

# FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

## BILL ANALYSIS

*This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.*

**BILL #:** [CS/CS/HB 1255](#)

**TITLE:** Education

**SPONSOR(S):** Trabulsy

**COMPANION BILL:** [CS/CS/SB 1618](#) (Calatayud)

**LINKED BILLS:** None

**RELATED BILLS:** None

### Committee References

[Student Academic Success](#)

15 Y, 2 N, As CS



[PreK-12 Budget](#)

12 Y, 1 N



[Education & Employment](#)

17 Y, 4 N, As CS

## SUMMARY

### Effect of the Bill:

The bill adds two components to a school district reading instruction plan and requires the inclusion of a mathematics instruction plan within the existing reading instruction plan. The bill revises several provisions of law to provide additional supports for mathematics instruction and interventions, including incorporating mathematics instruction into teacher preparation programs and the development of a pathway for a mathematics endorsement. The bill establishes new screening requirements for private schools participating in educational scholarship programs. The bill requires instruction on human embryologic development as part of health education courses and updates requirements for the financial literacy course. The bill reenacts the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. The bill prohibits specified expenditures by public K-12 educational entities. The bill expands authority to purchase emergency opioid antagonists and provides liability protection for public school employees administering the opioid antagonists. The bill clarifies the process for withdrawal and reenrollment in the Voluntary Prekindergarten program. The bill provides additional notifications surrounding New Worlds programs and requiring parental opt-in for corporal punishment. The bill provides for interventions for student discipline and extensions of expulsion periods based on the recommendations of a threat management team. The bill amends provisions governing charter school facilities and how local governing agencies manage the approval of such facilities. The bill authorizes school districts to administer the CLT10 to students in grade 10.

### Fiscal or Economic Impact:

The bill has an indeterminate fiscal impact on private sector expenditures and no fiscal impact on state expenditures.

[JUMP TO](#)

[SUMMARY](#)

[ANALYSIS](#)

[RELEVANT INFORMATION](#)

[BILL HISTORY](#)

## ANALYSIS

### EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill provides for two additional components for a [school district reading instruction plan](#) and requires approval of the plan by the Department of Education (DOE). The first additional component specifies that intensive reading interventions must be delivered by instructional personnel who possess a micro-credential through the New Worlds Reading Initiative or are certified or endorsed in reading. Intensive reading interventions must also incorporate evidence-based strategies identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office. Instructional personnel possessing only the micro-credential must be supervised<sup>1</sup> by an individual certified or endorsed in reading. The second is to provide a description of how the district prioritizes the assignment of highly effective teachers to students in kindergarten through grade 2. (Section [22](#)).

The bill creates a comprehensive system of [mathematics instruction](#) for students in pre-kindergarten through grade 12 and those who exhibit a substantial deficiency in early mathematics skills to mirror the existing

<sup>1</sup> The bill defines supervised to mean the ability to communicate by way of telecommunication with or physical presence of the certified or endorsed personnel for consultation and direction of the actions of the personnel with the micro-credential.

**STORAGE NAME:** h1255e.EEC

**DATE:** 4/18/2025

provisions related to reading instruction. The bill requires each school district to include a mathematics instruction plan as part of the reading instruction plan that may include:

- Additional time per day of evidence-based intensive mathematics instruction for students in kindergarten through grade 12, which may be delivered during or outside of the regular school day.
- Highly qualified mathematics coaches who hold a certification that aligns with the certification requirements for the courses of the teachers they support and have at least 3 consecutive years of a highly effective district evaluation to specifically support classroom teachers in making instructional decisions based on progress monitoring data and improve classroom teacher delivery of effective mathematics instruction and mathematics intervention.
- Tutoring in mathematics. (Section [23](#)).

The bill requires that the State Board of Education (SBE) define a highly qualified teacher of mathematics or a trained tutor for purposes of delivering supplemental, evidence-based mathematics interventions. Additionally, the bill requires that the parents of students identified as having a substantial deficiency in mathematics be notified of their eligibility for the New Worlds Scholarship Accounts and the school district services provided by the New Worlds Tutoring Program. (Section [31](#)).

Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the bill modifies the uniform core curricula requirements for state-approved [teacher preparation programs](#) to include specified content in mathematics at the elementary level. The bill requires that content in mathematics for teacher preparation programs include numbers and operations, fractions, algebraic reasoning, measurement, geometric reasoning, and data analysis and probability at the elementary level, for a minimum of 6 credit hours. (Section [25](#)).

Additionally, effective July 1, 2026, the bill requires that competency-based certification programs offered by postsecondary educator preparation institutes for non-education major baccalaureate degree holders and the professional learning certification program include content in mathematics, including numbers and operations, fractions, algebraic reasoning, measurement, geometric reasoning, and data analysis and probability at the elementary level. (Sections [26](#) and [39](#)).

The bill requires the [New Worlds Tutoring Program](#) to consult with the Office of Mathematics and Sciences in the development of best practice guidelines for mathematics tutoring in alignment with state standards. The bill updates the deadline for reporting New Worlds Tutoring Program data from July 1 to August 31, annually. (Section [33](#)).

The bill authorizes students providing tutoring under the RAISE High School Tutor Program, either paid or unpaid, to count the time spent tutoring toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and for the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. (Section [32](#)).

The bill updates the [background screening requirements](#) for private schools participating in an educational scholarship program. Employees and contracted personnel with direct contact with students as well as owners and operators must now be screened using the same standards as individuals seeking educator certification, a level 2 background check, through the Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse operated by the Agency for Health Care Administration. The bill also provides that disqualification pursuant to such a background screening will be based on the laws and rules in effect at the time of the application for employment, provided that the person is continually employed by the same school. (Sections [17](#) and [38](#)).

The bill requires that instruction on human embryologic development be included in health education for students in grades 6 through 12 as part of [required instruction](#). The bill requires that instruction in human embryologic development include a high-definition, medically accurate ultrasound video showing the development of the heart and other organs and movement of the limbs and head. The instruction must also include a high-quality, medically accurate, computer generated rendering showing and describing the process of fertilization and various states of human development in the uterus. A parent may opt their child out of viewing the required videos. The SBE is required to adopt rules to implement this instruction. (Section [21](#)).

The bill revises the term “[critical teacher shortage areas](#)” to “high-demand teacher needs areas” throughout the education code. (Sections [8](#), [25](#), [36](#) and [37](#)).

The bill repeals provisions related to the [Florida School for Competitive Academics](#) as the school never officially opened and the provisions at issue are unnecessary. (Sections [1](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [9](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#), and [34](#)).

Effective upon becoming law, the bill authorizes the DOE to join or establish a national consortium to assist in the development and implementation of advanced courses aligned to the requirements for general education courses as part of [articulated accelerated mechanisms](#) for secondary students. (Section [29](#)).

The DOE must adopt one or more statewide, competency-based pathways by which instructional personnel may earn a mathematics endorsement by the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year. A pathway adopted by the DOE must allow a candidate to complete coursework online and demonstrate mastery of each endorsement competency either in person or remotely. The bill requires the DOE, when adopting statewide, competency-based pathways for the reading endorsement, to evaluate and make recommendations for updates to reading endorsement competencies and subject area examination for educator certification that address among other issues dyscalculia and evidence-based mathematics instruction. (Section [40](#)).

The bill amends the [Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education Program](#) to authorize charter school consortia of at least 30-member schools and an approved professional learning system to nominate teachers for Teacher of the Year and to serve as the Ambassador for Education. (Section [41](#)).

The bill reenacts and amends the [Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children](#) (Compact) the automatic repeal date from July 1, 2025, to July 1, 2028. To provide additional support to military families relocating to Florida, the bill requires the DOE to develop and implement a training module relating to facilitating and expediting the transfer of a K-12 student’s education records from an out-of-state school. The training must be provided to all school districts and charter schools and must be made available to all employees working directly with military families. (Section [7](#) and [19](#)).

The bill [prohibits expenditures](#) by public K-12 educational entities and their direct-support organizations in a similar manner to existing restrictions on public postsecondary education institutions. A public school, charter school, school district, charter school administrator, or direct-support organization may not expend funds on membership in organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion. Additionally, the bill prohibits these entities from expending funds on programs that violate the Florida Educational Equity Act (FEEA) or advocate, promote, or engage in political or social activism, as defined by the SBE. The bill exempts student-led organizations and activities necessary to comply with federal and state law, receive or maintain accreditation, or for continuing to receive state funds based on SBE rule. (Section [10](#)).

The bill removes the requirement that the Commissioner of Education determine that [school advisory councils](#) include minority persons and persons of lower socioeconomic status to the maximum extent possible. (Section [11](#)).

The bill modifies provisions related to [opioid antagonists](#) and [corporal punishment](#) in schools. The bill expands the options for opioid antagonists available for purchase by district school boards by authorizing any emergency opioid antagonist approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), rather than only naloxone. Regarding corporal punishment, the bill requires that if a district school board has a policy authorizing corporal punishment, the policy must include a requirement for parental consent. The policy may specify that parent consent is provided for the entire school year or before each administration of corporal punishment. The bill requires charter schools to comply with the updated requirements for corporal punishment. Additionally, the bill expands existing liability protections for staff members that administer opioid antagonists to cover public school employees. (Section [12](#) and [13](#)).

The bill removes the 70 percent completion cap and the substantially completed limitation on withdrawal from and reenrollment in a [Voluntary Prekindergarten Program](#) (VPK) for good cause and extreme hardship, respectively. These changes allow a student to withdraw and reenroll regardless of how much of the program he or

she completed while maintaining that the total funding for the student may not exceed one full-time equivalent student. (Section [18](#)).

