

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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

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

BILL: CS/SB 432

INTRODUCER: Committee on Education Pre-K – 12 and Senator Hutson

SUBJECT: Teacher Certification

DATE: January 22, 2016

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Bailey	Klebacha	ED	Fav/CS
2.	_____	_____	AED	_____
3.	_____	_____	AP	_____

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Substantial Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 432 creates an expedited pathway for an individual holding a Florida temporary educator certificate to earn a Florida professional educator certificate for grades 6-12.

Specifically, the bill requires the applicant to:

- Meet all general certification requirements, with the exception of certain professional preparation coursework requirements;
- Hold a master’s or higher degree in the area of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics;
- Teach a high school course in the subject of the advanced degree;
- Be rated as highly effective as determined by the teacher’s performance evaluation system, based in part on student performance as measured by a statewide standardized assessment or an Advanced International Certificate of Education, or International Baccalaureate examination; and
- Achieve a passing score on the Florida professional competency examination required by the state board rules.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2016.

II. Present Situation:

STEM Education

STEM education is the intentional integration of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and their associated practices to create a student-centered learning environment in which students investigate and engineer solutions to problems, and construct evidence-based explanations of real-world phenomena with a focus on a student's social, emotional, physical, and academic needs through shared contributions of schools, families, and community partners.¹

During 2014-15, 175,006 teachers were employed in 4,426 Florida public schools.² Of this number, 47,342 teachers were teaching in a STEM area for eight or more years in a Florida public school district.³

Instructional Personnel Certification

In order for a person to serve as an educator in a traditional public school, charter school, virtual school, or other publicly operated school, the person must hold a certificate issued by the Florida Department of Education.⁴

Certification requirements are established to assure that educational personnel in public schools possess appropriate skills in reading, writing, and mathematics, and adequate pedagogical knowledge, including the use of technology to enhance student learning, and relevant subject matter competence to demonstrate an acceptable level of professional performance.⁵

Types of Educator Certificates

The Department of Education (DOE) identifies appropriate educator certification for the instruction of specified courses in an annual publication of a directory of course code numbers⁶ for all programs and courses funded through the Florida Education Finance Program.⁷

The DOE issues three types of educator certificates:⁸

- A professional certificate is the highest type of full-time certificate issued. The professional certificate is a 5-year renewable certificate.⁹
- A temporary certificate is a 3-year nonrenewable certificate issued to an applicant who does not qualify for a professional certificate.¹⁰

¹ Department of Education, *STEM Programs*, <http://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/subject-areas/math-science/stem/defining-stem.stml> (last visited January 15, 2016).

² *Staff of the Department of Education, Legislative Bill Analysis for SB 290* (2016).

³ *Id.*

⁴ Sections 1012.55(1) and 1002.33(12)(f), F.S.

⁵ Section 1012.54, F.S.

⁶ Department of Education, *2015-2016 Course Directory*, <http://www.fldoe.org/policy/articulation/ccd/2015-2016-course-directory.stml> (last visited January 21, 2016).

⁷ Section 1012.55(1)(c), F.S.

⁸ Section 1012.55, F.S.

⁹ Section 1012.56(1), (2), (3), (5), (6), and (7), F.S.

¹⁰ Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S.; Rule 6A-4.004(1), F.A.C.

- An Athletic Coaching certificate covers a full-time or part-time individual who is employed as an athletic coach in any public school in any district of the state.¹¹

Eligibility Criteria for Educator Certification

To be eligible to seek a Florida educator's certificate, an individual must submit an application and meet specified requirements:¹²

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- File an affidavit to uphold the principles incorporated in the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Florida;
- Document receipt of a bachelor's or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher learning, or a nonaccredited institution of higher learning that the DOE has identified as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree, or higher;
- Submit to a background screening;
- Be of good moral character;
- Be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator; and
- Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge, subject area knowledge, and professional preparation and education competence.

General Knowledge

Mastery of general knowledge may be demonstrated through several methods, including achieving a passing score on the General Knowledge Test¹³ or achieving passing scores established in state board rule on national or international examinations that test comparable content and relevant standards in verbal, analytical writing, and quantitative reasoning skills portions of the Graduate Record Examination.¹⁴

An educator who is employed under a temporary certificate must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge within one calendar year after employment in order to remain employed in a position that requires a certificate.¹⁵

If the educator is employed under contract, the calendar year deadline for demonstrating mastery of general knowledge may be extended through the end of the school year.¹⁶

Subject Area Knowledge

Mastery of subject area knowledge may be demonstrated by earning a qualifying bachelor's or higher degree and passing the Florida-developed subject area examination specified in state

¹¹ Section 1012.55(2)(a), F.S.

¹² Section 1012.56(2), F.S.; Rule 6A-4.002, F.A.C.

