



Olds Plaza Building, 10th Floor
Lansing, Michigan 48909
Phone: 517/373-6466

NATIONAL TEACHER CERTIFICATE

House Bill 4090 (Substitute H-1) First Analysis (3-15-95)

Sponsor: Rep. William R. Bryant, Jr.
Committee: Education

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

According to press accounts, 81 teachers nationwide, include 12 from Michigan, have become national board certified teachers after undergoing a year-long process developed by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. One commentator, in discussing efforts to develop teacher licensing systems based on performance, has recently said, "The assessments being developed by the [NBPTS] are leading the way with their performance components of portfolios, certification center assessment activities, and various types of essay examinations designed to demonstrate knowledge and skill." Reportedly, the NBPTS certification process involves, in addition to exams and portfolios, the videotaping of classroom teaching. In any event, national board certification is seen as recognition of excellence in teaching. A proposal has been made to waive for nationally board certified teachers some of the tests that certified teachers from other states must pass to obtain Michigan certification. (The code currently requires that a person holding a certificate from another state or a teaching degree from an out-of-state teacher preparation institution pass appropriate examinations, specified in the code, including one covering basic skills and others on subject areas, for either a secondary level and elementary level teaching certificate.)

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the School Code to require the state board of education to issue a Michigan professional education teaching certificate and applicable endorsements to an applicant who holds a certificate from another state, without requiring him or her to pass a basic skills examination or the applicable subject area examination, if certain requirements were met. The applicant would have to:

- meet the standards for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, as approved by the department;
- have taught successfully for at least three years in a position for which the person's certification from the other state was valid;
- have earned, after his or her initial certification in another state, at least 18 semester credit hours in a planned course of study at a state board approved institution of higher education or have earned, at any time, a master's or doctoral degree;
- have met the elementary or secondary, as applicable, reading credit requirement established under state board rule.

The bill specifies that the certificate and endorsements issued would be "comparable to the level and endorsements for which the person meets the standards for certification by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards . . ."

A person who received a Michigan certificate and endorsements in this way would be eligible to receive one or more additional endorsements comparable to endorsements he or she held in another state only if he or she passed the appropriate subject area examinations.

The state board could deny a certificate to the applicant for fraud, material misrepresentation, or concealment in the application or for a conviction as an adult of an act of immoral conduct contributing to the delinquency of a child or a felony related reasonably and adversely to the ability of the person to serve in an elementary or secondary school.

MCL 380.1531

House Bill 4090 (3-15-95)

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

There would be no significant fiscal impact on the state, according to both the Department of Education (3-14-95) and the House Fiscal Agency (3-13-95).

ARGUMENTS:***For:***

The bill would waive certain required examinations for out-of-state teachers to obtain a Michigan certificate if they had met the standards of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Being nationally board certified by this private organization requires the successful completion of a very rigorous (and expensive) process and is indicative of excellence in teaching and commitment to the craft. So far, only 81 teachers from 21 states are reported to have attained the new credential. Lowering the barriers for such high quality teachers might encourage them to teach in Michigan.

Against:

Is this a move towards the use of national, rather than state, standards? Does Michigan want to give up control over standards to a national, private body with which it has little or no influence?

Response:

If the standards of the national body get watered down, the state board of education could, under the bill, refuse to approve them for purposes of certifying out-of-state teachers.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Federation of Teachers has indicated support for the bill. (3-14-95)

A representative of the Office of Teacher Certification, Department of Education, testified in support of the bill. (3-14-95)