

SUMMARY—Provides for a pilot program to assess the competency of applicants for a license to teach through alternative assessment methods. (BDR 34-836)

FISCAL NOTE: Effect on Local Government: No.

Effect on the State: Contains Appropriation not included in Executive Budget.

AN ACT relating to education; making an appropriation to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to establish a pilot program to assess the competency of applicants for a license to teach through the use of alternative assessment methods; requiring certain regulations adopted by the Commission on Professional Standards in Education to authorize an applicant for a license to teach to be exempt from requirements to pass a competency test in various subjects if the applicant completes the pilot program; and providing other matters properly relating thereto.

Legislative Counsel's Digest:

Existing law creates the Commission on Professional Standards in Education and requires the Commission to adopt regulations prescribing the qualifications for licensing teachers and other educational personnel. (NRS 391.011, 391.019) Existing law additionally requires the Commission to adopt regulations: (1) governing examinations for the initial licensing of teachers and other educational personnel; and (2) authorizing an applicant for such licenses to be exempt from the requirement to pass a competency test in basic reading, writing and mathematics if he or



she satisfies certain requirements (NRS 391.021) Existing regulations provide that an applicant is exempt from the requirement to pass such a competency test if the applicant submits to the Department of Education evidence that he or she completed: (1) the “Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators” in reading, mathematics and writing, prepared and administered by the Educational Testing Service; or (2) an equivalent test, as determined by the Department. (NAC 391.036) **Section 1** of this bill provides that the regulations adopted by the Commission must also authorize an applicant for an initial license to teach to be exempt from the requirement to pass a competency test in basic reading, writing and mathematics if he or she satisfactorily completes the pilot program established pursuant to **section 2** of this bill.

Section 3 of this bill appropriates money to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to establish a pilot program to offer an alternative pathway for assessing the competency of prospective teachers through the use of alternative assessment methods. **Section 2:** (1) sets forth the requirements for the program; and (2) provides that the pilot program must have not more than 100 participants, requiring that each participant be an applicant for an initial license to teach who currently holds a provisional license to teach. Furthermore, **section 2** sets forth the requirements governing the composition of participants, including that: (1) not more than 60 percent of participants be employed by a school district in a county whose population is 100,000 or more (currently Clark and Washoe Counties); (2) not more than 40 percent of participants be employed by a school district in a county whose population is less than 100,000 (currently all counties other than Clark and Washoe Counties); (3) participants be from at least five different school districts; (4) there be at least one graduate from each institution within the Nevada System of Higher



Education; (5) for each regional training program, there be at least one participant who received professional development services from the regional training program; and (6) there be at least one participant who is a member of certain employee organizations.

For a participant in the pilot program, **section 2** requires the Department to extend the deadline for successfully passing a competency test, which is required to receive an initial license to teach, for a period of 24 months after he or she is selected to participate in the program, thereby allowing the participant to use his or her satisfactory completion of the pilot program to satisfy requirements to receive an exemption from completing certain competency tests. **Section 2** also requires the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, to submit: (1) an annual progress report regarding the pilot program to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for distribution to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education; and (2) not later than 6 months after the cessation of the pilot program, a report to the Department on the success of the pilot program and a plan for its broader implementation.

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEVADA, REPRESENTED IN
SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. NRS 391.021 is hereby amended to read as follows:

391.021 1. Except as otherwise provided in NRS 391.027, the Commission shall adopt regulations governing examinations for the initial licensing of teachers and other educational



personnel. The regulations adopted by the Commission must ensure that the examinations test the ability of the applicant to teach and the applicant's knowledge of each specific subject he or she proposes to teach.

2. When adopting regulations pursuant to subsection 1, the Commission shall consider including any alternative means of demonstrating competency for persons with a disability or health-related need that the Commission determines are necessary and appropriate.

3. The regulations adopted by the Commission pursuant to subsection 1 must authorize an applicant to be exempt from any requirement to pass a competency test in basic reading, writing and mathematics if the applicant submits to the Department evidence that **[]** :

(a) At any time before or after ~~[not-passing]~~ completing a competency test in basic reading, writing and mathematics at the level of competence specified by the Commission, the applicant began and completed, with a grade of B or better, a course of study approved by the Department in each subject area of the competency test that the applicant did not pass at the level of competence specified by the Commission.

(b) If the applicant is applying for an initial license to teach, he or she has satisfactorily completed the pilot program established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

4. Teachers and educational personnel from another state who obtain a reciprocal license pursuant to NRS 391.032 or 391B.010 are not required to take the examinations for the initial licensing of teachers and other educational personnel described in this section or any other examination for initial licensing required by the regulations adopted by the Commission.



Sec. 2. 1. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, shall establish and operate a pilot program to offer an alternative pathway for assessing the competency of applicants for a license to teach pupils in this State through the use of alternative assessment methods.

