

Report From Agency
FINAL REPORT
CLEARINGHOUSE RULE 14-018
CHAPTER PI 34
Charter School Teaching Licenses

Analysis by the Department of Public Instruction

Statutory authority: s. 115.28(7)(a), Stats.

Statute interpreted: s. 115.28(7)(g), Stats.

The basis and purpose of the proposed rule, including how the proposed rule advances relevant statutory goals or purpose:

2013 Wisconsin Act 20 created s. 115.28(7)(g), Stats., which requires the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to grant a charter school teaching license to any person who has a bachelor's degree and demonstrates, based on criteria established by the DPI, that the person is proficient in the subject or subjects he or she intends to teach. PI 34 is modified to include the criteria that a person must meet to demonstrate that the person is proficient in the subject or subjects he or she intends to teach.

A public hearing to consider comments on the proposed rule were conducted by the department on March 24, 2014.

The following persons testified at the March 24, 2014 hearing (some also provided written testimony as well):

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Paul Tweed	Wildlands Science Research Charter School
Phil McDade	Member of Governance Board of Monona Grove Liberal Arts Charter School for the 21 st Century (MG21)
Steve DeMay	Co-founder and Advisor at Valley New School
Sean Roberts	Milwaukee Charter School Advocates
Barry Golden	Representing Self

The following persons submitted written testimony:

NAME	ORGANIZATION
Carmen Rivers	Waukesha County Resident
Daniel Grego	Executive Director, TransCenter for Youth

Summary of public comments relative to the rule, the agency's response to those comments, and changes made as a result of those comments:

Summary of the public comments:

1. The charter school license does not adequately reflect what is going on in some charter schools. In some schools, teachers work as “generalists” rather than as “specialists” in one particular subject content area. There is more flexibility needed for new innovative and demonstrated project based learning teaching environments. Teaching licenses need to be developed for teachers in project based learning settings. This charter school license is not sufficient because it focuses on demonstrating proficiency in a particular subject while teachers in project-based learning settings teach multiple subjects through their proficiency in pedagogy as opposed to content. Schools’ old methodologies of teaching in silos, focused on single stand alone subject areas, is no longer appropriate for students. Licensing should reflect this reality.
2. The definition of “highly qualified” teachers in models where the teacher is a generalist rather than a specialist, are the teachers who can work with a small group of students and help them connect to all kinds of learning resources so that their projects are rigorous, but often interdisciplinary. Creating rules that makes working in such models all but impossible prevents this innovative practice.
3. It does not make sense to have a license just for charter schools. Any school receiving taxpayer funds should be held to the same standards regarding teacher qualifications. The type of school should not make a difference; the expectations should be the same. The same rules should apply to public schools, charter schools, and private schools participating in the choice program.
4. By giving charter schools flexibility in who they hire, charter schools can make hiring decisions to best meet the needs of their students. However, it is also important to make sure that charter school candidates know their subject matter well which this proposed rule does by requiring the use of the Praxis II to determine subject-area competence.

Agency response:

The PI 34 language was drafted in response to 2013 Wisconsin Act 20. This legislation created new language under s. 115.28(7)(g), Stats., to allow individuals with at least a bachelor’s degree to be licensed teachers in non-virtual charter schools if they demonstrate proficiency in the subjects they intend to teach.

Additionally, federal law requires demonstration of content proficiency to be compliant with the ESEA requirement for highly qualified teachers. As part of this ESEA requirement, the teacher must demonstrate content knowledge in the subject(s) they are assigned to teach.

Changes made to the rule as a result of these comments:

No changes were made to the rule.

Changes to the plain language analysis or the fiscal estimate:

No changes to the plain language analysis or the fiscal estimate were made.

Responses to Clearinghouse Report:

All of the recommendations were accepted by the agency.