

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

C.S.S.B. 529
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Education
4/27/2017
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

With the majority of special education students in our state attending classes with their non-special education peers through the state policy of mainstreaming, it is vital for the success of these students for educators to be trained in teaching methods that include all students by catering to a variety of learning styles. Unfortunately, these inclusive teaching strategies, as exemplified in the "universal design for learning" framework, are not required to be part of the teacher training curriculum used by colleges, universities, or alternative educator preparation programs. Without this training, teachers and other educators will be unable to effectively teach all students, manage behavioral challenges, or identify students who may need additional interventions through the state's special education program.

S.B. 529 ensures that all educators will receive training in these vital skills by requiring existing educator preparation courses to integrate material on universal design for learning and related strategies. The bill also contains provisions for updating currently certified educators on these important classroom tools, as they may not have received that training in their own preparation programs. Equipping all Texas educators with the resources they need to reach all students in their classrooms is essential in making sure our special needs students are able to reach their full educational potential. (Original Author's / Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

C.S.S.B. 529 amends current law relating to improving training and staff development for primary and secondary educators to enable them to more effectively serve all students.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the State Board for Educator Certification is modified in SECTION 2 (Section 21.044, Education Code), SECTION 4 (Section 21.045, Education Code), and SECTION 8 (Section 21.051, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 21.001, Education Code, as follows:

Sec. 21.001. New heading: DEFINITIONS. Defines "commissioner" and "universal design for learning."

SECTION 2. Amends Section 21.044, Education Code, by amending Subsections (a), (b), (c-1), and (g) and adding Subsection (a-1), as follows:

(a) Requires the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to propose rules:

- (1) specifying what each educator is expected to know and be able to do, particularly with regard to students with disabilities;
- (2) establishing the training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, enter an internship, or enter an induction-year program. Creates Subdivision (2) from existing text; and

(3) specifying the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate.
Creates Subdivision (3) from existing text.

(a-1) Requires that the minimum academic qualifications for a certificate require that the person demonstrate certain skills.

(b) Requires that the minimum academic qualifications for a certificate specified require that the person receive, as part of the training required to obtain that certificate, instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia. Deletes existing text requiring any minimum academic qualifications for a certificate that require a person to possess a bachelor's degree to also require that the person receive, as part of the training required to obtain that certificate, instruction in detection and education of students with dyslexia.

(c-1) Makes conforming changes.

(g) Requires that each educator preparation program provide information regarding the skills that educators are required to possess, the responsibilities that educators are required to accept, and the high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities, in this state.

SECTION 3. Amends Section 21.0443(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Requires that an educator preparation program, to be eligible for approval or renewal of approval, use a universal design for learning framework integrating inclusion for all students, including students with disabilities, and evidence-based instruction and intervention strategies throughout course work, clinical experiences, and student teaching to adequately prepare candidates for educator certification and meet the standards and requirements of SBEC.

SECTION 4. Amends Section 21.045(a), Education Code, to require SBEC to propose rules necessary to establish standards to govern the continuing accountability of all educator preparation programs based on information about achievement, including improvement in achievement, of all students, including students with disabilities, taught by beginning teachers for the first three years following certification, to the extent practicable, that is disaggregated with respect to race, sex, and ethnicity.

SECTION 5. Amends Section 21.0453(a), Education Code, to require SBEC to require that an educator preparation program provide candidates for teacher certification with information including skills and responsibilities required of teachers with regard to all students, including students with disabilities, and expectations for student performance, including students with disabilities, based on state standards.

SECTION 6. Amends Section 21.046(b), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Requires that the qualifications for certification as a principal be sufficiently flexible so that an outstanding teacher may qualify by substituting approved experience and professional training for part of the educational requirements. Requires that supervised and approved on-the-job experience in addition to required internship be accepted in lieu of classroom hours. Requires that the qualifications include instructional leadership, including the ability to create an inclusive school environment and to foster parent involvement.

SECTION 7. Amends Section 21.047(c), Education Code, as follows:

(c) Authorizes a center to develop and implement a comprehensive field-based educator preparation program to supplement the internship hours required in Section 21.050 (Academic Degree Required for Teaching Certificate; Internship). Requires that this comprehensive field-based teacher program be designed on the basis of current research into state-of-the-art teaching practices applicable to all students, including students with

disabilities, curriculum theory and application within diverse student populations, evaluation of student outcomes, and the effective application of technology.

SECTION 8. Amends Sections 21.051(b) and (f), Education Code, as follows:

(b) Requires a candidate, before a school district may employ a candidate for certification as a teacher of record, to complete at least 15 hours of field-based experience in which the candidate is actively engaged in instructional or educational activities involving a diverse student population that, to the greatest extent practicable, includes students with disabilities under supervision at certain schools.

(f) Requires SBEC to propose rules providing flexible options for persons for any field-based experience or internship required for certification. Requires that the options, to the greatest extent practicable, involve interaction with a diverse student population, including students with disabilities.

SECTION 9. Amends Section 21.4511(b), Education Code, to require that the training, in order to create a classroom environment that meets the individual learning needs of each student, emphasize inclusive collaborative strategies and providing instruction using a universal design for learning framework to the greatest extent practicable.

SECTION 10. Requires the commissioner to implement this Act only if the legislature appropriates money specifically for that purpose. Authorizes the commissioner, but does not require the commissioner, if the legislature does not appropriate money specifically for that purpose, to implement this Act using other appropriations available for the purpose.

SECTION 11. Effective date: September 1, 2017.