

By Senator Jones

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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to educator certifications and training; amending s. 1004.04, F.S.; revising the core curricula for certain teacher preparation programs to include training relating to mass casualty incidents; amending s. 1004.85, F.S.; requiring certain postsecondary educator preparation institutes' programs to include training relating to mass casualty incidents; conforming a cross-reference; amending s. 1012.56, F.S.; revising the certified educator eligibility criteria to require training in mass casualty incidents; creating s. 1012.5841, F.S.; requiring the Department of Education to develop a list of approved trainings relating to mass casualty incidents; beginning in a specified school year, requiring the department to include such trainings in existing continuing education and inservice training requirements for instructional personnel; providing applicability; authorizing the State Board of Education to adopt rules; amending ss. 1012.55 and 1012.57, F.S.; conforming cross-references; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (2) of section 1004.04, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1004.04 Public accountability and state approval for teacher preparation programs.—

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(2) UNIFORM CORE CURRICULA AND CANDIDATE ASSESSMENT.—

(b) The rules to establish uniform core curricula for each state-approved teacher preparation program must include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Candidate instruction and assessment in the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices across content areas.

2. The use of state-adopted content standards to guide curricula and instruction.

3. 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 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. Instructional strategies may include visual information and strategies that 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.

4. Content literacy and mathematics practices.

5. Strategies appropriate for the instruction of English language learners.

6. Strategies appropriate for the instruction of students with disabilities.

7. Strategies to differentiate instruction based on student

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59 needs.

60 8. Strategies and practices to support evidence-based  
61 content aligned to state standards and grading practices.

62 9. Strategies appropriate for the early identification of a  
63 student in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge and  
64 the referral of such student to a mental health professional for  
65 support.

66 10. Strategies to support the use of technology in  
67 education and distance learning.

68 11. Strategies and practices to support effective,  
69 research-based assessment and grading practices aligned to the  
70 state's academic standards.

71 12. Strategies and practices for identifying, preventing,  
72 preparing for, addressing, and responding to mass casualty  
73 incidents.

74 Section 2. Paragraphs (a) and (b) of subsection (3) of  
75 section 1004.85, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

76 1004.85 Postsecondary educator preparation institutes.—

77 (3) Educator preparation institutes approved pursuant to  
78 this section may offer competency-based certification programs  
79 specifically designed for noneducation major baccalaureate  
80 degree holders to enable program participants to meet the  
81 educator certification requirements of s. 1012.56. An educator  
82 preparation institute choosing to offer a competency-based  
83 certification program pursuant to the provisions of this section  
84 must implement a program developed by the institute and approved  
85 by the department for this purpose. Approved programs shall be  
86 available for use by other approved educator preparation  
87 institutes.

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(a) Within 90 days after receipt of a request for approval, the Department of Education shall approve a preparation program pursuant to the requirements of this subsection or issue a statement of the deficiencies in the request for approval. The department shall approve a certification program if the institute provides evidence of the institute's capacity to implement a competency-based program that instructs and assesses each candidate in the following:

1.a. The Florida Educator Accomplished Practices approved by the state board.

b. The state academic standards provided under s. 1003.41, including scientifically based reading instruction, content literacy, and mathematical practices, for each subject identified on the statement of status of eligibility or the temporary certificate.

c. 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 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. 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

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117 teach word reading.

118 d. Strategies and practices for identifying, preventing,  
119 preparing for, addressing, and responding to mass casualty  
120 incidents.

121 2. An educational plan for each participant to meet  
122 certification requirements and demonstrate his or her ability to  
123 teach the subject area for which the participant is seeking  
124 certification, which is based on an assessment of his or her  
125 competency in the areas listed in subparagraph 1.

126 3. Field experiences appropriate to the certification  
127 subject area specified in the educational plan under the  
128 supervision of qualified educators. The state board shall  
129 determine in rule the amount of field experience necessary to  
130 serve as the teacher of record, beginning with candidates  
131 entering a program in the 2023-2024 school year.

132 4. A certification ombudsman to facilitate the process and  
133 procedures required for participants who complete the program to  
134 meet any requirements related to the background screening  
135 pursuant to s. 1012.32 and educator professional or temporary  
136 certification pursuant to s. 1012.56.

137 (b) Each program participant must:

138 1. Meet certification requirements pursuant to s.  
139 1012.56(1) by obtaining a statement of status of eligibility in  
140 the certification subject area of the educational plan and meet  
141 the requirements of s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(g) ~~s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f)~~  
142 before participating in field experiences.

143 2. Demonstrate competency and participate in field  
144 experiences that are appropriate to his or her educational plan  
145 prepared under paragraph (a). Beginning with candidates entering

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an educator preparation institute in the 2022-2023 school year, a candidate for certification in a coverage area identified pursuant to s. 1012.585(3)(f) must successfully complete all competencies for a reading endorsement, including completion of the endorsement practicum through the candidate's field experience, in order to graduate from the program.

