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BILL



ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 491 (as introduced 9-16-15)  
Sponsor: Senator Phil Pavlov  
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 9-30-15

## **CONTENT**

**The bill would amend the Revised School Code to do the following:**

- **Allow the board of a school district or intermediate school district (ISD) to engage a noncertificated, nonendorsed teacher to teach a course in writing, journalism, or health sciences, or a course in a discipline designated as a critical shortage discipline.**
- **Specify that an individual's service as a full-time instructor in a field of specialization at the college level would be considered occupational experience in that field of specialization.**
- **Allow a noncertificated teacher to teach in a field of specialization if he or she had occupational experience, rather than a major or a graduate degree, in that field, for certain subjects.**
- **Require an alternative teaching program, for an interim teaching certificate, to include training in classroom management.**
- **Eliminate the grade point average (GPA) requirement for those holding a master's or doctorate degree from a regionally accredited college or university, for an interim teaching certificate.**
- **Specify that an interim teaching certificate would be valid for seven years from the date it was issued.**

The bill would take effect 90 days after its enactment.

### **Noncertificated Teacher, List of Courses**

The Code allows the board of a school district or ISD to engage a full- or part-time noncertificated, nonendorsed teacher to teach a course in computer science, a foreign language, mathematics, biology, chemistry, engineering, physics, or robotics, or in another subject area determined and designated by the State Board of Education to be appropriate in grades 9-12. The bill would include on that list a course in writing, journalism, or health sciences, and a course in a discipline included on the listing of critical shortage disciplines compiled and updated by the Superintendent of Public Instruction under the Public School Employees Retirement Act.

### **Noncertificated Teacher, Requirements to Teach**

The Code allows a noncertificated, nonendorsed teacher to teach a course noted above if he or she possesses a bachelor's degree from an accredited postsecondary institution and has a major or a graduate degree in the field of specialization in which he or she will teach. If the teacher desires to teach for more than one year, he or she also must have passed the basic skills examination and a subject area examination, if a subject area examination exists, in the

field of specialization in which he or she will teach. (The bill would refer to the professional readiness examination, instead of a basic skills examination.)

In addition, except for individuals engaged to teach a foreign language, a noncertificated teacher must have at least two years of occupational experience in the field in which he or she will teach within the five-year period immediately before the date of hire. Under the bill, serving as a full-time instructor in a field of specialization at the college or university level would be considered occupational experience in that field of specialization.

Also, under the bill, instead of having a major or a graduate degree in the field of specialization in which he or she will teach, a teacher could meet one of the following:

- For teaching engineering or mathematics, in the six-year period immediately before the date of hire, had at least five years of occupational experience in the field of engineering.
- For teaching science, in the six-year period immediately before the date of hire, had at least five years of occupational experience in a science discipline.
- For teaching biology or health sciences, in the six-year period immediately before the date of hire, had at least five years of occupational experience in a health discipline.
- For teaching a foreign language, except as provided for Hebrew, was a native speaker of that language and had resided for at least 15 years in a nation that had that language as an official language.
- For teaching Hebrew, a) had passed the professional readiness examination, and b) had passed any applicable subject area examination or, if there were none, met other requirements established by the school district or ISD.

#### Interim Teaching Certificate & Certification Process

Section 1531 of the Code requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to establish a process for an individual to earn an interim teaching certificate that qualifies him or her to teach in public schools and to earn a Michigan teaching certificate. The process must provide that the Superintendent will grant an interim teaching certificate to an individual who, among other things, is a participant in an alternative teaching program that is approved by the Superintendent. To be approved, the program provider must demonstrate that it provides an intensive training program in teaching that constitutes the equivalent of at least 12 credit hours and includes training in all of the following: a) child development or child psychology, b) family and community relationships, c) diverse learnings, d) instructional strategies, and e) a form of field-based experience in a classroom setting. Under the bill, the program also would have to include training in classroom management.

To be granted an interim teaching certificate, an individual also must hold a bachelor's, master's, doctorate, or professional degree from a regionally accredited college or university with a GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent on another scale. The bill would remove the GPA requirement for those holding a master's or doctorate degree.

If an individual seeking an interim teaching certificate had more than one master's, doctorate, or professional degree, or had a bachelor's degree with more than one major, and if he or she met the other requirements of Section 1531i, then the individual would be eligible for a subject area endorsement, if available, in each of the subject areas in which he or she held a master's, doctorate, or professional degree or had earned a major.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction must promulgate rules that he or she considers necessary to implement Section 1531i. Under the bill, notwithstanding any rule to the contrary, an interim teaching certificate issued under this section would be valid for a period of seven years from the date it was issued.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The bill would have no significant fiscal impact on State or local government. The proposed amendments would not make any major changes to the systems and procedures for noncertificated, nonendorsed individuals to be able to teach at school districts. Any costs would be minimal and within current appropriations to both the Department of Education and local schools.

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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.