

Legislative Analysis



TEACHER CERTIFICATION FEES, ETC.

Mitchell Bean, Director
Phone: (517) 373-8080
<http://www.house.mi.gov/hfa>

House Bill 4591 (Substitute H-2)
Sponsor: Rep. Hoon-Yung Hopgood
Committee: Education

First Analysis (4-13-07)

BRIEF SUMMARY: House Bill 4591 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1538) to increase the certification fees for teachers, school psychologists, school counselors, and administrators (generally an increase of about \$35 for certificates and \$15 for permits), and also set a fee schedule for Michigan's teacher preparation programs of either \$2,000 or \$3,500 depending on the enrollment of the university where the program is located. House Bill 4591 would also require that not later than July 1, 2010, the Michigan Department of Education establish and implement a teacher certification database system meeting certain requirements, with the system to be funded by the increase in certification fees.

FISCAL IMPACT: The bill would create additional revenue to support the Department of Education. The proposed changes in certification fees would generate approximately \$1.5 million to support the upgrade of the school employee licensing database and to support professional preparations operations. The newly proposed teacher college review fees would raise approximately \$54,000 to reimburse the department for reviewing teacher preparation programs at universities and colleges. The FY 2007-08 Executive budget recommendation for the Department of Education assumes this additional fee revenue.

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Many Michigan school employees must be licensed or certified in order to work in public schools. Over 100,000 people working in more than 3,700 school buildings hold such certificates. For example, Michigan elementary and secondary school teachers must first earn a bachelor's degree in order to teach. After successfully completing one of the state's 34 undergraduate teacher preparation programs, they must pass their certification exams. Then their education school dean recommends them to the Michigan Department of Education for certification.

The Department of Education currently certifies teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, and special education teachers, to name a few. Michigan's fees for certification were set in 1988, and have not changed in nearly 20 years. The fee revenue is used to maintain the certification program.

In 2000, the Department of Education put a computer system in place to track all of the state's certified school personnel, in order to ensure that licensing and licensure renewal were both accurate, and efficient. Now seven years old, that system must be upgraded. Legislation has been introduced to increase licensing and certification fees, as well as to

establish, for the first time, fees whose revenue would fund the periodic reviews of teacher preparation programs.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

House Bill 4591 would amend the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1538) to increase the certification fees for teachers, school psychologists, school counselors, and administrators (generally an increase of about \$35 for certificates and \$15 for permits), and also set a fee schedule for Michigan's teacher preparation programs of either \$2,000 or \$3,500 depending on the enrollment of the university where the program is located.

Currently, the state's teacher preparation programs located at 32 universities and colleges are periodically reviewed by the Michigan Department of Education, as required by administrative rule, with no charge to the universities. In addition, the department annually reviews more than 100 specialty (or subject area) programs at no charge. Under House Bill 4591, a fee would be charged for the periodic program reviews, depending upon the university's enrollment:

- With fewer than 2,000 students, a fee of \$2,000.
- With 2,000 or more students, a fee of \$3,500.

In addition, the university would be charged a \$300 fee for each subject area specialty program review.

Currently, the law specifies fees for 19 in-state certificates or permits that have been in effect since 1988. House Bill 4591 would eliminate four of these (continuing teacher certificate; parent cooperative preschool certificate; school administrator certification for those eligible on July 1, 1988; and school administrator permit). Further, the bill would re-title two certificates (vocational temporary authorization would be modified to say "or interim occupational certificate," and annual vocational authorization would become "occupational authorization"), and add one new in-state certificate called the "school counselor license." The bill would increase fees for the certificates, as noted below.

In addition, the current law specifies fees for three out-of-state certificates or permits: provisional teaching, school psychologist, and school administrator. House Bill 4591 would retain these and increase each \$35. The bill also specifies a \$210 out-of-state fee for four additional certificates: professional teaching; vocational temporary authorization or interim occupational certificate; occupational education certificate; and school counselor.

