

**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

BILL: SB 1474  
 INTRODUCER: Senators Perry and Mayfield  
 SUBJECT: Teacher Certification  
 DATE: March 31, 2017      REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Benvenisty	Graf	ED	<b>Favorable</b>
2.	_____	_____	AED	_____
3.	_____	_____	AP	_____

**I. Summary:**

SB 1474 modifies the process for earning temporary educator certificates and renewing professional certificates. Specifically, the bill requires the Florida Department of Education to issue:

- A professional certificate to any applicant who fulfills the statutorily requirements for a professional certificate and completes a professional preparation and education competency program approved by the DOE.
- A temporary certificate to a qualifying applicant within 14 calendar days after the receipt of the request form and electronically notify the applicant’s employee school district or employing private school that the temporary certificate has been issued.
  - Requires the DOE to issue an official statement of status of eligibility within 90 calendar days after the stamped receipted date of the completed application. This statement must be provided electronically and specify every method by which an applicant can complete the qualifications for a professional certificate.

Additionally, the bill revises the professional development certification and education competency program to specify a teacher mentorship and induction component; and authorizes charter schools and charter management organizations to provide the program that includes the teacher mentorship and induction component.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

## II. Present Situation:

### **Educator 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 (DOE).<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

### *Types of Educator Certificates*

The DOE identifies appropriate educator certification for the instruction of specified courses in an annual publication of a directory of course code numbers for all programs and courses funded through the Florida Education Finance Program.<sup>3</sup>

The DOE issues three types of educator certificates:<sup>4</sup>

- A professional certificate is the highest type of full-time certificate issued. The professional certificate is a 5-year renewable certificate.<sup>5</sup>
- A temporary certificate is a 3-year nonrenewable certificate issued to an applicant who does not qualify for a professional certificate.<sup>6</sup>
- 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.<sup>7</sup>

### *Eligibility Criteria for Educator Certification*

To be eligible to seek a Florida educator's certificate, an individual must:<sup>8</sup>

- 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 and that the information provided in the application is true, accurate, and complete.
- 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 Department of Education has identified as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree, or higher. Each applicant seeking initial certification must have attained at least a 2.5 overall grade point average on a 4.0 scale in the applicant's major field of study.
- Submit to a background screening in accordance with Florida law.
- Be of good moral character.

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

<sup>2</sup> Section 1012.54, F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1012.55(1)(c), F.S.

<sup>4</sup> Section 1012.55, F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1012.56(1)-(3) and (5), (6)-(7), F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1012.56(7)(b), F.S.; Rule 6A-4.004(1), F.A.C.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1012.55(2)(a), F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1012.56(2)(a)-(i), F.S.

- Be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator.
- Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge, subject area knowledge, and professional preparation and education competence.

### **Professional Development Certification and Education Competency Program**

Florida law authorizes a school district to provide a cohesive competency-based professional development certification and education competency program by which members of a school district's instructional staff may satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements specified in statute and rules of the State Board of Education.<sup>9</sup> Participants in this program must hold a state-issued temporary certificate.<sup>10</sup> A school district that implements the program must provide a competency-based certification developed by the DOE or developed by the district and approved by the DOE.<sup>11</sup>

### **Renewal of Professional Certificates**

All professional certificates, except a nonrenewable professional certificate, must be renewed every five years.<sup>12</sup> In order to qualify for renewal, the applicant must earn at least 6 college credits or 120 inservice (professional development) points during the 5-year cycle.<sup>13</sup> At least 3 college credits or 60 inservice points must be earned in each subject area for which renewal is sought.<sup>14</sup> In addition to credits or inservice points required in the subject area, credits or inservice points may be earned in courses in clinical educator training, literacy and computational skills acquisition, exceptional student education, child development, drug abuse, child abuse, limited English proficiency, dropout prevention, and other topics.<sup>15</sup> Applicants for renewal of a professional certificate must earn at least one college credit or the equivalent amount of inservice points in the area of instruction for teaching students with disabilities.<sup>16</sup>

### **School Community Professional Development Act**

Florida law requires the DOE, public postsecondary education institutions public school districts, state education foundations, consortia, and professional organizations to work collaboratively to establish a coordinated system of professional development.<sup>17</sup> The purpose of this system is to increase student achievement, enhance classroom instructional strategies that promote rigor and

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

<sup>10</sup> *Id.*

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> Section 1012.585(2)(a), F.S.

<sup>13</sup> Section 1012.585(3)(a), F.S. Applicants may combine college credits and inservice points to meet this requirement. One semester hour of college credit is equivalent to 20 inservice points. Rule 6A-4.0051(1)(a)2., F.A.C. College credits must be earned at an accredited or state board-approved institution. Inservice points must be earned through participation in state board-approved school district inservice activities. Rule 6A-4.0051(1)(a), F.A.C.; *see* rule 6A-4.003(1) and (2), F.A.C. (list of approved accrediting agencies and guidelines for nonaccredited approved institutions).

