



Sample Board Resolution on Teacher Licensure Changes

WHEREAS, the _____ School Board recognizes the desirability of providing flexibility in educator licensure to address teacher shortages in certain subject areas and geographic regions in our state; and

WHEREAS, the _____ School Board recognizes the quality of the teacher in the classroom, is the most important school-based factor in improving student achievement; and

WHEREAS, school boards are responsible for hiring, disciplining and dismissing teachers and are liable for any potential misdeeds by less than fully vetted or qualified teachers; and

WHEREAS, current practice requires educators in middle and high school to have a bachelor's degree related to the subject they teach, complete intensive training on skills required to be a teacher, and successfully pass skills and subject content assessments; and

WHEREAS, the changes adopted by the Joint Finance Committee without a public hearing or other opportunity for public input would allow anyone with a bachelor's degree to teach English, math, science, or social studies courses in grades 6 through 12 and obtain a state license if a school board, or the governing board of an independent charter school or private school, determines the individual is proficient and has relevant experience; and

WHEREAS, there would be no requirement in these subjects that a teacher's bachelor's degree be related to the subject he or she intends to teach; and

WHEREAS, under the Joint Finance Committee proposal, for all other subjects in grades 6-12, any individual could obtain a teaching permit if a school board, or the governing board of a charter school or private voucher school determines the individual is proficient and has relevant experience; and

WHEREAS, it appears there would be no minimum state requirements to receive such a teaching permit, such as holding a high school diploma, passing a skills test, having received rigorous training in pedagogy, assessment, or classroom management; and

WHEREAS, for both the license provisions and the permit provisions in the Joint Finance Committee motion, the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) could not impose any additional requirements, which, according to the DPI, may preclude the fingerprinting and background checks required of all other licensed school staff; and

WHEREAS, the new standards would be lower than those currently required for teachers in private voucher schools, who must have at least a bachelor's degree; and

WHEREAS, a bachelor's degree is currently required in Wisconsin for all teaching licenses; and

WHEREAS, if the JFC proposal becomes law, Wisconsin would become the only state to license persons who lack a bachelor's degree to teach subjects other than technical education.

WHEREAS, the teacher licensure changes added by the Joint Finance Committee substitute subjective judgment for objective standards for teacher preparation, and drastically diminish the role and importance of teacher preparation;

THEREFORE, the _____ School Board urges that the teacher licensure changes adopted by the Joint Finance Committee be removed from the state budget and be approached in a more thoughtful manner that includes a public hearing and an opportunity for input by the public and by school boards.