

# BRIEFINGS

April 2005



*Center for Educational Accountability and Performance*

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## **Educator Preparation Institutes at Florida Community Colleges Will Help to Prevent Severe Teacher Shortage**

### **Introduction**

Teachers make a profound difference in the lives of students. Great teachers elicit remarkable levels of learning while nurturing within their students the basics of ethical and civil behavior. The Florida Legislature has long recognized the value of educators and has set a high standard of performance expectations. Additionally, several initiatives designed to enable more people to enter the teaching profession have been authorized. This is of critical importance as Florida faces an increased need of high quality teachers.

Teacher demand will increase substantially with the universal Pre-K implementation starting in 2005-2006 and with the full implementation of class size reduction in 2006-2007. **Florida will need more than 116,000 teachers over the next five years while Florida public and private colleges of education with state approved teacher preparation programs are projected to produce only 30,000 during the same period.**

Foreseeing the teacher shortage, Florida legislators recently passed a law (S.1004.85, F.S.) granting the authority to accredited or approved postsecondary institutions to create Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) to produce well-qualified teachers to meet this increasing demand in Florida. The law adds a new route to the current alternative teacher certification programs. It allows community colleges to establish EPIs offering

competency-based teacher certification programs to individuals who hold a bachelor's degree and requires that the EPIs be approved by the Florida Department of Education.

**This *Briefings* indicates that EPIs will help to close the gap between teacher supply and demand and will help prevent an acute teacher shortage in Florida. Therefore, the Florida TaxWatch Center for Educational Performance and Accountability urges the state government to allocate sufficient resources for a swift implementation of the law regarding the establishment of EPIs.**

### **Teacher Shortage in Florida**

The teacher shortage in the labor market can be solved through understanding the factors behind teacher supply and demand. Since the projected teacher demand in Florida is on the rise, the state must increase the teacher supply. Historically, one main source of supply has been the graduates from colleges of education. However, public and private colleges of education with state-approved teacher preparation programs produce approximately 6,000 teacher candidates each year,<sup>1</sup> not nearly enough to meet the need. Alternative teacher certificate programs address this issue by bringing additional people into the teaching profession.

As Table 1 demonstrates, during the fall of 2004, the State of Florida employed 155,576 teachers in public schools. The number of teacher position vacancies is likely to go up by 22.7 percent over the next five years (2005 to 2009) and by 32.5 percent over the next eleven years (2005 to 2015) due to projected enrollment growth, constitutionally mandated class size reduction and universal Pre-K implementation. The state will need to fill more than 116,000 teacher vacancies over the next five years and more than 221,000 vacancies over the next 10 years. It is important to note that teachers transfer across districts and those who were employed in another Florida district in the prior year fill 16-20% of the vacancies. Likewise, an unknown number of vacancies is filled by teachers who left the teaching profession for a while and then made the decision to return to teaching.

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<sup>1</sup> Trends in the Supply of New Teachers in Florida, Florida Department of Education, December 2003.

**Table 1. Trend in the Number of Classroom Teachers – Florida Public Schools**

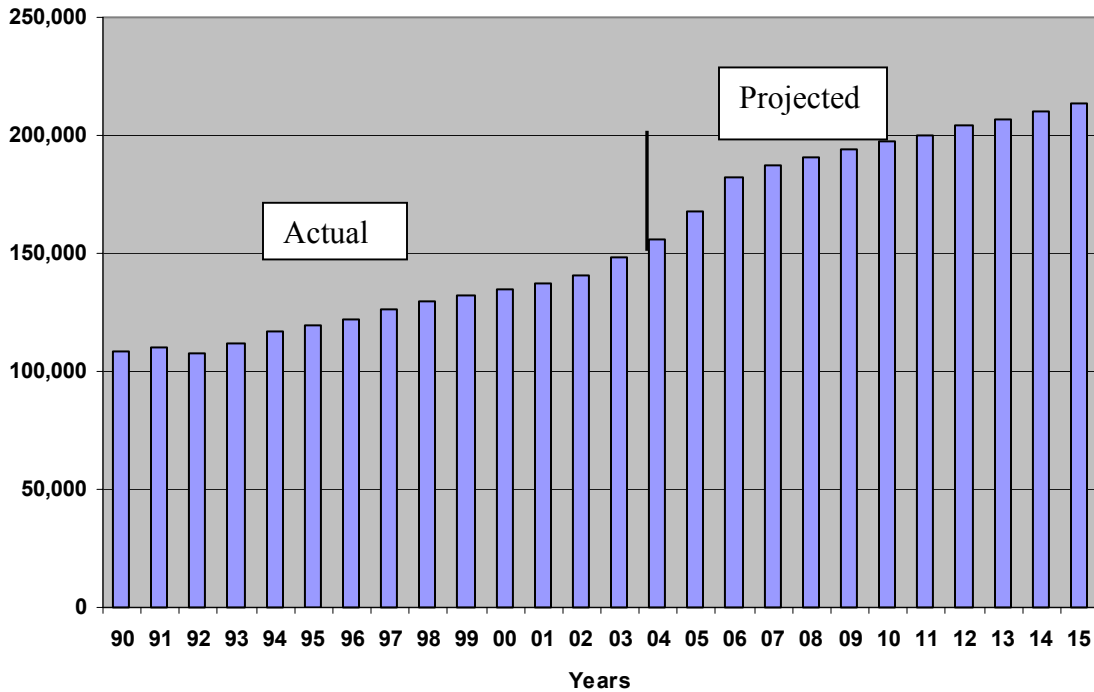
Actual				Projected			
Fall	Number	Diff	% Diff	Fall	Number	Diff	% Diff
1990	108,088						
1991	109,939	1,851	1.7	2004	155,576	7,621	5.2
1992	107,590	-2,349	-2.1	2005	167,502	11,926*	7.7
1993	112,130	4,540	4.2	2006	182,606	15,104**	9.0
1994	116,785	4,655	4.2	2007	187,170	4,564	2.5
1995	119,388	2,603	2.2	2008	190,578	3,408	1.8
1996	122,392	3,004	2.5	2009	193,905	3,327	1.7
1997	126,397	4,005	3.3	2010	197,083	3,178	1.6
1998	129,731	3,334	2.6	2011	200,346	3,263	1.7
1999	132,521	2,790	2.2	2012	203,958	3,612	1.8
2000	134,508	1,987	1.5	2013	207,184	3,226	1.6
2001	136,886	2,378	1.8	2014	210,493	3,309	1.6
2002	141,003	4,117	3	2015	213,583	3,090	1.5
2003	147,955	6,952	4.9				

