

6A-5.081 Approval of School Leadership Programs.

The Florida Legislature and State Board of Education recognize multiple pathways for demonstrating the standards required to qualify for a Professional Florida Educator's Certificate. To ensure capacity and quality of pre-service school leadership programs and the development of inservice school leaders required in Section 1012.986, F.S., this rule sets forth requirements for approval of two levels of school leadership programs. Level I programs lead to initial certification in educational leadership for the purpose of preparing individuals to serve as school leaders who may aspire to the school principalship. Level II programs build upon Level I training and lead to certification in School Principal. This bi-level certification and preparation process includes programs offered by Florida postsecondary institutions and public school districts as described herein.

(1) Level I: Educational Leadership.

(a) General Criteria.

1. An initial certification program in educational leadership approved pursuant to this section shall satisfy specialization requirements for certification in Educational Leadership pursuant to Rule 6A-4.0082, F.A.C. Each approval or extension shall be granted for a period of time determined by the Department of Education but shall not exceed seven (7) years based upon the institution or school district meeting the requirements of this section.

2. Each entity offering an approved program in accordance with this section shall report to the Department annually the number of participants admitted to and enrolled in the program and the number of program completers.

(b) Requirements for initial approval of programs offered by Florida postsecondary institutions. Each institution seeking approval of an initial certification program in educational leadership shall submit a request in writing from the chief executive officer to the Commissioner providing evidence of all of the following:

1. The institution is a Florida public or nonpublic postsecondary institution that requests approval of an initial certification program in educational leadership, has legal authority to grant appropriate master's degrees or higher in educational leadership or school administration, and meets accreditation requirements as prescribed in subsection 6A-4.003(1) or paragraph (2)(c), F.A.C.

2. The institution has incorporated into the program objectives which directly respond to needs assessed and projected for school leaders both in Florida school districts and the state as a whole.

3. The institution has established a comprehensive program that meets the following requirements:

a. Provides instruction in and assesses each candidate's level of knowledge and application of the competencies aligned to each of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards, pursuant to Rules 6A-5.080 and 6A-4.00821, F.A.C. The program description must include in which courses the competencies will be taught and assessed.

b. Incorporates appropriate elements of the William Cecil Golden Program for School Leaders to ensure a statewide foundation for leadership development in accordance with Section 1012.986, F.S.

c. Provides for field experiences in K-12 schools designed in collaboration with Florida public schools or school districts, during which program knowledge is applied and candidates are provided with opportunities to demonstrate required competencies.

d. Endorses as program completers only candidates who demonstrate all of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards at the initial certification level and earn passing scores on all portions of the Florida Educational Leadership Examination required in Section 1012.56, F.S.

4. The institution has employed faculty who are qualified to teach courses required in the program, and who document annual onsite participation or research in K-12 school settings. Activities must be related to the program course(s) they teach.

5. The institution has a means for collecting performance data on admitted candidates and program completers.

6. The institution publishes a description of the qualitative and quantitative requirements for program completion.

7. The institution may include a modified version of its approved program to be offered to individuals who hold a master's or higher degree, provided the institution has a means to document that the completer of the modified program has met all program requirements of this section. A modified program is not required to terminate in a degree.

(c) Requirements for initial approval of programs offered by Florida school districts. Each Florida school district seeking approval of an initial certification program in educational leadership shall submit a request in writing from the chief executive officer to the Commissioner providing evidence of all of the following:

1. The district shall offer the initial certification program in educational leadership only to its employees through its approved professional development system in accordance with Section 1012.98, F.S., and the requirements of this rule.

2. The district has incorporated into the program objectives which directly respond to needs assessed and projected for school leaders both in Florida and the district.

3. The district has established a comprehensive program that meets the following requirements:
 - a. Admits only candidates who hold a master's degree from an accredited or approved institution as described in Rule 6A-4.003, F.A.C. Programs may provide for admission of candidates without this degree, provided that the district's program documentation includes a process of formally notifying such candidates that they are not eligible to complete the program without official documentation of the master's degree.
 - b. Provides instruction in and assesses each candidate's level of knowledge and application of the competencies aligned to the Florida Principal Leadership Standards, pursuant to Rules 6A-5.080 and 6A-4.00821, F.A.C. The program description must indicate the professional development activities through which the competencies will be taught and assessed.
 - c. Incorporates appropriate elements of the William Cecil Golden Program for School Leaders to ensure a statewide foundation for leadership development in accordance with Section 1012.986, F.S.
 - d. Provides for field experiences in K-12 schools designed in collaboration with Florida public schools or school districts, during which program knowledge is applied and candidates are provided with opportunities to demonstrate required competencies.
 - e. Endorses as program completers only candidates who hold an acceptable master's degree, demonstrate all of the Florida Principal Leadership Standards at the initial certification level, and earn passing scores on all portions of the Florida Educational Leadership Examination required in Section 1012.56, F.S.
 4. The district has employed instructors whom the district has documented are qualified to deliver the professional development required in the program, based upon degree level and practical experience in school leadership. Practical experience must be related to the program curriculum taught.
 5. The district collaborates with one or more institutions of higher education in the development and/or delivery of the program.
 6. The district has a means for collecting performance data on admitted and enrolled candidates and program completers.
 7. The district publishes a description of the qualitative and quantitative requirements for program completion.
- (d) Initial approval determination and notification. The Commissioner shall determine whether the institution or district has met the criteria for initial approval and shall provide notification in writing of the approval or denial of approval. A denial of approval shall include identification of specific areas of program weakness that must be corrected prior to reconsideration for approval. For programs receiving initial approval, the institution or district shall be apprised of the requirements for continued approval.
- (e) Continued program approval.
1. Continued approval of each initial certification program in educational leadership shall be based upon the Department's review of the institution's or school district's description of its continuous improvement of the program throughout the approval period as submitted annually through a program evaluation plan. The program evaluation plan shall be based upon an internal analysis of data collected annually and published for the general public. The data must include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Candidate admission, enrollment, and completion data as described in paragraph (1)(a) of this rule;
 - b. Candidate pass rates on each portion of the Florida Educational Leadership Examination;
 - c. Candidates' performance during field experiences;
 - d. Program completers' satisfaction with their preparedness for serving in a school-based leadership position in the first year of such employment after completing the program; and
 - e. The satisfaction level of school district or public school employers of program completers with the level of preparedness for the first year of serving in a school leadership position. The description of the level of satisfaction shall be based on results of a survey of the employers that includes the candidate's performance related to the Florida Principal Leadership Standards, the placement rates of program completers, and the rehire rates of program completers.
 2. In the final year of the review cycle the Department shall make a site visit to the district or institution. Prior to the site visit the institution or district shall provide a summary report to the Department that synthesizes the data and actions taken as a result of the program evaluation plans issued during the cycle. The Commissioner will consider the summary report and report of the program approval site visit team to determine whether continued approval is granted and will notify the institution or district in writing of the decision. A denial of approval shall include identification of specific areas of program weakness.
- (2) Level II: School Principal. Florida public school districts are authorized to seek approval for a program leading to certification in School Principal pursuant to Rule 6A-4.0083, F.A.C. For purposes of this rule a public school district is referred to as a "district."

