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Senate Bill 161 (Substitute S-1 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Erika Geiss
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 4-20-23

INTRODUCTION

The bill would modify various legal requirements that an individual must meet to be issued a teaching certificate, as well as requirements of professional development as a certified teacher. Among other modifications, the bill would allow for reciprocity of an individual's teaching certificate and comparable endorsements if it were from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe, instead of just allowing for reciprocity from another state. It also would allow an individual to demonstrate that he or she had been rated effective, instead of highly effective, on his or her annual evaluation for three out of five of the most recent school years to fulfill a requirement for issuance of an advanced teaching certificate.

BRIEF RATIONALE

According to testimony, Michigan schools are struggling to retain teachers because of a variety of factors, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Some people believe that this teacher shortage leaves the teachers that remain overworked and the students underserved. Accordingly, it has been suggested that Michigan ease the process of entering the teaching field.

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the Department of Education and on local intermediate school districts, school districts, and public school academies. The Department would experience one-time and ongoing costs to update the teacher license requirements, certify out-of-state teachers, and select subtests for pre-k to grade 3 or grade 3 to grade 6. The costs would include one-time information technology costs to update the teacher certification system and staff to update the new teacher certification requirements and select subtests. The Department already has begun to update the certification system so the one-time costs would be minimal and within current appropriation. The Department would need additional ongoing staff and administrative support to review the teaching experience of teachers from out-of-state instead of requiring a passed subject area examination. Ongoing costs would be minimal and likely would be supported with current appropriations.

The bill would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on local intermediate school districts, school districts, and public school academies. Schools likely would be able to hire additional teachers from out-of-state to reduce the need for long-term substitute teachers. It is unknown how schools would benefit in the State as whole because of different needs and situations for each school. The fiscal impact resulting from the bill's CPR requirement would be minimal, because the initial teacher certification already requires first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training. The bill would ensure that schools provided the first aid and CPR professional development for teachers who currently do not hold a valid certification. The number of teachers who do not hold this certification currently is minimal.

MCL 380.1526 et al.

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CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to do the following:

- Require a teacher to complete as part of a professional development requirement a course in first aid and CPR, unless the teacher could not because of physical limitations, by August 1, 2023.**
- Modify certain requirements related to a teacher's passage of an examination before being issued a teaching certificate.**
- Require an individual to complete at least three years of successful experience in an appropriate assignment as specified by the bill before being issued an initial or advanced professional teaching certificate.**
- Allow an individual to demonstrate that he or she had been rated effective, instead of only highly effective, on his or her annual year-end evaluation for three out of five most recent school years to fulfill a requirement for the issuance of an advanced certificate.**
- If an individual held a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe, require the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to issue to an individual a Michigan professional education teaching certificate and applicable endorsements comparable to those an individual holds in that other location, without requiring the individual to pass the applicable subject area examination.**
- Modify specified requirements for the formulation of subject area examinations.**

CPR Certification

Under the Code, a teacher must receive intensive professional development induction into teaching during his or her first three years of employment. During the three-year period, the professional development must consist of at least 15 days of professional development, the experiencing of effective practices in university-linkers professional development schools, and regional seminars by master teachers and other mentors. Under the bill, this requirement would be subject to the provision described below.

Except as otherwise provided, for teachers employed in classroom teaching on or after August 1, 2023, except for individuals who have physical limitations that make it impracticable for the individual to complete the course and instruction and obtain the required certification, the 15 days of professional development described above would have to include a course approved by the Department of Education in first aid and CPR that included a test demonstration on a mannequin and instruction in foreign body airway obstruction management that resulted in valid certification in these topics issued by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or a comparable organization or institution approved by the Department. The course, instruction, and certification would have to be completed within the first year of the three-year period. This requirement would not apply to an individual who had successfully completed a course and instruction and held the valid certification.

The bill specifies that an individual who had completed the course and instruction and obtained the certification described above and who performed first aid, CPR, or foreign body airway obstruction management on another individual in the course of his or her employment as a teacher would not be liable in a civil action for damages resulting from an act or omission occurring in that performance except for an act or omission constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct. The bill also specifies that it would not create a duty to act on the part of an individual who held the certification.