The bill amends the required curriculum for the mandatory [financial literacy](#) course to include instruction on the costs of postsecondary education, including cost of attendance, completion of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), scholarships and grants, and student loans. (Section [24](#)).

The bill requires that new and revised [state academic standards](#) documents submitted to the SBE must only consist of academic standards and benchmarks. The bill also requires the Commissioner to submit all revised standards documents to the SBE for approval no later than July 1, 2026. By removing the benchmark clarifications statements, educators will have more flexibility in how they incorporate the standards into their instruction. (Section [20](#)).

Authorizes state agencies to fill positions with apprentices that have successfully completed their apprenticeship with that agency. (Section [2](#)).

Amends the requirements for membership in the governing body for the [Independent Special District for Children's Services](#) for Miami-Dade County by removing one specified member and adding a member-at-large. Extends the term of appointment for members of that governing board from 2 to 3 years. (Section [3](#)).

The bill prohibits a local government from enforcing any local building requirements or site-development restrictions on charter schools that are more stringent than those found in the State Requirements for Education Facilities of the Florida Building Code or are not uniformly imposed or enforced upon public schools. A local governing authority may not apply or enforce a condition against a charter school unless the condition is uniformly applied to other public schools within the jurisdiction of the local governing authority and the charter school is located on property that is the subject of a previously approved development order or development permit, and if such development order or development permit contains conditions applicable to the construction or operation of a public or private school, including, but not limited to:

- Limits on the number of students;
- Limits on the number of teachers;
- Limits on the number of classrooms;
- Limits on the hours of operation;
- Minimum outdoor recreation area; or
- Requirements to conform to a prior plan of development.

The bill prohibits a local government from requiring a charter school to obtain a special exemption or conditional use approval to be an allowable use under the local government's [land development code](#). (Section [13](#))

The bill requires school principals, as part of their [duties relating to student discipline and school safety](#), to refer disobedient, disrespectful, violent, abusive, uncontrollable, or disruptive students to the school's child study team to schedule a meeting with the student's parent to identify potential remedies. If an initial meeting with the student's parent does not resolve the behavioral issues, the child study team shall implement the following:

- Frequent attempts by the school, including the student's teacher and a school administrator, at communicating with the student's family. The attempts may be made in writing or by telephone, but must be documented.
- A student evaluation for alternative education programs.
- Behavior contracts.

The child study team may, but is not required to, implement other interventions, including referral to other agencies for family services or a recommendation for filing a petition for a child in need of services. (Section [27](#)).

Under a school board adopted [zero-tolerance policy](#) and before the expiration of an expulsion period, the district school superintendent must determine, based upon the determination of the threat management team (TMT), whether the expulsion period should be extended and, if the expulsion period is extended, what educational

services will be provided. A recommendation to extend the expulsion period must be provided to the student and his or her parents. (Section [28](#)).

The bill authorizes school districts to offer the CLT10 exam as an alternative to the PSAT/SMSQT or the PreACT to all enrolled student in grade 10, under the [Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement](#). (Section [30](#)).

Under the bill, a school district may use the revenue generated by their [discretionary millage levy](#) to pay for the cost of premiums associated with liability insurance. (Section [35](#)).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2025, except as otherwise provided. (Section [42](#)).

#### **RULEMAKING:**

The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to implement the required instruction on human embryologic development. The bill requires the SBE to define a highly qualified teacher of mathematics or a trained tutor for purposes of delivering supplemental, evidence-based mathematics interventions in rule. The bill requires the SBE to adopt rules to implement the expenditure prohibition provision of the bill.

***Lawmaking is a legislative power; however, the Legislature may delegate a portion of such power to executive branch agencies to create rules that have the force of law. To exercise this delegated power, an agency must have a grant of rulemaking authority and a law to implement.***

#### **FISCAL OR ECONOMIC IMPACT:**

##### **STATE GOVERNMENT:**

The annual fee that member states pay as dues to the Interstate Commission under the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children is at the rate of \$1.15 per dependent child of a military family eligible for transfer under the Compact. The House's proposed Fiscal Year 2025-2026 General Appropriations Act includes \$45,187 in recurring funds from the General Revenue Fund to the DOE to pay for the membership dues.

##### **PRIVATE SECTOR:**

The bill requires that private schools participating in educational scholarship programs conduct background screening to the same standards and through the same mechanism as individuals seeking educator certification. As it is uncertain how these new requirements may impact the background screening policies already in place at participating private schools or how many employees, contractors, owners, or operators would need an additional background screening to comply with the new standards, the bill will have an indeterminate, negative fiscal impact on private sector expenditures.

### **RELEVANT INFORMATION**

#### **SUBJECT OVERVIEW:**

##### **[Critical Teacher Shortage Areas](#)**

Critical teacher shortage areas are high-need content areas and high-priority location areas identified by the SBE. The SBE must adopt rules to annually identify critical teacher shortage areas and must consider current and emerging educational requirements and workforce demands in determining critical teacher shortage areas. School grade levels may also be designated critical teacher shortage areas. Individual district school boards may identify and submit other critical teacher shortage areas. Such submissions must be aligned to current and emerging educational requirements and workforce demands in order to be approved by the SBE. High-priority location areas must be in high-density, low-economic urban schools; low-density, low-economic rural schools; and schools that earned a grade of "F" or three consecutive grades of "D". The SBE must develop strategies to address critical teacher shortage areas.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Section [1012.07, F.S.](#)



## **Florida School for Competitive Academics**

Established in statute in 2023, the Florida School for Competitive Academics (FSCA) in Alachua County was envisioned as a state-supported public school for grade 6 through 12 students. The FSCA was intended to provide rigorous academic curriculum, and to prepare students for regional, state, and national academic competitions in all areas of study, such as, STEM. The mission of the FSCA was to provide students who meet selective admissions requirements an environment that will foster high academic engagement and advanced understanding of subject areas, develop productive work habits, build resiliency, connect students with industry leaders, and promote civic leadership.<sup>3</sup> However, the FSCA never officially opened.

## **Background Screening of Individuals at Schools**

Individuals who work in or provide services to school districts, charter schools, alternative schools, and private schools participating in state school choice scholarship programs must undergo a fingerprint-based background screening before being permitted access to school grounds.<sup>4</sup> The individuals who must undergo background screening fall under three personnel classifications: instructional and noninstructional personnel;<sup>5</sup> noninstructional school district employees and contracted personnel;<sup>6</sup> and noninstructional contractors.<sup>7</sup> Candidates for educator certification must also undergo background screening.<sup>8</sup>

The background screening requirements for each personnel classification vary depending upon the individual's duties, whether or not the individual is a school district employee, and the degree of contact the individual has with students.<sup>9</sup> Because they are more likely to have direct contact with students, candidates for educator certification, instructional and noninstructional personnel, and noninstructional school district employees and contracted personnel must be screened against level 2<sup>10</sup> screening standards.<sup>11</sup> Athletic coaches employed by public schools must be certified by the DOE and are subject to the same background screening standards as other individuals seeking certification.<sup>12</sup> In contrast, noninstructional contractors, individuals who are not school district employees and have no direct contact with students, are screened against a statutory list of 12 disqualifying offenses.<sup>13</sup> These background screenings are conducted through the Clearinghouse.<sup>14</sup>

## **Required Instruction Topics**

Florida law requires that public school students in grades K-12 receive instruction on specific subjects including, among other items, historical time periods, comprehensive health education, and government.<sup>15</sup> Instructional personnel are required to teach these subjects efficiently and faithfully, using historically accurate books and materials, following prescribed courses and approved methods of instruction.<sup>16</sup> Unless otherwise specified, the law generally does not prescribe grade level, instructional hours, or instructional materials requirements for these topics. School districts are required to report, annually each summer, to the DOE on how instruction was provided

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<sup>3</sup> Section [1002.351, F.S.](#)

<sup>4</sup> Sections [1002.421](#), [1012.32\(2\)](#), [1012.465\(2\)](#), and [1012.467\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>5</sup> Instructional and noninstructional personnel are individuals who are hired or contracted to fill positions that require direct contact with students in any public school. Section [1012.32\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>6</sup> Noninstructional school district employees and contracted personnel are individuals who are permitted access to school grounds when students are present; who have direct contact with students; or who have access to, or control of, school funds. Section [1012.465\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>7</sup> Noninstructional contractors are vendors or contractors who are not school district employees, are permitted access to school grounds when students are present, and have little or no direct contact with students. Section [1012.467\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>8</sup> Sections [1012.315](#), [1012.32\(2\)\(a\)](#), and [1012.56\(10\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>9</sup> See ss. [1012.32\(2\)](#), [1012.465\(2\)](#), and [1012.467\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>10</sup> Level 2 background screening includes, but is not limited to, fingerprinting for statewide criminal history records checks through the FDLE and national criminal history checks through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and may include local criminal records checks through local law enforcement agencies. Section [435.04, F.S.](#)

<sup>11</sup> Sections [1012.315](#), [1012.32](#), and [1012.465, F.S.](#)

<sup>12</sup> Section [1012.55\(2\), F.S.](#) See also [s. 1012.56, F.S.](#); r. 6A-4.004(4), F.A.C.

