

Legislative Analysis



TEACHER CERTIFICATION AMENDMENTS

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

House Bill 4150 as reported from committee
Sponsor: Rep. Mark Tisdell

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

House Bill 4151 as reported
Sponsor: Rep. David Martin

House Bill 4152 (H-2) as adopted
Sponsor: Rep. Kathy Schmaltz

House Bill 4153 (H-1) as reported
Sponsor: Rep. Nancy DeBoer

1st Committee: Education and Workforce
2nd Committee (HBs 4151 and 4153): Rules

Complete to 3-12-25

SUMMARY:

House Bills 4150 to 4153 would each make changes to the Revised School Code regarding teacher certification in Michigan.

House Bill 4150 would amend section 1538 of the code to eliminate fees related to applications for teaching certificates, endorsements, and permits.

Beginning on the effective date, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) would be prohibited from charging a fee for any of the following:

- The submission of an application.
- An evaluation of an application.
- The issuance, renewal, or reinstatement of a certificate, license, approval, endorsement, authorization, or permit.

The bill also would provide that applicants are not required to pay a fee to MDE for having an initial application for a certificate, license, approval, endorsement, authorization, or permit for conformance with application requirements or for having an application for the renewal or reinstatement of a certificate, license, approval, endorsement, authorization, or permit evaluated for conformance with application requirements.

Beginning on the bill's effective date, MDE would have to cover the cost of a fee that would have been collected before that date for the evaluation of an application.

MCL 380.1531h and 380.1538

House Bill 4151 would amend section 1531 of the code to require that an additional subject area endorsement be issued to a teaching certificate if the certificate holder passed that subject area on the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC).

MCL 380.1531

House Bill 4152 would amend section 1531e of the code to provide a deadline for teacher preparation programs and alternate teaching programs to ensure that programs for mathematics and science teachers were developed in consultation with a professor who specializes in mathematics or science, respectively. This requirement would not apply to programs that do not teach math or science content.

If a preparation program does not meet this requirement by September 30, 2027, then after that date MDE would have to revoke authorization for existing programs and not approve any new programs that do not comply with this requirement.

MCL 380.1531e

House Bill 4153 would amend the code to create authorization for public schools to issue a *local teaching certificate*.

Local teaching certificate would mean a teaching certificate issued by a school district, intermediate school district (ISD), or public school academy (PSA) that authorizes an individual to teach a specified subject area only in a school operated by that district, ISD, or PSA.

Under the bill, if a school district, ISD, or PSA elects to issue a local teaching certificate, then the board of that district, ISD, or PSA would have to establish requirements for issuance of their local teaching certificate. The superintendent of public instruction (state superintendent) would be required to establish a process for local boards to grant local teaching certificates in accordance with federal law. This process could not allow for an individual to teach special education under a local teaching certificate. In addition to any locally established requirements for issuance of the local teaching certificate, an individual would have to hold a bachelor's, master's, doctorate, or professional degree from a regionally accredited college or university in the subject area that the individual will teach and have graduated with at least a 3.0 GPA (grade point average) on a 4.0 scale while earning that degree.

A local teaching certificate could not be issued for longer than a five-year period, and the bill contains a sunset provision that ends authorization for issuing local certificates after July 1, 2035. After an individual's local teaching certificate expires, they could not serve as a public school teacher unless they obtain an MDE-issued teaching certificate. However, the five-year limit for a local teaching certificate's validity would not apply to an individual working as an industrial technology career program or a career and technical education (CTE) program.

Additionally, an individual employed as a teacher who holds a local teaching certificate would have to complete an MDE-approved course on cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) that involves a test demonstration on a mannequin and instruction on foreign body airway obstruction management and that results in certification issued by the American Red Cross, American Heart Association, or a comparable organization or institution approved by MDE.

Under current law, an individual must have a valid Michigan teaching certificate to work as a teacher in a Michigan public school unless they meet alternate requirements specified in the Revised School Code. The state superintendent determines the requirements for teaching certificates, which are contained in an administrative ruleset, and a certificate may be issued only to an individual who has passed the applicable state teaching examinations.

The bill would amend other sections of the code to include an individual with a local teaching certificate under the definition of *certified teacher*. Presently, a *certified teacher* means an individual with a valid teaching certificate issued by the state superintendent under section 1531 (which contains requirements for teacher certification in Michigan).

In addition, under current law, for the first three years an individual is employed as a classroom teacher, their school must assign them at least one master teacher to serve as their mentor. House Bill 4153 would exempt an individual working under a local teaching certificate from this requirement.

If an individual uses fraudulent means to obtain a teaching certificate under current law, they are subject to penalties for those violations as provided in section 1809 of the code. The bill would amend section 1809 to add language allowing the board of a school district, ISD, or PSA to refuse to issue or renew a local teaching certificate to an individual who is convicted of a violation under that section. Similarly, if a certified teacher is convicted of certain crimes, their Michigan teaching certificate can be suspended or revoked following a process described in section 1535a. The bill would extend these provisions to also apply to the holder of a local teaching certificate.

