

SENATE EDUCATION

Exhibit No. 2
Date 2/20/15
Bill No. SB 331

Senator Hansen:

Here's the summary of the process Texas uses for additional certifications

To qualify for additional licenses, an individual must first have a teaching certificate.

Secondly, a teacher must pay a fee and take a test designed, administered and scored (it is on line) by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). (I believe the tests are designed with the help of the university system)

Teachers must pay a fee to take those tests, but the tests are available at many sites, including several universities. If the teacher passes, the teacher still has to pay to have the endorsement put on his/her license.

For some test eligible degrees, only a test needs to be taken. For other degrees, additional classroom work is required. I don't know if the classroom work is required before, or after taking the test.

There is no limit to the number of tests a teacher can take, so they could be licensed in, say Spanish, if they already had a teaching degree and took the Spanish test. If a school needed them, they could take a test for say, physical science

The appropriate bill would be to require the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the Board of Public Education to design alternative methods of licensure for endorsement areas where teachers are listed on the TEAMS report as in short supply.

Tests could be purchased from other states, I'm sure. Someone would have to administer those tests, score those tests, and track the paperwork. But first it would have to be legal.

Another alternative would be to allow some reciprocity from other states. We have none.

Right now for anything other than technical education (business, Ag, Industrial Arts, etc), only a degree approved by a Montana University will work for a degree.

We to have two additional methods of getting a teaching certificate: with a 4 year degree, an individual may enroll in a MONTANA university system intern program for a provisional license that must be completed in three years. #2 for ONE year, a school may petition for an emergency license for an individual.

And I know of just those hires (I have a para right now that should be a teacher—she's been a para for several years, and the kids all go to her right now for all their math. They love her. She's making our math program a success.) If I could hire her, I would. But she's going to need 4+ years to get her degree. She has 8 kids. Working on it, but needs more time than three years. So she's a para doing para work—and being available to math students who need extra help.

Internet Message

Message #

Message taken:

2/17/2015

Sender

Phone

Fax

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County:

Vote

Senate

Sen. Kristin Hansen

E-mail

Seat No.

4

Dear Kristin,

Hello, my name is _____ and I am the Superintendent in _____ know _____ well and we have discussed your bill that addresses teacher licensing concerns in eastern Montana.

I originally graduated from _____ College with a degree in Political Science and Speech and a History minor. When I decided that I wanted to become a social studies teacher, I had to complete well over a year and a half of coursework at the University of Montana to earn my teaching credentials. This consisted of taking mainly 100 level courses in Geography, Economics, History, etc as well as a plethora of educational theory courses. I can honestly say these classes did not make me better prepared or more competent for my first teaching gig in _____

I will be in Helena _____ do hope I can meet with you to discuss the bill you have proposed to address teacher licensure.

Kind regards,



Kris Hansen <...>

teaching bill

1 message

Thu, Feb 12, 2015 at 1:09 PM

Reply-To

To: "krishansen

I fully support this bill. As a superintendent of a small independent district that is remote, we have a hard time getting certified quality teachers. I have tried the out of state pool, but they are often unable to gain certification without major coursework. Case in point: we hired an Indiana certified teacher and after 3 years she had taken 40 hours worth of courses, yet still needed 20+ more.

I find a big problem is that the board of Ed is comprised of many college members, and who sets the standards for those coming from out of state. . . board of ed. Who reviews transcripts to decide what courses are yet required for MT endorsement? MT Colleges of course. This is problematic because it doesn't put students best interests first.

Pedagogy is important, but why can't the state determine what is important and THOSE be the classes required. As it stands now, every one of our universities can evaluate the transcripts and decide what courses are required, and each of them can and does evaluate differently, coming up with different requirements. This means that one could have 4 or 5 different evaluations of what courses were needed to complete the state certification.

If there is anything I can do to assist your cause, let me know.

Superintendent

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Hello,

My name is _____ and I am the Superintendent of _____ School District. We are a small, rural K-12 district. I am here today to share my experiences as a small school Superintendent. Despite our best efforts in recruiting qualified educators, we struggle mightily in attracting qualified applicants to our school.

