SENATE BILL NO. 377

BY SENATORS PEACOCK, BARROW, BERNARD, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, CORTEZ, FESI, FIELDS, HEWITT, JACKSON, LAMBERT, MCMATH, FRED MILLS, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, STINE, TALBOT, TARVER AND WOMACK AND REPRESENTATIVES AMEDEE, DEVILLIER, EDMONDS, HARRIS, MCFARLAND, CHARLES OWEN, SCHAMERHORN, THOMPSON AND WHITE

1 AN ACT

To amend and reenact R.S. 17:7(6)(b), (c), and (e), 7.1(A)(3)(b) and (B)(1), to enact R.S. 17:7.1(A)(1) and 7.2(A)(7), and to repeal R.S. 17:7.1(A)(7) and 7.2(A)(4), relative to the certification of teachers; to provide relative to the responsibilities of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education; to provide for teaching certification qualifications and requirements; to provide eligibility criteria; to provide for the granting of teaching certifications; to provide relative to approved teacher education programs; and to provide for related matters.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

Section 1. R.S. 17:7(6)(b), (c), and (e), 7.1(A)(3)(b) and (B)(1) are hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 17:7.1(A)(1) and 7.2(A)(7) are hereby enacted to read as follows:

§7. Duties, functions, and responsibilities of board

In addition to the authorities granted by R.S. 17:6 and any powers, duties, and responsibilities vested by any other applicable laws, the board shall:

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(6) * * *

(b)(new) A person applying for initial certification as a teacher in a public school shall have passed satisfactorily an examination, which shall include English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge; and knowledge in his area of specialization, as a prerequisite to the granting of such certificate. However, a person who is employed as a foreign language teacher in a Certified Foreign Language Immersion Program pursuant to R.S. 17:273.2, and who is not otherwise eligible to receive state
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authorization to teach through participation in the Foreign Associate Teacher Program, shall not be required to pass the examination required by this Subitem, but shall at least have a baccalaureate degree and shall be subject to all provisions of state law relative to background checks and criminal history review applicable to the employment of public school personnel.

(bb) On and after September 15, 1981, any person certified to teach in another state who applies for certification to teach in the public schools of Louisiana shall be required to pass satisfactorily the examination which is administered in accordance with the provisions of this Paragraph as a prerequisite to the granting of such certification. However, a teacher certified in another state who meets all other requirements for a Louisiana certificate granted to out-of-state graduates except for the provisions of this Item shall be granted a three-year nonrenewable provisional certificate to be used while said teacher completes the requirements set forth in this Paragraph.

(ce)(ii) Any teacher who holds a valid out-of-state teaching certificate; and has at least three years of successful teaching experience in another state as determined by the board, and has completed one year of employment as a teacher in the Louisiana public school system or as a teacher in a Louisiana nonpublic school approved by the board as provided by law shall not be required to take the examination administered in accordance with the provisions of this Paragraph or to submit any examination scores from any examination previously taken in another state as a prerequisite to the granting of certification in Louisiana. Upon application and verification of successful teaching experience in another state by the board, the teacher shall be granted a valid standard Louisiana teaching certificate provided that all of the following conditions are met:

(aaa) The teacher meets all other requirements for background checks and criminal history reviews in Louisiana as may be required by law and board policy.

(bbb) The local superintendent or his designee of the public school system employing the teacher, the local superintendent of the school system operating the
(ee) The local superintendent or his designee of the public school system employing the teacher, the local superintendent of the school system operating the nonpublic school employing the teacher, if applicable, or, if not applicable, the principal of the approved nonpublic school employing the teacher has recommended the teacher for employment for the following school year subject to the receipt of a valid Louisiana teaching certificate.

(dd) The examination shall be administered to each student in a teacher education program at a public college or university in Louisiana prior to graduation and shall be administered to other applicants teachers certified in other states at any time such examination is offered. The board shall prescribe other qualifications and requirements and shall consider other factors.

(iii) The state superintendent of education shall administer the aforementioned policy of the board. In such administration of administering the policy, the superintendent shall choose the appropriate testing instrument, shall conduct all necessary research to validate the applicability of the instrument to teacher education programs within the state of Louisiana, and shall conduct all necessary research to determine the level at which the examination is satisfactorily completed. During the conduct of the research and in the preparation of the testing instrument, the superintendent shall meet with and consider the suggestions of individual classroom teachers, representatives of teacher organizations, deans of education of the public colleges and universities of the state, and representatives of each of the governing boards for higher education.

(v) Any applicant seeking certification may apply for and take any required test or tests without limitation as to the frequency of applications or testing.

(vi) The state superintendent of education shall annually submit a report to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education.
relative to the examination administered pursuant to this Paragraph. Such report shall include but not be limited to the following: the number of persons to whom the examination was administered; the educational background and teaching experience of such persons; the number of persons successfully completing the examination; the effectiveness of the examination; and any suggestions for improving the examination.

(c) Any person who holds at least a masters degree in the subject area in which he is seeking employment or any person who meets all other certification requirements except he failed to successfully pass the original examination required by Subparagraph (b) of this Paragraph, but who meets all other certification requirements and who scored within ten percent of the score required for passage on the original examination selected by the state superintendent of education, may be employed as a teacher for a period not to exceed one year five years in the following manner:

(i) The state superintendent of education, upon receipt of a signed affidavit by the president and superintendent of the school board to which such person has applied for employment that there is no other applicant available for employment for a specific teaching position who has met the requirements of this Section and who has agreed to participate in a mentorship program offered by the school board, may issue an emergency teaching permit to such person. Such permit shall be in effect for not more than one year five years but may be renewed twice. Such renewal of the permit shall be accomplished in the same manner as the granting of the original permit. The granting of such emergency teaching permit shall in no way affect, reduce, or waive the requirement that the person successfully complete the aforementioned examination. Each teacher issued an emergency teaching permit who has not completed an approved teacher education program shall be required to complete a preservice training session offered by the school board prior to the teacher's first day of teaching students.