\*First year that districts need to hire new teachers for universal Pre-K.

\*\*First year that districts must meet class-size standards by school.

Source: *Projected Number of Teachers Needed Florida Public Schools*, November 2004, Florida Department of Education & *Building the Capacity for Degreed Teachers for Florida’s Pre-Kindergarten System*, December 2004, Florida TaxWatch.

**Figure 1. Actual and Projected Teacher Demand in Florida Public Schools\***



\* The numbers for 2004-2015 are projected.

Table 2 below shows the source of teacher vacancies for the next decade. The third column presents the number needed to replace teachers leaving the system, either through retirement or resignation; the fourth column shows the number needed due to enrollment growth, the class size amendment, and universal Pre-K implementation. A jump in the total number of teachers needed in 2005 is attributed to the need to hire new teachers for the universal Pre-K implementation. According to a recent Florida TaxWatch report<sup>2</sup>, an estimated 6,524 new teachers will be required for the universal Pre-K program in 2005. The projection also shows that the teacher shortage will reach the peak level of approximately 30,000 vacancies in the 2006-2007 school year under the full implementation of the class size amendment (see column 5 in Table 2).

**Table 2. Projected Number of Teacher Vacancies to be Filled**

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Years	Projected Number of Teachers Prior Year	Needed to Replace Teachers Leaving System	Needed Due to Enrollment Growth, CSA, and UPK	Total Teacher Positions To Be Filled
2005-06	155,576	14,157	11,926*	26,083
2006-07	167,502	14,649	15,104**	29,753
2007-08	182,606	16,011	4,564	20,575
2008-09	187,170	16,413	3,408	19,821
2009-10	190,578	16,711	3,327	20,038
2010-11	193,905	17,003	3,178	20,181
2011-12	197,083	17,468	3,263	20,731
2012-13	200,346	17,725	3,612	21,337
2013-14	203,958	18,049	3,226	21,275
2014-15	207,184	18,343	3,309	21,652
2015-16	210,493	18,483	3,090	21,573

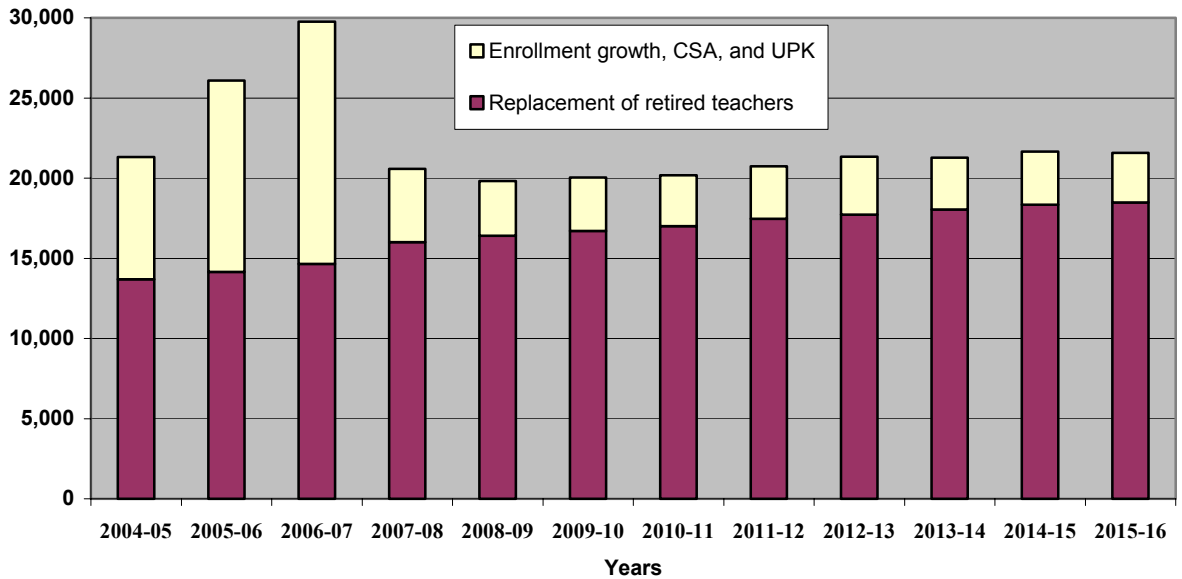
\*First year that districts need to hire new teachers for universal Pre-K.

