

March 22, 2021

Senate Education Committee

Re: PSBA Supports SB 381 & SB 224

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the 4,500 elected officials who govern the Commonwealth’s public school districts, **we are writing to request your support for Senate Bill 381 and Senate Bill 224** which are scheduled to be considered by the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday, March 23rd.

**Senate Bill 381 (Senators Martin and Aument)** would eliminate the statutory sunset provision for a program that allows individuals who are training to be teachers to serve as substitute teachers, provided they meet certain requirements.  The program has been in place for almost five years and is set to expire on June 30th of this year unless action is taken, and with school districts across the state continuing to struggle to find substitute teachers, now is not the time to lose the flexibility which this program provides.  PSBA is very supportive of maintaining this flexibility in hiring substitute teachers.

**Senate Bill 224 (Senators Bartolotta and Langerholc)** would update current law regarding out-of-state candidates for Pennsylvania teacher certification in order to ensure that qualified individuals can obtain certification as quickly and easily as possible.  The bill allows an out-of-state candidate who has completed an educator preparation program from an accredited institution of higher education, and who has two years of teaching experience, to be eligible for a comparable Pennsylvania instructional certification.  The bill will also require PDE to recognize and accept out-of-state candidates’ qualifying scores on equivalent certification tests in order to meet Pennsylvania requirements.  The legislation would further grant Pennsylvania certification to any candidate who holds a valid certificate issued by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.  Finally, the bill provides for expedited certification for individuals seeking certification in a subject area identified by PDE as a “shortage area”.  With school districts all across the state facing difficulties in finding and hiring teachers, PSBA believes that any effort to eliminate barriers should be supported and prioritized.

PSBA thanks Senators Martin, Bartolotta, Langerholc, and Aument for their leadership on these issues.