

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 892
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Education
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Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, teacher candidates must only have a 2.5 GPA to be admitted into an educator preparation program, only have to spend 15 hours in the classroom training, and can take their certification examinations an unlimited number of times.

C.S.S.B. 892 does four main things to raise the standards of Texas' educator preparation programs. First, this bill requires the development of a set of data that are essential to monitor the effectiveness of educator preparation programs. Specifically, the ratio of new teachers to field supervisors in each alternative certification program, the length of time it takes an alternative certified teacher to progress from a probationary certificate to a standard teaching certificate, and teacher retention and success metrics. Second, C.S.S.B. 892 requires educator preparation programs to have an average cohort GPA of 3.0 for each entering class. Third, C.S.S.B. 892 requires that all 30 hours of classroom training be completed in the classroom, whereas currently only 15 hours must be completed in the classroom. Lastly, C.S.S.B. 892 requires that the educator certification examination mirror the Texas bar examination, limiting the number of attempts for a candidate to pass the examination to five times.

C.S.S.B. 892 amends current law relating to educator preparation programs and teacher certification examinations.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board for Educator Certification in SECTION 4 (Section 21.051, Education Code) of this bill.

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the State Board for Educator Certification is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 21.0441, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 21.0441, Education Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsections (c) and (d), as follows:

(a) Requires that the rules of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) proposed under this subchapter provide that a person, other than a person seeking career and technology education certification, is not eligible for admission to an educator preparation program, including an alternative educator preparation program, unless the person:

(1) except as provided by Subsection (b), satisfies the following minimum grade point average requirements, rather than satisfies minimum grade point average requirements prescribed by SBEC, not to exceed the following:

(A) an overall grade point average of at least 2.50, rather than 2.75, on a four-point scale or the equivalent on any course work previously attempted at a public or private institution of higher education; or

(B) a grade point average of at least 2.50, rather than 2.75, on a four-point scale or the equivalent for the last 60 semester credit hours attempted at a public or private institution of higher education; and

(2) if the person is seeking initial certification:

(A) has successfully completed at least:

(i) 15 semester credit hours in the subject-specific content area in which the person is seeking certification, if the person is seeking certification to teach mathematics or science at or above grade level seven; or

(ii) 12 semester credit hours in the subject-specific content area in which the person is seeking certification, if the person is not seeking certification to teach mathematics or science at or above grade level seven; or

(B) has achieved a satisfactory level of performance on a content certification examination, which may be a content certification examination administered by a vendor approved by the commissioner of education for purposes of administering such an examination for the year for which the person is applying for admission to the program.

(c) Prohibits the overall grade point average of each incoming class admitted by an educator preparation program, including an alternative educator preparation program, from being less than 3.00 on a four-point scale or the equivalent or a higher overall grade point average prescribed by SBEC. Authorizes a program, in computing the overall grade point average of an incoming class for purposes of this subsection, to:

(1) include the grade point average of each person in the incoming class based on all course work previously attempted by the person at a public or private institution of higher education; or

(2) include the grade point average of each person in the incoming class based only on the last 60 semester credit hours attempted by the person at a public or private institution of higher education.

(d) Provides that a person seeking career and technology education certification is not included in determining the overall grade point average of an incoming class under Subsection (c).

SECTION 2. Amends Section 21.045(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Requires that each educator preparation program submit data elements as required by SBEC for an annual performance report to ensure access and equity. Requires that the annual report contain, at a minimum:

(1) the performance data from Subsection (a), other than the data required for purposes of Subsection (a)(3), and the following information, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity:

(A) the number of candidates who apply;

(B) the number of candidates admitted;

(C) the number of candidates retained;

(D) the number of candidates completing the program;

(E) the number of candidates employed as beginning teachers under standard teaching certificates by not later than the first anniversary of

completing the program, rather than the number of candidates employed in the profession after completing the program;

(F) the amount of time required by candidates employed as beginning teachers under probationary teaching certificates to be issued standard teaching certificates;

(G) the number of candidates retained in the profession; and

(H) any other information required by federal law;

(2) the ratio of field supervisors to candidates completing student teaching, clinical teaching, or an internship; and

(3) any other information necessary to enable SBEC to assess the effectiveness of the program on the basis of teacher retention and success criteria adopted by SBEC.

Creates Subdivision (1) from existing text and redesignates former Subdivisions (1)-(5) as Paragraphs (A)-(E) and former Subdivisions (6) and (7) as Paragraphs (G) and (H).

SECTION 3. Amends Section 21.048, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a-1) and (c-1) and adding Subsection (a-2), as follows:

(a-1) Prohibits SBEC from requiring that more than 45 days elapse before authorizing a person to retake an examination. Prohibits a person from retaking an examination more than four times, unless SBEC waives the limitation for good cause as prescribed by SBEC.

(a-2) Authorizes a person who initially took an examination before September 1, 2015, to retake the examination up to four times after that date, regardless of the number of times that the person attempted to perform satisfactorily on the examination before that date for purposes of the limitation imposed by Subsection (a-1) on the number of administrations of an examination. Provides that this subsection expires September 1, 2018.

(c-1) Provides that the results of an examination administered under this section are confidential and are not subject to disclosure under Chapter 552 (Public Information), Government Code, unless the disclosure is regarding notification to a parent of the assignment of an uncertified teacher to a classroom as required by Section 21.057 (Parental Notification). Deletes existing text exempting the educator who has failed the examination more than five times from the results of an examination administered under this section being confidential and not subject to disclosure under Chapter 522, Government Code. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 21.051, Education Code, effective September 1, 2016, by amending Subsection (b) and adding Subsections (b-1), (b-2), and (c-1), as follows:

(b) Requires a candidate, before a school district may employ the candidate for certification as a teacher of record, to complete at least 30 hours, rather than 15 hours, of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities in the classroom under supervision at:

(1) a public school campus accredited or approved for the purpose by the Texas Education Agency (TEA); or

(2) a private school recognized or approved for the purpose by TEA .

(b-1) Prohibits the hours of field-based experience required by Subsection (b) from being provided through use of electronic transmission or other video- or technology-based method.

(b-2) Authorizes a candidate to be employed by a school district as a teacher of record before completing the field-based experience required by that subsection, notwithstanding Subsection (b), if the candidate:

(1) is not admitted by an educator preparation program before June 15;

(2) is employed by the district on or after June 15 or after the district's school year begins; and

(3) completes the required field-based experience not later than the 90th day after the date the candidate receives a teaching assignment.

(c-1) Provides that Subsections (b), (b-1), and (b-2), amended and added by S.B. 892, Acts of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, apply only to an initial certification issued on or after September 1, 2016. Provides that those provisions do not affect:

(1) the validity of a certification issued before September 1, 2016; or

(2) the eligibility of a person who holds a certification issued before September 1, 2016, to obtain a subsequent renewal of the certification in accordance with TEA rule.

SECTION 5. Requires SBEC to develop criteria for evaluation of educator preparation programs based on teacher retention and success as required by Section 21.045(b)(3), Education Code, as added by this Act, not later than January 1, 2016. Requires SBEC to consult with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) in developing the criteria, and requires THECB to participate and provide recommendations regarding the criteria.

SECTION 6. Effective date, except as otherwise provided by this Act: September 1, 2015.