AED	
3.			RC	

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## **I. Summary:**

SB 1718 increases flexibility and efficiency in educator preparation, certification, and professional learning. The bill allows educator preparation institute participants to complete coursework while obtaining an statement of status of eligibility, expands access to temporary certification for certain educators with expired professional certificates, and streamlines the reinstatement process by removing duplicative subject area examination requirements while maintaining existing eligibility safeguards.

The bill also updates statutory references relating to the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence and expands the Center's responsibilities to provide no-cost professional learning and administrative support to educators seeking to renew or reinstate their certificates.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2026.

## **II. Present Situation:**

### **Teacher Preparation Programs**

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

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<sup>1</sup> Section 1004.04, F.S. See Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026). See also Rule 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

There are various state-approved teacher preparation programs that individuals may use to receive the training needed to attain an educator certificate, including:<sup>2</sup>

- Initial Teacher Preparation programs in public and private colleges and universities that require candidates to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge<sup>3</sup> in one or more specific subject areas, mastery of general knowledge,<sup>4</sup> and mastery of professional preparation and education competence. Program completers qualify for a professional educator certificate.
- Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) that offer alternative certification programs by postsecondary institutions and qualified private providers for baccalaureate degree holders. These programs provide professional preparation for career-changers and recent college graduates who do not already possess a Professional Educator Certificate and require mastery of general knowledge, subject-area knowledge, and professional preparation and education competence.
- District professional learning certification and education competency programs. Such programs are cohesive competency-based professional preparation certification programs offered by school districts, charter schools, and charter management districts, through which instructional staff can satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements. In addition to completing the district program, candidates must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge and subject area knowledge.

### ***Educator Preparation Institute Participant Criteria***

Each EPI participant must:<sup>5</sup>

- Meet certification application requirements, including obtaining a statement of eligibility, established in law, and meet all basic eligibility requirements for an educator certificate before participating in field experiences. Generally, a student must receive a statement of eligibility for a certificate prior to enrollment in an EPI.
- Demonstrate competency and participate in field experiences that are appropriate to the participant's educational plan, including completion of all competencies for a reading endorsement when seeking certification in a certificate area that includes reading instruction or interventions in kindergarten through grade six.
- Before completion of the program, fully demonstrate his or her ability to teach the subject area for which he or she is seeking certification by documenting a positive impact on student learning growth in a prekindergarten through grade 12 setting.
- Achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination,<sup>6</sup> the General Knowledge Test, and the subject area examination for the subject area certification, as required by the State Board of Education (SBE) rule.

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<sup>2</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026). See also Rule 6A-5.066, F.A.C.

<sup>3</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Subject Area Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/subject-area-knowledge.shtml> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026).

<sup>4</sup> Florida Department of Education, *General Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.shtml> (last visited Jan. 21, 2026).

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

<sup>6</sup> Section 1012.56(7)(a)3., F.S. An individual who completes an educator preparation institute and is rated highly effective by his or her performance evaluation is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination in order to be awarded a professional certificate.

## **Educator Certification**

To serve as an educator in a traditional public school, charter school, virtual school, or other publicly operated school, a person must hold a certificate issued by the DOE.<sup>7</sup> The purpose of certification is to require school-based personnel to “possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to allow the opportunity for a high-quality education in the public schools.”<sup>8</sup>

To be eligible for an educator certificate, a person must meet the following basic eligibility requirements:<sup>9</sup>

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- Sign an affidavit attesting that the applicant will uphold the U.S. and State Constitutions;
- Earn a bachelor’s or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher learning or from a non-accredited institution identified by the DOE as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor’s or higher degree and have attained at least a 2.5 overall grade point average in the applicant’s major field of study;<sup>10</sup>
- Submit to fingerprinting and background screening and not have a criminal history that requires the applicant’s disqualification from certification or employment;
- Be of good moral character; and
- Be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of a teacher.

### ***Temporary Educator Certificate***

A temporary teaching certificate is valid for five school years and is nonrenewable.<sup>11</sup> The DOE is required to issue a temporary certificate to a qualifying applicant within 14 calendar days after receipt of a request from an employer and is required to electronically notify the applicant’s employer that the temporary certificate has been issued and provide the applicant with an official statement of status of eligibility at the time the certificate is issued.<sup>12</sup>

The DOE must issue a temporary certificate to any applicant who:<sup>13</sup>

- Meets the basic eligibility requirements for certification;<sup>14</sup>
- Completes applicable subject area content requirements or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge by, for example, successful completion of an approved exam; and
- Holds an accredited degree or a degree approved by the DOE at the level required for the subject area specialization in the SBE rule.