<sup>13</sup> See [s. 1012.467\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#) The law references eight specific offenses plus crimes involving lewd and lascivious behavior in ch. 800, F.S., which include four such offenses. *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> Section [1012.315, F.S.](#)

<sup>15</sup> Section [1003.42, F.S.](#)

<sup>16</sup> Section [1003.42\(2\), F.S.](#)

during the previous school year for certain required subjects.<sup>17</sup> Amongst several topics, school districts are required to provide comprehensive age-appropriate and developmentally appropriate kindergarten through grade 12 instruction on health education that addresses concepts of community health, consumer health, environmental health, and family life, including:

- Injury prevention and safety.
- Internet safety.
- Nutrition.
- Personal health.
- Prevention and control of disease.
- Substance use and abuse.
- Prevention of child sexual abuse, exploitation, and human trafficking.<sup>18</sup>

Current law requires students to take a one-half credit course in personal financial literacy that must include instruction in all of the following:

- Types of bank accounts offered, opening and managing a bank account, and assessing the quality of a depository institution's services.
- Balancing a checkbook.
- Basic principles of money management, such as spending, credit, credit scores, and managing debt, including retail and credit card debt.
- Completing a loan application.
- Receiving an inheritance and related implications.
- Basic principles of personal insurance policies.
- Computing federal income taxes.
- Local tax assessments.
- Computing interest rates by various mechanisms.
- Simple contracts.
- Contesting an incorrect billing statement.
- Types of savings and investments.
- State and federal laws concerning finance.<sup>19</sup>

### **Comprehensive System of Reading Intervention**

Each school district is required to implement a system of comprehensive reading instruction for students enrolled in prekindergarten through grade 12 and certain students who exhibit a substantial deficiency in early literacy.<sup>20</sup> Students with a substantial deficiency are defined as:<sup>21</sup>

- A voluntary prekindergarten student in early literacy skills who scores below the tenth (10th) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items at the middle or end of the year test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.
- A kindergarten through grade 3 student in reading if:
  - The student is identified as in need of Tier 3 interventions.<sup>22</sup>
  - For kindergarten, the student scores below the tenth (10th) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items on the designated grade-level assessment at the beginning, middle, or end of the year test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.
  - For grades 1 and 2, the student scores below the tenth (10th) percentile or is unable to complete the practice items on the designated grade-level assessment for the specified test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.

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<sup>17</sup> *Id.*

<sup>18</sup> Section [1003.42\(2\)\(o\)1, F.S.](#)

<sup>19</sup> Section [1003.4282\(3\)\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>20</sup> Section [1003.4201, F.S.](#)

<sup>21</sup> Rule 6A-6.053, F.A.C.

<sup>22</sup> Intensive, Individualized Instruction/Interventions (Tier 3): provides explicit, systematic, individualized instruction based on student need, one-on-one or very small group instruction with more guided practice, immediate corrective feedback, and frequent progress monitoring; and occurs in addition to core instruction and Tier 2 interventions.

- For grade 3, the student scores below the twentieth (20th) percentile at the beginning or middle of the year test administration of the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.
- A student in grade 3 scores a Level 1 on the end-of-year statewide, standardized English Language Arts (ELA) assessment.

The comprehensive reading instruction plan may include all district schools, including charter schools, unless a charter school elects to submit a plan independently from the school district.<sup>23</sup> The plan may include the following components:<sup>24</sup>

- Additional time per day of evidence-based intensive reading instruction for kindergarten through grade 12 students, which may be delivered during or outside of the regular school day.
- Highly qualified reading coaches, who must be endorsed in reading, to specifically support classroom teachers in making instructional decisions based on progress monitoring data and improve classroom teacher delivery of effective reading instruction, reading intervention, and reading in the content areas based on student need.
- Professional learning to help instructional personnel and certified prekindergarten teachers funded in the Florida Education Finance Program earn a certification, a credential, an endorsement, or an advanced degree in scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instruction.
- Summer reading camps, using only classroom teachers or other district personnel who possess a micro-credential<sup>25</sup> in reading or are certified or endorsed in reading consistent for all students in kindergarten through grade 5 exhibiting a reading deficiency as determined by district and state assessments.
- Incentives for instructional personnel and certified prekindergarten teachers funded in the Florida Education Finance Program who possess a reading certification or endorsement or micro-credential and provide educational support to improve student literacy.
- Tutoring in reading.

### [Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence Act](#)

In 2021, the Florida Legislature established the Reading Achievement Initiative for Scholastic Excellence (RAISE) program within the DOE.<sup>26</sup> The RAISE program provides instructional supports to school districts, school administrators, and instructional personnel in implementing evidence-based reading instruction and interventions in order to improve student reading achievement.<sup>27</sup>

Under the RAISE program, the DOE must establish 20 literacy support regions and regional support teams in Florida to assist schools in improving low reading scores.<sup>28</sup> Eligible schools include:<sup>29</sup>

- Schools serving students in kindergarten through grade 5 where 50 percent of the students score below a Level 3 on the statewide, standardized ELA assessment for any grade level. and
- Schools where 50 percent or more of students in kindergarten through grade 3 are not on track to pass the grade 3 ELA assessment based on data from the coordinated screening and progress monitoring system.

As part of the RAISE program, the DOE must establish a tutoring program and develop training to prepare eligible high school students to tutor students in kindergarten through grade 3.<sup>30</sup> If high school students serve as a tutor in the RAISE program, they:<sup>31</sup>

- May earn up to three elective credits for high school graduation based on the verified number of hours the student spends tutoring under the program.

<sup>23</sup> Section [1003.4201\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>24</sup> Section [1003.4201\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>25</sup> To earn an early literacy micro-credential a teacher must demonstrate competency in diagnosing literacy difficulties and determining the appropriate range of literacy interventions based upon the age and literacy deficiency of the student and how use evidence-based instructional and intervention practices grounded in the science of reading, including strategies identified by the Just Read, Florida! Office.

<sup>26</sup> Section [1008.365, F.S.](#)

<sup>27</sup> Section [1008.365\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>28</sup> Section [1008.365\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>29</sup> Section [1008.365\(4\), F.S.](#)

<sup>30</sup> Section [1008.365\(8\), F.S.](#)

<sup>31</sup> Section [1008.365\(8\)\(c\), F.S.](#)



- May use unpaid hours devoted to tutoring toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and community service requirements for participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.

### **New Worlds Tutoring Program**

The New Worlds Tutoring Program (tutoring program) was established in 2024 to support school districts and schools in improving student achievement in reading and mathematics. The tutoring program must:<sup>32</sup>

- Provide best practice science of reading guidelines for districts in consultation with the Just Read, Florida! Office.
- Provide best practice guidelines for mathematics tutoring in alignment with Florida's Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards for mathematics.
- Establish minimum standards that each school district must meet to participate in the program. The minimum standards must address:
  - Appropriate group sizes for tutoring sessions.
  - The frequency and duration of tutoring sessions.
  - Minimum staffing qualifications for tutors.
  - The use of ongoing, informal and formal assessments to target instructional interventions.
  - Prioritization strategies for tutoring students.
- Provide access during the school day to additional literacy or mathematics support through evidence-based automated literacy tutoring software that provides each student with real-time interventions that are based in science of reading principles or mathematics instructional best practices and individually tailored to the needs and ability of each student. The bill provides that access must be provided to students in kindergarten through grade 5 enrolled in a public school who have a substantial deficiency in reading or mathematics.
- Award grants to school districts that may be used for stipends for in-person tutoring during the school day, before and after school, or during a summer program. At a minimum, in-person tutoring may be provided to kindergarten through grade 5 students enrolled in a public school who have a substantial deficiency in reading or mathematics.
- Provide technical assistance and professional learning to school districts, including:
  - Advising district staff on tutoring program design and intervention selection upon request.
  - Assisting districts in reviewing tutoring programs, professional learning programs, curriculum, and resources to ensure that they adhere to the science of reading or best practices in mathematics.
  - Providing professional learning to district staff to build their knowledge and skills around the science of reading or best practices in mathematics.

### **Mathematics Instruction**

Florida law requires all public school students in grades 3 through 8 to participate in the annual statewide, standardized mathematics assessment.<sup>33</sup> The law also provides that students enrolled in Algebra 1 and Geometry courses must take the associated statewide, standardized end-of-course (EOC) assessment.<sup>34</sup> A student must pass the statewide, standardized Algebra I EOC assessment, or earn a comparative score,<sup>35</sup> in order to earn a standard high school diploma.<sup>36</sup> A student who does not achieve a Level 3 or above on the statewide, standardized Mathematics assessment or the Algebra I EOC assessment must be evaluated to determine the nature of the student's difficulty, the areas of academic need, and strategies for providing academic supports to improve the student's performance.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Section [1008.366, F.S.](#)

<sup>33</sup> Section [1008.22\(3\)\(a\), F.S.](#) Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, the end-of-year comprehensive progress monitoring assessment is the statewide, standardized mathematics assessment for students in grades 3 through 8.

<sup>34</sup> Section [1008.22\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#) An EOC assessment counts as 30 percent of a student's final course grade. Section [1008.22\(3\)\(b\)4., F.S.](#)

<sup>35</sup> Beginning with students entering grade 9 in the 2019-2020 school year, a comparative passing score on the Math section of the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), the SAT or the ACT, or on the Geometry EOC assessment may be used to meet the Algebra I EOC assessment graduation requirement. *See* r. 6A-1.09422(8)(b)2., F.A.C.