\*\*First year that districts must meet class size standards by school.

Source: *Projected Number of Teachers Needed Florida Public Schools*, November 2004, Florida Department of Education & *Building the Capacity for Degreed Teachers for Florida's Pre-Kindergarten System*, December 2004, Florida TaxWatch

<sup>2</sup> *Building the Capacity for Degreed Teachers for Florida's Pre-Kindergarten System*, Florida TaxWatch and FSU Center for Prevention and Early Intervention Policy, December 2004.

**Figure 2. Projected Number of Teacher Vacancies in Florida**



### **History of Alternative Teacher Certification Programs**

Alternative teacher certification programs (ATCP) emerged in the mid-1980s in two states, New Jersey and Texas, in response to teacher shortages. In 1984, New Jersey designed a new teacher certification program to recruit liberal arts graduates to meet the state's teacher demand. The program evolved and currently produces one-fourth of all new teachers hired in the state. Likewise, Texas initiated an alternative teacher certification program in 1985 based on the teacher shortage projections in the state. In 1989, Texas legislators abolished the program's teacher shortage pre-requisite and made it permanent.

Alternative routes for teacher certification spread to other states and continue to proliferate across the United States. As of 2005, according to an estimate by the National Center for Alternative Certification, more than 250,000 people have taken alternative routes to become certified teachers<sup>3</sup>. Currently there are 122 different routes toward teacher certification implemented in 47 states and the District of Columbia. Nationally, the number of individuals receiving teacher certification through these alternative routes

<sup>3</sup> Alternative Teacher Certification: State by state analysis, <http://www.teach-now.org/booktoc2005.html>, retrieved on March 3, 2005.

is now approximately 35,000 per year, which accounts for nearly one-third of all new teacher certificates. The percentage of new teachers who enter the profession through an alternative certificate program is 18% in California, 24% in New Jersey, and nearly 50% in Texas. Although the alternative teacher certification program began as a short-term solution to deal with the teacher shortage experienced by some states, it has evolved into a sophisticated means for those who wish to become teachers but who do not have a degree in education fields.

Table 3 shows the numbers of teaching certificates issued to prospective teachers who completed an alternative route between 1999 and 2004. The high numbers in Texas and New Jersey can be explained by the fact that these states were the first to establish the alternative teaching certificate programs. In the 2003-2004 school year, while Texas issued more than 7,000 teaching certificates to those who completed an alternative route, Florida only granted 650 such teaching certificates documented. Since Texas and Florida are of similar demographics, this gap is substantial. It is an indication that Florida may be missing out on a population of college graduates who may want to explore the teaching profession as a new career but who require an additional alternative route to do so.

**Table 3. Numbers of Teaching Certificates Issued to Persons Who Completed an Alternative Route, by State: 1985-2004**

STATE	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
California	2,503	4,455	4,492	4,998	n.a.
Florida	n.a.	n.a.	79	147	650
Georgia	1,311	1,152	766	1,303	1,330
Illinois	21	157	274	491	302
N. Jersey	1,832	1,981	1,826	2,395	2,908
New York	n.a.	n.a.	1,165	1,428	2,072
N. Carolina	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	246	271
Texas	2,660	2,505	3,528	4,628	7,117
Virginia	2,746	n.a.	n.a.	6,142	5,206

Source: *National Center for Education Information, Washington, D.C., 2005*

(Note: The states above were picked because of size and demographic similarities.)

n.a.: Not available.

## **Community College Involvement in Teacher Certification**

In 2000, Texas became the first state to provide the authority to community colleges to offer alternative teacher certificate programs. In response to the need for qualified teachers, Collin County Community College District in Texas became the first community college in the nation to offer a teacher certification program. Since 2000, 22 community colleges in Texas have been approved to offer the certificate programs.<sup>4</sup> Following the Texas example, other states experiencing a teacher shortage launched similar initiatives to increase their teacher supplies.

Community colleges have some advantages over traditional colleges and universities in terms of delivering alternative teacher certification programs to help serve the needs of student populations. First, community colleges have unique experience in preparing non-traditional students for the workforce. Second, those individuals who want to become teachers in their mid-careers can receive the required training to be certified through their local community colleges because of this organizational agility. Third, community colleges are more affordable and geographically accessible compared to four-year colleges, and they offer flexible scheduling which allows teacher candidates to continue to manage their current jobs and their familial obligations. In Florida, 21 out of 28 community colleges have already submitted application for EPIs.