Last year my social studies teacher also served as my PE & Health teacher. This year, my high school English educator also teaches band and choir. My first year PE & Health teacher is taking on school counseling duties. We make do with the personnel available. Making do with what we have means my school receives numerous deviations on OPI school accreditations.

My colleagues and I are all having similar experiences. Our rural towns general don't draw people in. Few people are inclined to move to a small, rural town on the edge of the map. We do not have the budget to offer qualified teachers and staff enough financial incentive to leave the convenience of larger towns and cities. Hiring qualified personnel is extremely difficult. Providing schools some flexibility in regard to accreditation standards would enable us to be flexible in addressing staffing issues without fear of professional repercussions.



Kris Hansen

sb331

Message

Fri, Feb 20, 2015 at 12:09 PM

To: Kris Hansen <krishansen>

Senator,

I like the portability. I like (c) except that I want to make sure the district has some say over what is "acceptable evidence." And the same with the definition of "reasonably" on line 28.

I also need to be able to advertise anywhere. It shouldn't be limited to Montana. I do a lot of advertising on Minnesota's list.

Thanks for considering our comments.

Superintendent



Kris Hansen <

FW: LC1884

1 message

Hansen, Kris (Sen) <Sen.Kris.Hansen@mt.gov>
To: " " <krishanser

Tue, Feb 17, 2015 at 9:11 PM

From:
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2015 11:18 AM
To: Hansen, Kris (Sen)
Subject: LC1884

Kris,

We spoke following the hearing on SB 260 last week regarding teacher recruitment. My thought would be the provision should be for one year only after which the candidate must apply and receive a provisional certificate from OPI. The recruitment of new teachers will only get worse and if nothing else this will make people more aware of the problem. Yes, I would support it and I will do some checking with organizations including MREA.



Kris Hansen <

FW: To All Class C Superintendents

Printed on 2/17/2015

Tue, Feb 17, 2015 at 4:32 PM

To: Kris Hansen <kris Hansen33@gmail.com>

You need to see what is going on. Pass or not pass, what you are doing is forcing the conversation about all of this into the open. That's a HUGE step.

From: [redacted] via MASS [mailto:MASS@sammt.org]
Sent: Tuesday, February 17, 2015 4:18 PM
To: [redacted]
Subject: Re: To All Class C Superintendents

I would agree [redacted] and add all of us K-8 Independent Districts to the list of schools seeking reliable teachers, administration, bus drivers and other classified staff. One may want to look at Kris Hansen's bill additionally, as it helps us with certification issues of teaching staff.

Superintendent

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Kirs:

This looks very positive. Nearly everyone at the NEMASS (superintendents' meeting) knew about your bill and was talking about it. All had horror stories to tell. All were somewhat scared to really put it all out there—don't really want people to know what machinations they go through to meet certification requirements.

Dave Puyear's name was mentioned repeatedly. If he will work with you to get something, it would allow all these people to relax and support it.

You are bringing an important issue to light. One superintendent today recounted being told by a new graduate that if the job wasn't in driving distance of XXXXXXXX(one of the big seven towns), that new graduate would just do something else until a position opened up.



Kris Hansen

teacher shortage draft legislation

7 messages

Kris Hansen <krishansen

Thu, Feb 12, 2015 at 4:54 PM

To:

Mr.

Please take a look at this draft and get back to me as soon as you can.

Thanks,
Senator Kristin Hansen
Havre

LC1884.pdf
15K

Fri, Feb 13, 2015 at 10:47 AM

To: Kris Hansen <krishansen

I like it Kris and especially (iii). I will send this to my friends that I know need teachers and see if they will come with me to Helena (which ever day within the next two weeks).

Superintendent: Public Schools

[Quoted text hidden]

Fri, Feb 13, 2015 at 11:18 AM

To: krishansen33@gmail.com

Please let me know when this hearing is.

----- Forwarded message -----

Kris Hansen has called me about a bill that would allow local control of people teaching our classes and not having to be accredited through O.P.I. Look over the proposed bill and if you are willing to go to Helena within the next two weeks (Kris will tell me when) and tell legislature what we go through and how this bill would help, I would be grateful to have strength in numbers!

If you know of others who would like to see this billed passed, forward it to them too.

