

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 159
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Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

There have been calls to strengthen the integration of evidence-based inclusive practices in educator preparation and professional development programs, particularly for students with disabilities or limited English proficiency. Research has shown that implementing these inclusive practices improves learning for all students, including students with disabilities. H.B. 159 seeks to enable educators to better serve all students by requiring educator preparation programs and professional development training to integrate inclusive instructional practices throughout the curriculum.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board for Educator Certification in SECTIONS 2, 4, and 8 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 159 amends the Education Code to require the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to propose rules specifying what each primary and secondary educator is expected to know and be able to do, particularly with regard to students with disabilities. The bill requires training requirements for an educator certificate to include demonstration of the following:

- basic knowledge of each disability category under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and how each category can affect student learning and development;
- basic knowledge of conditions that may be considered a disability under certain provisions of the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and how such conditions can affect student learning and development;
- competence in the use of specified proactive instructional planning techniques; and
- competence in the use of evidence-based inclusive instructional practices.

H.B. 159 makes the minimum academic qualifications for certification relating to instruction regarding students with dyslexia and instruction regarding mental health, substance abuse, and youth suicide apply to all certifications without regard to whether the certification requires a person to possess a bachelor's degree. The bill clarifies that the qualifications for principal certification must emphasize the principal's ability to create an inclusive school environment and to foster parent involvement as part of instructional leadership and must emphasize the principal's curriculum and instruction management for students with disabilities.

H.B. 159 expands the requirements for an educator preparation program's eligibility for approval or renewal to include:

- incorporation of proactive instructional planning techniques throughout coursework and across content areas using a specified framework; and
- integration of inclusive practices for all students, evidence-based instruction, and intervention strategies throughout coursework, clinical experience, and student teaching.

H.B. 159 specifies that the information in certain provisions relating to the required content, emphasis, and purpose of educator preparation programs is applicable to all students, including students with disabilities, as follows:

- the information regarding the high expectations for students in Texas that is provided by each educator preparation program;
- the information based on the achievement of students taught by beginning teachers for the first three years following certification, as it applies to the standards established to govern the continuing accountability of educator preparation programs; and
- the information provided by an educator preparation program to teacher certification candidates concerning the skills and responsibilities required of teachers and student performance expectations.

H.B. 159 specifies that research into teaching practices that serves as the basis for a comprehensive field-based teacher program must be applicable to all students, including students with disabilities, and that research into curriculum theory and application within diverse student populations must be integrated in the design of such a program. The bill also specifies that the instructional or educational activities of a teacher candidate's required field-based experience must involve a diverse student population that, to the greatest extent practicable, includes students with disabilities. The bill requires the options provided by SBEC-proposed rules for any required field-based experience or internship to involve interaction with a diverse student population, including students with disabilities.

H.B. 159 requires a public school district, in designing the staff development provided to an educator other than a principal, to use procedures that ensure the training included in the staff development incorporates proactive instructional planning techniques using a specified framework and integrates inclusive and evidence-based instructional practices for all students, including students with disabilities.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.