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EDUCATION Elementary and Secondary Education: Provide That Professional Standards Committee Shall Grant a Renewable Certificate When Required Conditions Are Met; Provide Rules and Regulations

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EDUCATION

*Elementary and Secondary Education: Provide That
Professional Standards Committee Shall Grant a Renewable
Certificate When Required Conditions Are Met;
Provide Rules and Regulations*

CODE SECTION:	O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200 (amended)
BILL NUMBER:	SB 336
ACT NUMBER:	664
GEORGIA LAWS:	2000 Ga. Laws 521
SUMMARY:	The Act requires that the Professional Standards Commission establish rules and regulations to offer alternative means of teacher certification.
EFFECTIVE DATE:	July 1, 2000

History

The State of Georgia needs more teachers.¹ DeKalb County alone will require eighty new teachers next year, and the number of teachers needed will continue to grow as class size is decreased.² Senator Tommie Williams of the 6th Senate District introduced SB 336 to address the growing need for teachers by taking advantage of an important resource, willing professionals.³ Prior to the passage of SB 336, Georgia law required a teacher to obtain a degree in education to become certified.⁴ Professionals who want to teach would have to go back to school and obtain a teaching degree.⁵ Now, as an

1. See Audio Recordings of Senate Proceedings, Feb. 21, 2000 (remarks by Sen. Tommie Williams) <<http://www.ganet.org/services/leg/audio/2000archive.html>> [hereinafter Senate Audio].

2. See *id.*

3. See *id.*; see also SB 336, as introduced, 2000 Ga. Gen. Assem.

4. See Telephone Interview with Sen. Tommie Williams, Senate District No. 6 (May 17, 2000) [hereinafter Williams Interview].

5. See *id.* Senator Williams, himself, chose to enter the classroom after having pursued a career for years. See Senate Audio, *supra* note 1. He was required to go back to school despite his work experience and education. See *id.* Senator Williams found that much of what was required did not actually assist him in the classroom, and he feared that many professionals would not be willing to become a student once again. See *id.*; Williams Interview, *supra* note 4.

alternative to the education degree requirement, the Professional Standards Board must establish criteria to certify applicants with at least a bachelor's degree in a subject area that corresponds to an appropriate subject matter certification.⁶

SB 336

Introduction in the Senate

The bill was introduced by Senator Tommie Williams on January 24, 2000.⁷ SB 336 was assigned to the Senate Higher Education Committee upon introduction,⁸ and the bill experienced its only alteration in this Committee.⁹ The Committee offered a substitute that added provisions requiring the Professional Standards Commission to establish the rules and regulations necessary to implement the effected subsections.¹⁰ The Senate passed the bill, as substituted, on February 21, 2000, with a vote of 49 to 1.¹¹

Passage in the House

The Senate version was introduced in the House on February 22, 2000.¹² The bill was then assigned to the House Education Committee, which favorably reported the bill on March 14, 2000.¹³ The Senate unanimously passed SB 336 on March 16, 2000.¹⁴ After both the House and the Senate passed SB 336, the Governor signed the bill into law on April 20, 2000.¹⁵

6. Compare 1991 Ga. Laws 1546, § 4, at 1557-58 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c) (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c) (Supp. 2000).

7. See State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, Mar. 22, 2000.

8. See *id.*

9. Compare SB 336, as introduced, 2000 Ga. Gen. Assem., with SB 336 (SCS), 2000 Ga. Gen. Assem.

10. Compare SB 336, as introduced, 2000 Ga. Gen. Assem., with SB 336 (SCS), 2000 Ga. Gen. Assem. The bill mandates that the Professional Standards Board develop rules and regulations to offer alternative teacher certificates. See Senate Audio, *supra* note 1.

11. See Georgia Senate Voting Record, SB 336 (Feb. 21, 2000); State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, Mar. 22, 2000.

12. See State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, Mar. 22, 2000.

13. See *id.*

14. See Georgia House of Representatives Voting Record, SB 336 (Mar. 16, 2000); State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, Mar. 22, 2000.

15. See 2000 Ga. Laws 521, § 3, at 522; see also State of Georgia Final Composite Status Sheet, Mar. 22, 2000.

The Act

The Act changes Code section 20-2-200 in three significant ways. First, the Act requires the Professional Standards Commission to grant certification when the conditions provided in the Act are met.¹⁶ The prior Code section merely granted them the authority to grant certification.¹⁷ Second, the Act replaces the requirement that a teacher take a “college course related to human growth and development” with a general provision that requires an applicant to satisfy “any additional requirements or standards of the alternative certification program” in the rules and regulations of the Professional Standard Commission.¹⁸ Third, the Act empowers the Professional Standards Commission to establish the rules and regulations necessary to carry out the statute “as soon as practical.”¹⁹

Prior to the Act, an individual needed a degree in education and certification by the Professional Standards Board to teach in Georgia.²⁰ Now, the Act allows a degree in a candidate’s area of expertise and certification by alternate means.²¹ The education degree requirement was problematic because many professionals were not willing to attend school for another year.²² The Act requires that the Professional Standards Board offer an alternative means of certification.²³ Senator Tommie Williams expects the Board will look at a person based on his or her experience to determine what amount of additional education is necessary.²⁴ Senator Williams believes the ideal

16. Compare 1991 Ga. Laws 525, § 4, at 1557-58 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c) (1999)), and 1992 Ga. Laws 2365, § 1, at 2365 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(d) (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c), (d) (Supp. 2000).

17. Compare 1991 Ga. Laws 525, § 4, at 1557-58 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c) (1999)), and 1992 Ga. Laws 2365, § 1, at 2365 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(d) (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c), (d) (Supp. 2000).

18. Compare 1991 Ga. Laws 525, § 4, at 1557-58 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c) (1999)) and 1992 Ga. Laws 2365, § 1, at 2365 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(d) (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c), (d) (Supp. 2000).

19. Compare 1991 Ga. Laws 525, § 4, at 1557-58 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c) (1999)), and 1992 Ga. Laws 2365, § 1, at 2365 (formerly found at O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(d) (1999)), with O.C.G.A. § 20-2-200(c), (d) (Supp. 2000).

20. See Williams Interview, *supra* note 4.

21. See *id.*

22. See *id.*

23. See *id.*

24. See *id.*

situation would be for an individual to have a degree in the subject he or she will teach and to learn classroom skills from a master teacher.²⁵

Forty states currently have similar standards, which often target men who are needed as role models.²⁶ These new standards have also tended to bring in persons of color and those with experience in math and science.²⁷ Importantly, individuals who meet these criteria tend to have high retention rates.²⁸

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25. *See id.*

26. *See id.*

27. *See id.*

28. *See id.* Senator Williams attributes the high retention rates to the experience of the individuals targeted by the Act. *See id.*