

# Panel OKs teacher competency tests

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

The state House Education Committee gave solid support to a bill requiring competency testing of would-be teachers.

But a key member doubts such an exam is the best way to pick the weeds from the crop.

"Everyone's for quality," said Rep. James Kosteva, D-Canton, vice-chairman of the 20-member panel. "But when you look at the total cost and compare testing to the alternatives..."

The first-term lawmaker said higher salaries and in-service work may be better alternatives, adding, "I hope we're not through with the bill."

THE BILL would require that, prior to receiving a state certificate, a person would have to pass state exams in basic intellectual skills; their specific fields such as chemistry or history; and teaching skills.

If enacted, the law would require basic skills testing for all teachers certified in the fall of 1991.

The subject area examination would be phased in for fall of 1993.

**'Ninety-seven percent of the citizens polled (in 1983) felt that teachers should be required to demonstrate competency in the subject area they teach.'**

— Phillip Runkel  
state superintendent  
of public instruction

REPRESENTATIVES are far from through with the bill.

Education Committee Chairman William Keith, D-Garden City, noted the measure (Senate Bill 447) must go next to the Appropriations Committee, which will measure costs.

And because the House measure is far different from the original Senate version, the House version must go back to the upper chamber for concurrence.

The bill is supported by the Michigan Association of School Boards, Michigan Association of School Administrators and the two major teachers unions.

One union, the Federation of Teachers, however, wants the bill amended so that the examination advisory committee has a majority of classroom teachers rather than administrators or professors.

DESPITE HIS qualms, Kosteva voted to report out the bill. So did Keith and Reps. Justice Barnes, D-Westland, and Lyn Banks, R-Livonia.

Banks strongly favors it.

"True or not, a lot of people think some teachers teach the first year and repeat it 17 times. That's a perception," she said.

Her view is supported by Phillip Runkel, superintendent of public instruction. He cited a 1983 state poll which showed "97 percent of the citizens polled felt that teachers should be required to demonstrate competency in the subject area they teach."

A 1984 nationwide Gallup Poll showed 69 percent of the public and 69 percent of teachers favor state exams for beginning teachers.

BANKES WAS pleased with one major change in the House version of the bill.

"The Senate bill allowed each teaching college to have its own exam. We thought that

was ludicrous," she said. The House version requires the state Department of Education to draw up standardized tests.

Lawyers, doctors, nurses, architects and many other professional persons must pass state exams before being certified to work, she said, "and parents are demanding the same."

Rep. Tom Power, R-Traverse City, agreed. "Schools of education have a motive to write an extremely weak exam."

IN 1981, according to a Senate staff report, a math test given to 392 prospective elementary teachers at five Michigan universities showed that, even with calculators:

- Thirty percent couldn't subtract 0.14 from 64.

- Forty percent couldn't divide 24 by 0.3.

- Eighty-eight percent couldn't calculate what percentage of 1,200 is 30.

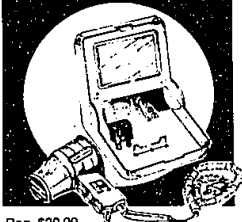
The Michigan Department of Education reports that 19 states currently require passage of some kind of certification test.

Fifteen states are planning new or additional examinations. Eighteen — including Michigan — have no competency tests.

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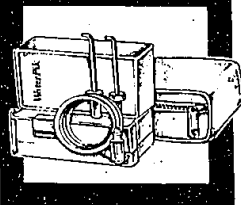
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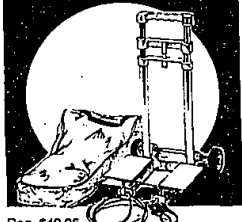
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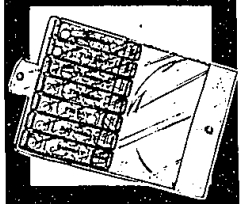
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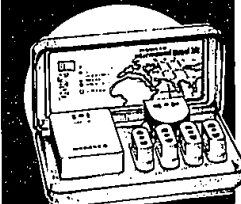
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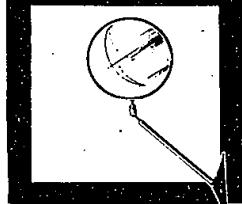
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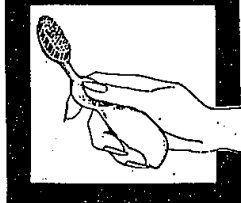
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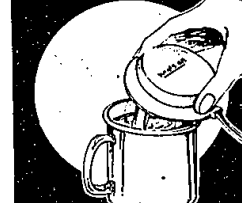
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THE MICHIGAN LOTTERY HAS ANNOUNCED A NEW WEEKLY GAME, SUPER LOTTO, TO START IN APRIL. A LETTER TO "WINNERS CIRCLE" POSED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

Q. What is the major difference between the two Lotto games?

A. The Michigan Lotto game currently challenges players to match six numbers from a field of 40. Super Lotto will ask players to pick six numbers from a field of 44.

Q. Won't it then be harder to match all six numbers?

A. Yes. The odds for matching four, five or all six winning numbers will increase along with estimated prize amounts.

Q. How large will prizes be in Super Lotto?

A. Jackpot shares in the regular Lotto game have averaged about \$1.7 million. Super Lotto should provide average jackpot shares of more than \$3 million. Second prize shares will be an estimated \$2,500 compared to \$1,000, while third prize shares will average an estimated \$90 versus \$50.

Q. Why is this new game being added?

A. Many players have indicated interest in large jackpot amounts, like those that have occurred in other states, from Lotto games with more numbers from which to choose.

Q. What if I prefer the regular Lotto game?

A. Players will now have a choice of two Lotto games. Those preferring the better odds can play the regular six of 40 game with weekly drawings every Wednesday night. Those seeking larger prizes can try the longer odds in Super Lotto, with its Saturday drawings.

Q. How will the Lotto game change affect my current subscription?

A. Lotto subscriptions will continue for the 6/40 game only. Players with current subscriptions will receive notice of the return to once-a-week play and charts to help them figure new expiration dates. Subscription play will NOT be offered for Super Lotto, but the Lottery is looking into a system for advance purchase of tickets at Lotto retailers.

Q. How will the game affect the Lottery's contribution to the State School Aid Fund?

A. Addition of a second Lotto game should help the Lottery provide \$430 million to aid K-12 education this year. Last year, Lottery players provided \$360 million for schools.

Because his Super Lotto question was first received and used in this column, Harold Lockwood of Gaylord received 10 tickets for the "Pie Tac Toe" instant game. If you have a Lottery question, you'll like answered, and it'll be in the "Winners Circle," Michigan Lottery, P.O. Box 30077, Lansing, MI 48906.