(ii) At any time the person who failed to pass the exam successfully passes the examination, he shall be certified and may be employed on a permanent basis.
(iii) After five years of effective teaching evaluations pursuant to R.S. 17:3902 and upon a signed affidavit of a superintendent of a school system recommending to employ the person for the following school year subject to the receipt of a valid Louisiana teaching certificate, the person shall be granted a valid standard professional level teaching certificate by the state superintendent of education, subject only to passing all provisions of law relative to background checks and criminal history review.

(ii)(iv) The period herein provided for the employment of a teacher is working with an emergency teaching permit granted under the provisions of this Paragraph shall not count toward tenure.

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(e) The board shall not adopt any policy, rule, regulation, or other measure that limits or restricts the number of times a temporary employment permit may be issued to any teacher who meets all other requirements of current board policy, has applied for employment for a specific teaching position for which position there is no other applicant available for employment who has met the requirements of this Paragraph, has the recommendation of the superintendent of the school system employing such teacher, and has had a successful local evaluation for the previous four years prior to such issuance. Any such policy, rule, regulation, or other measure in effect on July 1, 1993 shall be null and void.

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§7.1. Certification of teachers; certification of principals and superintendents; certification of school psychologists

A. In carrying out its responsibility to prescribe the qualifications and provide for the certification of teachers under authority of R.S. 17:7(6), the qualifications and requirements established by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for certification of any applicant for certification who completes an approved teacher education program in Louisiana shall include but not be limited to the following:

(1) Beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year, that each approved teacher education program shall not require more than one hundred twenty
semester hours of college credit for degree completion, inclusive of any
classroom observation time or mentorship requirements. Programs designated
by the Board of Regents as dual degrees or dual certifications shall be permitted
to exceed the one hundred twenty semester hour credit limit.

(b) An applicant who has passed all requisite examinations covering pre-
professional skills and content knowledge but who does not meet the requirement of
Subparagraph (a) of this Paragraph may be certified if he completes a post-
baccalaureate program as provided in this Subparagraph: or he may be employed
as a teacher for a period not to exceed five years in the following manner:

(i) The state superintendent of education, upon receipt of a signed
affidavit by the president and superintendent of the school board to which such
person has applied for employment that there is no other applicant available for
employment for a specific teaching position who has met the requirements of
this Section, may issue an emergency teaching permit to such person. Such
permit shall be in effect for not more than five years.

(ii) After five years of effective teaching evaluations pursuant to R.S.
17:3902 and upon a signed affidavit of a superintendent of a school system
recommending to employ the person for the following school year subject to the
receipt of a valid Louisiana teaching certificate, the person shall be granted a
valid standard professional level teaching certificate by the state superintendent
of education, subject only to passing all provisions of law relative to background
checks and criminal history review.

(i) Such an applicant for admission to a post-baccalaureate program may be
granted conditional admission following a satisfactory personal interview by the
program's admissions officer.

(ii) If the program awards credit hours, the applicant shall achieve a grade
point average of 3.00 or higher in post-baccalaureate program courses by the end of
his first twelve credit hours and successfully complete the program.
(iii) If the program does not award credit hours, the applicant shall demonstrate mastery of competencies as required by the program administrator and by the school system in which the applicant completes required clinical practice, and satisfactorily completes all program requirements as set forth by the state board, including any requirements for clinical practice, at graduation.

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B.(1) After August 15, 1986, except as otherwise provided in Paragraph (2) of this Subsection, any person applying for initial certification as a principal or vice, assistant, or deputy principal, hereafter referred to as a principal, in addition to any other requirements of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, shall have passed the administrative portion of the National Teachers Examination produced by the Educational Testing Service educational leadership exam adopted by and at a level determined by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education not later than August 1, 1986, which determination shall be based on a validation study to be completed by the board no later than July 31, 1986. The validation study shall be submitted to the Joint Committee on Education for its review prior to adoption of a passage score.

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§7.2. Approved teacher education programs

A. In carrying out its responsibility to prescribe the qualifications and provide for the certification of teachers under authority of R.S. 17:7(6), the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, subject to the constitutional power and authority of the Board of Regents, the Board of Supervisors for the University of Louisiana System, the Board of Supervisors of Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, and the Board of Supervisors of Southern University and Agricultural and Mechanical College, shall establish qualifications and requirements for the approval of teacher education programs from which graduates may be certified. The qualifications and requirements established by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for an approved teacher education program shall include but not be limited to the following:

Coding: Words which are struck through are deletions from existing law; words in boldface type and underscored are additions.
(7) Beginning with the 2024-2025 academic year, that an approved teacher education program shall be no more than one hundred twenty semester hours of college credit for degree completion, inclusive of any classroom observation time or mentorship requirements. Programs designated by the Board of Regents as dual degrees or dual certifications shall be permitted to exceed the one hundred twenty semester hour credit limit.

Section 2. R.S. 17:7.1(A)(7) and 7.2(A)(4) are hereby repealed.

Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become effective on the day following such approval.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: ___________