<sup>36</sup> Section [1003.4282\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>37</sup> Section [1008.25\(4\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

In 2023, the Legislature created a framework for increasing mathematics proficiency in Florida by requiring the identification of any student in kindergarten through grade 4 who exhibits a substantial deficiency in mathematics or the characteristics of dyscalculia based upon screening, diagnostic progress monitoring, or assessment data; statewide assessments; or teacher observations. Immediately following the identification of the mathematics deficiency, the student must be provided systematic and explicit mathematics instruction to address his or her specific deficiencies. Instruction must be through either daily targeted small group mathematics interventions based on student need or supplemental, evidence-based mathematics interventions before or after school, or both, and delivered by a highly qualified teacher of mathematics or a trained tutor. Additionally, for students identified with a mathematic deficiency, the student's performance must be monitored and instruction be adjusted based on student needs.<sup>38</sup>

### **Articulated Accelerated Mechanisms**

High school students in Florida have a variety of avenues by which they can earn college credit. These opportunities, known as articulated acceleration mechanisms, shorten the time necessary for a student to complete the requirements for a high school diploma and a postsecondary degree. These mechanisms also allow Florida schools to increase the depth of study in a particular subject and expand available curricular options.<sup>39</sup>

Programs that provide high school students with the opportunity to earn college credit include, but are not limited to, dual enrollment and early admission, credit by examination, advanced placement, the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program, and the Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE) Program. Credit earned through the Florida Virtual School also provides additional opportunities for early graduation and acceleration.<sup>40</sup>

The DOE annually identifies and publishes the minimum scores, maximum credit, and course or courses for which credit is to be awarded for each College Level Examination Program (CLEP) subject examination, College Board Advanced Placement Program examination, AICE examination, IB examination, Excelsior College subject examination, Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES) subject standardized test, and Defense Language Proficiency Test (DLPT). In addition, the DOE also identifies courses in the general education core curriculum of each state university and Florida College System (FCS) institution for which credit is to be granted.<sup>41</sup> The DOE is also authorized to partner with an independent third-party testing or assessment organization to develop assessments that measure competencies consistent with general education core courses.<sup>42</sup>

### **Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education Program**

The Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education Program was created in 1986<sup>43</sup> to recognize that Florida continues to face teacher shortages, and that fewer young people consider teaching as a career. The Christa McAuliffe Ambassador for Education Program was established to provide salary, travel, and other related expenses annually for an outstanding Florida teacher (Teacher of the Year) to promote the positive aspects of teaching as a career. The goals of the program are to:<sup>44</sup>

- Enhance the stature of teachers and the teaching profession.
- Promote the importance of quality education and teaching for our future.
- Inspire and attract talented people to become teachers.
- Provide information regarding Florida's scholarship and loan programs related to teaching.
- Promote the teaching profession within community and business groups.
- Provide information to retired military personnel and other individuals who might consider teaching as a second career.
- Work with and represent the DOE, as needed.

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<sup>38</sup> Section [1008.25\(6\), F.S.](#)

<sup>39</sup> Section [1007.27\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>40</sup> *Id.*

<sup>41</sup> Section [1007.27\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>42</sup> Section [1007.27\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>43</sup> Chapter 1986-156, L.O.F.

<sup>44</sup> Section [1012.77\(2\), F.S.](#)

- Work with and encourage the efforts of school and district teachers of the year.
- Support the activities of the Florida Future Educator of America Program.
- Represent Florida teachers at business, trade, education, and other conferences and meetings.
- Promote the teaching profession in other ways related to the teaching responsibilities, background experiences, and aspirations of the Ambassador for Education.

The Teacher of the Year is required to serve as the Ambassador for Education for a year. Applications and selection criteria are distributed annually by the DOE to all school districts. The Commissioner is required to establish a selection committee which assures representation from teacher organizations, administrators, and parents to select the Teacher of the Year and Ambassador for Education from among the school district teachers of the year.<sup>45</sup>

### **Florida's Voluntary Prekindergarten Program**

The VPK program prepares children for success in school and in life. Implemented in 2005, VPK is a free education program available to all four-year-old children residing in the state.<sup>46</sup> Each child who resides in Florida who attains the age of four years on or before September 1 of the school year is eligible for the VPK program during either that school year or the following school year. Parents of four-year-old children with birthdays from February 2 through September 1 may wait to enroll their child the following year when they are five.<sup>47</sup> The child remains eligible until the child is admitted to kindergarten, or unless the child has attained the age of 6 years by February 1 of any school year.<sup>48</sup> In 2023-2024, there were 155,275 children enrolled with 6,247 providers in Florida's VPK program.<sup>49</sup>

Parents of each child eligible for a VPK program in Florida may enroll their child in one of the following programs:<sup>50</sup>

- A school-year prekindergarten program delivered by an approved private prekindergarten provider.
- A school-year prekindergarten program delivered by a public school.
- A summer prekindergarten program delivered by a public school or private prekindergarten provider.
- A specialized instructional services program for children who have disabilities, if the child has been evaluated and determined as eligible and has a current individual educational plan developed by the local school board.

### **Funding for Florida's VPK Program**

A full-time equivalent student in the VPK program is calculated as follows:<sup>51</sup>

- For a student in a school-year prekindergarten program delivered by a private prekindergarten provider: 540 instructional hours.
- For a student in a school-year prekindergarten program delivered by a public school: 540 instructional hours.
- For a student in a summer prekindergarten program delivered by a public school or private prekindergarten provider: 300 instructional hours.

A child who, for any of the prekindergarten programs, has not completed more than 70 percent of the hours authorized to be reported for funding may withdraw from the program for good cause and reenroll in one of the programs. The total funding for a child who reenrolls in one of the programs for good cause may not exceed one full-time equivalent student.<sup>52</sup> A child who has not substantially completed any of the prekindergarten programs may withdraw from the program due to an extreme hardship that is beyond the child's or parent's control, reenroll

<sup>45</sup> Section [1012.77\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>46</sup> Art. IX, s. 1., Fla. Const.

<sup>47</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Division of Early Learning, Annual Report 2023-2024*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/20628/2324-DEL-AnnualReport.pdf> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>48</sup> Section [1002.53\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>49</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Division of Early Learning, Annual Report 2023-2024*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/20628/2324-DEL-AnnualReport.pdf> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>50</sup> Section [1002.53\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>51</sup> Section [1002.71\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>52</sup> Section [1002.71\(4\), F.S.](#)

in one of the summer programs, and be reported for funding purposes as a full-time equivalent student in the summer program.<sup>53</sup>

**State Academic Standards**

Florida’s state academic standards establish the core content of the curricula to be taught and specify the core content knowledge and skills that K-12 public school students are expected to acquire. Standards must be rigorous and relevant and provide for the logical, sequential progression of core curricular content that incrementally increases a student’s core content knowledge and skills over time.<sup>54</sup>

The Commissioner is required to develop and submit proposed revisions to the standards for review and comment by Florida educators, school administrators, representatives of the FCS institutions and state universities who have expertise in the content knowledge and skills necessary to prepare a student for postsecondary education and careers, a representative from the Department of Commerce, business and industry leaders for in-demand careers, and the public.<sup>55</sup> The state academic standards are required to meet the following requirements:<sup>56</sup>

- ELA standards are required to establish specific curricular content for, at a minimum, reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language.
- Science standards are required to establish specific curricular content for, at a minimum, the nature of science, earth and space science, physical science, and life science.
- Mathematics standards are required to establish specific curricular content for, at a minimum, algebra, geometry, statistics and probability, number and quantity, functions, and modeling.
- Social Studies standards are required to establish specific curricular content for, at a minimum, geography, United States and world history, government, civics, humanities, economics, and financial literacy.
- Visual and performing arts, physical education, health, and foreign language standards are required to establish specific curricular content and include distinct grade-level expectations for the core content knowledge.

Florida uses a unique coding scheme that is defined by five-character positions in alphanumeric code: the subject, grade level, strand, standard and benchmark. The strand is a focal group of related standards, standards are overarching criteria for the grade level or grade band, and the benchmark is a specific expectation for the grade level or grade band that falls within the standard.<sup>57</sup>

Within the approved state academic standards documents, the DOE includes clarifications that are added to standards to guide teachers in the integration of those standards within instruction. For example, in the Computational Thinking and Reasoning Standards for the Computer Science Standards, there are seven standards, and each of the seven standards has a clarification for how that standard should be integrated into instruction.<sup>58</sup>

**District and School Advisory Councils**

Each district school board must establish an advisory council for each school in the district and develop procedures for the election and appointment of advisory council members. The school advisory council is the sole body responsible for final decision-making at the school relating to the implementation of school improvement and education accountability.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *Id.*  
<sup>54</sup> Section [1003.41\(1\), F.S.](#)  
<sup>55</sup> Section [1003.41\(3\), F.S.](#)  
<sup>56</sup> Section [1003.41\(2\), F.S.](#)  
<sup>57</sup> Florida Department of Education, Florida’s State Academic Standards Computer Science 2024 (2024), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20758/urlt/7-3.pdf> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).  
<sup>58</sup> *Id.*  
<sup>59</sup> Section [1001.452\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

The advisory councils must consist of the principal and an appropriately balanced number of teachers,<sup>60</sup> education support employees,<sup>61</sup> students, parents, and other business and community citizens who are representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school. Career center and high school advisory councils must include students, and middle and junior high school advisory councils may include students. School advisory councils of career centers and adult education centers are not required to include parents as members. Council members representing teachers, education support employees, students, and parents must be elected by their respective peer groups at the school in a fair and equitable manner.<sup>62</sup>

The district school board must review the membership composition of each advisory council. If the district school board determines that the membership elected by the school is not representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school, the district school board must appoint additional members to achieve proper representation. The Commissioner must determine if schools have maximized their efforts to include minority persons and persons of lower socioeconomic status on their advisory council.<sup>63</sup>

### Opioid Antagonists

In 2022, public schools were authorized to purchase a supply of the opioid antagonist, naloxone, from an approved wholesale distributor, in the event of a student opioid overdose.<sup>64</sup> School districts are required to maintain the naloxone in a secure location and the school district employee who administers the opioid antagonist in compliance with state law is immune from civil liability.

