



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #538

### **Alternative Teaching License (DPI -- Administrative and Other Funding)**

[LFB 2015-17 Budget Summary: Page 372, #13]

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#### **CURRENT LAW**

Any individual teaching in a public school, including an independent "2r" charter school, must hold a license or a permit issued by DPI. The State Superintendent is responsible for establishing procedures for teacher licensing through administrative rule. Initial educator licenses provided by DPI require successful completion of a traditional or alternative teacher training program, or demonstration of equivalent teaching experience, in addition to demonstrating subject area competency. Teaching permits are also available to individuals with limited teacher training or classroom experience when necessary to fill statewide or district-level shortage areas. Approximately 59,900 teachers were employed by Wisconsin public schools in 2013-14.

#### **GOVERNOR**

Require the State Superintendent to grant a teaching license to an individual who meets all of the following requirements: (a) has a bachelor's degree; (b) demonstrates proficiency in the subject area or areas that he or she intends to teach by passing a competency exam approved by DPI; and (c) has relevant experience in the subject area or areas that he or she intends to teach, as determined by DPI. Specify that a license granted to an individual meeting these requirements would authorize the individual to teach in grades six through 12 only in the subject area or areas in which he or she demonstrated proficiency and relevant experience. The license would be valid for three years, and would be renewable for three-year periods. Provide \$20,000 PR annually above base level funding of \$3,417,000 PR to reflect the estimated increase in revenue associated with the alternative licensing process.

## DISCUSSION POINTS

1. K-12 teacher education and licensing requirements are established under Chapter PI 34 of Wisconsin Administrative Code. PI 34 provides standards for higher educational institutions that prepare professional school personnel and defines standards and license stages for elementary and secondary teachers, administrators, and pupil services professionals. Under PI 34, each license is issued for a specific range of childhood development based on a pupil's age, including early childhood, middle childhood, early adolescence, and adolescence, for a particular subject area, and for either regular or special education.

2. PI 34 provides for three stages of licenses for teachers, administrators, and pupil services personnel: (a) an initial educator license; (b) a professional educator license; and (c) a master educator license. An initial educator license is valid for a period of five years and is non-renewable. An individual with an initial educator license may apply for a professional educator license, which can be renewed for an indefinite number of five-year periods, after completing a professional development plan and obtaining at least three years of teaching experience. A master educator license is a voluntary 10-year license that is issued to an educator who has completed a national board certification based on a rigorous assessment process, or a Wisconsin master educator assessment process if the individual teaches a subject for which national board certification is not available. Initial and professional educator licenses cost \$100 at the time of initial licensure or license renewal, or \$150 for out-of-state educators applying for their first Wisconsin license, and master educator licenses cost \$250.

3. The 2002 reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the No Child Left Behind Act, and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required all states to ensure that educators teaching core academic subjects (including the arts, reading and language arts, English, history, economics, civics and government, geography, foreign language, mathematics, and science) and special education are highly qualified. Federal law requires that teachers in these subjects must have a bachelor's degree with a major or the equivalent in the subject area they teach, have full state certification or licensure, and demonstrate their subject area competency. In Wisconsin, candidates demonstrate subject area competency by earning a specified score on a content-area assessment. Additionally, most teacher licenses issued by DPI require the completion of a teacher preparatory program. State law requires a teacher preparatory program to include a full semester of student teaching, following the daily schedule and semester calendar of the cooperating school and working with an assigned cooperating teacher.

4. Current teacher licensure programs allow someone who has a bachelor's degree in the subject he or she wishes to teach and demonstrates subject area competency to qualify for an initial teaching license without completing a traditional teacher preparatory program. An individual with no teaching experience may qualify for a teaching license in a statewide shortage area (including mathematics, science, special education, English as a second language, bilingual/bicultural, world languages, technology education, or business education) after completing an alternative route education program. These programs provide part-time teacher training over a period of six to 18 months, during which the individual can teach under an emergency permit or a professional

teaching permit. In 2010-11, 158 individuals completed an alternative route preparation program, 112 of whom were employed in a Wisconsin public school in 2012-13.

5. An individual who has not completed an alternative route teacher education program, but who has a bachelor's degree and demonstrates subject area competency, can qualify for a license based on equivalency. To qualify, the individual must have three years of previous teaching experience, which can include relevant out-of-state, private or charter school, post-secondary, or industry teaching experience, including experience gained while the individual held an emergency permit. This license was first offered in 2012, and DPI indicates that 216 individuals have applied for a license based on previous teaching experience since that time.