## **Teacher Certification Programs in Florida**

Currently, there are multiple ways to be certified to teach in Florida. Among them are: 1) the traditional state approved four-year teacher education programs offered by universities and some community colleges; 2) the reciprocal agreement with other states; 3) the credentialing through the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards or the American Board Certification; 4) the course-based professional education component offered by community colleges and universities; and 5) the alternative teacher certification program offered by the local school districts and tied to employment via a temporary teaching certificate. School districts may choose either a district-developed

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<sup>4</sup> Teacher Preparation Policy Toolkit, <http://www.communitycollegepolicy.org>, retrieved on March 1, 2005.

certification program that has been approved by the Florida Department of Education or use the program developed by the state. Many districts use a combination of state and district developed materials.

Alternative teacher certification programs are specifically designed for those individuals who have non-education major baccalaureate degrees, are in the workforce and are interested in the teaching profession. These programs bring more diversity to the teacher population and attract individuals with rich life experiences who have expertise in high-demand fields. Indeed, the preliminary data from the state departments of education collected by National Center for Education Information indicate that those who received teacher certificates through an alternative route are diverse in terms of their age, gender, and ethnicity. This group represents an older population with more men, more Blacks and Hispanics, and more experience. Importantly, early data from several states utilizing alternative routes for teacher licensing reveal that teachers coming through an alternative route have higher retention rates than those entering teaching through colleges of education.<sup>5</sup>

EPIs extend routes to the teaching profession for mid-career professionals who have a non-education baccalaureate degree. Unlike the state-designated district alternative teacher programs, EPIs do not require an individual to hold a teaching position to qualify for the enrollment. EPIs also will provide training for substitute teachers and give another option to teachers to elevate their certificate or add a subject to it. By establishing EPIs, virtually anyone who holds at least a bachelor's degree from an accredited postsecondary institution can become a teacher in Florida through one of these routes.

### **Establishing Educator Preparation Institutes in Florida**

There will be an acute teacher shortage in Florida unless more action is taken to meet the rising teacher demand. Fortunately, there is interest in the teaching profession among people who are currently in the workforce as well as among early retirees from the military and other occupations. Alternative teacher certification routes have grown

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<sup>5</sup> Alternative Teacher Certification: State by state analysis, <http://www.teach-now.org/overview.cfm>, retrieved on March 3, 2005.

throughout the nation to offer a new opportunity to these people. In the 2004 session, Florida legislators extended the routes to alternative teacher certification through granting authority to community colleges to open educator preparation institutes.

Section 1004.85, F.S., defines “educator preparation institute” as an institute created by a postsecondary institution and approved by the Department of Education” (see Appendix I). The law authorizes accredited or approved postsecondary institutions, including community colleges, to seek approval from the Department of Education to create EPIs to provide professional instruction to:

- Assist teachers in improving classroom instruction and in meeting certification or re-certification requirements;
- Assist potential and existing substitute teachers in performing their duties;
- Assist paraprofessionals in meeting education and training requirements;
- Assist mid-career professionals with baccalaureate degrees, who are not education majors, to become certified teachers.

The bill authorizes approved EPIs to offers “alternative certification programs” for baccalaureate degree holders and specifies that the program participants must meet the educator certification requirements, including demonstration of mastery of general knowledge, subject area knowledge, and professional preparation and education competence (see Appendix II). The bill establishes the application and approval process through the Department of Education and sets a 90-day deadline for the approval process after receipt of the request for an alternative certification program. Approved programs must be available for implementation statewide. The bill also stipulates that the approved EPIs must submit to the Department of Education annual performance evaluations regarding the effectiveness of the programs including successful completion rates of participants, employment rates, retention rates, and employer satisfaction surveys.

### ***Conclusion***

Due to the class size amendment and universal Pre-K implementation, the projected teacher demand will substantially exceed the supply, thus the gap will increase if more is

not done. The good news is that there exists an untapped resource of individuals who hold bachelor degrees in non-education fields who are willing to fill the gap. Since by law educators must hold a teaching certificate in order to teach, EPIs will be another avenue to train and license prospective teachers.

In short, Educator Preparation Institutes (EPIs) at Florida Community Colleges will increase the teacher supply in Florida by bringing more people from an expanded pool of candidates with a broader range of experience to the teaching profession and will recruit prospective teachers to meet the increasing demand. EPIs will create collaboration between school districts and community colleges to educate and train prospective teachers. This new alternative certification program will produce increased numbers of qualified teachers needed due to the requirements of the class size amendment, enrollment growth, and universal Pre-Kindergarten implementation.

## **Appendix 1: Florida Statute 1004.85: Postsecondary educator preparation institutes**

(1) As used in this section, "educator preparation institute" means an institute created by a postsecondary institution and approved by the Department of Education.

(2) Postsecondary institutions that are accredited or approved as described in state board rule may seek approval from the Department of Education to create educator preparation institutes for the purpose of providing any or all of the following:

(a) Professional development instruction to assist teachers in improving classroom instruction and in meeting certification or recertification requirements.

