

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 892
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Education
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As Filed

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.

S.B. 892 does four main things to raise the standards of Texas' educator preparation programs. First, this bill requires the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to develop 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, S.B. 892 requires educator preparation programs to have an average cohort GPA of 3.0 for each entering class. Third, 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, 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.

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

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

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

(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 the State Board of Educator Certification (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 each educator preparation program to submit data elements as required by SBEC for an annual performance report to ensure access and equity. Requires the annual report to contain, at a minimum:

(1) certain data and additional information as set forth, including the number of candidates employed as beginning teachers, rather than the number of candidates employed in the profession, after completing the program and the amount of time required by candidates employed as beginning teachers to progress from a probationary teaching certificate to a standard teaching certificate;

(2) the ratio of candidates employed as beginning teachers to field supervisors; 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 designation of Subparagraphs (1)-(7) as Paragraphs (A)-(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 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) 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.

(c-1) Provides that Subsections (b) and (b-1), as amended and added by __.B. ____, 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 the State Board for Educator Certification 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 the State Board for Educator Certification 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.