Thank you and if you want her email: krishansen

Superintendent,

Tue, Feb 17, 2015 at 4:39 PM

To: Kris Hansen <krishansen>

Kris: Been working on this all day. What he said is what is mostly in law now. Does not change much of anything. In fact, right now there is an emergency authorization that is the section that needs to be "beefed up." I don't know anyone who has been granted emergency authorization under someone in under (1)(d). I'd accept the rest if this section was...more accessible. Or *had* to be granted upon proof of search by district. And could be renewed for up to three years with continued proof of search.

10.57.107 EMERGENCY AUTHORIZATION OF EMPLOYMENT (1) In accordance with 20-4-111, MCA, school administrators who have exhausted all possibilities for obtaining a licensed teacher may request that the Superintendent of Public Instruction issue an emergency authorization of employment to the district to employ a person to teach in the emergency situation. The requirements and standards set forth below must be met to assure consideration of a request for an emergency authorization of employment: (a) The request for emergency authorization of employment must originate with the school district. (b) The position must have been advertised through the teacher placement offices of the Montana job service and the Montana university system far enough in advance to reasonably enable qualified applicants to submit applications and credentials and to be interviewed. (c) The individual for whom the emergency authorization is being sought: (i) shall have previously held a valid teacher or specialist license; (ii) shall hold a bachelor's degree related to the area for which the emergency authorization of employment is being sought; or (iii) shall provide acceptable evidence of cultural expertise related to the area for which the emergency authorization of employment is being sought. (d) The individual for whom the emergency authorization is being sought shall not have held a valid class 5 license within the year preceding the year for which emergency authorization of employment is being sought. (2) An emergency authorization of employment is valid for one year.

DISTRICT

This is a letter regarding SB331 proposed by Senator Hanson. I am the superintendent in [redacted] I would be in Helena to testify in person if basketball tournaments weren't in full session. Friday afternoon I will find myself Scobey about 10,000 miles away from Helena.

SB 331 addresses a critical concern most of our Montana schools face today. Finding and keeping teachers, especially in rural areas, has reached critical mass. In my 35 years in education, [redacted] have never seen such a dismal pool of applicants for any job opening I post. In some cases, I don't see any applicants at all. Elementary positions used to be easy to fill, but not anymore. It's bad. It's really bad.

This isn't a [redacted] problem; it's a state-wide problem with even Class A schools finding it difficult to fill certain positions. Imagine how hard it is to get a teacher to come to rural [redacted] Montana for the limited amount of pay we can give them.

Senator Hanson has written a bill that attempts to relieve some of this pressure. I know it won't be met with enthusiasm by some, but these people aren't trying to hire teachers. I need something that will help us and give us more of the local control that we are promised.

Accreditation standards tie our hands from hiring or placing teachers. Why aren't I allowed to make some judgment calls? Why can't a veteran endorsed teacher instruct a class outside of their endorsed areas without taking a severe hit from OPI? Let's face it, a lot of endorsed teachers, state wide, are "non-renewed" because they don't do an adequate job. Why is it such a stretch to place someone in a class I believe they can handle even though they aren't specifically endorsed? Can't a 15-year physics teacher teach math? Couldn't a veteran English educator effectively teach history?

I support standards and respect my profession immensely. With 35 years in education, I have the expertise to know that someone will instruct a class outside of their endorsed field with the same high standards they have for their endorsed subjects. Let me make some of these decisions without penalty from OPI.

Having an endorsement doesn't make you a good or bad teacher. Given the choice of an endorsed or non-endorsed teacher, I would always pick the former. However, I've lost that first option and now I need ways to place qualified persons in classrooms without penalty. Please, find something that will solve our problem. Increase pay would be great, but that's an unlikely, and unpopular, option. Yet giving us some flexibility, like Senator Hanson's bill does, is a great start. Tweak the details. Add some options. But find solutions. You have no idea how just how bad this is. On a scale of 1-10, on the difficulty of finding teachers: It's a 15.

I appreciate you listening to me, and to Senator Hanson. We have to find solutions that work. Our kids' education depends on it.