(b) Instruction to assist potential and existing substitute teachers in performing their duties.

(c) Instruction to assist paraprofessionals in meeting education and training requirements.

(d) Instruction for baccalaureate degree holders to become certified teachers as provided in this section in order to increase routes to the classroom for mid-career professionals who hold a baccalaureate degree and college graduates who were not education majors.

(3) Educator preparation institutes approved pursuant to this section may offer alternative certification programs specifically designed for noneducation major baccalaureate degree holders to enable program participants to meet the educator certification requirements of s. 1012.56. Such programs shall be competency-based educator certification preparation programs that prepare educators through an alternative route. An educator preparation institute choosing to offer an alternative certification program pursuant to the provisions of this section must implement a program previously approved by the Department of Education for this purpose or 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.

(a) Within 90 days after receipt of a request for approval, the Department of Education shall approve an alternative certification program or issue a statement of the deficiencies in the request for approval. The department shall approve an alternative certification program if the institute provides sufficient evidence of the following:

1. Instruction must be provided in professional knowledge and subject matter content that includes educator-accomplished practices and competencies specified in State Board of Education rule and meets subject matter content requirements, professional competency testing requirements, and competencies associated with teaching scientifically based reading instruction and strategies that research has shown to be successful in improving reading among low-performing readers.

2. The program must provide field experience with supervision from qualified educators.

3. The program must provide a certification ombudsman to facilitate the process and procedures required for participants who complete the program to meet any requirements

related to the background screening pursuant to s. 1012.32 and educator professional or temporary certification pursuant to s. 1012.56.

(b) Each program participant must:

1. Meet certification requirements pursuant to s. 1012.56(1) by obtaining a statement of status of eligibility and meet the requirements of s. 1012.56(2)(a)-(f).
2. Participate in field experience that is appropriate to his or her educational plan.
3. Fully demonstrate his or her ability to teach the subject area for which he or she is seeking certification and demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence by achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by state board rule prior to completion of the program.

(c) Upon completion of an alternative certification program approved pursuant to this subsection, a participant shall receive a credential from the sponsoring institution signifying satisfaction of the requirements of s. 1012.56(5) relating to mastery of professional preparation and education competence. A participant shall be eligible for educator certification through the Department of Education upon satisfaction of all requirements for certification set forth in s. 1012.56(2), including demonstration of mastery of general knowledge, subject area knowledge, and professional preparation and education competence, through testing or other statutorily authorized means.

(d) If an institution offers an alternative certification program approved pursuant to this subsection, such program may be used by the school district or districts served by that institution in addition to the alternative certification program as required in s. 1012.56(7).

(4) Each institute approved pursuant to this section shall submit to the Department of Education annual performance evaluations that measure the effectiveness of the programs, including the pass rates of participants on all examinations required for teacher certification, employment rates, longitudinal retention rates, and employer satisfaction surveys. The employer satisfaction surveys must be designed to measure the sufficient preparation of the educator to enter the classroom. These evaluations shall be used by the Department of Education for purposes of continued approval of an educator preparation institute's alternative certification program.

(5) Instructors for an alternative certification program approved pursuant to this section must possess a master's degree in education or a master's degree in an appropriate related field and document teaching experience.

(6) Educator preparation institutes approved pursuant to this section and providing approved instructional programs for any of the purposes in subsection (2) are eligible for funding from federal and state funds, as appropriated by the Legislature.

(7) The State Board of Education may adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to implement the provisions of this section.

## **Appendix II: Florida Statute 1012.56 Educator certification requirements**

(1) APPLICATION.--Each person seeking certification pursuant to this chapter shall submit a completed application containing the applicant's social security number to the Department of Education and remit the fee required pursuant to s. 1012.59 and rules of the State Board of Education. Pursuant to the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, each party is required to provide his or her social security number in accordance with this section. Disclosure of social security numbers obtained through this requirement is limited to the purpose of administration of the Title IV-D program of the Social Security Act for child support enforcement. Pursuant to s. 120.60, the department shall issue within 90 calendar days after the stamped receipted date of the completed application:

(a) If the applicant meets the requirements, a professional certificate covering the classification, level, and area for which the applicant is deemed qualified and a document explaining the requirements for renewal of the professional certificate;

(b) If the applicant meets the requirements and if requested by an employing school district or an employing private school with a professional education competence demonstration program pursuant to paragraphs (5)(f) and (7)(b), a temporary certificate covering the classification, level, and area for which the applicant is deemed qualified and an official statement of status of eligibility; or

(c) If an applicant does not meet the requirements for either certificate, an official statement of status of eligibility.

The statement of status of eligibility must advise the applicant of any qualifications that must be completed to qualify for certification. Each statement of status of eligibility is valid for 3 years after its date of issuance, except as provided in paragraph (2)(d).

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

(a) Be at least 18 years of age.

(b) File an affidavit that the applicant subscribes to and will uphold the principles incorporated in the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Florida and that the information provided in the application is true, accurate, and complete. The affidavit shall be by original signature or by electronic authentication. The affidavit shall include substantially the following warning:

**WARNING:** Giving false information in order to obtain or renew a Florida educator's certificate is a criminal offense under Florida law. Anyone giving false information on this affidavit is subject to criminal prosecution as well as disciplinary action by the Education Practices Commission.

