



Senate Fiscal Agency
P.O. Box 30036
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536



Telephone: (517) 373-5383
Fax: (517) 373-1986

Senate Bill 354 (Substitute S-4 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Erika Geiss
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 12-26-24

CONTENT

The bill would amend the Revised School Code to allow the Superintendent of Public Instruction (SPI) to issue a Michigan teaching certificate to an individual who held or was eligible to hold a valid teaching certificate in another state or with a Federally recognized Indian tribe if that individual passed either the reading subtest developed by the SPI or a reading test that was based on the science of reading and approved by the other state or Federally recognized Indian tribe and an existing licensing examination.

The Code requires the SPI to determine the requirements for and issue all licenses and certificates for teachers. Generally, the SPI may *only* issue a teaching certificate to an individual if that individual has passed *appropriate available examinations*, including an equivalent examination approved by the SPI for an individual holding a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe.¹

The bill would specify that, for an individual who held or was eligible for a valid teaching certificate in another State or with a Federally recognized Indian tribe, an equivalent examination would have to meet the following requirements:

- Be approved by the state or the Federally recognized Indian tribe that issued the individual's teaching certificate.
- Already be in existence as of the bill's effective date.

An individual who held or was eligible to hold a valid teaching certificate in another *country* would have to pass an equivalent examination approved by the SPI to receive a teaching certificate.

Additionally, the bill would specify that an individual who held or was eligible for a valid teaching certificate in another State or with a Federally recognized Indian tribe who sought a pre-K-to-grade-3-level endorsement or grade-3-to-grade-6-level endorsement also would have to pass the State's required reading subtest *or*, if the other State or Federally recognized Indian tribe had approved a reading subtest that was based on the science of reading, the reading subtest approved by the other State or Federally recognized Indian tribe.

An individual who held or was eligible to hold a valid teaching certificate in another country who sought a pre-K-to-grade-3-level endorsement or grade-3-to-grade-6-level endorsement

¹ Public Act 110 of 2023 amended the law to require the SPI to issue a Michigan teaching certificate to, as well as endorsements comparable to those previously held by, an individual with a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe if the individual has taught successfully in that state, country, or for that tribe for at least three years and meets applicable elementary or secondary reading credit requirements.

also would have to pass the State's required reading subtest or the reading subtest that the SPI approved to replace the State's current reading subtest.

The Code also requires the SPI, based on criteria recommended by a committee of teachers, representatives of approved teacher education institutions, Michigan education organizations and associations, and experts in measurement and assessment to develop and select one or more subject area examinations. Under the bill, if an individual passed one of these subject area examinations, that individual also would be considered to have passed the appropriate available examinations and could be issued a Michigan teaching certificate.

Currently, "an individual holding a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe" means an individual with a valid teaching certificate or an individual who is eligible for a teaching certificate in the state or country or with the Federally recognized Indian tribe in which or with which the individual is certificated or eligible for certification. Under the bill, the term would mean an individual with a valid teaching certificate or an individual who is eligible for a teaching certificate in another state, in another country, or with a Federally recognized Indian tribe.

MCL 380.1531

BRIEF RATIONALE

Reportedly, Michigan schools and communities are struggling due to a shortage of certified teachers. According to a report by Michigan State University's Education Policy Innovation Collaborative (EPIC), from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2016-2017 school year, more Michigan teachers exited the profession than entered it.² Though in recent years the rates of teachers entering and exiting the profession stabilized, the percentage of teachers who were in their first year of teaching reached an all-time high, as did the percentage of teachers who were new to their current district.³ Due to the shortage, school districts have had to compensate by relying on teachers with temporary credentials, multi-site teachers, and third-party virtual course providers.⁴ In 2023, Public Act 110 sought to address the shortage of certified teachers by requiring the SPI to grant a Michigan teaching certificate to an individual with a teaching certificate from another state, country, or Federally recognized Indian tribe if that individual had successfully taught for three years. Some people believe the State could attract even more teachers by expanding reciprocity to include certified teachers from other states who had less than three years of experience.

Legislative Analyst: Abby Schneider

FISCAL IMPACT

The bill would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

Fiscal Analyst: Cory Savino, PhD

² Kilbride, et al., "Michigan Teacher Shortage Study: Comprehensive Report", EPIC, p. 39, Jan. 2023.

³ *Id.* pp. 40-41.

⁴ *Id.* p. 76.

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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.