¹³ Section 1012.56(3)(a), F.S. The General Knowledge Test is part of the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations and is administered as four subtests: Reading, English Language Skills, Essay, and Mathematics. Rule 6A-4.0021(7), F.A.C.

¹⁴ Section 1012.56(3)(e), F.S.; Rules 6A-4.002(4)(e) and 6A-4.0021(12)(a), F.A.C.

¹⁵ Section 1012.56(7), F.S.

¹⁶ *Id.*

board rule¹⁷ or, if a Florida subject area examination has not been developed, achieving a passing score on a standardized examination specified in state board rule.¹⁸

An applicant may also demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge by providing documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued for a subject area by another U.S. state or territory, by National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or by American Board for Certification of Teacher Excellence, if the certificate is comparable to the Florida certificate issued for the same subject area.¹⁹

Professional Preparation and Education Competence

Mastery of professional preparation and education competence is typically demonstrated by successfully completing an approved teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution in Florida, or a teacher preparation program from an out-of-state accredited or department-approved institution, and achieving a passing score on the Professional Education Test required by state board rule.²⁰

Individuals who already have a bachelor's or higher degree in a subject other than education, competence is demonstrated in part by completing 15 semester hours in professional preparation courses specified in state board rule²¹ and achieving a passing score on the Professional Education Test.²²

Exception to Educator Certification

Currently, local school district boards can issue an adjunct teaching certificate to any applicant who meets specific requirements²³ and has expertise in the subject area to be taught.²⁴ The adjunct teaching certificate is only valid through the term of the annual contract between the educator and school district.²⁵

The State Board of Education provides rules to authorize district school boards to employ selected noncertificated personnel to provide instructional services in the individuals' fields of specialty or to assist instructional staff members as education paraprofessionals.²⁶

¹⁷ Section 1012.56(5)(a), F.S. The Florida Teacher Certification Examinations include 44 subject area tests. Florida Department of Education, *Florida Teacher Certification Examinations*, http://www.fl.nesinc.com/FL_TIGS.asp (last visited January 21, 2016).

¹⁸ Section 1012.56(5), F.S.

¹⁹ Section 1012.56(5)(e) and (f), F.S.; Rule 6A-4.002(1)(i)-(j), F.A.C.

²⁰ Section 1012.56(6)(a) and (b), F.S.; *see s.* 1004.04, F.S.; Rule 6A-4.003(1) and (4), F.A.C. The Professional Education Test is part of the Florida Teacher Certification Examinations. Rule 6A-4.0021(8), F.A.C.

²¹ Section 1012.56(6)(f), F.S.; Rule 6A-4.006, F.A.C. The required 15 semester hours of course work in professional education areas include: classroom management, child and adolescent development and learning, educational assessment practices, effective instructional techniques, strategies, and materials to meet the needs of diverse learners, applications of research-based practices in reading, and strategies for teaching students of limited English proficiency.

²² Section 1012.56(6)(f), F.S.

²³ Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(f) and (10), F.S.

²⁴ Section 1012.57(1), F.S.

²⁵ Section 1012.57(4), F.S.

²⁶ Section 1012.55(1)(c), F.S.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

CS/SB 432 creates an expedited pathway for an individual holding a Florida temporary educator certificate to earn a Florida professional educator certificate for grades 6-12.

Specifically, the bill requires the applicant to:

- Meet all general certification requirements, with the exception of certain professional preparation coursework requirements;
- Hold a master's or higher degree in the area of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics (STEM);
- Teach a high school course in the subject of the advanced degree;
- Be rated as highly effective as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation system, based in part on student performance as measured by a statewide standardized assessment or an Advanced International Certificate of Education, or International Baccalaureate examination; and
- Achieve a passing score on the Florida professional competency examination required by the state board rules.

In effect, the bill creates an effective approach for the individual with expertise in a STEM field, to immediately earn a professional educator certificate by eliminating the additional coursework requirements that would typically be taken while teaching under a Florida state-issued temporary certificate.

The bill permits an individual to bypass the 15 semester hours of professional preparation requirements, therefore, omitting coursework in topics such as classroom management with a focus on safe learning environments, educational assessment practices, and instructional strategies for teaching students of limited English proficiency. However, the bill presumes the knowledge and skills covered in the content areas of the professional preparation coursework would otherwise be acquired by the educator.

In addition, a candidate who meets all of these requirements may apply for a professional certificate before the completion of his or her three-year temporary certification period.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2016.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

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 amends section 1012.56 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)**CS by Education Pre-K – 12 on January 20, 2016:**

The committee substitute modifies the bill as follows:

- Requires a bill title change from STEM Teachers Pilot Program to Teacher Certification which provides alternative requirements for an applicant to earn a professional educator certificate;
- Removes the STEM Teachers Pilot Program and reporting requirements; and
- Creates an expedited pathway for temporary certified teachers who meet certain requirements in the area of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics to receive a professional certificate for grades 6-12.

B. Amendments:

None.