

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the recruitment and retention of
3 speech-language pathologists; creating s. 1012.02,
4 F.S.; requiring the Department of Education to develop
5 and maintain a statewide strategic plan for the
6 recruitment and retention of speech-language
7 pathologists and the provision of quality services;
8 providing requirements for such plan; providing
9 department requirements relating to completing and
10 publishing the plan; providing school district and
11 charter school requirements relating to submitting
12 specified data for the plan; requiring the department
13 to provide specified updates to certain committees of
14 the Legislature; providing an effective date.

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

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18 **Section 1. Section 1012.02, Florida Statutes, is created**
19 **to read:**

20 1012.02 Statewide strategic plan for the recruitment and
21 retention of speech-language pathologists and the provision of
22 quality services.—

23 (1) The Department of Education shall develop and maintain
24 a statewide strategic plan for recruiting and retaining speech-
25 language pathologists and assuring that quality services are

26 provided to students with speech-language disabilities. At a
27 minimum, the plan must include, but is not limited to, all of
28 the following:

29 (a) The analysis of relevant data to determine the
30 specific staffing needs of school districts and charter schools.
31 Such analysis must be ongoing throughout the school year and
32 must include:

33 1. The total number of public schools, disaggregated by
34 school district and charter school.

35 2. The number of speech-language pathologists employed at
36 each school and school district, including speech-language
37 pathologists who are contracted personnel.

38 3. The number of employees and contracted personnel per
39 school district or charter school who are:

40 a. Doctoral-level speech-language pathologists.

41 b. Master-level speech-language pathologists.

42 c. Bachelor-level speech-language therapists.

43 d. Speech-language pathology assistants.

44 4. An examination of the caseloads and compensation of
45 such employees and contracted personnel and a comparison of such
46 caseloads and compensation between school districts and charter
47 schools and in contiguous states.

48 (b) Tracking the changes in the number of employees and
49 contracted personnel listed in subparagraph (a)3. from year to
50 year, including resignations and retirements.

51 (c) An examination of strategies for addressing challenges
52 school districts and charter schools face in the recruitment and
53 retention of the employees and contracted personnel listed in
54 subparagraph (a)3., including, but not limited to:

- 55 1. Tuition assistance programs.
56 2. Continuing education opportunities.
57 3. Expanding opportunities for such employees and
58 contracted personnel to work full-time, part-time, or on another
59 hybrid schedule with continued benefits.
60 4. Establishing hybrid work environments.
61 5. Establishing differentiated pay for speech-language
62 pathologists.
63 6. Expanding mentorships for speech-language pathologists
64 for newly employed speech-language pathologists.

65 (d) An estimation of the costs to implement the strategies
66 outlined in paragraph (c), including the extent to which
67 federal, state, and local funds could be used to support such
68 implementation.

69 (e) The development and implementation of a weighted
70 calculation methodology for determining a caseload and workload
71 plan for speech-language pathologists. The plan must be based on
72 an analysis of the activities and populations for which the
73 speech-language pathologists are responsible and, at a minimum,
74 must include sufficient time for all of the following:

- 75 1. Individualized therapeutic instruction and

76 interventions for students.

77 2. Diagnostic and evaluation-specific speech, language,
78 and literacy.

79 3. Consultation services and collaboration among staff
80 members.

81 4. Attendance at individual education plan meetings and
82 other staff conferences, as appropriate.

83 5. Required documentation and reporting.

84 6. Medicaid billing and related activities.

85 7. Response to student interventions.

86 (f) The amount of Medicaid revenue that is annually:

87 1. Generated by speech-language pathologist activities.

88 2. Obtained through speech-language pathologist activities
89 and is transferred to the school district's or charter school's
90 general revenue fund.

91 3. Used for speech-language pathologists' pay supplements,
92 stipends, continued professional training, and therapeutic
93 materials.

94 (2)(a) The department shall create a survey for each
95 school district and charter school to complete to gather the
96 data required under subsection (1).

97 (b) Each school district and charter school must complete
98 and submit such survey to the department no later than October
99 31 of each year.

100 (c) No later than November 30 of each year, the department

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101 shall publish the statewide strategic plan on its website, which
102 includes the integration of school district and charter school
103 data and information, and provide an update on the department's
104 progress in developing and implementing the statewide strategic
105 plan to the appropriate substantive committees of the Senate and
106 House of Representatives.

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