

## REMOVE COURSE AND EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS FROM TEACHING CERTIFICATION

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**House Bill 4084 (H-5) as reported from committee**  
**Sponsor: Rep. Jim Tedder**  
**Committee: Education Reform**  
**Complete to 3-7-18**

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

**BRIEF SUMMARY:** House Bill 4084 would amend the qualifications for professional certification under the Revised School Code. The bill would remove the provision that the superintendent of public instruction may not advance a teacher to professional certification unless the teacher has completed a three-credit course in additional reading instruction focused on the diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities and differentiated instruction.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** House Bill 4084 would have no fiscal impact on the state or local units of government. The bill would not reduce the administrative responsibilities of the MDE.

### ***THE APPARENT PROBLEM:***

The bill sponsor noted a number of concerns about the current reading diagnostic requirement, from timing to expense to applicability. The course is currently a requirement before receiving professional certification, which may mean that the applicant completes the course after and in addition to a teacher preparation program. Additionally, it is currently required of all teachers applying for professional certification—even those who do not work with the grade level or subject matter for which the training would be applicable.

### ***THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:***

Current law requires that the instruction include the following, as the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) determines to be appropriate for the person's certification level and endorsements: interest inventories, English language learning screening, visual and auditory discrimination tools, language expression and processing screening, phonemics, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, spelling and writing assessment tools, and instructional strategies. The bill would remove this course requirement.

Additionally, the bill would remove the requirement that teachers pass the basic skills examination (currently the SAT, as described in ***Background Information***, below) before being awarded a teaching certificate.

The bill would take effect 90 days after enactment.

MCL 380.1531

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

### ***Reading disability diagnostics course requirement***

Public Act 118 of 2006 (Senate Bill 327)<sup>1</sup> instituted the requirement that, in order to advance a person's certification to professional certification or renew a provisional teaching certificate, the person must have completed at least a three-credit course with appropriate field experience in the diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities and differentiated instruction.

Public Act 32 of 2007 (Senate Bill 70)<sup>2</sup> moved the implementation date from 2007 to 2009, in order to allow universities time to implement the required curriculum, and removed the requirement for people renewing provisional teaching certificates.

[Note: In SB 327 as originally passed by the Senate, the three-credit course was only required of elementary school teachers. The House adopted, and the Senate concurred in, a substitute which required the course for all teachers.]

### ***Basic skills examination***

Beginning October 1, 2017, according to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE), candidates seeking initial teacher certification would only be able to take the SAT as the basic skills examination (tests taken before that date that qualified at the time they were taken may also be honored).

The memo issued by MDE may be found here:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Testing\\_Guidance\\_601819\\_7.PDF](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Testing_Guidance_601819_7.PDF)

More information about the alternative route to Michigan certification or endorsement: [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Alternative\\_Routes\\_to\\_Certification\\_and\\_Endorsement\\_597547\\_7.PDF](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Alternative_Routes_to_Certification_and_Endorsement_597547_7.PDF)

## **ARGUMENTS:**

### ***For:***

Proponents argue that the timing of the requirement—not before graduation, but before professional certification—means that some teachers receive the training after their teacher preparation programs. If the training is so critical, they argue, it should be incorporated into the preparation programs themselves. As it is, they say that the training seems like yet another in a series of burdensome requirements.

### ***Response:***

Current language requires teachers to fulfill the requirement either during their teacher preparation programs or during the first six years of employment in classroom teaching. According to MDE, most people taking the course post-baccalaureate are those who graduated before the requirement was instituted and are only now moving to professional certification, as well as teachers moving to Michigan from out of state.

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<sup>1</sup> House Fiscal Agency analysis for PA 118/SB 327 available at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2005-SB-0327>

<sup>2</sup> House Fiscal Agency analysis for PA 32/SB 70 available at <http://legislature.mi.gov/doc.aspx?2007-SB-0070>

***For:***

Supporters also argue that the requirement is unnecessarily broad. Why, they ask, would intensive training in diagnosing reading disabilities be necessary for school administrators or teachers of specialized subject such as art or music?

***For:***

Likewise, supporters argue that passage of the SAT—another requirement that would be eliminated under the bill—is a poor indicator of competence. In fact, the Michigan Department of Education supports removal of the basic skills examination at all levels, stating that there is no indication that it results in a better teacher.

***Against:***

While the bill was reported unanimously from committee, some wondered whether the focus on reading disability diagnosis and remediation could be better incorporated at the university level. Alternatively, they suggested, the training could be offered as part of the professional development required of teachers on an ongoing basis.

***POSITIONS:***

The following organizations support the bill:

Michigan Association of Secondary School Principals (2-22-18)

Michigan Association of School Administrators (2-22-18)

ESA Legislative Group (2-22-18)

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