(c) Document receipt of a bachelor's or higher degree from an accredited institution of higher learning, or a non-accredited institution of higher learning that the Department of Education has identified as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree, or higher. Each applicant seeking initial certification must have attained at least a 2.5 overall grade point average on a 4.0 scale in the applicant's major field of study. The applicant may document the required education by submitting official transcripts from institutions of higher education or by authorizing the direct submission of such official transcripts through established electronic network systems. The bachelor's or higher degree may not be required in areas approved in rule by the State Board of Education as nondegreed areas.

(d) Submit to background screening in accordance with subsection (9). If the background screening indicates a criminal history or if the applicant acknowledges a criminal history, the applicant's records shall be referred to the investigative section in the Department of Education for review and determination of eligibility for certification. If the applicant fails to provide the necessary documentation requested by the department within 90 days after the date of the receipt of the certified mail request, the statement of eligibility and pending application shall become invalid.

(e) Be of good moral character.

(f) Be competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator.

(g) Demonstrate mastery of general knowledge, pursuant to subsection (3).

(h) Demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge, pursuant to subsection (4).

(i) Demonstrate mastery of professional preparation and education competence, pursuant to subsection (5).

(3) MASTERY OF GENERAL KNOWLEDGE.--Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of general knowledge are:

(a) Achievement of passing scores on basic skills examination required by state board rule;

(b) Achievement of passing scores on the College Level Academic Skills Test earned prior to July 1, 2002;

(c) A valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state;

(d) A valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education; or

(e) Documentation of two semesters of successful teaching in a community college, state university, or private college or university that awards an associate or higher degree and is an accredited institution or an institution of higher education identified by the Department of Education as having a quality program.

(4) MASTERY OF SUBJECT AREA KNOWLEDGE.--Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of subject area knowledge are:

(a) Achievement of passing scores on subject area examinations required by state board rule;

(b) Completion of the subject area specialization requirements specified in state board rule and verification of the attainment of the essential subject matter competencies by the district school superintendent of the employing school district or chief administrative officer of the employing state-supported or private school for a subject area for which a subject area examination has not been developed and required by state board rule;

(c) Completion of the subject area specialization requirements specified in state board rule for a subject coverage requiring a master's or higher degree and achievement of a passing score on the subject area examination specified in state board rule;

(d) A valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state; or

(e) A valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education.

(5) MASTERY OF PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION AND EDUCATION COMPETENCE.--Acceptable means of demonstrating mastery of professional preparation and education competence are:

(a) Completion of an approved teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution within this state and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by state board rule;

(b) Completion of a teacher preparation program at a postsecondary educational institution outside Florida and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by state board rule;

(c) A valid professional standard teaching certificate issued by another state;

(d) A valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards or a national educator credentialing board approved by the State Board of Education;

(e) Documentation of two semesters of successful teaching in a community college, state university, or private college or university that awards an associate or higher degree and

is an accredited institution or an institution of higher education identified by the Department of Education as having a quality program;

(f) Completion of professional preparation courses as specified in state board rule, successful completion of a professional education competence demonstration program pursuant to paragraph (7)(b), and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by state board rule;

(g) Successful completion of a professional preparation alternative certification and education competency program, outlined in paragraph (7)(a); or

(h) Successful completion of an alternative certification program pursuant to s. 1004.85 and achievement of a passing score on the professional education competency examination required by rule of the State Board of Education.

(6) TYPES AND TERMS OF CERTIFICATION.--

(a) The Department of Education shall issue a professional certificate for a period not to exceed 5 years to any applicant who meets all the requirements outlined in subsection (2).

(b) The department shall issue a temporary certificate to any applicant who 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 (4) 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.

(c) The department shall issue one nonrenewable 2-year temporary certificate and one nonrenewable 5-year professional certificate to a qualified applicant who holds a bachelor's degree in the area of speech-language impairment to allow for completion of a master's degree program in speech-language impairment.

Each temporary certificate is valid for 3 school fiscal years and is nonrenewable. However, the requirement in paragraph (2)(g) must be met within 1 calendar year of the date of employment under the temporary certificate. Individuals who are employed under contract at the end of the 1 calendar year time period may continue to be employed through the end of the school year in which they have been contracted. A school district shall not employ, or continue the employment of, an individual in a position for which a temporary certificate is required beyond this time period if the individual has not met the requirement of paragraph (2)(g). The State Board of Education shall adopt rules to allow the department to extend the validity period of a temporary certificate for 2 years when the requirements for the professional certificate, not including the requirement in paragraph (2)(g), were not completed due to the serious illness or injury of the applicant or other extraordinary extenuating circumstances. The department shall reissue the temporary certificate for 2 additional years upon approval by the Commissioner of Education. A written request for reissuance of the certificate shall be submitted by the

district school superintendent, the governing authority of a university lab school, the governing authority of a state-supported school, or the governing authority of a private school.

