

AN ACT concerning education.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing
Sections 21-1 and 21-11.1 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/21-1) (from Ch. 122, par. 21-1)

Sec. 21-1. Qualification of teachers. No one may be certified to teach or supervise in the public schools of this State who is not of good character, of good health, a citizen of the United States or legally present and authorized for employment, and at least 19 years of age. An applicant for a certificate who is not a citizen of the United States must sign and file with the State Board of Education a letter of intent indicating that either (i) within 10 years after the date that the letter is filed or (ii) at the earliest opportunity after the person becomes eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship, the person will apply for U.S. citizenship.
~~If the holder of a certificate under this Section is not a citizen of the United States 6 years after the date of the issuance of the original certificate, any certificate held by such person on that date shall be cancelled by the board of education and no other certificate to teach shall be issued to such person until such person is a citizen of the United States.~~

Citizenship is not required for the issuance of a temporary part-time certificate to participants in approved training programs for exchange students as described in Section 21-10.2. A certificate issued under this plan shall expire on June 30 following the date of issue. One renewal for one year is authorized if the holder remains as an official participant in an approved exchange program.

In determining good character under this Section, any felony conviction of the applicant may be taken into consideration, but such a conviction shall not operate as a bar to registration.

No person otherwise qualified shall be denied the right to be certified, to receive training for the purpose of becoming a teacher or to engage in practice teaching in any school because of a physical disability including but not limited to visual and hearing disabilities; nor shall any school district refuse to employ a teacher on such grounds, provided that the person is able to carry out the duties of the position for which he applies.

No person may be granted or continue to hold a teaching certificate who has knowingly altered or misrepresented his or her teaching qualifications in order to acquire the certificate. Any other certificate held by such person may be suspended or revoked by the State Teacher Certification Board, depending upon the severity of the alteration or misrepresentation.

No one may teach or supervise in the public schools nor receive for teaching or supervising any part of any public school fund, who does not hold a certificate of qualification granted by the State Board of Education or by the State Teacher Certification Board and a regional superintendent of schools as hereinafter provided, or by the board of education of a city having a population exceeding 500,000 inhabitants except as provided in Section 34-6 and in Section 10-22.34 or Section 10-22.34b. However, the provisions of this Article do not apply to a member of the armed forces who is employed as a teacher of subjects in the Reserve Officer's Training Corps of any school. Sections 21-2 through 21-24 do not apply to cities having a population exceeding 500,000 inhabitants, until July 1, 1988.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, the

board of education of any school district may grant to a teacher of the district a leave of absence with full pay for a period of not more than one year to permit such teacher to teach in a foreign state under the provisions of the Exchange Teacher Program established under Public Law 584, 79th Congress, and Public Law 402, 80th Congress, as amended. The school board granting such leave of absence may employ with or without pay a national of the foreign state wherein the teacher on leave of absence will teach, if the national is qualified to teach in that foreign state, and if that national will teach in a grade level similar to the one which was taught in such foreign state. The State Board of Education shall promulgate and enforce such reasonable rules as may be necessary to effectuate this paragraph.

(Source: P.A. 88-189; 89-159, eff. 1-1-96; 89-397, eff. 8-20-95; 89-626, eff. 8-9-96.)

(105 ILCS 5/21-11.1) (from Ch. 122, par. 21-11.1)

Sec. 21-11.1. Certificates for equivalent qualifications. An applicant who holds or is eligible to hold a teacher's certificate or license under the laws of another state or territory of the United States may be granted a corresponding teacher's certificate in Illinois on the written authorization of the State Board of Education and the State Teacher Certification Board upon the following conditions:

(1) That the applicant is at least 19 years of age, is of good character, of good health, and a citizen of the United States or legally present and authorized for employment; and

(2) That the requirements for a similar teacher's certificate in the particular state or territory were, at the date of issuance of the certificate, substantially equal to the requirements in force at the time the

application is made for the certificate in this State.

After January 1, 1988, in addition to satisfying the foregoing conditions and requirements, an applicant for a corresponding teaching certificate in Illinois also shall be required to pass the examinations required under the provisions of Section 21-1a as directed by the State Board of Education.

In determining good character under this Section, any felony conviction of the applicant may be taken into consideration, but the conviction shall not operate as a bar to registration.

The State Board of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board shall prescribe rules and regulations establishing the similarity of certificates in other states and the standards for determining the equivalence of requirements.

(Source: P.A. 90-548, eff. 1-1-98.)