

Legislative Analysis



TEACHING NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBAL LANGUAGE

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Senate Bill 1014 as passed by the Senate

Sponsor: Sen. Michael Prusi

House Committee: Education

Senate Committee: Education

Complete to 9-21-10

A SUMMARY OF SENATE BILL 1014 AS PASSED BY THE SENATE 8-11-10

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to allow a teacher without a teaching certificate to teach a Native American tribal language and culture class.

Specifically, the bill would allow the Michigan Department of Education to enter into a memorandum of understanding with a federally recognized Native American tribe, the board of a school district, or the board of directors of a charter school. That memorandum would authorize the state superintendent of public instruction to allow the tribe, the district, or the charter school to use teachers without valid Michigan teaching certificates to teach Native American tribal language and culture classes. To achieve this end, the state school superintendent would issue a three-year letter of approval (or a letter of continuing approval).

Under the memorandum of understanding, the uncertified teacher would have to demonstrate mastery of the tribal language, either through a credential issued by a federally recognized tribe, or by another means considered suitable by the Department of Education. The memorandum of understanding also would have to include requirements for renewal or continuing approval of the non-certificated teacher as established by the tribe, school district, or charter school in collaboration with the department.

Under the bill, the Native American tribe, school district, or charter school could apply the credits earned by a tribal language student who is taught by an uncertified teacher for any purpose and to the same extent, as if taught by a certificated teacher, including credit toward completion of the requirements for a language other than English. (Note: the Revised School Code requires a student, beginning with those entering third grade in 2006, to complete at least two credits in a language other than English, or equivalent course work, or other learning experiences, before receiving a high school diploma.)

FISCAL IMPACT:

The Department of Education would incur minimal additional administrative costs for setting up a process for approving non-certified teachers to teach Native American tribal language and culture classes. There would be no measurable fiscal impact on local school districts.

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