

CHAPTER 2026-106

Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 561

An act relating to educator preparation and certification; amending s. 1004.85, F.S.; authorizing an educator preparation institute to allow certain program participants to enroll in introductory coursework; amending s. 1012.56, F.S.; revising the criteria for the award of a temporary educator certification to include certain persons with expired professional certificates; amending s. 1012.585, F.S.; requiring that subject area coverages and endorsements for a certificateholder be reinstated with the certificateholder's professional certificate; revising requirements for reinstatement of a professional certificate; providing that certain requirements for reinstatement of a professional certificate may not be satisfied using specific inservice points; amending s. 1012.981, F.S.; requiring the Florida Center for Teaching Excellence to collaborate with the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of Teaching for specified purposes; requiring, rather than authorizing, the center to submit a specified professional learning system for approval by the department; requiring the center to allow certain certified educators to use such professional learning system for specified purposes at no cost to the educator; requiring the center to submit inservice points for such educators to the department; requiring the center to provide information on certain school district professional learning systems to certain certified educators; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (b) of subsection (3) of section 1004.85, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1004.85 Postsecondary educator preparation institutes.—

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

(b) Each program participant must:

1. Meet certification requirements pursuant to s. 1012.56(1) by obtaining an eligible a statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area of the educational plan and meet the requirements of s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f) before participating in field experiences. An educator preparation institute

may allow a program participant to enroll in and complete coursework while the participant is working to obtain an eligible statement of status of eligibility in the certification subject area of the educational plan.

2. Demonstrate competency and participate in field experiences that are appropriate to his or her educational plan prepared under paragraph (a). Beginning with candidates entering 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 2. Paragraph (b) of subsection (7) of section 1012.56, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.56 Educator certification requirements.—

(7) TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.—

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

1. Completes the requirements outlined in paragraphs (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)-(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)-(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;

4. Completes the requirements in paragraphs (2)(a)-(f) and whose previously issued professional certificate has expired.

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 3. Subsection (5) of section 1012.585, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.585 Process for renewal or reinstatement of professional certificates.—

(5) The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow the reinstatement of expired professional certificates, including each subject area coverage and endorsement held by the certificateholder at the time of the certificate's expiration. The department may reinstate an expired professional certificate if the certificateholder:

(a) Submits an application for reinstatement of the expired certificate.

(b) Completes the requirements in s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f).

~~(c)(b)~~ Documents completion of 6 college credits during the 5 years immediately preceding reinstatement of the expired certificate, completion of 120 inservice points, or a combination thereof, in an area specified in paragraph (3)(a) to include the credit required under paragraph (3)(e).

~~(e) During the 5 years immediately preceding reinstatement of the certificate, achieves a passing score on the Florida-developed subject area examination or, if a Florida subject area examination has not been developed, a standardized examination specified in state board rule for each subject to be shown on the reinstated certificate.~~

The requirements of this subsection may not be satisfied by ~~subject area examinations or~~ college credits or inservice points completed for issuance of the certificate that has expired.

Section 4. Subsections (2) and (3) of section 1012.981, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

1012.981 The Florida Center for Teaching Excellence.—

(2) The center shall, in collaboration with the David C. Anchin Center for the Advancement of ~~Innovative Teaching within and Learning at~~ the University of South Florida, do all of the following:

(a) Develop and deliver evidence-based professional learning opportunities aligned to the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices.

(b) Develop and deliver educator training programs pursuant to s. 1012.98 that integrate high-quality instructional materials included on the state-adopted instructional materials list under s. 1006.28, materials evaluated and identified pursuant to s. 1001.215(4), and materials developed by or under the direction of the department as provided in s. 1006.39. These programs must focus on the effective use of knowledge-based curricula, highlighting when and how to incorporate intervention materials, and emphasize the importance of background knowledge in building advanced reading comprehension grounded in the science of reading and critical thinking skills.

(c) Develop and design models of high-quality clinical experiences for aspiring teachers. These model experiences shall serve as a standard that institutions approved pursuant to ss. 1004.04 and 1004.85 can adopt or adapt, enabling participants to demonstrate mastery of instructional techniques, classroom management strategies, and the application of high-impact teaching strategies in authentic educational settings.

(d) Collaborate with school districts and other educational stakeholders to identify emerging needs in teacher preparation and align center programs accordingly, conducting gap analyses to provide comprehensive coverage of the science of learning, high-impact teaching strategies, and knowledge-rich curriculum implementation.

(e) Establish a statewide network of teachers and instructional leaders equipped with the knowledge and skills to mentor and support aspiring and current educators participating in the center's programs. This network shall model effective pedagogical practices and facilitate professional growth.

(f) Conduct research and disseminate findings on high-impact teaching practices and the implementation of knowledge-based curricula to inform policy, improve classroom instruction, and address the importance of background knowledge in student achievement.

(g) Report to the department the completion of professional learning by individuals who are not employed by entities with an approved professional learning system.

(3) The center;

(a) Must ~~may~~ submit a professional learning system for approval pursuant to s. 1012.98.

(b) Shall allow a certified educator seeking to renew or reinstate his or her certificate to use the system at no cost and submit any inservice points earned by the educator through the system to the department on the educator's behalf.

(c) Shall provide a certified educator seeking to renew or reinstate a certificate with information on school district professional learning systems that provide access to inservice training to persons not employed by the school district.

Section 5. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor May 22, 2026.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 22, 2026.