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<sup>7</sup> Sections 1012.55(1) and 1002.33(12)(f), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1012.54, F.S. See Rule 6A-4.001(1), F.A.C.

<sup>9</sup> Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Rule 6A-4.003(2), F.A.C.

<sup>11</sup> Section 1012.56(7), F.S.

<sup>12</sup> Section 1012.56(1)(b), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 1012.56(7)(b) and (d), F.S. As specified in law, alternative pathways for a temporary certificate are available for military service members and participants in the Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

<sup>14</sup> Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.



***Professional Educator Certificate***

A professional certificate is valid for five school years and is renewable. A professional certificate is awarded to an applicant who meets the basic eligibility requirements for certification<sup>15</sup> and demonstrates mastery of:<sup>16</sup>

- General knowledge;
- Subject area knowledge; and
- Professional preparation and education competence.

***Reinstatement of Professional Educator Certificate***

To reinstate an expired professional educator certificate, the certificate holder must submit an application; complete 6 college credits, 120 inservice points, or a combination thereof, in specified areas<sup>17</sup> during the 5 years immediately preceding reinstatement; and pass a subject area exam for each subject to be shown on the reinstated certificate during those same prior 5 years.<sup>18</sup> The requirements for reinstatement may not be satisfied by subject area exams or college credits completed for issuance of the expired certificate.<sup>19</sup>

**The Florida Center for Teaching Excellence**

The Florida Center for Teaching Excellence (Center) is established at Miami Dade College to prepare high-quality teachers in Florida through rigorous, evidence-based programs grounded in cognitive science, high-impact teaching strategies, and the implementation of knowledge-rich curricula.<sup>20</sup> The Center works in collaboration with the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at the University of South Florida.<sup>21</sup> Among other functions, the center is authorized to submit a professional learning system for approval under the School Community Professional Learning Act.<sup>22</sup> The Miami-Dade College Board of Trustees, in collaboration with the DOE, is responsible for establishing policies governing the supervision, administration, and governance of the Center.<sup>23</sup>

**III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

SB 1718 amends s. 1004.85, F.S., to authorize educator preparation institutes to enroll participants and allow them to complete coursework while the participants are working to obtain an “eligible” statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area included in the participant’s educational plan. Therefore a student may begin coursework in an EPI prior to a determination of eligibility for a certificate.

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<sup>15</sup> Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

<sup>16</sup> Section 1012.56(2)(g)-(i), F.S.

<sup>17</sup> Section 1012.585(5)(b), F.S. *See also* Section 1012.585(3)(a) and (e), F.S.

<sup>18</sup> Section 1012.585(5), F.S.

<sup>19</sup> *Id.* (flush left).

<sup>20</sup> Section 1012.981(1), F.S.

<sup>21</sup> Section 1012.981(2), F.S.

<sup>22</sup> Section 1012.981(3), F.S. The School Community Professional Learning Act was established to bring together various education stakeholders to collaboratively establish a coordinated system of professional learning. *See* Section 1012.98, F.S.

<sup>23</sup> Section 1012.98(5), F.S.

The bill amends s. 1012.56, F.S., to require the Florida Department of Education (DOE) to issue a temporary certificate to an educator whose previously issued professional certificate has expired, provided the educator meets basic eligibility requirements for certification.<sup>24</sup> This allows the educator to begin teaching while completing required college coursework or inservice points without having to again demonstrate subject area mastery and may expedite the educator's return to the classroom.

The bill amends s. 1012.585, F.S., to require an applicant seeking reinstatement of a professional educator certificate to complete specified statutory certification eligibility requirements,<sup>25</sup> but removes the requirement that an educator retake subject area examinations for each subject included on the certificate when the educator has previously demonstrated mastery of subject area knowledge. Upon reinstatement, the professional certificate must include all subject area coverages and endorsements held at the time of expiration. The bill also specifies that inservice points that were earned in order to earn or renew a professional certificate that has since expired may not be used to satisfy reinstatement requirements.

The bill amends s. 1012.981, F.S., to update the name of the Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning at the University of South Florida with the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching as the required collaborating entity for the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence (Center).

The bill requires, rather than authorizes, the Center to submit to the DOE a professional learning system. The bill requires the Center to offer professional learning, at no cost, to certified educators seeking to renew or reinstate their certificate and to submit any inservice points earned to the DOE on the educator's behalf. The bill also requires the Center to provide such educators with information on school district professional learning systems that provide access to inservice training to individuals not employed by the school district.

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.

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<sup>24</sup> Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f), F.S.