<sup>14</sup> Section 1012.585(3)(a), F.S.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.*

<sup>16</sup> Section 1012.585(4), F.S. This required training may not add to the total hours required by the DOE for continuing education or inservice training. *Id.*

<sup>17</sup> Section 1012.98(1), F.S.

relevance throughout the curriculum, and prepare students for continuing education and the workforce.<sup>18</sup>

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

SB 1474 modifies the process for earning temporary educator certificates and renewing professional certificates. Specifically, the bill requires the Florida Department of Education to issue:

- A professional certificate to any applicant who fulfills the statutory requirements for a professional certificate and completes a professional preparation and education competency program approved by the DOE.
- A temporary certificate to a qualifying applicant within 14 calendar days after the receipt of the request form and electronically notify the applicant's employee school district or employing private school that the temporary certificate has been issued.
  - Requires the DOE to issue an official statement of status of eligibility within 90 calendar days after the stamped receipted date of the completed application. This statement must be provided electronically and specify every method by which an applicant can complete the qualifications for a professional certificate.

Additionally, the bill revises the professional development certification and education competency program to specify a teacher mentorship and induction component; and authorizes charter schools and charter management organizations to provide the program that includes the teacher mentorship and induction component.

#### **Educator Certification**

The bill requires the DOE to electronically issue a temporary certificate to a qualifying applicant within 14 calendar days after it receives a request from the applicant's employing school district or private school. The DOE must also electronically provide an official statement of status of eligibility at the time the certificate is issued. The statement must include each method by which an applicant can complete the qualifications for a professional certificate. This may streamline the temporary certificate application process for prospective educators and may provide greater transparency for educators wishing to pursue a professional certificate.

Additionally, the bill requires the DOE to issue a professional certificate to a temporary certificate holder who meets the requirements for a professional certificate enumerated above, who completes a professional preparation and education competence program, and is rated highly effective. As such, the bill provides that an individual with a temporary certificate is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination in order to be awarded a professional certificate.

#### **Professional Development Certification and Education Competency Program**

The bill requires a professional development certification and education competency program to include a mentorship and induction component, which must include, at minimum, weekly opportunities for mentoring and induction activities. Mentoring and induction activities include,

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<sup>18</sup> Section 1012.98(1), F.S.

common planning time, ongoing professional development targeted to a mentee teacher's needs, opportunities to observe other teachers, co-teaching experiences, and reflection and followup discussions. A teacher selected to serve as a peer mentor is required under the bill to complete specialized training in clinical supervision and participate in ongoing mentor training provided through the coordinated system of professional development. The bill authorizes that participation in mentorship and induction activities, including as a mentor, may apply towards professional development requirements.

The bill requires that the mentorship and induction activities must be provided for the teacher's first year in the program and may be provided until the teacher attains his or her professional certificate. Further, the bill requires that a principal who is rated highly effective must be provided flexibility in selecting professional development activities for the mentorship and induction component so long as the DOE approves the program.

The DOE is directed to adopt standards for the approval of professional development certification programs, including standards for the teacher mentorship and induction component, by December 31, 2017. The standards for the teacher mentorship and induction component must include:

- Program administration and evaluation;
- Mentor roles, selection, and training;
- Beginning teacher assessment and professional development; and
- Teacher content knowledge and practices aligned to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices.

Additionally, the bill authorizes charter schools and charter management organizations to offer a professional development certification program approved by the DOE. Accordingly, this program may ease the pathway to teacher certification for temporary certificate holders and may help school districts recruit and retain teachers.

The bill takes effect July 1, 2017.

#### **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:**

According to the Florida Department of Education (DOE), SB 1474 may result in cost savings for professional certificate applicants who may not be required to enroll in additional college coursework or take the professional education competency examination to be awarded a professional certificate.<sup>19</sup>

**C. Government Sector Impact:**

According to the DOE, implementation of the bill will require one additional DOE staff member to review, approve, and monitor compliance with the statutory requirements for the Professional Development Certification and Education Competency programs, as well as revision of school district professional development systems.<sup>20</sup> The estimated cost for the additional staff member is \$82,160.<sup>21</sup>

**VI. Technical Deficiencies**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends the following sections of the Florida Statutes: 1001.42, 1012.56, 1012.585, and 1012.98.

**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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<sup>19</sup> Florida Department of Education, *2017 Agency Legislative Bill Analysis for HB 1111* (March 22, 2017), at 7. HB 1111 is similar to SB 1474.

<sup>20</sup> *Id.* at 6.

<sup>21</sup> *Id.*