

Legislative Analysis



Teacher Certification Test Fee

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

Senate Bill 358 (S-2)

Sponsor: Sen. Goeff Hansen

House Committee: Appropriations

Senate Committee: Appropriations

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

Complete to (7-13-15)

SUMMARY:

SB 358 would amend Section 1531 of the Revised School Code (MCL 380.1531) to modify the teacher certification test fee. The bill would remove the current cap on teacher certification test fees, which is set at \$50 for a basic skills examination and \$75 for an elementary certification or a subject area examination.

Additionally, if MDE develops a teacher certification test itself, rather than contracting it out, the bill would prohibit the MDE from spending more than the cost of the current competitively bid version of examinations. The bill also would require that the MDE notify each teacher education institution at least one year before the implementation of a fee increase, and the institutions would be required to notify its students of the timing and amount of the fee increase.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) was first implemented in 1992, and the testing fee has never been increased. According to MDE and the State Budget Office, the current test fee cap hinders the number of competitive bids because the cap is considered too low, limiting the number and quality of test updates. Removing the cap would allow for updates to the test to meet current content standards and provide for situational simulations that test beyond content knowledge.

FISCAL IMPACT:

By removing the fee cap for the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC), the bill would likely lead to an increased fee for test takers and an increase in fee revenue to the State to operate the certification test program. The bill would have no fiscal impact on local units of government.

The MTTC covers a basic skills test and subject area tests, of which both are given in paper and online versions. Since the online version is optional, it may be provided at a higher cost per test. The following is the current breakdown of testing costs:

- Paper test:
 - Basic Skills: \$50
 - Subject area: \$75
- Optional Online test:
 - Basic Skills: \$140
 - Subject area: \$130

Based on the most recent data in 2013-14, there were 25,778 tests taken, which generated \$2.3 million in revenue. Currently, \$5 per test (\$129,000 total) is kept by the MDE to oversee the MTTC including 1 dedicated FTE, while the balance is paid to the test contractor.

Based on a review of other testing options, the most commonly used tests by other states, at least half, are the Praxis tests. The approximate cost per Praxis test for basic skills is \$150 and for subject area tests is \$130. If the MDE used the Praxis tests, it would generate approximately \$3.6 million in total revenue, and it would be up to the MDE to negotiate its oversight share.

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