<sup>25</sup> *See Id.* To seek certification, a person must be at least 18 years old; swear allegiance to constitutional principles; hold a bachelor's or higher degree; submit to background screening; be of good moral character; and be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator.

**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:**

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1004.85, 1012.56, 1012.585, and 1012.981.

**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.

By Senator Calatayud

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1 A bill to be entitled  
 2 An act relating to educator preparation and  
 3 certification; amending s. 1004.85, F.S.; authorizing  
 4 an educator preparation institute to allow certain  
 5 program participants to enroll in introductory  
 6 coursework; amending s. 1012.56, F.S.; revising the  
 7 criteria for the award of a temporary educator  
 8 certification to include certain persons with expired  
 9 professional certificates; amending s. 1012.585, F.S.;  
 10 requiring that subject area coverages and endorsements  
 11 for a certificateholder be reinstated with the  
 12 certificateholder's professional certificate; revising  
 13 requirements for reinstatement of a professional  
 14 certificate; providing that certain requirements for  
 15 reinstatement of a professional certificate may not be  
 16 satisfied using specific inservice points; amending s.  
 17 1012.981, F.S.; requiring the Florida Center for  
 18 Teaching Excellence to collaborate with the David C.  
 19 Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching for  
 20 specified purposes; requiring, rather than  
 21 authorizing, the center to submit a specified  
 22 professional learning system for approval by the  
 23 department; requiring the center to allow certain  
 24 certified educators to use such professional learning  
 25 system for specified purposes at no cost to the  
 26 educator; requiring the center to submit inservice  
 27 points for such educators to the department; requiring  
 28 the center to provide information on certain school  
 29 district professional learning systems to certain

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

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30 certified educators; providing an effective date.  
 31  
 32 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:  
 33  
 34 Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section  
 35 1004.85, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:  
 36 1004.85 Postsecondary educator preparation institutes.—  
 37 (3) Educator preparation institutes approved pursuant to  
 38 this section may offer competency-based certification programs  
 39 specifically designed for noneducation major baccalaureate  
 40 degree holders to enable program participants to meet the  
 41 educator certification requirements of s. 1012.56. An educator  
 42 preparation institute choosing to offer a competency-based  
 43 certification program pursuant to the provisions of this section  
 44 must implement a program developed by the institute and approved  
 45 by the department for this purpose. Approved programs shall be  
 46 available for use by other approved educator preparation  
 47 institutes.  
 48 (b) Each program participant must:  
 49 1. Meet certification requirements pursuant to s.  
 50 1012.56(1) by obtaining an eligible ~~a~~ statement of status of  
 51 eligibility in the certification subject area of the educational  
 52 plan and meet the requirements of s. 1012.56(2) (a)-(f) before  
 53 participating in field experiences. An educator preparation  
 54 institute may allow a program participant to enroll in and  
 55 complete coursework while the participant is working to obtain  
 56 an eligible statement of status of eligibility in the  
 57 certification subject area of the educational plan.  
 58 2. Demonstrate competency and participate in field

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

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

Section 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (7) of section 1012.56, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.56 Educator certification requirements.—

(7) TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.—

(b) The department shall issue a temporary certificate to any applicant who:

1. Completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs (2)(a)-(f) and completes the subject area content requirements specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to subsection (5) and holds an accredited degree or a degree approved by the Department of Education at the level required for the subject area

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specialization in state board rule;

2. For a subject area specialization for which the state board otherwise requires a bachelor's degree, documents 48 months of active-duty military service with an honorable discharge or a medical separation; completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs (2)(a), (b), and (d)-(f); completes the subject area content requirements specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to subsection (5); and documents completion of 60 college credits with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as provided by one or more accredited institutions of higher learning or a nonaccredited institution of higher learning identified by the Department of Education as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher; ~~or~~

3. Is enrolled in a state-approved teacher preparation program under s. 1004.04; is actively completing the required program field experience or internship at a public school; completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs (2)(a), (b), and (d)-(f); completes the subject area content requirements specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to subsection (5); and documents completion of 60 college credits with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as provided by one or more accredited institutions of higher learning or a nonaccredited institution of higher learning identified by the Department of Education as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher; or

4. Completes the requirements in paragraphs (2)(a)-(f) and whose previously issued professional certificate has expired.

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At least 1 year before an individual's temporary certificate is set to expire, the department shall electronically notify the individual of the date on which his or her certificate will expire and provide a list of each method by which the qualifications for a professional certificate can be completed.

