

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Education Pre-K - 12 Committee

BILL: CS/SB 1062

INTRODUCER: Education Pre-K Committee and Senator Dockery

SUBJECT: Foreign Language Certification

DATE: February 20, 2008 **REVISED:** _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Carrouth	Matthews	ED	Fav/CS
2.			EA	
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				

Please see Section VIII. for Additional Information:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| A. COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE..... | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Statement of Substantial Changes |
| B. AMENDMENTS..... | <input type="checkbox"/> | Technical amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Amendments were recommended |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | Significant amendments were recommended |

I. Summary:

The bill provides additional options for teacher certification candidates to demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge in the following world languages: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, and Russian. In lieu of the Department of Education developing subject area examinations for these languages, the bill provides that a bachelor's degree, combined with the attainment of certain proficiency scores on approved world language examinations, may be used to demonstrate subject area mastery for which there are no Florida-developed exams.

II. Present Situation:

The DOE has currently developed foreign language subject area examinations for Spanish, French, German, and Latin. Florida-developed subject area examinations in Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Italian, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hindi, Portuguese, Russian, and Hebrew are not available at this time and would require additional funding and substantial time to develop.

Currently, many Florida foreign language teachers in these increasingly popular world languages have, at a minimum, a bachelor's degree and certification in another subject area. Other educators with expertise in these emerging world languages have been approved by their local

school district as experts in the field of the respective languages for which there is currently no statewide certification available. Additionally, some districts rely on visiting exchange teachers in these foreign language subjects, some of whom are not U.S. citizens.¹

On average, development and administration of certification examinations costs approximately \$85 per examinee. However, for low-incidence certification areas such as those in emerging world languages, state development of examinations is not cost effective because small numbers of currently potential examinees would not provide for significant amortization.²

The DOE estimates that it would take approximately six months to develop, fund, and execute contract amendments for new examinations in emerging world languages. In addition, it would require approximately 18 months for test development of written and performance tests and upwards of 2.5 years before initial test administration could be made. In contrast, approving additional means of establishing subject competency could take six months or less.³

III. **Effect of Proposed Changes:**

The bill authorizes, but does not require, the Department of Education to establish passing scores for subject area examinations required for teacher certification in the following languages: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Haitian Creole, Hebrew, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. The department currently has Florida-developed subject area certification examinations in Spanish, French, and German.

In lieu of developing additional examinations, the bill provides that an educator can demonstrate mastery of subject area knowledge for teacher certification purposes by attaining a bachelor's degree and passing scores on the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) for subject areas for which there is no Florida-developed examination. The bill defines passing scores to mean proficiency above the intermediate level on the oral interview and written test administered by ACTFL.

IV. **Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

¹ Department of Education, bill analysis – November 26, 2007.

² DOE Deputy Chancellor for K-12 Educator Quality – January 25, 2008

³ *Id.*

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

Individuals wishing to take these exams must pay the current fees for teacher certification examinations provided by the state or the fees for exams offered by other organizations. Costs for currently available subject area exams average between \$25 and \$150.⁴

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Additional Information:**A. Committee Substitute – Statement of Substantial Changes:**

(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

The committee substitute removes the requirement by the Department of Education to develop additional foreign language subject area examinations and instead allows for individuals who hold a bachelor's degree to verify attainment of oral and written proficiency scores on examinations offered by the American Council of Teachers of Foreign Languages for certification purposes.

B. Amendments:

None.

This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

⁴ Meeting with Deputy Chancellor and Legislative Affairs staff.