

**LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE
BILL ANALYSIS**

Bill Number: SB 202

50th Legislature, 1st Session, 2011

Tracking Number: .183502.1

Short Title: Student Teacher Alternative Curriculum

Sponsor(s): Senators Cynthia Nava and Mary Jane M. García

Analyst: Pamela Herman

Date: February 6, 2011

FOR THE LEGISLATIVE EDUCATION STUDY COMMITTEE

Bill Summary:

SB 202 amends the *School Personnel Act* to allow the Secretary of Public Education to waive class-size requirements for classes to which a student teacher who meets certain criteria has been assigned.

Among its provisions, SB 202:

- would permit, for school years 2011-2012 through 2013-2014, granting of a waiver for an alternative curricular plan that includes classes taught by a student teacher with the supervision of a cooperating teacher, if the student teacher:
 - has at least four years of prior experience in a school setting; and
 - meets the qualifications established by the school district or charter school and the student teacher's teacher preparation program; and
- would add a requirement to track any alternative curricular plan based on the school district and public school Educational Plan for Student Success (EPSS) to show alignment with student achievement goals. (The *School Personnel Act* currently requires that the Public Education Department (PED) evaluate the impact of each alternative curricular plan annually, and that an annual report be made to the Legislative Education Study Committee (LESC)).

Fiscal Impact:

SB 202 does not contain an appropriation.

Fiscal Issues:

In the 2009 interim, the LESC heard testimony that the temporary provision proposed in SB 202 could permit school districts to reduce class loads and realize budget savings in times of austerity, by dividing an overcrowded class and placing a qualified student teacher, who receives a stipend and is supervised by a cooperating teacher, in charge of half of the cooperating teacher's students.

Technical Issue:

- PED points out in its bill analysis that, if enacted, SB 202 would conflict with the section of the *School Personnel Act* that those who teach in a public school classroom hold a valid license or certificate from the department authorizing the person to perform this function.
- PED suggests either that the *School Personnel Act* be amended to address this conflict, or that student teachers who teach in their own classrooms under the waiver provided for in SB 202 apply for a substitute teacher's certificate, which would permit them to teach for up to 45 days in a single classroom, or longer upon approval from the Secretary of Public Education.

Substantive Issues:

SB 202 would allow school districts and charter schools to treat teacher candidates who pursue a traditional path to entry-level licensure similarly to those who pursue alternative licensure, by allowing an appropriately qualified student teacher in the final semester of an undergraduate teacher education program to assume responsibility for a teaching load under the supervision of a willing cooperating teacher.

Background:

The *School Personnel Act* sets out two paths to achieving Level 1 (entry-level) teacher licensure:

- a standard undergraduate teaching programs leading to a four-year baccalaureate degree, in which the candidate must take prescribed courses in the general education core, pedagogy, and the content areas in which the candidate seeks endorsement; all programs must include at least 14 weeks of student teaching, a portion of which shall occur in the student's senior year, with the student teacher directly responsible for the classroom; or
- alternative licensure programs for candidates who already hold a baccalaureate or higher degree and who meet statutorily established minimum course requirements in the subjects to be taught; alternative licensure requires either:
 - completion of a minimum of 12 semester hours of instruction in teaching principles, in an approved program; or
 - demonstration to the department, in conjunction with the school district or state agency, that the candidate has met PED-approved competencies for Level 1 teachers for the grade level to be taught.

Since February 1, 2007, PED rule has permitted candidates for alternative licensure to enter the classroom *without any coursework in pedagogy or any field experience*. These candidates demonstrate the required competencies via an online portfolio *after*:

- serving as the teacher of record for a full school year prior to being granted a portfolio review;
- completing required coursework in the teaching of reading; and
- passing all sections of the current PED required teacher licensure tests.

Related Bills:

None as of February 5, 2011.