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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 673 (as enrolled)
Sponsor: Senator Ron Jelinek
Senate Committee: Education
House Committee: Education

PUBLIC ACT 335 of 2006

Date Completed: 1-17-07

RATIONALE

The School Code of 1974 included a provision requiring that all school administrators be certified according to standards and procedures developed by the Department of Education. As part of an extensive revision of the School Code, this certification requirement was deleted in 1995 to allow qualified individuals from varied backgrounds to become school administrators (although provisions for administrators' certification fees were not omitted). While the Revised School Code contains continuing education requirements for school administrators, it provides no standards or qualifications to become a school administrator. Michigan evidently is the only state that does not require certification for school administrators. Some people believe that establishing voluntary certification for school administrators may help create more consistent leadership in schools, and enhance public confidence in the State's school leaders.

CONTENT

The bill amended the Revised School Code to require the State Board of Education to develop a voluntary school administrator's certificate, along with standards and procedures for its implementation.

The bill took effect on August 15, 2006, and is described in detail below.

The bill requires the State Board of Education to develop a school administrator's certificate for school district and intermediate school district

superintendents, school principals, assistant principals, and other administrators whose primary responsibility is administering instructional programs. In addition, the bill permits the Board to develop appropriate certificate endorsements for school administrators, by elementary, secondary, and central office level. No person is required to have a school administrator's certificate or endorsement to be employed as an administrator by a school district, public school academy, intermediate school district, or nonpublic school.

The State Board of Education must develop standards and procedures to address at least all of the following:

- Application for and issuance of certificates and endorsements.
- Educational and professional experience requirements for a certificate or endorsement.
- Continuing education requirements for periodic recertification.
- Suspension and revocation of a certificate.

The standards and procedures for suspension and revocation must be based on the standards and procedures for taking action against a person's teaching certificate in the Code.

In developing these standards, the Department of Education is required to consult and work with appropriate professional organizations, primarily those representing superintendents and building-level administrators. The Department also

may recognize performance-based professional learning programs offered by established State professional associations representing school administrators, for the purposes of adding one or more enhancement or specialty endorsements for a school administrator's certificate. The programs must be approved by the Department based on alignment with school administrator program preparation standards approved by the Board of Education.

Under the bill, "established state professional organization" means an association that has served members on a statewide basis for at least 10 years.

MCL 380.1536

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

A number of studies have shown that effective administrators are the key to successful schools, and that good leaders serve several crucial functions in schools. One Michigan task force found that effective principals need specific knowledge and skills in three basic areas: instructional leadership, organizational leadership, and community leadership (*Elevating Educational Leadership Task Force Report*, Marianne Yared McGuire, 8-8-02). According to the report, proficiencies in these areas should be "based on a core of technical knowledge about teaching, learning, curriculum, assessment, team building and other essential skills." Nevertheless, Michigan has no statewide standards that school administrators must meet to verify that they have the necessary skills and competency. The voluntary certification process created in the bill will establish a set of standards for school administrators, and will highlight the skills that the State considers to be important, helping to ensure that administrators have the proficiencies required to be effective leaders. The standards also will help universities in developing a curriculum for administrators that is consistent with the State's expectations, and may build public confidence in the schools' leaders.

In addition, a certification process for administrators will give them an opportunity to demonstrate their professionalism, and will allow administrators from other states to maintain their certification when they move to Michigan. As a result, the certification process may help address the shortage of principals that Michigan reportedly is experiencing (*A Study of Michigan's School Principal Shortage*, Philip A. Cusick, January 2003). By keeping certification voluntary, however, the bill will not create a hurdle to those interested in entering the profession, and school districts will continue to have the flexibility to hire well qualified individuals from a variety of backgrounds, regardless of certification.

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

FISCAL IMPACT

The Department of Education will see increased administrative costs associated with the development of a school administrator's certificate, and the development of accompanying requirements for original and renewal certification.

The Revised School Code provides for a school administrator certificate fee of \$125 for in-State applicants and \$175 for out-of-State applicants, as well as a \$50 fee for school administrator endorsement. A certificate or endorsement is valid for five years. It is likely that the State will see increased revenue from administrators who seek certification as a result of the bill. An estimate of the amount is impracticable, however, since administrator certification is optional under the bill.

Fiscal Analyst: Kathryn Summers-Coty

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This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan Senate staff for use by the Senate in its deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.