Opioid receptor antagonists block one or more of the opioid receptors in the central or peripheral nervous system. The two most commonly used centrally-acting opioid receptor antagonists are naloxone and naltrexone. Naloxone comes in intravenous, intramuscular, and intranasal formulations and is FDA-approved for the use in an opioid overdose and the reversal of respiratory depression associated with opioid use. Naltrexone is available in both oral and long-acting injectable formulations and is FDA-approved for the treatment of opioid and/or alcohol maintenance treatment. The most commonly used peripheral opioid receptor antagonist is methylnaltrexone, which is a potent competitive antagonist acting at the digestive tract and is also FDA-approved for the treatment of opioid-induced constipation.<sup>65</sup>

### Corporal Punishment

District school boards have the option of administering corporal punishment and must establish a policy authorizing the use of corporal punishment as a form of discipline, which must be reviewed every three years. The district school board is required to take public testimony in establishing or reviewing the policy authorizing corporal punishment.<sup>66</sup> If the school board has a corporal punishment policy, it must provide that:<sup>67</sup>

- The use of corporal punishment must be approved by the principal before it is used, but approval is not necessary for each specific instance in which it is used. The principal is required to prepare guidelines for administering such punishment that must identify the types of punishable offenses, the conditions under which the punishment is administered, and the specific personnel on the school staff authorized to administer the punishment.

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<sup>60</sup> Section [1001.452\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#) (flush left provision at the end of the paragraph). For the purposes of school advisory councils and district advisory councils, the term “teacher” includes classroom teachers, certified student services personnel, and media specialists.

<sup>61</sup> *Id.* For the purposes of school advisory councils and district advisory councils, “education support employee” means any person employed by a school who is not defined as instructional or administrative personnel and whose duties require 20 or more hours in each normal working week.

<sup>62</sup> Section [1001.452\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>63</sup> *Id.* (flush left provision at the end of the paragraph).

<sup>64</sup> Chapter 2022-28, L.O.F. A wholesale distributor means a person, other than a manufacturer, a manufacturer’s co-licensed partner, a third-party logistics provider, or a repackager, who is engaged in wholesale distribution.

<sup>65</sup> *Opioid Antagonists*, Theriot, Jonathan, et. al., (last updated July 23, 2023), available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK537079/#:~:text=3%5D%5B4%5D-.The%20two%20most%20commonly%20used%20centrally%20acting%20opioid%20receptor%20antagonists,depression%20associated%20with%20opioid%20use>. (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>66</sup> Section [1002.20\(4\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>67</sup> Section [1003.32\(1\)\(k\), F.S.](#)



- A teacher or principal may administer corporal punishment only in the presence of another adult who is informed beforehand, and in the student's presence, of the reason for the punishment.
- A teacher or principal who has administered corporal punishment shall, upon request, provide the student's parent with a written explanation of the reason for the punishment and the name of the other adult who was present.

In the 2023-2024 school year, there were 516 incidents of corporal punishment in 17 school districts.<sup>68</sup>

### **Florida Educational Equity Act**

The FEEA prohibits discrimination in any program or employment condition on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or marital status against a student or an employee in the state system of public K-20 education.

The FEEA specifies, in part, that:

- No individual may, on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or marital status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any public K-20 education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices, conducted by a public educational institution that receives or benefits from federal or state financial assistance.<sup>69</sup>
- The criteria for admission to a program or course may not have the effect of restricting access by persons of a particular race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or marital status.<sup>70</sup>

Included in the prohibition on discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or sex is subjecting any student or employee to training or instruction that espouses, promotes, advances, inculcates, or compels such student or employee to believe any of the following concepts:

- Members of one race, color, national origin, or sex are morally superior to members of another race, color, national origin, or sex.
- A person, by virtue of his or her race, color, national origin, or sex, is inherently racist, sexist, or oppressive, whether consciously or unconsciously.
- A person's moral character or status as either privileged or oppressed is necessarily determined by his or her race, color, national origin, or sex.
- Members of one race, color, national origin, or sex cannot and should not attempt to treat others without respect to race, color, national origin, or sex.
- A person, by virtue of his or her race, color, national origin, or sex, bears responsibility for, or should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment because of, actions committed in the past by other members of the same race, color, national origin, or sex.
- A person, by virtue of his or her race, color, national origin, or sex, should be discriminated against or receive adverse treatment to achieve diversity, equity, or inclusion.
- A person, by virtue of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin, bears personal responsibility for and must feel guilt, anguish, or other forms of psychological distress because of actions, in which the person played no part, committed in the past by other members of the same race, color, national origin, or sex.

### **Florida College System institution and State University System Prohibited Expenditures**

A Florida College System (FCS) institution, state university, FCS institution direct-support organization, or state university direct-support organization may not expend any funds, regardless of source, to purchase membership in, or goods and services from, any organization that discriminates on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or religion.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Discipline Data, 2023-24*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/file/18612/2324DisciplineReport.xlsx> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>69</sup> Section 1000.05(2)(a), F.S.

<sup>70</sup> Section 1000.05(2)(b), F.S.

<sup>71</sup> Section 1004.06(1), F.S.

An FCS institution, state university, FCS institution direct-support organization, or state university direct-support organization may not expend any state or federal funds to promote, support, or maintain any programs or campus activities that:<sup>72</sup>

- Violate FEEA.
- Advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, or promote or engage in political or social activism, as defined by rules of the SBE and regulations of the Board of Governors.

The requirements for prohibited expenditures do not apply to student fees to support student-led organizations regardless of any speech or expressive activity by such organizations, but the public funds must be allocated to student-led organizations pursuant to written policies or regulations of each FCS institution or state university.<sup>73</sup>

The requirements also do not apply to programs, campus activities, or functions required for compliance with general or federal laws or regulations; for obtaining or retaining institutional or discipline-specific accreditation; or for access programs for military veterans, Pell Grant recipients, first generation college students, nontraditional students, "2+2" transfer students from the FCS, students from low-income families, or students with unique abilities.<sup>74</sup>

### **Educator Certification**

Educational personnel in public schools must possess appropriate skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; adequate pedagogical knowledge; and relevant subject matter competence to demonstrate an acceptable level of professional performance.<sup>75</sup> 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 DOE.<sup>76</sup>

A professional teaching certificate is valid for five school fiscal years and is renewable. A professional certificate is awarded to an applicant who meets the basic eligibility requirements for certification and demonstrates mastery of:<sup>77</sup>

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

Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of general knowledge include:<sup>78</sup>

- Achievement of passing scores on the general knowledge examination.
- Documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state.
- Documentation of a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) or a national educator credentialing board approved by the SBE.
- Documentation of two semesters of successful, full-time or part-time teaching in a FCS institution, state university, or private college or university that meets certain criteria.
- Achievement of passing scores on national or international examinations with comparable verbal, writing, quantitative reasoning, and rigor as the general knowledge exam, including but not limited to Graduate Record Examination.
- Documentation of receipt of a master's or higher degree from an accredited postsecondary educational institution that the DOE has identified as having a quality program resulting in a baccalaureate degree or higher.

A school district that employs an individual who does not achieve passing scores on any subtest of the general knowledge examination must provide information regarding the availability of state-level and district-level supports and instruction to assist him or her in achieving a passing score. The requirement of mastery of general

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<sup>72</sup> Section [1004.06\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>73</sup> *Id.* (Flush left provision at the end of the subsection).

<sup>74</sup> Section [1004.06\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>75</sup> Section [1012.54, F.S.](#)

<sup>76</sup> Sections [1012.55\(1\)](#) and [1002.33\(12\)\(f\), F.S.](#)

<sup>77</sup> Section [1012.56\(2\)\(g\)-\(i\), F.S.](#)

<sup>78</sup> Section [1012.56\(3\), F.S.](#)

knowledge must be waived for an individual who has been provided 3 years of support and instruction and who has been rated effective or highly effective for each of the last 3 years.<sup>79</sup>

The acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of subject area knowledge include:<sup>80</sup>

- Passing a subject area or other alternative examination as approved by the SBE.
- Having a valid teaching certificate from another state.
- Having a valid certificate from the NBPTS.
- A passing score or program completion of a specified defense language proficiency test or program.

The acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of a professional preparation and education competence include:<sup>81</sup>

- Successful completion of an approved teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution within the state and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule.
- Successful completion of a teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution outside Florida and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule.
- Documentation of a valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state.
- Documentation of a valid certificate issued by the NBPTS or a national educator credentialing board approved by the SBE.
- Documentation of two semesters of successful, full-time or part-time teaching in an FCS institution, state university, or private college or university that awards an associate or higher degree and is an accredited institution or an institution of higher education identified by the DOE as having a quality program and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule.
- Successful completion of professional preparation courses as specified in SBE rule.
- Successful completion of a professional education competence program and documentation of 3 years of being rated effective or highly effective while holding a temporary certificate.
- Successful completion of a professional learning certification program.
- Successful completion of a competency-based certification program and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by SBE rule.