Section 3. Subsection (5) of section 1012.585, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.585 Process for renewal or reinstatement of professional certificates.—

(5) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow the reinstatement of expired professional certificates, including each subject area coverage and endorsement held by the certificateholder at the time of the certificate's expiration. The department may reinstate an expired professional certificate if the certificateholder:

(a) Submits an application for reinstatement of the expired certificate.

(b) Completes the requirements in s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f).

(c)(b) Documents completion of 6 college credits during the 5 years immediately preceding reinstatement of the expired certificate, completion of 120 inservice points, or a combination thereof, in an area specified in paragraph (3)(a) to include the credit required under paragraph (3)(e).

~~(e) During the 5 years immediately preceding reinstatement of the certificate, achieves a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination or, if a Florida subject area examination has not been developed, a standardized examination specified in state board rule for each subject to be shown on~~

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~~the reinstated certificate.~~

The requirements of this subsection may not be satisfied by ~~subject area examinations or~~ college credits or inservice points completed for issuance of the certificate that has expired.

Section 4. Subsections (2) and (3) of section 1012.981, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1012.981 The Florida Center for Teaching Excellence.—

(2) The center shall, in collaboration with the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Innovative Teaching within and Learning at the University of South Florida, do all of the following:

(a) Develop and deliver evidence-based professional learning opportunities aligned to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices.

(b) Develop and deliver educator training programs pursuant to s. 1012.98 that integrate high-quality instructional materials included on the state-adopted instructional materials list under s. 1006.28, materials evaluated and identified pursuant to s. 1001.215(4), and materials developed by or under the direction of the department as provided in s. 1006.39. These programs must focus on the effective use of knowledge-based curricula, highlighting when and how to incorporate intervention materials, and emphasize the importance of background knowledge in building advanced reading comprehension grounded in the science of reading and critical thinking skills.

(c) Develop and design models of high-quality clinical experiences for aspiring teachers. These model experiences shall serve as a standard that institutions approved pursuant to ss.

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1004.04 and 1004.85 can adopt or adapt, enabling participants to demonstrate mastery of instructional techniques, classroom management strategies, and the application of high-impact teaching strategies in authentic educational settings.

(d) Collaborate with school districts and other educational stakeholders to identify emerging needs in teacher preparation and align center programs accordingly, conducting gap analyses to provide comprehensive coverage of the science of learning, high-impact teaching strategies, and knowledge-rich curriculum implementation.

(e) Establish a statewide network of teachers and instructional leaders equipped with the knowledge and skills to mentor and support aspiring and current educators participating in the center's programs. This network shall model effective pedagogical practices and facilitate professional growth.

(f) Conduct research and disseminate findings on high-impact teaching practices and the implementation of knowledge-based curricula to inform policy, improve classroom instruction, and address the importance of background knowledge in student achievement.

(g) Report to the department the completion of professional learning by individuals who are not employed by entities with an approved professional learning system.

(3) The center:

(a) Must ~~may~~ submit a professional learning system for approval pursuant to s. 1012.98.

(b) Shall allow a certified educator seeking to renew or reinstate his or her certificate to use the system at no cost and submit any inservice points earned by the educator through

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the system to the department on the educator's behalf.

(c) Shall provide a certified educator seeking to renew or reinstate a certificate with information on school district professional learning systems that provide access to inservice training to persons not employed by the school district.

Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

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**STATE OF FLORIDA  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Division of Elections**

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

***Layla Collins***

is duly appointed a member of the  
**State Board of Education**

for a term beginning on the Twelfth day of August, A.D., 2025,  
until the Thirty-First day of December, A.D., 2028 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 Twenty-Third day of December, A.D., 2025.*



Secretary of State

DSDE 99 (3/03)





**RON DeSANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

RECEIVED

2025 JUL 15 PM 4:37

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

July 11, 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 1001.01, Florida Statutes:

Mrs. Layla Collins



as a member of the State Board of Education, succeeding Ben Gibson, subject to confirmation by the Senate. This appointment is effective August 1, 2025, for a term ending December 31, 2028.

Sincerely,

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

Ron DeSantis  
Governor

RD/dw

RECEIVED

# OATH OF OFFICE

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

2025 DEC 19 AM 10:08

DIVISION OF ELECTIONS  
TALLAHASSEE, FL

STATE OF FLORIDA

County of Hillsborough

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

State Board of 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 17 day of Dec, 2025

S. Hamell / Sharon Irene Harrell

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



SHARON IRENE HARRELL

Commission # HH 301453

Expires August 16, 2026

Personally Known ☐ OR Produced Identification ☒

Type of Identification Produced

## 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

Print Name

Signature