Finally, House Bill 4591 would increase renewal and reinstatement fees for seven certificates, and also set a fee for renewing the school counselor license.

The types of certificates and the fees—both current and proposed—that are specified in statute and in the bill, are as follows:

<i>Type of Certificate</i>	<i>In-State Fee Increase</i>	<i>Out-of-State Fee Increase</i>
<i>First-time Fee</i>		
Provisional teaching	\$125 to \$160	\$175 to \$210
Professional teaching	\$125 to \$160	\$210
Vocational temporary	\$125 to \$160	\$210
Interim occupational	\$125 to \$160	\$210
Occupational education	\$125 to \$160	\$210
Substitute teacher permit	\$25 to \$40	
Full-year teacher permit	\$25 to \$40	
Emergency permit	\$25 to \$40	
Annual occupational authorization	\$25 to \$40	
Duplicate	\$10 to \$25	
School psychologist	\$125 to \$160	\$175 to \$210
School administrator	\$125 to \$160	\$175 to \$210
School counselor	\$160	\$210
<i>Renewal/Reinstatement Fee</i>		
Provisional teaching	\$75 to \$100	
Professional teaching	\$125 to \$160	
Vocational temporary	\$75 to \$100	
Interim occupational	\$75 to \$100	
Occupational education	\$125 to \$160	
School psychologist	\$125 to \$160	
School administrator	\$125 to \$160	
School counselor	\$160	

House Bill 4591 would also require that not later than July 1, 2010, the Michigan Department of Education establish and implement a teacher certification database system that provides for at least all of the following:

- The ability for teachers to renew a professional teaching certificate online.
- Online credit card payment capability, to result in processing of teaching certificate applications and issuance of teaching certificates within 48 to 72 hours for in-state applicants and within three weeks for out-of-state applicants who have provided a complete application, as determined by the department.
- A central registry that documents each teacher's professional development activities and completion of state board continuing education units.
- Improved compatibility with the registry of educational personnel data reporting system.
- Improved efficiency of the teacher preparation institution web-based teacher certification recommendation process.
- Improved capacity to generate reports about the number of certificates and endorsements issued.
- Improved quality control through customization of the system.

Finally, the bill requires that the Michigan Department of Education fund the system described above from the fee increases proposed in Section 1538 of the bill (that is, all fees excepting those to be used for the periodic reviews of teacher preparation programs).

ARGUMENTS:

For:

This legislation would increase public school licensure and certification fees for the first time in 20 years. The fee increase would enable the Michigan Department of Education to upgrade the computer system that is used to track licensed and certified personnel—teachers, school counselors, and school psychologists—as well as the state's 34 certified teacher preparation programs.

Under the federal No Child Left Behind law, each student is promised a qualified teacher in every classroom—that is, a teacher who is assigned to teach a subject he or she studied as a major or minor field while an undergraduate in college. Generally, qualified teachers are thought to be those who complete a course of study in one of the state's public or private school teacher preparation programs (which are certified as meeting federal and state standards). After the teacher candidates earn bachelors degrees, they must pass their teacher practice exams, and then be recommended by the dean of the school of education they attended to the Department of Education for certification. Each applicant pays a fee for that license.

This bill would enable Michigan school officials to verify the licensure status of school personnel via a more accurate and up-to-date computer system.

Against:

These fee increases are substantial, and some seem unnecessarily high. They should be reduced. What's more, certified school personnel would receive little benefit under the higher fees. Some also question the cost of the new certification database.

Response:

The bill has been amended to make explicit the benefits for licensees under the new, upgraded computer system the fee increases are intended to fund. Among the benefits would be the ability of teachers to pay for their license renewals on-line, and to track their cumulative continuing education credits required throughout their careers.

POSITIONS:

The Michigan Department of Education supports the bill. (4-12-07)

The Michigan Education Association supports the bill as amended. (4-12-07)

Legislative Analyst: J. Hunault
Fiscal Analyst: Mary Ann Cleary
Bethany Wicksall

■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House staff for use by House members in their deliberations, and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.