



Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 70 (Substitute S-1 as passed by the Senate)
Sponsor: Senator Nancy Cassis
Committee: Education

Date Completed: 5-8-07

RATIONALE

Public Act 110 of 2006 amended the Revised School Code to require a teacher to receive reading instruction within his or her first six years of teaching in order to qualify for a renewal of a provisional teaching certificate or advancement to a professional teaching certificate. The requirement is scheduled to take effect on July 1, 2007, but some universities reportedly will not have the required course in place by then. It has been suggested that the implementation be delayed a year to give universities additional time to develop the course, and that prospective teachers be allowed to complete the course as part of their teacher education program.

CONTENT

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

- **Delay from July 1, 2007, to July 1, 2008, the beginning date of a requirement that a certified teacher receive instruction on reading disabilities within the first six years of classroom teaching.**
- **Permit a person to complete the required course as part of his or her teacher preparation training.**

The Code provides that, for a person holding a teaching certificate, beginning July 1, 2007, the Superintendent of Public Instruction may not renew the person's provisional teaching certificate or advance the person's certification to professional certification unless, during the first six years of his or her employment in classroom teaching, the person successfully completes at least a three-credit course of study with

appropriate field experiences in the diagnosis and remediation of reading disabilities and differentiated instruction.

Under the bill, this requirement would apply beginning July 1, 2008.

The bill would remove the requirement that the course be completed during the first six years of classroom teaching, and instead would permit a person to complete the course of study either as part of his or her teacher preparation program or during the first six years of classroom teaching. The bill also would remove the reference to a provisional teaching certificate. Under the bill, the Superintendent could not advance a person's certification to professional certification unless the person had successfully completed the three-credit course as specified.

MCL 380.1531

ARGUMENTS

(Please note: The arguments contained in this analysis originate from sources outside the Senate Fiscal Agency. The Senate Fiscal Agency neither supports nor opposes legislation.)

Supporting Argument

In the classroom, teachers—new teachers in particular—may have difficulty identifying the specific barriers that might be preventing a student from reading at grade level. During the crucial years between kindergarten and third grade, it is important to help children develop solid reading skills that will serve as the foundation for the rest of their education. Without proper training, a teacher may recommend that a pupil be placed into special education classes or

diagnose the child with a learning disability, when the real issue may be a visual, hearing, or motor disability. In addition, emotional disturbances or social conditions such as poverty or difficulties at home can affect a child's performance in school.

The reading training course required under the Revised School Code will enable teachers to identify these and other barriers and help students to work past them, providing more effective education to students at this crucial age, and alleviating strain on the special education programs. Evidently, however, some universities have not completed development of the required course. The bill would postpone the implementation of the reading training requirement until July 1, 2008, to give universities additional time to finish developing the course.

The bill also would allow prospective teachers to take the course as part of their teacher education program or during the first six years of classroom teaching. When the reading course requirement was enacted in 2006, some expressed concern that if the course were incorporated into the teacher education curriculum, it could lengthen the time needed to complete the program, or discourage prospective teachers from entering the field. Some students, however, might prefer to take the course while they are still in school, while others would rather complete the teacher education program and take the course later during the summer, or in the evening or on weekends. The bill would give an individual the flexibility to decide the best time to take the course, based on his or her schedule and other considerations.

Legislative Analyst: Curtis Walker

FISCAL IMPACT

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

Fiscal Analyst: Kirk Sanderson

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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.