

SUMMARY – HB 230

Alternate Teacher Certification

- (1) Allows local school trustees to adopt a policy for hiring qualified persons who do not hold a state teacher certificate, to teaching positions in the district on a one-year trial “internship” basis.
- (2) To qualify for the internship teaching position, the personal must satisfy the testing criteria set out in the bill. The person then becomes a provisional teacher for a one-year period.
- (3) Following the one-year internship and evaluation period, the school district may alternately certify the person, and forward their name for state certification. OPI will then issue the certificate, which allows them to be hired by any school in the state.

COMMENT: This bill empowers local schools with the ability to hire, on a trial basis, outstanding teachers who may not be state certified. Currently, schools cannot hire such individuals without jeopardizing their accreditation. There are sometimes wonderful people available for positions, who have a great flair for teaching, exceptional mastery of a given field, and extensive “real life” knowledge and experience in the subject being taught. This bill allows districts the flexibility to hire the occasional standout individual who is not certified, while providing a means for this “intern” to be evaluated and eventually become certified after one year, at the recommendation of the school trustees

As state certification cannot guarantee that a teacher is truly qualified, so the absence of traditional certification (usually because the person lacks a degree in education) does not prove a person unqualified to teach. Great teachers belong in Montana’s public schools. This bill removes a major impediment, by providing a sensible alternate route for non-traditional teachers to be hired.