(7) PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATION AND EDUCATION COMPETENCY PROGRAM.--

(a) The Department of Education shall develop and each school district must provide a cohesive competency-based professional preparation alternative certification program by which members of a school district's instructional staff may satisfy the mastery of professional preparation and education competence requirements specified in this subsection and rules of the State Board of Education. Participants must hold a state-issued temporary certificate. A school district shall provide a competency-based alternative certification preparation program developed by the Department of Education or developed by the district and approved by the Department of Education. The program shall include the following components:

1. A minimum period of initial preparation prior to assuming duties as the teacher of record.
2. An option for collaboration between school districts and other supporting agencies for implementation.
3. Experienced peer mentors.
4. An assessment that provides for:
  - a. An initial evaluation of each educator's competencies to determine an appropriate individualized professional development plan.
  - b. A postevaluation to assure successful completion of the program.
5. Professional education preparation content knowledge that includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - a. Requirements specified in state board rule for professional preparation.
  - b. The educator-accomplished practices approved by the state board.
  - c. A variety of data indicators for student progress.
  - d. Methodologies, including technology-based methodologies, for teaching subject content that supports the Sunshine State Standards for students.
  - e. Techniques for effective classroom management.

f. Techniques and strategies for operationalizing the role of the teacher in assuring a safe learning environment for students.

g. Methodologies for assuring the ability of all students to read, write, and compute.

6. Required achievement of passing scores on the professional education competency examination required by state board rule.

(b) Each school district must and a state supported public school or a private school may develop and maintain a system by which members of the instructional staff may demonstrate mastery of professional education competence as required by law. Each program must be based on classroom application and instructional performance and must include a performance evaluation plan for documenting the demonstration of required professional education competence.

#### (8) EXAMINATIONS.--

(a) The Commissioner of Education, with the approval of the State Board of Education, may contract for developing, printing, administering, scoring, and appropriate analysis of the written examinations required.

(b) The State Board of Education shall, by rule, specify the examination scores that are required for the issuance of a professional certificate and temporary certificate. Such rules must define generic subject area competencies and must establish uniform evaluation guidelines.

(c) The State Board of Education shall designate the certification areas for subject area examinations. All required examinations may be taken prior to graduation.

(d) If an applicant takes an examination developed by this state and does not achieve the score necessary for certification, the applicant may review his or her completed examination and bring to the attention of the department any errors that would result in a passing score.

(e) For any examination developed by this state, the Department of Education and the State Board of Education shall maintain confidentiality of the examination, developmental materials, and workpapers, which are exempt from s. 119.07(1).

(f) The examinations used for demonstration of mastery of general knowledge, professional education competence, and subject area knowledge shall be aligned with student standards approved by the state board. The delivery system for these examinations shall provide for overall efficiency, user-friendly application, reasonable accessibility to prospective teachers, and prompt attainment of examination results. The examination of competency for demonstration of subject area knowledge shall be sufficiently comprehensive to assess subject matter expertise for individuals who have acquired subject knowledge either through college credit or by other means.

(g) All examination instruments, including developmental materials and workpapers directly related thereto, which are prepared, prescribed, or administered pursuant to this section shall be confidential and exempt from the provisions of s. 119.07(1) and from s. 1001.52. Provisions governing access to, maintenance of, and destruction of such instruments and related materials shall be prescribed by rules of the State Board of Education.

(9) BACKGROUND SCREENING REQUIRED, INITIALLY AND PERIODICALLY.-

(a) Each person who seeks certification under this chapter must meet level 2 screening requirements as described in s. 1012.32 unless a level 2 screening has been conducted by a district school board or the Department of Education within 12 months before the date the person initially obtains certification under this chapter, the results of which are submitted to the district school board or to the Department of Education.

(b) A person may not receive a certificate under this chapter until the level 2 screening has been completed and the results have been submitted to the Department of Education or to the district school superintendent of the school district that employs the person. Every 5 years after obtaining initial certification, each person who is required to be certified under this chapter must meet level 2 screening requirements as described in s. 1012.32, at which time the school district shall request the Department of Law Enforcement to forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the level 2 screening. If, for any reason after obtaining initial certification, the fingerprints of a person who is required to be certified under this chapter are not retained by the Department of Law Enforcement under s. 1012.32(3)(a) and (b), the person must file a complete set of fingerprints with the district school superintendent of the employing school district. Upon submission of fingerprints for this purpose, the school district shall request the Department of Law Enforcement to forward the fingerprints to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the level 2 screening, and the fingerprints shall be retained by the Department of Law Enforcement under s. 1012.32(3)(a) and (b). The cost of the state and federal criminal history check required by level 2 screening may be borne by the district school board or the employee. Under penalty of perjury, each person who is certified under this chapter must agree to inform his or her employer within 48 hours if convicted of any disqualifying offense while he or she is employed in a position for which such certification is required.

(c) If it is found under s. 1012.796 that a person who is employed in a position requiring certification under this chapter does not meet the level 2 screening requirements, the person's certification shall be immediately revoked or suspended and he or she shall be immediately suspended from the position requiring certification.

