

CHAPTER 2026-107

Committee Substitute for Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 753

An act relating to school counselors; amending s. 1012.34, F.S.; requiring evaluation criteria for certified school counselors to be based on specified standards; amending s. 1012.55, F.S.; providing that persons seeking employment as school counselors are exempt from specified educator certification requirements; providing that school districts may require such persons to meet certain requirements as a condition of employment; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (3) of section 1012.34, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1012.34 Personnel evaluation procedures and criteria.—

(3) EVALUATION PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA.—Instructional personnel and school administrator performance evaluations must be based upon the performance of students assigned to their classrooms or schools, as provided in this section. Pursuant to this section, a school district's performance evaluation system is not limited to basing unsatisfactory performance of instructional personnel and school administrators solely upon student performance, but may include other criteria to evaluate instructional personnel and school administrators' performance, or any combination of student performance and other criteria. Evaluation procedures and criteria must comply with, but are not limited to, the following:

(a) A performance evaluation must be conducted for each employee at least once a year, except that a classroom teacher, as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(a), excluding substitute teachers, who is newly hired by the district school board must be observed and evaluated at least twice in the first year of teaching in the school district. The performance evaluation must be based upon sound educational principles and contemporary research in effective educational practices. The evaluation criteria must include:

1. Performance of students.—At least one-third of a performance evaluation must be based upon data and indicators of student performance, as determined by each school district. This portion of the evaluation must include growth or achievement data of the teacher's students or, for a school administrator, the students attending the school over the course of at least 3 years. If less than 3 years of data are available, the years for which data are available must be used. The proportion of growth or achievement data may be determined by instructional assignment.

2. Instructional practice.—For instructional personnel, at least one-third of the performance evaluation must be based upon instructional practice. Evaluation criteria used when annually observing classroom teachers, as defined in s. 1012.01(2)(a), excluding substitute teachers, must include indicators based upon each of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices adopted by the State Board of Education.

a. For instructional personnel who are not classroom teachers or certified school counselors, evaluation criteria must be based upon indicators of the Florida Educator Accomplished Practices and may include specific job expectations related to student support.

b. For certified school counselors, evaluation criteria must be based upon indicators of the Florida School Counseling Standards adopted by the State Board of Education.

c. This section does not preclude a school administrator from visiting and observing classroom teachers throughout the school year for purposes of providing mentorship, training, instructional feedback, or professional learning.

3. Instructional leadership.—For school administrators, at least one-third of the performance evaluation must be based on instructional leadership. Evaluation criteria for instructional leadership must include indicators based upon each of the leadership standards adopted by the State Board of Education under s. 1012.986, including performance measures related to the effectiveness of classroom teachers in the school, the administrator's appropriate use of evaluation criteria and procedures, recruitment and retention of effective and highly effective classroom teachers, improvement in the percentage of instructional personnel evaluated at the highly effective or effective level, and other leadership practices that result in student learning growth. The system may include a means to give parents and instructional personnel an opportunity to provide input into the administrator's performance evaluation.

4. Other indicators of performance.—For instructional personnel and school administrators, the remainder of a performance evaluation may include, but is not limited to, professional and job responsibilities as recommended by the State Board of Education or identified by the district school board and, for instructional personnel, peer reviews, objectively reliable survey information from students and parents based on teaching practices that are consistently associated with higher student achievement, and other valid and reliable measures of instructional practice.

Section 2. Subsection (6) of section 1012.55, Florida Statutes, is renumbered as subsection (7), and a new subsection (6) is added to that section, to read:

1012.55 Positions for which certificates required.—

(6) A person who is seeking employment as a school counselor is exempt from the educator certification requirements in s. 1012.56(2)(g) and (i). Such exemption does not preclude a school district from requiring a certified school counselor to satisfy the requirements of s. 1012.56(2)(g) and (i) as a condition of employment.

Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2026.

Approved by the Governor May 22, 2026.

Filed in Office Secretary of State May 22, 2026.