



## Legislative Fiscal Bureau

One East Main, Suite 301 • Madison, WI 53703 • (608) 266-3847 • Fax: (608) 267-6873  
Email: [fiscal.bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov](mailto:fiscal.bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov) • Website: <http://legis.wisconsin.gov/lfb>

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Joint Committee on Finance

Paper #542

### Requirements for Teachers (DPI -- Administrative and Other Funding)

[LFB 2013-15 Budget Summary: Page 396, #22, Page 397, #24 & 25]

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#### CURRENT LAW

In general, under current law, an education degree is required in order to be issued a teaching license, licenses are issued for specific grade bands and academic subjects, and licenses are issued according to three license stages, for periods of either five or 10 years. Approved education programs include a practicum experience, meaning a supervised experience in a school or other setting, which provides practical application of theory and classroom experience for a student-teacher. Also, under PI 34, an initial or professional educator license may be issued to an applicant who has not completed an approved program, if the applicant can present evidence of having completed an approved program in another state except student teaching, if the applicant verifies at least three years of successful teaching experience in the subject or grade level of preparation and if the applicant meets other applicable requirements.

Under Chapter PI 34 of the Administrative Code, a charter school instructional staff license may be issued to an individual who holds a valid state teaching license, to teach a subject outside of his or her teaching license. An individual assigned to teach a core academic subject in a charter school is required to hold a valid state teaching license, and have done one of the following: (a) completed a major or minor in the assigned core academic subject; (b) successfully passed a content knowledge examination, prescribed by the State Superintendent, in the assigned core academic subject; and (c) demonstrated knowledge and competence in the assigned core academic subject based on an assessment process approved by the State Superintendent.

Under current law, the governing body of a virtual charter school must assign an appropriately licensed teacher for each online course offered by the virtual charter school. No person holding only a permit to teach exclusively in a charter school may teach in a virtual charter school, and no person holding both a license to teach exclusively in a charter school and a license to teach in other public schools may teach, in a virtual charter school, a subject or at a level that is not authorized by the latter license. Also, beginning July 1, 2010, no person may

teach an online course in a public school, including a charter school, unless he or she has completed at least 30 hours of professional development designed to prepare a teacher for online teaching.

## **GOVERNOR**

Require the State Superintendent to grant a charter school teaching license to any person who has a bachelor's degree and demonstrates, based upon criteria established by DPI, that the person is proficient in the subjects that he or she intends to teach. Provide that the license would authorize the person to teach those subjects in a charter school. Provide that the license would be valid for three years, and would be renewable for three-year periods.

Prohibit DPI from requiring professional development for an appropriately licensed person teaching in a virtual charter school that would not otherwise be required for a similarly licensed person teaching outside of a virtual charter school. Delete the current law requirement that a person teaching an online course in a public school complete at least 30 hours of online teaching professional development.

Require the Department to ensure that teaching experience gained while a person held an emergency permit issued under PI 34 counts toward fulfillment of the teaching experience requirement for a license based on experience or for a license as a school administrator.

## **DISCUSSION POINTS**

### **Charter School Teaching License**

1. Under current law, the chartering or contracting entity of a "2r" independent charter school is required to ensure that all instructional staff of "2r" charter schools hold a license or permit to teach issued by DPI. For virtual charter schools, the governing body of such a school must assign an appropriately licensed teacher for each online course offered by the virtual charter school.

2. The State Superintendent must establish an alternative teacher training program for art, music, foreign language, computer science, mathematics, and science teachers, consisting of approximately 100 hours of formal instruction, under current law. An individual who holds a bachelor's degree in engineering, music, art, foreign language, computer science, mathematics, or science from an accredited institution of higher education, has at least five years of experience as a professional in the subject area in which his or her degree was awarded and demonstrates, to the satisfaction of the State Superintendent, competency in that subject area that is current and compatible with modern curricula may apply for enrollment in the alternative teacher training program. The State Superintendent must grant a professional teaching permit to any person who satisfactorily completes the alternative teacher training program. The permit authorizes the person to teach the subject area specified by DPI in grades kindergarten to grade 12. The initial permit is valid for two years, and renewable for five-year periods. During the initial permit period, the person must be supervised by a person who holds a regular teaching license.

3. The Governor's recommendation would provide another route to a teaching license for persons who wish to teach in a charter school. Rather than the traditional teacher training, or the alternative teacher training provided for under current law, anyone with a bachelor's degree who could demonstrate proficiency in an academic subject would be issued a three-year teaching license. Under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind) all teachers must be "highly qualified," meaning that the teacher holds a bachelor's degree, demonstrates subject matter competency in the core academic subjects he or she will teach, and holds a license to teach in the state. For public charter schools under federal law, "highly qualified" means that the teacher meets the requirements of the state's public charter school law. These requirements may differ from the requirements for full state certification for teachers in other public schools. However, staff from DPI indicate that in certain limited circumstances, creating different standards for charter school licenses might conflict with some federal funding requirements.

4. Some could argue that AB 40 is inconsistent in its treatment of classroom teachers in some respects. For example, under another provision, the bill requires that teachers certified as master educators must also receive a rating of "effective" under the new educator effectiveness system, in order to receive the annual stipend for which they are eligible under current law. It might be desirable to likewise require that a person who is granted a charter school teaching license under this provision be required to receive a rating of "effective" under the new educator effectiveness system, in order to have the charter school teaching license renewed every three years.

### **Virtual Charter School Teacher Requirements**

1. Some have argued that an online teacher should not be required to have additional professional development, in order to remove barriers to online teaching and thereby promote greater access to online, digital learning. On the other hand, online teaching differs significantly from the traditional classroom experience, and educators unfamiliar with the online setting could benefit from additional preparation in strategies for online education.

2. Some could argue that AB 40 is inconsistent in its treatment of classroom teachers in some respects. For example, under another provision, the bill requires that master educators, who by definition must possess a related master's degree, have at least five years of teaching experience, and demonstrate, through a formal assessment process, exemplary classroom performance, must also receive a rating of "effective" under the new educator effectiveness system in order to receive an annual stipend provided under current law.

3. On the other hand, AB 40 provides that charter school teachers be required only to possess a bachelor's degree and demonstrate proficiency in the academic subject in order to be licensed. The virtual charter school provision would prohibit DPI from requiring professional development in online learning. Retaining the current law professional development requirements for virtual charter school teachers, some would argue, could help promote high quality online teaching in this state.

### **Teaching Experience**

1. An initial or professional educator license may be issued to an applicant who

completes Department approved standards-based training and assessments for the license, including alternative teacher training programs approved by the State Superintendent. Under PI 34, DPI may issue an emergency permit for one specific assignment, if an individual holds a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university. The permit is valid for up to one year, and may be renewed if the employing school district requests that the permit be renewed, and if the applicant completes at least six semester credits or the equivalent coursework toward completion of an approved teacher training program. To receive a school district administrator license, an applicant must typically have three years of successful full-time classroom teaching experience.

2. Staff from DPI indicate that counting experience gained while holding an emergency permit for a license applicant's qualifications would not affect the license-holder's status as "highly qualified" under federal rules.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

### **A. Charter School Teaching License**

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation.
2. Modify the Governor's recommendation to require that a charter school teaching license issued under this provision would not be renewed by DPI, unless the holder of the license received a rating of "effective" under the educator effectiveness system in the previous school year.
3. Delete provision.

### **B. Virtual Charter School Teacher Requirements**

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation.
2. Delete provision.

### **C. Teaching Experience**

1. Approve the Governor's recommendation.
2. Delete provision.

Prepared by: Layla Merrifield