Sincerely, [redacted] Superintendent,

Public Schools

(Accredited by the state of Montana)

19 February, 2015

Senator Kris Hansen
Helena, MT

Dear Senator Hansen:

It was with great interest that I read SB331, which you are sponsoring at this session of the state legislature. This bill addresses one of my pet concerns.

I have been involved in education in small rural schools for the past 30 years. While I am newly come to Montana, this issue was a plague in my former position as an administrator in rural . . . I know the frustrations of being unable to rercruit qualified candadates for open positions. Additionally, I fought my way through the certification process when I sought Montana licensure.

Most recently, I found my self searching for a music teacher for my K-12 school. I learned that there are very few music education majors coming out of the Montana university systems. Our school advertised all spring and summer for a qualified candidate. I contacted music majors from the east and west coasts. I appealed to my alma mater, which has an exceptional music educator program, and was unable to find a candidate.

So, like most resourceful superintendents, I began asking around as to possible music teachers who were out of the field for various reasons. I contacted stay-home moms hoping to draw them back into the teaching field. I contacted the universities in an attempt to recruit some student teachers. None of that worked. Finally, I found a teacher with 19 years of highly successful teaching experience in agriculture, who is an acclaimed vocalist. She has many years of performance in northeast Montana. She has compiled quite a portfolio of college performances.

Unfortunately, she did not have enough coursework in music to qualify for a license in music.

I contacted the universities again to see what it would take for her to obtain the necessary coursework to earn the proper certification. Sadly, I was informed that those courses are unavailable during the summer months. Nor were they easily taken during evenings or on-line. I was told that the only way for her to earn a music education endorsement/license was by resigning from her job and moving to one of the university towns and earning a degree in music education.

I presented her case to my board of trustees and explained that the only way to fill the position would be to hire this woman and misassign her to the music position. They voted to do so, and we hired her for this school year.

She has far exceeded our hopes for our music program. She has offered two successful public concerts for the K-12 music program. She works with beginning band members, junior high and high school band, junior high and high school choir, K-6 general music classes, and also leads the pep band for athletic competitions. She is currently coordinating with our drama teacher to offer a musical stage production this coming fall.

The universities in this state have a strangle hold on the teacher licensing process. They are the ultimate authority on who does or does not qualify for license endorsement. Denying licenses to applicants from other states keeps their enrollments high, but hampers our staffing efforts.

I have another teacher on staff who is currently working on a master's degree in math because her degree from Washington didn't meet the same grade span requirements as those of Montana's universities. She had five years of successful teaching at the middle and high school levels in two other states, but Montana universities refused to accept the endorsement of her university.

I'm sorry, but to my way of thinking, putting the universities in Montana in charge of assessing the degrees and licensing requirements of other states is analagous to putting the fox in charge of guarding the hen house. They are, in essence, drumming up business for themselves by preventing teachers from transferring into the state with their credentials intact.

From a personal perspective, when I applied to the state for administrative licensing after retiring from _____ I received a three year provisional license. I was told that I would have to take Montana school law and Montana school finance. Granted each state has some differences and some unique situations, but I know that _____ accepted my _____ State University endorsement for an _____ certificate. I don't believe that any state university or state educational department of certification has the right to deny the endorsement of another properly affiliated university program.

Your bill is a step in the right direction. It allows local schools to do their best to put qualified people in place to operate school. I fully support your efforts on behalf of rural districts. I urge your fellow legislators to pass this bill as it stands.

Additionally, I would like to ask that you put forth a bill ,or an amendment to a bill, that would allow teachers to meet certification endorsements through a testing process. We have many experienced teachers in content areas, who could pass content tests in other fields. The Praxis tests could be used in this manner. If a high school English teacher sat for the history test and passed it, that teacher should be able to add a history endorsement to an existing Montana license. This would allow small rural schools to hire teachers with multiple areas of certification. I have a hard time using full time English, social studies, science and math teachers in a school with fewer than fifty 7th-12th grade students. I would love to have someone endorsed in English/history or math/science. That was the way I staffed my schools in _____.

If there is any way that I can provide additional support for your efforts on behalf us out here in the trenches, please let me know. I do thank you for your time and energy in educational bills that offer some hope for those of us in the hinterlands.

Respectfully,

Superintendent,