

— LEGISLATIVE —  
**TESTIMONY**

*May 8, 2023*

MOLLY MACEK

**Modifying Teacher  
Certification  
Requirements**

House Education Committee

# Support of Senate Bill 161

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Modifying the requirements for issuing a Michigan teacher certification may increase the pool of educators qualified to teach in the state's public schools.

The current teacher certification requirements create an unnecessary obstacle for individuals applying for an initial or advanced teacher certification, transferring their certificate from other locations to Michigan and/or seeking endorsements. Policy that motivates individuals to pursue a teacher certification and attracts teachers from out-of-state is an important step towards staffing Michigan's public schools with qualified educators.

Senate Bill 161 facilitates the process of obtaining an initial or advanced professional teacher certificate in Michigan. It does this by removing the requirement that individuals pass a subject- area examination in addition to the general certification exam to receive a Michigan teaching certificate or additional endorsement. It also allows the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in collaboration with a committee of education experts, to determine the examinations required for certification. This modification applies to Michigan residents and licensed teachers from other states, countries, or federally recognized Indian tribes pursuing a Michigan certificate.

The bill also expands eligibility for an advanced professional teaching certificate to individuals who have been rated as "effective" or "highly effective" on their annual evaluation for three of the five most recent school years. Of note, with this change, the advanced professional teaching certificate would be available to nearly all teachers in the state, since 95-99% of them receive "highly effective" or "effective" ratings. The future utility of an advanced professional teaching certificate should be considered given impending efforts to modify the state's teacher evaluation system.

By easing the requirements to obtain a teacher certificate or endorsement, and by expanding reciprocity to licensed teachers in other countries and federally recognized Indian tribes, the proposed changes would increase the likelihood that individuals, regardless of their state or country of residence, pursue a Michigan teacher certification. In turn, a larger pool of qualified educators would be available to bring their expertise to public school classrooms.

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