(a) Initial Approval Requirements. The Department may approve a school district's School Principal certification program for a period of time determined by the Department not to exceed seven (7) years. Approval is based upon the district providing documentation of meeting the following requirements:

1. Admitting only candidates who hold a valid Florida Educator's Certificate in the area of educational leadership, education administration, or administration and supervision pursuant to requirements of Rule 6A-4.0083, F.A.C., and who are employed in a public school within the district in a leadership position through which the candidate can fully demonstrate the competencies associated with the Florida Principal Leadership Standards.

2. Delivery of a competency-based developmental program that:

a. Is based upon each individual's needs using data gathered from self-assessment, selection, and appraisal instruments aligned to the competencies to be demonstrated in the program to develop the customized learning plan;

b. Uses district-developed indicators of competency in all Florida Principal Leadership Standards and provides multiple, job-embedded opportunities for achievement;

c. Incorporates appropriate elements of the William Cecil Golden School Professional Development Program for School Leaders to ensure a statewide foundation for leadership development pursuant to Section 1012.986, F.S.;

d. Integrates on-going professional development and the district's annual appraisal system into program experiences;

3. A means of collecting continued approval data as described in subparagraph (2)(d) of this rule.

4. An endorsement of program completion by the superintendent for all program participants who fully demonstrate the Florida Principal Leadership Standards at a level commensurate with full responsibility as head of a school as described in Section 1012.01(3)(c)1., F.S., and as required by the district's program.

(b) Initial program approval determination and notification. The Commissioner shall determine whether the district has met the criteria for initial approval and shall reply with a notification in writing indicating approval or denial of approval. A denial of approval shall include identification of specific areas of program weakness that must be corrected prior to reconsideration for approval. For programs receiving initial approval, the district shall be apprised of the requirements for continued approval.

(c) Changes to an approved program prior to the end of the approval period. If a district seeks to make substantial revisions to its approved School Principal certification program prior to the resubmission of the program for continued approval, the district should submit those revisions to the Commissioner with a letter requesting a review. The Commissioner will advise the district in writing whether the revised program remains in compliance with this rule and of any proposed changes that are not acceptable. This determination and subsequent program revisions will not affect the approval period previously established for the program.

(d) Continued program approval.

1. Annual reporting. Each district with an approved program in School Principal certification under this rule will report to the Department annually the individuals who are admitted and enrolled, and who complete the program. The district will include in the report to the Department the number and type of inservice hours completed by each participant in curriculum offerings provided by the state through the William Cecil Golden Professional Development Program for School Leaders.

2. Continued approval review.

a. During the last year of approval of the program, the Department will request of the district documentation for continued approval review. Documentation shall include results of an analysis of data collected by the district during each year of approval and a summary of program improvements made during the course of the approval period. The analysis and summary submitted by the district should include data on program participants as follows:

(I) Data elements listed in subparagraph (2)(d) of this rule;

(II) Level of satisfaction of the participants and their supervisors with the training received in the program with regard to their level of preparedness for their employment in a leadership position in the years immediately following completion of the program;

(III) Evaluation of the effectiveness of the professional development offered through the program in accordance with the protocol standards for professional development adopted by the state;

(IV) Longitudinal data on program participants including placement rates, rehire rates, retention rates, performance based on the achievement of their students and other indicators of the success of the school(s) where they are assigned during the years immediately following completion of the program.

b. After a review of the summary documents, the Commissioner will provide the district with written verification of the continued approval of the program or denial of approval. If a determination of denial is reached, the Commissioner must provide the

reasons for the determination in accordance with requirements of this rule. A district whose program is denied continued approval may apply for a new initial approval in accordance with the requirements in paragraph (2)(a) of this rule.

c. The Department will publish a periodic reporting of the statewide status of programs approved under this rule.

Rulemaking Authority 1012.98, 1012.986 FS. Law Implemented 1012.986, 1012.56 FS. History—New 6-20-07.