### **Teacher Preparation Programs**

Teacher preparation programs are accountable for producing individuals with the competencies and skills necessary to achieve the state education goals.<sup>82</sup> State-approved teacher preparation programs are offered by Florida public and private postsecondary institutions, public school districts, and private providers by 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>83</sup>

There are various state-approved teacher preparation programs that individuals may use to receive the training needed to attain an educator certificate, including:<sup>84</sup>

- Initial Teacher Preparation (ITPs) programs in public and private colleges and universities requiring candidates to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge in one or more specific subject areas(s),

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<sup>79</sup> Section [1012.56\(3\), F.S.](#) (flush left provision at the end of the subsection)

<sup>80</sup> Section [1012.56\(5\), F.S.](#), and Rule 6A-4.002(4), F.A.C.

<sup>81</sup> Section [1012.56\(6\), F.S.](#)

<sup>82</sup> Section [1004.04\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>83</sup> See Florida Department of Education, *Florida's Coordinated System of Professional Learning*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/professional-dev/> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025). See also r. 6A-5.066, F.A.C.; ss. [1004.04\(3\)\(a\)](#) and [1004.85\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>84</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Educator Preparation*, <http://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

mastery of general knowledge, and mastery of professional preparation and education competence. Program completers qualify for a professional educator certificate.<sup>85</sup>

- Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) offering 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, mastery of subject area knowledge, and mastery of 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 by which the instructional staff can satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements.<sup>86</sup> In addition to completing the district program, candidates must demonstrate mastery of general knowledge<sup>87</sup> and subject area knowledge.<sup>88</sup>

### **Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs)**

Postsecondary institutions that are accredited or approved by the DOE to award degrees and credits for educator certification may seek approval from the DOE to create EPIs for the purpose of providing all or any of the following:<sup>89</sup>

- Professional development instruction to assist teachers in improving classroom instruction and in meeting certification or recertification requirements;
- Instruction to assist potential and existing substitute teachers in performing their duties;
- Instruction to assist paraprofessionals in meeting education and training requirements;
- Instruction for noneducation baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers in order to increase routes to the classroom for mid-career professionals; and
- Instruction and professional development for part-time and full-time non-degreed teachers of career programs.

A private provider that has a proven history of delivering high-quality educator preparation may also seek approval to offer a competency-based certification program. The DOE approval must be based upon evidence provided from other state recipients of the provider's services and data showing the successful performance of completers based upon student achievement.<sup>90</sup>

EPIs may offer competency-based certification programs specifically designed for noneducation major baccalaureate degree holders to enable program participants to meet the educator certification requirements. The DOE must approve a certification program within 90 days if the institute provides evidence of its capacity to implement a competency-based program that instructs and assesses each candidate in the following:

- The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices approved by the SBE.
- The state academic standards, including scientifically based reading instruction, content literacy, and mathematical practices, for each subject identified on the statement of status of eligibility or temporary certificate.
- Scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies grounded in the science of reading, which improve reading performance for all students, including explicit, systematic, and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension and multisensory intervention strategies. The primary instructional strategy for teaching word reading is

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<sup>85</sup> Rule 6A-5.066(1)(r), F.A.C.

<sup>86</sup> Section [1012.56\(8\)\(a\), F.S.](#) There are 77 such programs in Florida. Florida Department of Education. *State-Approved Educator Preparation Programs, Approved Add-on Programs*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation/initial-teacher-preparation-programs/approved-teacher-edu-programs.shtml> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>87</sup> See Florida DOE, *General Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/general-knowledge.shtml> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>88</sup> Florida DOE, *Subject Area Knowledge*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/certification/general-cert-requirements/subject-area-knowledge.shtml> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>89</sup> Section [1004.85\(2\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>90</sup> Section [1004.85\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

phonics instruction for decoding and encoding. Instructional strategies for foundational skills may not employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading.

- An educational plan for each participant to meet certification requirements and demonstrate his or her ability to teach the subject area for which the participant is seeking certification, based on an assessment of competency.
- Field experiences appropriate to the certification subject area under the supervision of qualified educators.
- A certification ombudsman to facilitate the process and procedures required for participants who complete the program to meet any requirements related to background screening and educator certification.

There are currently 28 state-approved EPI programs.<sup>91</sup>

### **Professional Learning Certificate Program**

School districts, charter schools, and charter management organizations may offer a cohesive professional learning certification program that must be approved by the DOE. Participants must hold a state-issued temporary certificate. The program must include:<sup>92</sup>

- an option to collaborate with other agencies or educational entities for implementation;
- a teacher mentorship and induction component;
- an assessment of teaching performance aligned with the district's personnel evaluation system;
- professional educational preparation content knowledge which must be included in the mentoring and induction activities;
- required passing scores on the general knowledge, subject area and the professional education competency test; and
- completion of all competencies for a reading endorsement for all candidates for certification in coverage areas that include reading instruction or interventions in kindergarten through grade 6.

Professional education preparation content knowledge, which must be included in the mentoring and induction activities, must include, but is not limited to:<sup>93</sup>

- The state academic standards,<sup>94</sup> including scientifically researched and evidence-based reading instructional strategies grounded in the science of reading, content literacy, and mathematical practices, for each subject identified on the temporary certificate. Reading instructional strategies for foundational skills shall include phonics instruction for decoding and encoding as the primary instructional strategy for word reading. Instructional strategies may not employ the three-cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for teaching word reading. Instructional strategies may include visual information and strategies which improve background and experiential knowledge, add context, and increase oral language and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to teach word reading.
- The educator-accomplished practices approved by the State Board of Education.

Currently, 47 school districts operate their own DOE-approved professional learning certification programs.<sup>95</sup>

### **Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children**

Children in active-duty military families face unique educational challenges. A military child changes schools on average three times more often than a non-military child.<sup>96</sup> Frequent moves may cause students to miss out on extracurricular activities and face obstacles in meeting requirements to graduate.<sup>97</sup> A military child experiences

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<sup>91</sup> Florida Department of Education, *State-Approved EPI Programs*, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7502/urlt/State-ApprovedEPIProgram.pdf>.

<sup>92</sup> Section 1012.56(8)(a)1.-7., F.S.

<sup>93</sup> Section 1012.56(8)(a)3.a.-b., F.S.

<sup>94</sup> Section 1003.41, F.S.

<sup>95</sup> Florida Department of Education, *Professional Learning Certification Programs*, <https://www.fldoe.org/teaching/preparation/plcp.shtml> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>96</sup> U.S. Dep't of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA). *The Military Interstate Compact*, <https://www.dodea.edu/education/partnership-and-resources/military-interstate-compact> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>97</sup> *Id.*



stress from gaps in education, difficulty in stopping and starting friendships, and repeated required adjustment to a new school setting.<sup>98</sup> Deployment of a family member exacerbates stress.<sup>99</sup>

To provide transitioning military children greater educational stability and uniformity, in 2006, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), in concert with the Council of State Governments established the Compact.<sup>100</sup> The Compact only applies to public schools or to DoD Education Activity Schools.<sup>101</sup>

States join the Compact by enacting it into law, which Florida did in 2008.<sup>102</sup> Before the compact could go into effect, at least 10 states had to sign on.<sup>103</sup> This occurred in July 2008, when Delaware became the tenth state to adopt the Compact.<sup>104</sup> Currently, all 50 states and the District of Columbia are members of the Compact.<sup>105</sup>

The Compact applies to students who are children of:

- Active duty members of the uniformed services,<sup>106</sup> including members of the National Guard and Reserve on active duty orders;
- Members or veterans of the uniformed services who are medically discharged or retired for a period of one year; and
- Members of the uniformed services who die on active duty, for a period of one year following death.<sup>107</sup>

Excluded from the Compact are children of DoD personnel or federal agency civilians and contract employees not on active duty.<sup>108</sup>

The Compact accommodates military children in the following areas:

- Eligibility, including authorizing continued enrollment in the current school and reasonable accommodation for extracurricular participation;
- Enrollment, including in the production of education records, timing of immunizations, and flexibility in the entrance age of the child;
- Placement, including in accommodating original course and program placement, maintaining the same special education services as in the transferred school district, placement flexibility such as a waiver of prerequisites if similar coursework was already completed, and flexibility in absences due to family time with a deployed parent; and
- Graduation, including course waivers if similar coursework is already completed at another school, accepting exit exams from a sending state, and accepting a diploma from a sending school for a transfer during senior year so that a student may graduate on time.<sup>109</sup>

## **Review of Compact Rule Adoption**

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<sup>98</sup> Neil, Lori, U.S. Dep't of Education, *The Unique Needs of Students from Military Families*, available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1230690.pdf> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>99</sup> *Id.*

<sup>100</sup> Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, *Background*, <https://mic3.net/background/> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>101</sup> Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, *Frequently Asked Questions*, available at [https://mic3.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/FAQ-Final-Updates-2023\\_FINAL\\_2023.08.16.pdf](https://mic3.net/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/FAQ-Final-Updates-2023_FINAL_2023.08.16.pdf) (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>102</sup> Chapter 2008-225, L.O.F.

<sup>103</sup> U.S. Army, *Delaware Becomes the 10<sup>th</sup> State to Ratify Military Education Compact*, (July 17, 2008), <https://www.army.mil/article-amp/10975> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>104</sup> *Id.*

<sup>105</sup> Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, *Interactive Map*, <http://www.mic3.net/interactive-map.html> (last visited Apr. 17, 2025).