6. Additionally, teaching permits allow districts to fill positions in shortage areas with individuals who have a bachelor's degree but no formal teacher training. Two-year professional teaching permits are available in statewide critical shortage areas to an individual who has a minimum of five years of professional experience in that subject area and at least 100 hours of formal instruction in the application of modern curricula in that subject area. Supervision by a licensed teacher must be provided during the initial two-year permit, after which the permit can be renewed for five-year periods. An emergency permit is available upon the request of an employing school district, and therefore can be used for a district-specific shortage area. Emergency permit holders must have a bachelor's degree and work towards full licensure in the subject and grade level of the assignment within three years by enrolling in an educator preparation program, with the one-year permit renewable upon request from the employing school district if the individual is working towards achieving full licensure.

7. An additional permit is available to increase the number of instructors in technical education, a common area of teacher shortage. A trade specialist permit is intended for individuals who have occupational experience in a particular trade area such as machining, welding, or auto body repair. To qualify, an individual must have completed an apprenticeship program and have three years of practical experience beyond the apprenticeship, or have four years of institutional training in the trade area. No bachelor's degree is required. A trade specialist permit is valid for a period of five years, with the option to renew the permit for five-year periods, and can be used to teach high school courses related to specific trades.

8. Beginning in September, 2015, all candidates for an initial educator license, including alternative route candidates, will be required to complete a teacher performance assessment known as the edTPA, developed by Stanford University's Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity, prior to licensure. Beginning in September, 2016, candidates will be required to earn a minimum passing score established by DPI in order to become licensed. The edTPA assesses teacher performance based on a portfolio that includes video clips of a candidate's teaching, lesson plans, assessments, student work samples, and reflective commentaries. The portfolio is submitted for external scoring by trained scorers. Most candidates will complete the edTPA during their student teaching.

9. In 2013, the Speaker's Rural Schools Task Force was formed to identify challenges facing rural schools and to make recommendations to address those challenges. In May, 2014, the Rural Schools Task Force issued a report with recommendations including pursuing flexibility in

teacher licensing to allow individuals who have extensive experience or competency in a subject area, particularly an area of teacher shortage, to receive a license without obtaining a traditional education degree. The report indicated that the task force had heard testimony from schools requesting additional licensure flexibility.

10. The Governor's proposal differs from the existing license and permit procedures described above because it would not require any teacher training or professional development prior to licensure or as a condition of license renewal, would not limit subject areas to areas of teacher shortage, and would not require candidates to demonstrate pedagogical competency through the edTPA assessment or another method. Some argue that the proposal would increase the number of licensed teachers available to school districts, particularly those in rural districts facing teacher shortages, and that it may be beneficial to pupils to be taught by educators with diverse professional experience.

11. On the other hand, some have expressed concern that content knowledge is not necessarily sufficient to ensure that someone would be an effective educator. Skills such as pedagogy, classroom management, lesson planning, and instruction strategies for pupils with diverse learning styles are also required of a successful teacher, and these skills are taught through the teacher training programs or alternative route programs currently required for teacher licensure. Additionally, one could argue that sufficient flexibility already exists to allow an individual without a teaching degree to begin teaching in a district or statewide shortage area while pursuing formal teacher training at the same time.

12. Additionally, DPI staff has expressed concern that licenses issued under the proposal would not fit within established licensure categories or stages. In particular, while licenses provided under the bill would be valid to teach grades six through 12, DPI's current licensure system does not grant licenses based on grades, but rather based on ages grouped into developmental categories. Under current practice, a license to teach the early adolescent-adolescent developmental category includes pupils ages 10 to 21, or approximately grades five through 12. Additionally, DPI issues licenses for some subject areas, such as art or music, without specifying a developmental category. Licenses under the bill would also be valid for three years, rather than five years, and individuals would not advance through the initial, professional, and master educator stages used currently. DPI staff indicates that administrative costs may be associated with this change, such as costs to modify the online license system. It may be preferable to integrate individuals qualifying for a license under the procedure specified in the bill into the licensing structure that applies to other educators in the state.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation to issue a teaching license to an individual who has a bachelor's degree and relevant experience in the subject area he or she wishes to teach and demonstrates competency in that area.

2. Modify the Governor's proposal with one or both of the following changes:

a. Delete language specifying that a license under the bill would authorize an individual to teach only grades six through 12 and would be valid for a period of three years. Under this alternative, DPI could issue the licenses under its current licensure structure, including developmental categories, subject areas, and license stages.

b. Specify that in addition to demonstrating subject-area competency, a candidate for licensure under the bill would also be required to demonstrate competency in pedagogical skills in a manner determined by DPI.

3. Delete provision.

<b>ALT 3</b>	<b>Change to Bill</b>
PR	- \$40,000

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