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

Section 3. Present paragraphs (g), (h), and (i) of subsection (2) of section 1012.56, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (h), (i), and (j), respectively, a new paragraph (g) is added to that subsection, and paragraphs (a), (b), and (d) of subsection (7) of that section are amended, to read:

1012.56 Educator certification requirements.—

(2) ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.—To be eligible to seek certification, a person must:

(g) Have received training that includes strategies and practices for identifying, preventing, preparing for, addressing, and responding to mass casualty incidents.

(7) TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.—

(a) The Department of Education shall issue a professional

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certificate for a period not to exceed 5 years to any applicant who fulfills one of the following:

1. Meets all the applicable requirements outlined in subsection (2).

2. For a professional certificate covering grades 6 through 12:

a. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2) (a) - (i) ~~(2) (a) - (h)~~.

b. Holds a master's or higher degree in the area of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics.

c. Teaches a high school course in the subject of the advanced degree.

d. Is rated highly effective as determined by the teacher's performance evaluation under s. 1012.34, based in part on student performance as measured by a statewide, standardized assessment or an Advanced Placement, Advanced International Certificate of Education, or International Baccalaureate examination.

e. Achieves a passing score on the Florida professional education competency examination required by state board rule.

3. Meets the applicable requirements of paragraphs (2) (a) - (i) ~~(2) (a) - (h)~~ and completes a professional learning certification program approved by the department pursuant to paragraph (8) (c) or an educator preparation institute approved by the department pursuant to s. 1004.85. An applicant who completes one of these programs and is rated highly effective as determined by his or her performance evaluation under s. 1012.34 is not required to take or achieve a passing score on the professional education competency examination in order to be

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awarded a professional certificate.

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

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

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

3. Is enrolled in a state-approved teacher preparation program under s. 1004.04; is actively completing the required program field experience or internship at a public school; completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs (2) (a), (b), and (d) - (g) ~~(d) - (f)~~; completes the subject area content

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requirements specified in state board rule or demonstrates mastery of subject area knowledge pursuant to subsection (5); and documents completion of 60 college credits with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale, as provided by one or more accredited institutions of higher learning or a nonaccredited institution of higher learning identified by the Department of Education as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher.

(d) The department shall issue a temporary apprenticeship certificate to any applicant who meets the requirements of paragraphs (2) (a), (b), and (d)-(g) ~~(d)-(f)~~.

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

Section 4. Section 1012.5841, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1012.5841 Continuing education and inservice training for identifying, preventing, preparing for, addressing, and responding to mass casualty incidents.-

(1) The Department of Education shall develop a list of approved trainings to prepare instructional personnel to identify, prevent, prepare for, address, and respond to mass casualty incidents.

(2) Beginning with the 2026-2027 school year, the department shall incorporate the training included in the list required under subsection (1) into existing requirements for the

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continuing education or inservice training of instructional personnel. The requirements of this section may not add to the total hours required for continuing education or inservice training as currently established by the department.

(3) A person has no cause of action for any loss or damage caused by an act or omission resulting from the implementation of this section or resulting from any training required by this section unless the loss or damage was caused by willful or wanton misconduct. This section does not create any new duty of care or basis of liability.

(4) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to implement this section.

Section 5. Subsections (5) and (6) of section 1012.55, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1012.55 Positions for which certificates required.—

(5) A person who is employed as a school social worker is exempt from the educator certification requirements in s. 1012.56(2)(h) and (i) ~~s. 1012.56(2)(g) and (h)~~ relating to the mastery of general and subject area knowledge.

(6) Notwithstanding this section and ss. 1012.32 and 1012.56, or any other provision of law or rule to the contrary, the State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow for the issuance of a classical education teaching certificate, upon the request of a classical school, to any applicant who fulfills the requirements of s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(g) ~~s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f)~~ and (11) and any other criteria established by the department. Such certificate is only valid at a classical school. For the purposes of this subsection, the term "classical school" means a school that implements and provides professional learning in a

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classical education school model that emphasizes the development of students in the principles of moral character and civic virtue through a well-rounded education in the liberal arts and sciences that is based on the classical trivium stages of grammar, logic, and rhetoric.

Section 6. Subsection (1) of section 1012.57, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.57 Certification of adjunct educators.—

(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of ss. 1012.32, 1012.55, and 1012.56, or any other provision of law or rule to the contrary, district school boards and charter school governing boards shall adopt rules to allow for the issuance of an adjunct teaching certificate to any applicant who fulfills the requirements of s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(g) ~~s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f)~~ and (11) and who has expertise in the subject area to be taught. An applicant is considered to have expertise in the subject area to be taught if the applicant demonstrates sufficient subject area mastery through passage of a subject area test or has achieved an industry certification in the subject area to be taught.

Section 7. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.