The Code currently prohibits the SPI from issuing an initial teaching certificate to a person unless the person presents evidence satisfactory that he or she meets one of the following:

- Has successfully completed a course approved by the Department in first aid and CPR, including a test demonstration on a mannequin, and has successfully completed instruction approved by the department in foreign body airway obstruction management, and holds valid certification in these topics issued by the American Red Cross, the American Heart Association, or a comparable organization or institution approved by the Department.
- Has physical limitations that make it impracticable for the person to complete the instruction and obtain the required certification.

Under the bill, the provision described above would not apply after July 31, 2023.

SPI Responsibilities

The Code requires the SPI to determine the requirements for and issue all licenses and certificates, including preprimary teachers and teachers as qualified counselors, and an endorsement of teachers for teaching a foreign language in an elementary grade in public schools. Except as otherwise provided, the SPI must only issue a teaching certificate to an individual who has passed the following appropriate examinations:

- For a secondary level teaching certificate, pass the appropriate available subject area examination for each subject area in which he or she applies to be certified.
- For an elementary level teaching certificate, pass, if it is available, the elementary certification examination, and pass the appropriate available subject area examination for each subject area, if any, in which he or she applies to be certified.

The bill would delete the list of appropriate examinations, and instead, specify that the SPI would have to determine the requirements for and issue all licenses, certificates, and endorsements for teachers, including preprimary teachers and teachers as counselors, in the State's public schools.

The Code also requires the SPI to issue a Michigan teaching certificate to an individual holding a certificate from another state or a teaching degree from an out-of-state teacher preparation institution who applies for a Michigan teaching certificate only if the individual passes appropriate examinations as provided in the list described above. The bill would delete this provision.

The bill would allow the SPI to accept passage of an equivalent examination approved by the SPI for an individual holding a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized tribe.

Under the Code, if an individual holds a teaching certificate, the SPI must not advance the individual's certification to professional certification unless the individual has successfully completed at least a three-credit course of study with appropriate field experiences in the diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities and differentiated instruction. The Code allows an individual to complete the course of study as part of his or her teacher preparation program or during the first six years of his or her employment. Under the bill, the individual could only complete the course of study as part of his or her preparation program.

Initial Professional Teaching Certificate

The Code prohibits the SPI from issuing an initial professional teaching certificate to an individual unless the individual presents evidence satisfactory demonstrating that he or she met certain requirements, such as successfully completing at least three years of teaching. Under the bill, the individual also would have to present evidence satisfactorily demonstrating that since issuance of the individual's most recent teaching certificate, the individual completed at least three years of successful experience in an appropriate assignment, as determined by the SPI, including experience as a teacher leader, a teacher of children from birth through pre-K, a teacher of adult education, or a provider of K to 12 instruction in an assignment that did not require an annual performance evaluation under the Code.

Advanced Professional Education Certificate

The Code prohibits the SPI from issuing an advanced professional teaching certificate to an individual unless the individual presents evidence satisfactory demonstrating that he or she met certain requirements, such as being rated highly effective on his or her annual year-end evaluation for three out of five most recent school years. The bill would allow an individual to demonstrate that he or she had been rated highly effective *or effective* on his or her annual year-end evaluation for three out of five most recent school years to fulfill that requirement.

In addition, the individual would have to present evidence satisfactory demonstrating that, since the issuance of the individual's most recent teaching certificate, the individual completed at least three years of successful experience in an appropriate assignment, as determined by the SPI, including experience as a teacher leader, a teacher of children from birth through pre-K, a teacher of adult education, or a provider of K to 12 instruction in an assignment that did not require an annual performance evaluation under the Code.