(10) NONCITIZENS.--

(a) The State Board of Education may adopt rules for issuing certificates to noncitizens who are needed to teach and who are legally admitted to the United States through the

United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services. The filing of a written oath to uphold the principles of the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Florida, required under paragraph (2)(b), does not apply to individuals assigned to teach on an exchange basis.

(b) A certificate may not be issued to a citizen of a nation controlled by forces that are antagonistic to democratic forms of government, except to an individual who has been legally admitted to the United States through the United States Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services.

(11) DENIAL OF CERTIFICATE.--

(a) The Department of Education may deny an applicant a certificate if the department possesses evidence satisfactory to it that the applicant has committed an act or acts, or that a situation exists, for which the Education Practices Commission would be authorized to revoke a teaching certificate.

(b) The decision of the department is subject to review by the Education Practices Commission upon the filing of a written request from the applicant within 20 days after receipt of the notice of denial.

(12) STATE BOARD RULES.--The State Board of Education shall adopt rules pursuant to ss. 120.536 and 120.54, as necessary to implement this section.

(13) PRIOR APPLICATION. Persons who apply for certification are governed by the law and rules in effect at the time of application for issuance of the initial certificate, provided that continuity of certificates is maintained.

(14) PERSONNEL RECORDS. --The Department of Education shall maintain a complete statement of the academic preparation, professional training, and teaching experience of each person to whom a certificate is issued. The applicant or the district school superintendent shall furnish the information using a format or forms provided by the department.

(15) AUTHORITY OF COMMISSIONER. --The Commissioner of Education may make decisions regarding an applicant's certification under extenuating circumstances not otherwise provided for in statute or by rule. However, an applicant for certification approved by the commissioner must possess the credentials, knowledge, and skills necessary to provide quality education in the public schools.

(16) COMPARISON OF ROUTES TO A PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE.--Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, the Department of Education shall conduct a longitudinal study to compare performance of certificate holders who are employed in Florida school districts. The study shall compare a sampling of educators who have qualified for a professional certificate since July 1, 2002, based on the following:

- (a) Graduation from a state-approved teacher preparation program.
- (b) Completion of a state-approved professional preparation and education competency program.
- (c) A valid standard teaching certificate issued by a state other than Florida.

The department comparisons shall be made to determine if there is any significant difference in the performance of these groups of teachers, as measured by their students' achievement levels and learning gains as measured by s. 1008.22.

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## ***About The Center for Educational Performance and Accountability***

*The Florida TaxWatch Center for Educational Performance and Accountability produces research and makes recommendations regarding issues pertaining to educational policies/practices and fiscal accountability toward improved financial and student performance in Florida's pre-K-12 schools.*

**The work of the Florida TaxWatch Center for Educational Performance and Accountability has been made possible, in part, through the generous contributions of Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc., Darden Restaurants Foundation, Washington Mutual Foundation, and Progress Energy Foundation.**

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## *About Florida TaxWatch*

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Florida TaxWatch is a private, non-profit, non-partisan research institute that over its 25 year history has become widely recognized as the watchdog of citizens' hard-earned tax dollars. Its mission is to provide the citizens of Florida and public officials with high quality, independent research and education on government revenues, expenditures, taxation, public policies and programs and to increase the productivity and accountability of Florida Government.

Florida TaxWatch's empirically sound research recommends productivity enhancements and explains the statewide impact of economic and tax and spend policies and practices on citizens and businesses. Florida TaxWatch has worked diligently and effectively to help state government shape responsible fiscal and public policy that adds value and benefit taxpayers.

This diligence has yielded impressive results: since 1979, policy makers and government employees have implemented three-fourths of Florida TaxWatch's cost-saving recommendations, saving the taxpayers of Florida more than \$6.2 billion--approximately \$1,067 in added value for every Florida family.

The organization enjoys a credible reputation and statewide exposure with the television, radio and newspaper media, which regularly report on its research and recommendations.

Florida TaxWatch has a historical understanding of state government, public policy issues, and the battles fought in the past necessary to structure effective solutions for today and the future. It's the only statewide organization devoted entirely to Florida taxing and spending issues.

Supported by voluntary, tax-deductible memberships and grants, Florida TaxWatch is open to any organization or individual interested in helping to make Florida competitive, healthy and economically prosperous by supporting a credible research effort that promotes constructive taxpayer improvements. Members, through their loyal support, help Florida TaxWatch to bring about a more effective, responsive government that is accountable to the citizens it serves.

Florida TaxWatch is supported by all types of taxpayers -- homeowners, small businesses, large corporations, philanthropic foundations, professionals, associations, labor organizations, retirees--simply stated, the taxpayers of Florida. The officers, Board of Trustees and members of Florida TaxWatch are respected leaders and citizens from across Florida, committed to improving the health and prosperity of Florida.

With your help, Florida TaxWatch will continue our diligence to make certain your tax investments are fair and beneficial to you, the taxpaying customer who supports Florida's government. Florida TaxWatch is ever present to ensure that taxes are equitable, not excessive, that their public benefits and costs are weighed, and that government agencies are more responsive and productive in the use of your hard-earned tax dollars.

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