



**House
Legislative
Analysis
Section**

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NONCERTIFIED VOCATIONAL TEACHERS

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House Bill 4339 as enrolled
Second Analysis (7-6-87)

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Sponsor: Rep. Thomas L. Hickner
House Committee: Education
Senate Committee: Education and Mental Health

THE APPARENT PROBLEM:

Many vocational education instructors do not hold teaching certificates but teach under annual vocational authorizations issued by the Department of Education at the request of school districts. Some of them have been recruited from business and industry, and they are expected to work towards certification once hired. An authorization is renewable each year upon the recommendation of the school district. About 1,500 vocational authorizations were approved for full-time or substitute teachers in 1986-1987 (perhaps 500 for full-time teachers). In theory, an authorization to hire a teacher without a certificate is granted to a school district when the district has been unable to find a certified teacher for the post. In practice, school districts have re-hired vocational instructors under annual authorizations regardless of the availability of certified teachers. In a change of attitude towards enforcement, the Department of Education notified school districts in the fall of 1985 that beginning in September of 1987 positions held by instructors with annual authorizations would have to be posted to see if certified teachers were available. Obviously, this has made vocational teachers with annual authorizations feel very insecure and frustrated. Many of them left jobs in industry to teach and have been working toward certification (and have made other efforts to make themselves better teachers). Some people have recommended amending the School Code to protect experienced vocational teachers who are working towards certification from having their jobs put at risk.

THE CONTENT OF THE BILL:

The bill would amend the School Code to allow a local or intermediate school district to renew through June 30, 1995, an annual vocational authorization of a noncertified vocational teacher who was employed by the district on June 1, 1987, even if a certified teacher was available for hire. To qualify, an uncertified teacher would have to be annually and continually enrolled and earning credits in an approved vocational teacher preparation program leading to certification, and keep the program on file with the employing district, the teacher preparation institution, and the Department of Education. The teacher training school would have to use the teacher's employment experience for the purpose of waiving student teaching requirements if the teacher was supervised by the school.

The bill would also require all vocational teachers certified after June 1, 1995, to pass a competency test.

MCL 380.1233

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Department of Education reports that the bill has no fiscal implications for the state. (4-16-87)

ARGUMENTS:

For:

The bill would protect the jobs of vocational education instructors currently teaching under annual authorizations issued by the Department of Education at the request of their school districts. If a vocational teacher was working towards certification, his or her job would not be posted each year to see if a certified teacher was available. This seems only fair treatment for these teachers, some of whom gave up jobs in industry to teach when vocational teachers were scarce and have performed to the satisfaction of their school districts for many years. Otherwise, dedicated teachers with perhaps a decade of experience in vocational education (but as yet uncertified) could lose their jobs, to be replaced by less experienced, certified teachers, regardless of the wishes of the employing districts. Good teachers should not have to face the humiliation and insecurity of having the jobs they hold advertised every year.

Against:

Fully certified vocational teachers should have priority in hiring over vocational teachers who are not certified because they are better qualified. The point of the certification laws and rules is that certified teachers are, on the whole, more qualified teachers. Certified teachers have priority in hiring in other subject areas.

Response: The bill applies only to teachers employed as of June 1, 1987. Essentially, it "grandfathers" vocational teachers working now. No teachers hired after that date on annual authorizations will be protected from the Department of Education's new procedures requiring school districts to demonstrate that there are no certified teachers available before an annual authorization can be issued.

Against:

Given the need to attract people in industry to teaching, particularly in rapidly changing technical areas, why not extend the protection in the bill to all vocational instructors? Why would anyone leave a job to take a vocational teaching position if that job is to be advertised every year?

Response: It may be that the issue will need to be addressed again in the future in another bill. This bill, however, deals with an obvious existing problem: the threats to the jobs of experienced vocational educators whose work satisfies the districts that employ them and who are working toward certification.

Against:

The competency testing requirement is unnecessary since such testing will become mandatory for new teachers earlier than 1995 under existing statutes.

H.B. 4339 (7-6-87)