<sup>106</sup> "Uniformed services" means the Army, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, as well as the Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Public Health Services. See Article II, s. R of the Compact, [s. 1000.36, F.S.](#)

<sup>107</sup> Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, *supra* note 91. Also see Article III, s. A. of the Compact, [s. 1000.36, F.S.](#)

<sup>108</sup> Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission, *supra* note 91. Also see Article III, s. C. of the Compact, [s. 1000.36, F.S.](#)

<sup>109</sup> Dep't of Defense Education Activity, *The Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children, Fact Sheet for Service Providers*, available at <https://dodea.widen.net/s/5fzm2hhlxc/interstatecompacttoolkit-ooreview-15june2015>.

Since its enactment in 2008,<sup>110</sup> Florida's Compact legislation has included a repeal provision that requires automatic repeal of the Compact after a period of time, unless reauthorized by the Legislature.<sup>111</sup> The repeal provision allows the Legislature to periodically review Compact rules and determine whether it agrees with any new rules or rule amendments adopted during the intervening period.

The Legislature last reauthorized the Compact and its implementing provisions during the 2022 Regular Session<sup>112</sup> and provided for repeal of the Compact and its implementing provisions on July 1, 2025, unless reviewed and saved from repeal by the Legislature by that date.<sup>113</sup>

### **Assistance to Transitioning Students from Military Families**

School-aged dependents of military personnel, or military students, are faced with numerous transitions during their formative years and moves during the high school years provide special challenges to learning and future achievement. Recognizing the challenges faced by military students and the importance of military families to our community and economy, current law requires the DOE to assist the transition of these students by improving the timely transfer of records, developing systems to ease student transition during the first 2 weeks of enrollment, promoting practices which foster access to extracurricular programs, establishing procedures to lessen the adverse impact of moves from the end of the junior year as well as before and during the senior year, encouraging or continuing partnerships between the military base and the school system, providing services for transitioning students when applying to and finding funding for postsecondary study, and providing other assistance as identified by department, school, and military personnel.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, the DOE must facilitate the development and implementation of memoranda of agreement between school districts and military installations which address strategies for assisting students who are the children of active duty military personnel in the transition to Florida schools.<sup>115</sup>

### **Special Taxing Districts for Children's Services**

In 1986, the Legislature authorized Florida counties to create children's services councils as countywide special districts to fund children's services. Counties may create independent special districts, for which the county governing body must seek voter approval to levy annual ad valorem property taxes, or dependent special districts, which are supported by appropriations and are authorized to accept grants and donations from public and private sources.<sup>116</sup>

Children's services councils may exercise the following powers and functions:

- Provide preventive, developmental, treatment, rehabilitative, and other services for children;
- Provide funds to other agencies that operate for the benefit of children, with the exception of the public school system;
- Collect data and conduct research to determine the needs of the children in the county;
- Coordinate with providers of children's services to prevent duplication of services; and
- Lease or buy necessary real estate, equipment and personal property.<sup>117</sup>

Ten counties currently have children's services councils organized as special districts: Alachua, Broward, Escambia, Hillsborough, Leon, Martin, Miami-Dade, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, and St. Lucie.<sup>118</sup>

### **Charter School Facilities**

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<sup>110</sup> Chapter 2008-225, L.O.F.

<sup>111</sup> See ch. 2008-225, s. 5, ch. 2010-52, s. 3, ch. 2013-20, s. 2, ch. 2016-34, s. 2, ch. 2019-7, s. 1, and, ch. 2022-182, s. 2, L.O.F.

<sup>112</sup> Chapter 2022-182, s. 2, L.O.F. See [s. 1000.40, F.S.](#)

<sup>113</sup> Chapter 2022-182, s. 2, L.O.F. See [s. 1000.40, F.S.](#)

<sup>114</sup> Section [1003.05\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>115</sup> Section [1003.05\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>116</sup> Chapter 86-197, L.O.F.; s. [125.901\(1\) and \(7\), F.S.](#)

<sup>117</sup> Section [125.901\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>118</sup> Florida Department of Commerce, Division of Community Development, *Official List of Special Districts Online*, available at: <https://specialdistrictreports.floridajobs.org/OfficialList/CustomList> (last accessed Apr. 17, 2025). (In option 7, select "Children;s Services" and then click "Download Report").

All charter schools in Florida are tuition-free public schools within the state's public education system.<sup>119</sup> One of the guiding principles of charter schools is to "meet high standards of student achievement while providing parents flexibility to choose among diverse educational opportunities within the state's public school system."<sup>120</sup> Charter schools operate under a performance contract with a sponsor.<sup>121</sup> This performance contract is known as a "charter."<sup>122</sup>

Charter school facilities, except for conversion charter schools,<sup>123</sup> are not required to comply with the State Requirements for Educational Facilities of the Florida Building Code (SREF).<sup>124</sup> Instead, charter schools are subject to the general provisions of the Florida Building Code, including any amendments adopted by local governments.<sup>125</sup> Local governments are prohibited, however, from adopting or imposing any local building requirements or site-development restrictions, such as parking and site-size criteria, student enrollment, and occupant load, that are more stringent than the SREF if those matters are addressed therein.<sup>126</sup> Local governments must treat charter schools equitably in requirements imposed upon traditional public schools, including any requirements entered into via interlocal agreement.

Charter schools may not be subject to any land use regulation requiring a comprehensive plan amendment, development order, or development permit that would not be required for a public school in the same location.<sup>127</sup> A variety of facilities may provide space within their facilities to charter schools.<sup>128</sup> Charter schools may be housed in certain types of facilities under the existing zoning and land use designations for those facilities without the need to obtain a special exception, rezoning, or a land use change.<sup>129</sup>

### [Land Development Regulations](#)

Comprehensive plans are implemented via land development regulations. Each county and municipality must adopt and enforce land development regulations, such as zoning, that are consistent with and implement their adopted comprehensive plan.<sup>130</sup> Local governments are encouraged to use innovative land development regulations such as the transfer of development rights, incentive and inclusionary zoning, planned unit development, impact fees, and performance zoning.<sup>131</sup> All land development regulations adopted by a local government are compiled into a single land development code for the jurisdiction.<sup>132</sup>

All local government land development regulations must be consistent with the local comprehensive plan.<sup>133</sup> Additionally, all public and private development must be consistent with the local comprehensive plan.<sup>134</sup>

### [Duties of school principal relating to student discipline and school safety](#)

Florida law provides an extensive description of the roles, duties, and authority of each personnel classification charged with maintaining a safe and orderly school environment and enforcing disciplinary violations.<sup>135</sup> Each

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<sup>119</sup> Section [1002.33\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>120</sup> Section [1002.33\(2\)\(a\)1., F.S.](#)

<sup>121</sup> Section [1002.33\(1\), \(7\), and \(9\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>122</sup> Section [1002.33\(7\) and \(9\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>123</sup> Conversion charter schools are charter schools formed by a process that converts an existing traditional public school. [Section 1002.33\(3\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>124</sup> Section [1002.33\(18\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>125</sup> See [s. 553.73, F.S.](#)

<sup>126</sup> Section [1002.33\(18\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>127</sup> *Id.*

<sup>128</sup> Section [1002.33\(18\)\(c\), F.S.](#) Those facilities include any library, community service, museum, performing arts, theater, cinema, or church facility; any facility or land owned by a Florida College System institution or university; any similar public institutional facilities; and any facility recently used to house a school or child care facility licensed under [s. 402.305, F.S.](#)

<sup>129</sup> Section [1002.33\(18\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>130</sup> Section [163.3202, F.S.](#)

<sup>131</sup> Section [163.3202\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>132</sup> *Id.*

<sup>133</sup> [S. 163.3194\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>134</sup> See ss. [163.3161\(6\)](#) and [163.3194\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>135</sup> See ss. [1003.32](#) (classroom teachers and school principals), [1006.08](#) (superintendents), [1006.09](#) (school principals), and [1006.10, F.S.](#) (school bus drivers).

district school superintendent must, among other things, recommend to the district school board plans for promoting the welfare of students, including attendance, discipline, health and safety, and other matters. Each superintendent must fully support the disciplinary authority of school principals, classroom teachers, and school bus drivers.<sup>136</sup>

Generally speaking, the law provides that each classroom teacher “shall have such authority for the control and discipline of students as may be assigned to him or her by the principal . . . .” Consistent with the school district’s code of student conduct, classroom teachers have authority to, among other things, establish classroom rules of conduct; establish and implement consequences for infractions; and remove disobedient, disorderly, or violent students from the classroom.<sup>137</sup>

Each school principal must, among other things, develop policies for delegating responsibility for the control and direction of students to classroom teachers, other instructional staff, and school bus drivers. Each school principal must fully support the authority of such personnel to remove disobedient, disrespectful, violent, abusive, uncontrollable, or disruptive students from the classroom and the school bus. The principal must give full consideration to disciplinary recommendations made by such personnel when making disciplinary referrals.<sup>138</sup>

Each school principal may suspend a student from school pursuant to school board rules.<sup>139</sup> A school principal may recommend the expulsion of a student to the superintendent who, in turn, may recommend such expulsion to the school board.<sup>140</sup> A student may be suspended for criminal offenses that occurred off of school property only following a showing that the offense has an adverse impact on the education program, discipline, or welfare in the school in which the student is enrolled.<sup>141</sup>

### **Zero-Tolerance Policies in Florida Schools**

Each school board must adopt a zero-tolerance policy that: <sup>142</sup>

- Identifies acts that are required to be reported in the SESIR.
- Defines acts that pose a threat to school safety.
- Defines petty acts of misconduct which are not a threat to school safety and do not require consultation with law enforcement.
- Minimizes the victimization of students, staff, or volunteers, including taking all steps necessary to protect the victim of any violent crime from any further victimization.
- Establishes a procedure that provides each student with the opportunity for a review of the disciplinary action imposed.
- Requires the TMT to consult with law enforcement when a student exhibits a pattern of behavior, based upon previous acts or the severity of an act, which would pose a threat to school safety.

