



Advanced Degrees

Senate Bill 736

During the 2011

Session, the Florida Legislature passed a highly publicized law to overhaul public education. Senate Bill 736

intends to reward high

achieving teachers by linking raises to how students perform in the classroom. School systems must implement new performance plans by 2014.

One very small section of the law, which became effective July 1, 2011, now prohibits school systems from rewarding newly hired teachers or administrators for advanced degrees unless those advanced degrees are in the individual's area of certification.



The 2011 Florida Statutes

Title XLVIII

K-20 Education Code

Chapter 1012 Personnel

1012.22 Public school personnel; powers and duties of the district school board.—The district school board shall: (1) Designate positions to be filled, prescribe qualifications for those positions, and provide for the appointment, compensation, promotion, suspension, and dismissal of employees as follows, subject to the requirements of this chapter: ...

(c) Compensation and salary schedules.— ...

3. Advanced degrees.—A district school board may not use advanced degrees in setting a salary schedule for instructional personnel or school administrators hired on or after July 1, 2011, unless the advanced degree is held in the individual's area of certification and is only a salary supplement. ...

Q. I have a master's and I've been here 10 years. Does this impact me?

A. No. As long as you don't have a "break in service," you are grandfathered in. It doesn't matter whether your advanced degree is in your area of certification/concentration or in a different area such as Education Leadership.

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This information is designed to help explain changes to Florida law, which impact new instructional employees or those who may be seeking advanced degrees.

... questions & answers

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Q. How many people does this impact?

A. We want to respect the confidentiality of our employees. However, this change may impact a handful of people hired after July 1. We are carefully checking every single record to make sure our system is in compliance, and to work with these employees to clarify their situation.

Q. I am working on an advanced degree now. Should I be worried?

A. Every situation is different. If your advanced degree will be in your area of certification, then you meet the “letter of the law.” If you were hired before July 1, 2011, we also believe you are grandfathered in.

If you have any break in service, however, you will be considered a “new” hire for the purposes of this law, and then your advanced degree must be in your area of certification to qualify for a salary supplement.

You should discuss your long-term education and career goals with your building administrator, and your college advisor. Even if your advanced degree doesn’t qualify for a salary supplement (under the new State law), it may help achieve your long-term career goals.

Q. Why would anyone pursue an advanced degree if the salary supplement is gone?

A. As educators, we agree that all education has value. We would like to compensate our employees for all advanced learning.

However, even without the salary supplement, advanced degrees may help individuals pursue administrative positions or fulfill personal goals.

Ultimately, it is up to each individual educator to decide whether or not to pursue an advanced degree. The potential salary supplement should only be one factor in the decision-making process.



Veteran teachers may not be impacted by the new law changing how educators get paid for master’s degrees – if they already have their advanced degrees.