MCL 380.501 et seq. and proposed MCL 380.1531/

BRIEF DISCUSSION:

Michigan currently has three teaching certificates (interim, standard, and professional) that individuals wishing to work as teachers may apply for through the Michigan Department of Education. While the Revised School Code contains requirements that all individuals working as teachers in public schools be appropriately licensed for the grades and subjects they teach, schools are allowed to place individuals outside of their endorsed content or grade areas under certain circumstances. In addition, individuals who are not certified teachers may be employed on a full-time basis under a substitute permit if they meet additional criteria. Career and technical education (CTE) teachers have additional flexibilities offered in placement, reflecting a desire to draw individuals who work in career fields with a high demand for new workers to share their knowledge and skills with students through a CTE program.

House Bill 4150 is intended to save teachers money by eliminating the initial application and renewal fees for their teaching certificates and for endorsements. Certificates are valid for five years, and teachers are required to complete professional learning as part of maintaining their teaching credentials. Endorsements are an additional cost, and specify which grades and content areas a teacher may teach in a school. Because Michigan has a shortage of teachers for its public schools, MDE allows teachers to be assigned to teach classes outside of those for which they have endorsements in accordance with department guidelines.

Because of the time it takes for an individual to complete the necessary requirements to gain certification as a teacher, MDE also has permits available to allow individuals to serve for up to one year as a substitute teacher. However, according to a report by the education group EdTrust Midwest, during the 2022-23 school year, more than a third of all teachers who were teaching out of field (that is, teaching a class for which they did not hold the appropriate endorsement) were working in schools that serve a high percentage of students living in

poverty.¹ This has led to concerns regarding teacher quality in schools with the greatest concentrations of need, as those schools also have a higher percentage of their appropriately credentialed teachers in the beginning of their careers compared to schools that serve wealthier communities.

The cost of becoming a teacher is also a barrier to entering the profession, and supporters of expanding opportunities for noncertified individuals to teach in a full-time manner say that these arrangements allow for more people to take nontraditional paths to becoming teachers while also earning needed money to support their families as they work toward becoming fully certified. Critics of these arrangements say that not enough support is offered to individuals working under permits to ensure that their teaching practices provide the necessary student learning, and that if a school is overly reliant on using teachers working out of field or individuals teaching under temporary permits, students will not receive the same quality of instruction as their peers in schools with a greater percentage of staff working within their credentialed areas.

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bill 4150 would reduce revenue for the state and would have no fiscal impact on local school districts, PSAs, and ISDs. MDE is expected to receive \$8.0 million in revenue through certification fees in FY 2024-25. Approximately \$4.2 million of the certification fees support the Office of Educator Excellence, which is responsible for educator workforce development efforts, and remaining fees support administrative activities across the department. The bill would remove the requirements for applicants for teacher certification to pay these fees, resulting in a loss of approximately \$8.0 million in revenue annually.

House Bill 4151 would have a minimal fiscal impact on the state and would have no fiscal impact on local school districts, PSAs, and ISDs. While the bill does remove some requirements to obtain a specific endorsement on a teaching certificate, such as literacy training, completion of an approved preparation program, and the requirement to work directly with students within the subject area, an application would still be required for teacher certification. Although the scope of the application may be reduced, it is likely to have a minimal impact on MDE's costs.

House Bill 4152 would have no fiscal impact on the state and could have an indeterminate fiscal impact on certain institutions of higher education that offer teacher preparation programs. Under the bill, approval for a teacher preparation program would be revoked if the math or science curriculum needed for a math or science endorsement that involves the teaching of that content was not developed in consultation with a professor who specializes in the respective subject. The potential fiscal impact of this change cannot be determined at this time.

House Bill 4153 may reduce costs for the state and would have no direct fiscal impact on local school districts, PSAs, and ISDs. The bill would allow a school board or PSA board of directors to issue local teaching certificates, which would certify an individual to teach without seeking certification from MDE. This could reduce the amount of time needed by MDE to process requests, which could result in lower costs. The provisions in the bill are permissive in nature

¹ <https://midwest.edtrust.org/resource/closing-the-opportunity-divide-addressing-michigans-teacher-shortage-problem-for-students-most-in-need/>

and do not directly impose any costs or savings on districts, PSAs, and ISDs. The bill would allow for a wider applicant pool for teaching positions and could also provide districts, PSAs, and ISDs with more flexibility in filling positions that are vacant due to a shortage of qualified teachers. The impact on an individual district, PSA, or ISD will depend on how the district, PSA, or ISD chooses to implement local teaching certificates.

POSITIONS:

A representative of Launch Michigan testified in support for HB 4152. (3-5-25)

The Great Lakes Education Project Education Fund indicated support for the bills. (3-5-25)

Oakland Schools indicated support for HBs 4150, 4151, and 4152. (3-5-25)

The Michigan Association of Public School Academies indicated support for HBs 4150, 4151, and 4153. (3-5-25)

The following entities indicated support for HB 4150 (3-5-25):

- EdTrust Midwest
- Teach Plus Michigan

The Michigan Department of Education indicated opposition to the bills. (3-5-25)

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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.