Additionally, each school board's zero tolerance policy must:

- Provide that any student found to have committed crimes upon any elected official or school district employee must be expelled or placed in an alternative school setting or other program, as appropriate.<sup>143</sup>
- Prohibit students found to have committed certain felony offenses against another student from attending the same school or riding on the same school bus as a victim or a victim’s sibling.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Section [1006.08\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>137</sup> Section [1003.32\(1\), F.S.](#)

<sup>138</sup> Section [1006.09\(1\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

<sup>139</sup> Section [1006.09\(1\)\(b\), F.S.](#)

<sup>140</sup> Sections [1006.08\(1\)](#) and [1006.09\(1\)\(c\), F.S.](#)

<sup>141</sup> Section [1006.09\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>142</sup> Section [1006.13\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>143</sup> Section [1006.13\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>144</sup> Section [1006.13\(6\)\(a\), F.S.](#)

Zero-tolerance policies may not be rigorously applied to petty acts of misconduct. A TMT may use alternatives to expulsion or referral to law enforcement agencies, such as restitution, civil citation, teen court, neighborhood restorative justice or similar programs, unless the use of such alternatives will pose a threat to school safety.<sup>145</sup>

School boards have discretion to provide continuing educational services to an expelled student in an alternative educational setting. A district school superintendent may consider the one-year expulsion requirement on a case-by-case basis and request that the school board modify the requirement by assigning the student to a disciplinary program or second chance school if it determines such modification is in the best interest of the student and the school system.<sup>146</sup>

### **The Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement**

In 2004, the Legislature passed the Florida Partnership for Minority and Underrepresented Student Achievement (partnership) Act<sup>147</sup> recognizing the importance of not only access to college but also success in college for all students. The intent of the partnership was to ensure that every student enrolled in a public secondary school has access to high-quality, rigorous academics, with a particular focus on access to advanced courses, with a particular focus on minority students and students who are underrepresented in postsecondary education.<sup>148</sup> The DOE may contract for operation of the partnership.<sup>149</sup>

In order to prepare, inspire and connect students to postsecondary success and opportunity, public high schools must provide for the administration of the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), or the PreACT to all enrolled 10th grade students. However, a written notice must be provided to each parent which must include the opportunity to exempt his or her child from taking the PSAT/NMSQT or the PreACT.<sup>150</sup> Test results from these assessments are used by certified school counselors to identify students who are prepared or who need additional work to be prepared to enroll and be successful in AP courses or other advanced high school courses.

### **School Board Discretionary Millage Levy**

Each district school board is authorized to levy 1.5 mills against the taxable value for public school purposes to fund specific needs as identified in law, including, for example:<sup>151</sup>

- New construction, remodeling projects, sites and site improvement or expansion to new sites, existing sites, auxiliary facilities, athletic facilities, or ancillary facilities.
- Payments for educational facilities and sites due under a lease-purchase agreement.
- Payment of costs of leasing relocatable educational facilities, of renting or leasing educational facilities and sites, or of renting or leasing buildings or space within existing buildings.

In addition, a district school board may expend up to \$200 per unweighted FTE student from the revenue generated by the millage levy to fund expenses for:<sup>152</sup>

- The purchase, lease-purchase, or lease of driver's education vehicles; motor vehicles used for the maintenance or operation of plants and equipment; security vehicles; or vehicles used in storing or distributing materials and equipment.
- Payment of the cost of premiums property and casualty insurance necessary to insure school district educational and ancillary plants.<sup>153</sup>

<sup>145</sup> Section [1006.13\(1\) and \(8\), F.S.](#)

<sup>146</sup> Section [1006.13\(3\), F.S.](#) (flush left provisions at end of subsection).

<sup>147</sup> Ch. 2004-63, L.O.F.

<sup>148</sup> Section [1007.35\(2\)\(b\), F.S.](#); See Florida Department of Education, *Annual Evaluation Report for Florida Partnership 2021-2022* (September 2022), available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/19912/urlt/FLPAER2122.pdf>.

<sup>149</sup> Section [1007.35\(3\), F.S.](#)

<sup>150</sup> Section [1007.35\(4\) and \(5\), F.S.](#) Public school districts must choose either the PSAT/NMSQT or the PreACT for districtwide administration. Funding for the PSAT/NMSQT or the PreACT for all 10th grade students is contingent upon annual funding in the General Appropriations Act. *Id.*

<sup>151</sup> Section [1011.71\(2\), F.S.](#)

<sup>152</sup> Section [1011.71\(5\), F.S.](#)

<sup>153</sup> The casualty insurance authorized is burglary and theft, glass, boiler and machinery, leakage and fire extinguisher equipment, and elevator. Section [624.605\(1\)\(d\), \(f\), \(g\), \(h\), and \(m\), F.S.](#)



**RECENT LEGISLATION:**

| YEAR | BILL #                              | HOUSE SPONSOR(S) | SENATE SPONSOR | OTHER INFORMATION  |
|------|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|--|
| 2023 | <a href="#">HB 5101</a>             | Tomkow           | Hooper         | Became law on July 1, 2023.                                  |
| 2023 | <a href="#">CS/SB 676</a>           | Trabulsy         | Grall          | Became law on July 1, 2024,<br>except as otherwise provided. |
| 2023 | <a href="#">CS/CS/CS/SB<br/>266</a> | Andrade          | Grall          | Became law on July 1, 2023.                                  |
| 2022 | <a href="#">CS/SB 430</a>           | Altman           | Wright         | Became law on June 9, 2022.                                  |
| 2022 | <a href="#">CS/SB 544</a>           | Caruso           | Boyd           | Became law on July 1, 2022.                                  |
| 2022 | <a href="#">SB 1054</a>             | Busatta          | Hutson         | Became law on July 1, 2022.                                  |
| 2021 | <a href="#">CS/HB 7011</a>          | Aloupis          | Rodriguez      | Became law on July 1, 2021.                                  |

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**BILL HISTORY**

| COMMITTEE REFERENCE                                   | ACTION   | DATE      | STAFF<br>DIRECTOR/<br>POLICY CHIEF | ANALYSIS<br>PREPARED BY |
|---|--|-----------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <a href="#">Student Academic Success Subcommittee</a> | 15 Y, 2 N, As CS   | 3/18/2025 | Sanchez                            | Wolff                   |
| THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarified that the notification to parents related to New Worlds Tutoring Program must include the services available from the school district.</li> <li>• Updated reporting date for New Worlds Tutoring Program data.</li> <li>• Removed changes to Hope Scholarship Program incidents.</li> <li>• Prohibited public K-12 educational entities from making specified expenditures.</li> <li>• Saved the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children from repeal.</li> <li>• Required the DOE to develop and implement a training module relating to facilitating and expediting the transfer of a military associated K-12 student's education records from an out-of-state school.</li> <li>• Removed the Commissioner's duty to verify school district advisory council membership.</li> <li>• Expanded authority for school districts to purchase any emergency opioid antagonists approved by the FDA.</li> <li>• Required parental opt-in for corporal punishment at both traditional public schools and charter schools.</li> <li>• Clarified reenrollment for VPK students that have not completed a VPK program after a withdrawal for good cause or extreme hardship.</li> <li>• Updated requirements for the presentation of state academic standards to the SBE.</li> <li>• Included additional topics related to postsecondary education in the mandatory financial literacy course.</li> <li>• Added certification by the American Board of Certification of Teacher Excellence as a direct pathway to educator certification in Florida.</li> </ul> |           |                                    |                         |
| <a href="#">PreK-12 Budget Subcommittee</a>           | 12 Y, 1 N  | 4/1/2025  | Potvin                             | Bailey                  |
| <a href="#">Education &amp; Employment Committee</a>  | 17 Y, 4 N, As CS   | 4/17/2025 | Hassell                            | Wolff                   |
| THE CHANGES ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE:                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended the composition of, and terms of appointments for, governing board members for specified Children's Services independent districts.</li> <li>• Clarified the certification requirements for mathematics coaches.</li> <li>• Required teacher preparation programs to include instruction on mathematics to teacher candidates.</li> <li>• Amended required instruction on human embryological development.</li> <li>• Required the DOE to develop a pathway for candidates to earn a mathematics endorsement.</li> <li>• Authorized state agencies to hire individuals that successfully complete an apprenticeship with the agency.</li> <li>• Updated requirements for local governing agencies when approving charter school facilities.</li> <li>• Updated student discipline provisions to provide additional interventions and to permit the extension of expulsions.</li> <li>• Removed provisions allowing certification by the American Board of Certification of Teacher Excellence to satisfy educator certification requirements.</li> <li>• Authorized school districts to provide the CLT10 to students in grade 10.</li> <li>• Authorized school districts to use district school tax revenue for liability insurance premiums.</li> </ul>   |           |                                    |                         |

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**THIS BILL ANALYSIS HAS BEEN UPDATED TO INCORPORATE ALL OF THE CHANGES DESCRIBED ABOVE.**  
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