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CS/HB 851

2026 Legislature

1
 2 An act relating to professional learning for
 3 instructional and school administrative personnel;
 4 amending s. 1012.98, F.S.; requiring certain
 5 professional learning systems to provide at least one
 6 autism-specific professional learning opportunity;
 7 providing requirements for the professional learning;
 8 providing an effective date.

9
 10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

11
 12 Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (5) of section
 13 1012.98, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

14 1012.98 School Community Professional Learning Act.—

15 (5) The Department of Education, school districts,
 16 schools, Florida College System institutions, and state
 17 universities share the responsibilities described in this
 18 section. These responsibilities include the following:

19 (b) Each school district shall develop a professional
 20 learning system as specified in subsection (4). The system shall
 21 be developed in consultation with teachers, teacher-educators of
 22 Florida College System institutions and state universities,
 23 business and community representatives, and local education
 24 foundations, consortia, and professional organizations. The
 25 professional learning system must:

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26 | 1. Be reviewed and approved by the department for
27 | compliance with s. 1003.42(3) and this section. Effective March
28 | 1, 2024, the department shall establish a calendar for the
29 | review and approval of all professional learning systems. A
30 | professional learning system must be reviewed and approved every
31 | 5 years. Any substantial revisions to the system must be
32 | submitted to the department for review and approval. The
33 | department shall establish a format for the review and approval
34 | of a professional learning system.

35 | 2. Be based on analyses of student achievement data and
36 | instructional strategies and methods that support rigorous,
37 | relevant, and challenging curricula for all students. Schools
38 | and districts, in developing and refining the professional
39 | learning system, shall also review and monitor school discipline
40 | data; school environment surveys; assessments of parental
41 | satisfaction; performance appraisal data of teachers, managers,
42 | and administrative personnel; and other performance indicators
43 | to identify school and student needs that can be met by improved
44 | professional performance.

45 | 3. Provide inservice activities coupled with follow-up
46 | ~~followup~~ support appropriate to accomplish district-level and
47 | school-level improvement goals and standards. The inservice
48 | activities for instructional and school administrative personnel
49 | shall focus on analysis of student achievement data; ongoing
50 | formal and informal assessments of student achievement;

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51 identification and use of enhanced and differentiated
52 instructional strategies that emphasize rigor, relevance, and
53 reading in the content areas; enhancement of subject content
54 expertise; integrated use of classroom technology that enhances
55 teaching and learning; classroom management; parent involvement;
56 and school safety.

57 4. Provide inservice activities and support targeted to
58 the individual needs of new teachers participating in the
59 professional learning certification and education competency
60 program under s. 1012.56(8)(a).

61 5. Include a professional learning catalog for inservice
62 activities, pursuant to rules of the State Board of Education,
63 for all district employees from all fund sources. The catalog
64 must be updated annually by September 1, must be based on input
65 from teachers and district and school instructional leaders, and
66 must use the latest available student achievement data and
67 research to enhance rigor and relevance in the classroom. Each
68 district inservice catalog must be aligned to and support the
69 school-based inservice catalog and school improvement plans
70 pursuant to s. 1001.42(18). Each district inservice catalog must
71 provide a description of the training that middle grades
72 instructional personnel and school administrators receive on the
73 district's code of student conduct adopted pursuant to s.
74 1006.07; integrated digital instruction and competency-based
75 instruction and CAPE Digital Tool certificates and CAPE industry

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76 | certifications; classroom management; student behavior and
77 | interaction; extended learning opportunities for students; and
78 | instructional leadership. District plans must be approved by the
79 | district school board annually in order to ensure compliance
80 | with subsection (1) and to allow for dissemination of research-
81 | based best practices to other districts. District school boards
82 | shall submit verification of their approval to the Commissioner
83 | of Education no later than October 1, annually. Each school
84 | principal may establish and maintain an individual professional
85 | learning plan for each instructional employee assigned to the
86 | school as a seamless component to the school improvement plans
87 | developed pursuant to s. 1001.42(18). An individual professional
88 | learning plan must be related to specific performance data for
89 | the students to whom the teacher is assigned, define the
90 | inservice objectives and specific measurable improvements
91 | expected in student performance as a result of the inservice
92 | activity, and include an evaluation component that determines
93 | the effectiveness of the professional learning plan.

94 | 6. Include inservice activities for school administrative
95 | personnel, aligned to the state's educational leadership
96 | standards, which address updated skills necessary for
97 | instructional leadership and effective school management
98 | pursuant to s. 1012.986.

99 | 7. Provide for systematic consultation with regional and
100 | state personnel designated to provide technical assistance and

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101 evaluation of local professional learning programs.

102 8. Provide for delivery of professional learning by
 103 distance learning and other technology-based delivery systems to
 104 reach more educators at lower costs.

105 9. Provide for the continuous evaluation of the quality
 106 and effectiveness of professional learning programs in order to
 107 eliminate ineffective programs and strategies and to expand
 108 effective ones. Evaluations must consider the impact of such
 109 activities on the performance of participating educators and
 110 their students' achievement and behavior.

111 10. For all grades, emphasize:

112 a. Interdisciplinary planning, collaboration, and
 113 instruction.

114 b. Alignment of curriculum and instructional materials to
 115 the state academic standards adopted pursuant to s. 1003.41.

116 c. Use of small learning communities; problem-solving,
 117 inquiry-driven research and analytical approaches for students;
 118 strategies and tools based on student needs; competency-based
 119 instruction; integrated digital instruction; and project-based
 120 instruction.

121
 122 Each school that includes any of grades 6, 7, or 8 shall include
 123 in its school improvement plan, required under s. 1001.42(18), a
 124 description of the specific strategies used by the school to
 125 implement each item listed in this subparagraph.

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126 11. Provide training to reading coaches, classroom
127 teachers, and school administrators in effective methods of
128 identifying characteristics of conditions such as dyslexia and
129 other causes of diminished phonological processing skills;
130 incorporating instructional techniques into the general
131 education setting which are proven to improve reading
132 performance for all students; and using predictive and other
133 data to make instructional decisions based on individual student
134 needs. The training must help teachers integrate phonemic
135 awareness; phonics, word study, and spelling; reading fluency;
136 vocabulary, including academic vocabulary; and text
137 comprehension strategies into an explicit, systematic, and
138 sequential approach to reading instruction, including
139 multisensory intervention strategies. Such training for teaching
140 foundational skills must be based on the science of reading and
141 include phonics instruction for decoding and encoding as the
142 primary instructional strategy for word reading. Instructional
143 strategies included in the training may not employ the three-
144 cueing system model of reading or visual memory as a basis for
145 teaching word reading. Such instructional strategies may include
146 visual information and strategies which improve background and
147 experiential knowledge, add context, and increase oral language
148 and vocabulary to support comprehension, but may not be used to
149 teach word reading. Each district must provide all elementary
150 grades instructional personnel access to training sufficient to

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151 meet the requirements of s. 1012.585(3)(f).

152 12. Provide at least one autism-specific professional
153 learning opportunity annually for instructional personnel and
154 school-based administrators. The professional learning must be
155 developed in consultation with the district's assigned Center
156 for Autism and Related Disabilities and must include evidence-
157 based practices for supporting students with autism spectrum
158 disorder across all levels of need, including academic
159 instruction, behavioral supports, communication strategies, and
160 inclusive practices.

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