Certificate Reciprocity

Under the Code, if an individual holding a teaching certificate from another state applies to the SPI for a Michigan teaching certificate and meets the requirements of this Code, the SPI must issue to the individual a Michigan professional education teaching certificate and applicable endorsements comparable to those the individual holds in the other state, without requiring the individual to pass the applicable subject area examination. Under the bill, this provision would apply to an individual holding a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe. In addition, the individual holding a teaching certificate could be issued a Michigan certificate without completing the reading credit requirement established under SPI rule.

The Code requires an individual holding a teaching certificate as described above to provide evidence satisfactory to the Department that he or she meets all the following requirements:

- He or she has taught successfully for at least three years in a position for which the individual's teaching certification from the other state was valid.
- He or she has earned at least 18 semester credit hours in a planned course of study at an institution of higher education approved by the SPI or has earned a master's or doctoral degree approved by the SPI.

Instead, under the bill, an individual holding a teaching certificate as described above would have to provide evidence satisfactory to the Department that he or she had taught successfully for at least three years in a position for which the individual's teaching certification from the other state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe was valid.

Subject to denial for fraud or material misrepresentation, the bill specifies that an individual holding a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe would be eligible for a Michigan professional education certificate if the individual met the following:

- The individual had taught successfully for at least three years in a position for which the individual's teaching certification from the other state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe was valid.
- The individual met the elementary or secondary reading credit requirement established under SPI rule.

The Code specifies that an individual who receives a teaching certificate and endorsement or endorsements as described above is eligible to receive one or more additional endorsements comparable to endorsements the individual holds in another state only if the individual passes the appropriate subject area examinations. Instead, under the bill and subject to denial for fraud or material misrepresentation, if an individual holding a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe applied to the SPI for an additional endorsement on a valid Michigan teaching certificate and met the requirements, the SPI would have to issue the individual an endorsement comparable to that which the individual held in the other state or country or with the Federally recognized Indian tribe without requiring that the individual pass the appropriate available examinations. To be eligible to receive an additional endorsement, an individual would have to provide evidence satisfactory to the Department that he or she had taught successfully for at least three years in a position for which the individual's teaching endorsement from the other state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe was valid.

The Code requires the SPI to issue a nonrenewable temporary teaching certificate to an individual that holds a teaching certificate from another state and applies for a Michigan certificate while meeting all requirements for the certificate except passage of the appropriate examination. Under the bill, this provision also would apply to an individual holding a certificate from another country or Federally recognized Indian tribe. The bill also would allow the SPI to issue the nonrenewable certificate if the individual had not passed the reading credit requirement.

The bill would define "additional endorsement" as an endorsement added to a Michigan teaching certificate after initial issuance of the certificate. "An individual holding a teaching certificate from another state, country, or federally recognized Indian tribe" would mean an individual with a valid teaching certificate or an individual who is eligible for a teaching certificate in the state or country or with the Federally recognized Indian tribe in which or with which the individual is certificated or eligible for certification.

"Subject area examination" currently means an examination related to a specific area of certification, which examination has been developed or selected by the SPI for the purpose of demonstrating the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and determining whether or not an applicant is eligible for a Michigan teaching certificate. Under the bill, the term would mean an examination related to an endorsement area for the purpose of demonstrating the applicant's knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and determining whether or not an applicant is eligible for a Michigan teaching certificate or endorsement.

Formation of Subject Area Examinations

Under the Code, the Department, based upon certain criteria, must provide to approved teacher education institutions approved guidelines and criteria for use in the development or selection of subject area examinations. The bill would delete this requirement.

The Code specifies that if the Department develops for use an examination that had previously been contracted for using a competitive bid process, then the Department must not expend on the development of that examination an amount that exceeds the amount that the Department expended on procurement of the most recent competitively-bid version of that examination. The bill would require the competitive bid process to address validity, reliability, and other technical standards of the examinations and of the appropriate administration and use of those examinations.

The Code also requires the SPI to appoint a seven-member standing technical advisory council composed of individuals who are experts in measurement and assessment. This council must advise the SPI and the teacher examination committee on the validity, reliability, and other technical standards of the examinations that will be used or are being used and of the administration and use of those examinations. The bill would delete this requirement.