2. A pilot program established pursuant to subsection 1 must:

(a) Using the criteria set forth in subsection 3, select not more than 100 participants for the pilot program;

(b) Select not more than 25 teachers licensed pursuant to chapter 391 of NRS who have taught in a public school in this State for at least 5 years to serve as mentors for participants in the pilot program;

(c) Include a curriculum of professional development for participants in the pilot program that consists of at least 10 sessions and is aligned with the criteria for designating a teacher as effective or highly effective under the statewide performance evaluation system established by the State Board of Education pursuant to NRS 391.465;

(d) Require, for the duration of the pilot program, a teacher selected to serve as a mentor pursuant to paragraph (b) to conduct a monthly meeting with each participant who is assigned as his or her mentee;

(e) For a participant to receive credit for satisfactorily completing the pilot program, require the participant to, while he or she is participating in the pilot program, receive at least two consecutive evaluations, conducted pursuant to NRS 391.685, in which the overall performance of the teacher was designated as effective or highly effective;



(f) For alternative assessment methods, assess the validity and reliability of the methods and ability of the methods to be scaled to accommodate a greater number of participants;

(g) Promote assessment practices that are inclusive and equitable and that support a diversity of learning styles and experiences;

(h) Align alternative assessment methods with applicable state standards, requirements for accreditation and the needs of school districts in this State;

(i) Collect and analyze data to provide evidence-based recommendations for the potential implementation of alternative assessment methods in this State; and

(j) Continue for a duration of not more than 24 months after the date of establishment of the pilot program.

3. A person is eligible to participate in a pilot program established pursuant to this section if he or she is an applicant for a license to teach issued pursuant to chapter 391 of NRS and holds a provisional license issued by the Superintendent of Public Instruction pursuant to NRS 391.032. Not more than 60 percent of the total participants in the pilot program must be employed by a school district in a county whose population is 100,000 or more, and not more than 40 percent of the participants in the pilot program must be employed by a school district in a county whose population is less than 100,000. A pilot program established pursuant to this section must be composed of:

(a) Participants from at least five different school districts in this State;

(b) For each institution within the Nevada System of Higher Education, at least one participant who has obtained an associate's degree, baccalaureate degree or certificate from the institution;



(c) For each regional training program, at least one participant who has received professional development services from the regional training program;

(d) At least one participant who is a member of the employee organization representing the majority of teachers employed by a large school district; and

(e) At least one participant who is a member of an employee organization representing the majority of teachers employed by school districts in this State other than a large school district.

4. The Department of Education shall, for each participant in the pilot program established pursuant to this section, extend for 24 months after selection to participate in the pilot program any deadline for removing a provision on a provisional license issued by the Superintendent of Public Instruction pursuant to NRS 391.032 that requires successfully passing a competency test required to receive an initial license to teach pursuant to NRS 391.021.

5. The University of Nevada, Las Vegas, shall:

(a) On or before July 1 of each year of operation for the pilot program established pursuant to this section, submit a report to the Director of the Legislative Counsel Bureau for distribution to the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education describing the progress of the pilot program, including, without limitation:

- (1) Demographic information for participants in the pilot program;
- (2) The success of professional development services provided by the pilot program; and
- (3) Preliminary findings of the pilot program.

(b) Not later than 6 months after the pilot program established pursuant to this section ceases operation, submit to the Department of Education:



(1) A plan for implementing the pilot program in a permanent format that can accommodate all prospective applicants that describes the structure and curriculum of the pilot program; and

(2) The metrics of success for the pilot program.

6. As used in this section:

(a) “Alternative assessment methods” means valid and reliable methods used for determining, for an applicant for an initial license to teach issued pursuant to NRS 391.019, the applicants competency in, knowledge of and ability to provide instruction in reading, mathematics and writing that is equivalent to the “Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators” in reading, mathematics and writing, prepared and administered by the Educational Testing Service.

(b) “Large school district” has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 388G.530.

(c) “Metrics of success” includes, without limitation:

(1) An evaluation of the growth in competency, professional engagement and readiness for participants in the pilot program established pursuant to this section;

(2) An analysis of the impact of the pilot program on the retention, effectiveness and morale of teachers; and

(3) Benchmarks for satisfactory completion of the pilot program.

(d) “Participant” means an applicant for a license to teach who is selected to participate in the pilot program established pursuant to this section.

(e) “Regional training program” has the meaning ascribed to it in NRS 391A.105.

Sec. 3. 1. There is hereby appropriated from the State General Fund to the University of Nevada, Las Vegas the sum of \$1,100,000 for the purpose of developing and conducting a pilot



program to offer an alternative pathway for assessing the competency of applicants for a license to teach pupils in this State through the use of alternative assessment methods. Not more than 10 percent of the money appropriated by this subsection may be used for the purpose of defraying indirect costs incurred as a result of providing the pilot program established pursuant to section 2 of this act.

2. Any remaining balance of the appropriation made by subsection 1 must not be committed for expenditure after June 30, 2027, by the entity to which the appropriation is made or any entity to which money from the appropriation is granted or otherwise transferred in any manner, and any portion of the appropriated money remaining must not be spent for any purpose after September 17, 2027, by either the entity to which the money was appropriated or the entity to which the money was subsequently granted or transferred, and must be reverted to the State General Fund on or before September 17, 2027.

Sec. 4. This act becomes effective upon passage and approval.

