

FLORIDA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BILL ANALYSIS

This bill analysis was prepared by nonpartisan committee staff and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.

BILL #: HB 127

TITLE: Required Instruction in Cursive Writing

SPONSOR(S): Overdorf, Trabulsy

COMPANION BILL: SB 444 (Grall)

LINKED BILLS: None

RELATED BILLS: None

Committee References

Student Academic Success

14 Y, 0 N



Education & Employment

17 Y, 0 N

SUMMARY

Effect of the Bill:

The bill requires all public schools to provide cursive writing instruction to students in grades 2 through 5. By the end of grade 5, each student must demonstrate proficiency in reading and writing cursive through an evaluation of written work.

Fiscal or Economic Impact:

None

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EFFECT OF THE BILL:

The bill adds cursive writing to the statutorily required instruction for students in grades 2 through 5. Under the bill, students must be taught how to form cursive letters, proper spacing and alignment, and must practice writing complete words and sentences in cursive. (Section 1).

The bill requires each student to demonstrate proficiency in cursive writing through a written evaluation by the end of grade 5. The bill defines “proficiency in cursive writing” as the ability to write upper and lowercase letters in cursive, writing words and sentences legibly with proper spacing and alignment, and the ability to read and apply cursive writing so as to support literacy development, including writing essays and other assignments in cursive in accordance with state academic standards. (Section 1).

The effective date of the bill is July 1, 2026. (Section 2).

RELEVANT INFORMATION

SUBJECT OVERVIEW:

Required Instruction

Florida Law mandates that students be taught certain topics.¹ For example, students must be taught about the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Holocaust, African American history, and the history of Asian Americans and Pacific islanders.² Those topics are general requirements with no specified grade level, but some topics must be taught to specific grades.³

Florida’s Academic Standards

Statutorily required instruction is a small fraction of the content that schools must incorporate into curriculum. Florida law requires the State Board of Education (SBE) to develop academic standards that establish the core

¹ Section 1003.42, F.S.

² Section 1003.42(2)(a)-(i), F.S.

³ See e.g. Section 1003.42(2)(o), F.S.

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content of curricula and the knowledge and skills that K-12 public school students are expected to acquire in English Language Arts (ELA), science, mathematics, social studies, visual and performing arts, physical education, health, and foreign languages.⁴ Those academic standards must provide for the logical, sequential progression of core curricular content that incrementally increases a student's knowledge and skills over time.⁵

On February 12, 2020, the SBE approved the adoption of new student academic standards for K-12 ELA and mathematics called the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards.⁶ The Department of Education fully implemented the B.E.S.T. standards in the 2022-2023 school year when the Florida Assessment of Student Thinking (FAST)—the statewide standardized assessment for VPK through grade 10 ELA and VPK through grade 8 mathematics—became aligned with the new standards.⁷

Florida law requires each district school board to provide appropriate instruction that ensures that students meet state academic standards.⁸ As a result, most of the content schools are required to teach comes from the academic standards adopted by the SBE, including the B.E.S.T. standards for ELA and mathematics.

Cursive Writing Instruction in Florida

In line with the adoption of Common Core Standards, Florida dropped cursive writing from state academic standards in 2010.⁹ However, in 2014, the SBE reinstated cursive instruction requirements in its academic standards.¹⁰

Though cursive writing is not explicitly mentioned in Florida's statutorily required instruction,¹¹ cursive writing is included in the B.E.S.T. ELA standards for grades 3 through 5.¹² Therefore, schools are required to teach cursive in grades 3 through 5. The current B.E.S.T. ELA standards require public schools to teach:

- Grade 3—How to write all upper- and lower-case letters in cursive;
- Grade 4—How to produce cursive writing that can be consistently read by others; and
- Grade 5—How to produce legible cursive writing in the same time frame that students would use for writing in print.¹³

Under the B.E.S.T. standards, schools are not explicitly required to ensure that students can read and comprehend cursive writing. Moreover, Florida law does not require schools to give any cursive writing examinations or

⁴ Section 1003.41, F.S.

⁵ Section 1003.41(1), F.S.

⁶ See Florida Department of Education, *Florida ESSA State Plan* (Aug. 2, 2023), at 7, available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/14196/urlt/fl-essa-stateplan080223.pdf>; r. 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.

⁶ Florida Department of Education, *Adoption and Implementation of the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards* (Feb. 13, 2020), available at <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-8838/dps-2020-26.pdf>.

⁷ Florida Department of Education, *Adoption and Implementation of the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking (B.E.S.T.) Standards* (Feb. 13, 2020), available at <https://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-8838/dps-2020-26.pdf>.

⁸ Section 1003.42(2), F.S.

⁹ See Patch, *What's Behind Cursive Comeback in 22 States, Including Florida*, <https://patch.com/florida/stpete/whats-behind-cursive-comeback-22-states-including-florida> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026). For a progression of changes to Florida's academic standards since 1999, see Florida Department of State, *Rule Title: Student Performance Standards*, <https://www.flrules.org/gateway/RuleNo.asp?title=FINANCE%20AND%20ADMINISTRATION&ID=6A-1.09401> (last visited Jan. 20, 2026) (providing a sequence of links to proposed and adopted amendments to r. 6A-1.09401, F.A.C.).

¹⁰ *Id.*

¹¹ See Section 1003.42(2), F.S.

¹² CPALMS, *ELA 3.C.1.1*, <https://www.cpalms.org/PreviewStandard/Preview/15220> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026); CPALMS, *ELA 4.C.1.1*, <https://www.cpalms.org/PreviewStandard/Preview/14968> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026); CPALMS, *ELA 5.C.1.1*, <https://www.cpalms.org/PreviewStandard/Preview/15017> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026). CPALMS is an acronym for Curriculum Planning and Learning Management System and is the state's official source for Florida's academic standards. See Florida Department of Education, *Standards and Instructional Support* <https://www.fldoe.org/academics/standards/> (last visited Jan. 22, 2026).

¹³ *Id.*

evaluations and neither cursive writing nor comprehension is assessed on the grades 3 through 5 FAST assessments.¹⁴

RECENT LEGISLATION:

YEAR	BILL #	HOUSE/SENATE SPONSOR(S)	OTHER INFORMATION
2025	HB 921 - Required Instruction in Cursive Writing	Overdorf/ Grall	The bill passed the House, but died in the Senate.

OTHER RESOURCES:

Teaching of cursive writing in the first year of primary school: Effect on reading and writing skills

BILL HISTORY

COMMITTEE REFERENCE	ACTION	DATE	STAFF DIRECTOR/ POLICY CHIEF	ANALYSIS PREPARED BY
<u>Student Academic Success Subcommittee</u>	14 Y, 0 N	11/18/2025	Sanchez	Dixon
<u>Education & Employment Committee</u>	17 Y, 0 N	11/22/2026	Hassell	Dixon

¹⁴ See Florida Department of Education, *Test Design Summary and Blueprint: FAST ELA Reading and B.E.S.T. Writing* (updated June 2024) available at <https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/20102/urlt/TDS-FAST-ELA.pdf>. The Test Design Summary and Blueprint provides a comprehensive list of standards tested on FAST ELA assessments; cursive writing standards are not included. *Id.*