AN ACT to renumber and amend 118.19 (14) (a); to amend 118.19 (14) (c); and to create 118.19 (14) (a) 2. of the statutes; relating to: requirements for initial licensure as a special education teacher.

Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau

This bill permits an individual to receive an initial license as a special education teacher if the individual successfully completes a course in the teaching of reading and reading comprehension, provided the individual satisfies all other requirements for licensure by the Department of Public Instruction. Current law requires, as a condition for receiving an initial license to teach in special education, that an individual has passed an examination identical to the Foundations of Reading test.

The people of the state of Wisconsin, represented in senate and assembly, do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. 118.19 (14) (a) of the statutes is renumbered 118.19 (14) (a) 1. and amended to read:

118.19 (14) (a) 1. The Except as provided in subd. 2., the department may not issue an initial teaching license that authorizes the holder to teach in grades
kindergarten to 5 or in special education, an initial license as a reading teacher, or
an initial license as a reading specialist, unless the applicant has passed an
examination identical to the Foundations of Reading test administered in 2012 as
part of the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure. The department shall set
the passing cut score on the examination at a level no lower than the level
recommended by the developer of the test, based on this state’s standards.

SECTION 2. 118.19 (14) (a) 2. of the statutes is created to read:

118.19 (14) (a) 2. The department shall waive the requirement under subd. 1.
for an applicant seeking an initial teaching license that authorizes the holder to
teach in special education if the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the
department that the applicant has successfully completed a course that satisfies all
of the following:

a. The course provides rigorous instruction in the teaching of phonemic
   awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and fluency.

b. A student in the course receives feedback and coaching from an individual
   who holds either a masters degree in reading or a reading specialist license issued
   by the department.

c. A student in the course demonstrates competence in phonemic awareness,
   phonics, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and fluency by providing a portfolio of
   work.

SECTION 3. 118.19 (14) (c) of the statutes is amended to read:

118.19 (14) (c) Any teacher who passes the examination under par. (a) 1, shall
notify the department, which shall add a notation to the teacher’s license indicating
that he or she passed the examination.

(END)