

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 1963
By: Creighton
Education
6/21/2017
Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

In 2016, The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) proposed a rule change that was adopted by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) requiring advanced educator preparation programs in Texas to conduct at least one of three face-to-face observations of a candidate pursuing a career as an educator, other than a classroom teacher, to be in-person. A candidate within an advanced educator preparation program must meet state certification requirements in order to become a principal, superintendent, or school counselor. Before TEA adopted the rule change, state law permitted "face-to-face" observation and did not make any distinction between in person or other modes of observation, including video, Skype, or other technology-enhanced solutions. This previous flexibility regarding mode of observation provided students and general academic institutions the ability to provide increased access to online advanced educator preparation programs at a reduced cost while achieving above-state-average outcomes on certification tests for nearly a decade.

The proposed SBEC/TEA change to professional advanced educator preparation program will lead to increased regulation, increased program costs for students and institutions, and decreased statewide access. With the additional regulation, field supervisors will be forced to travel to the campus or district of each principal, superintendent, or counselor program participant for one of the three field observations.

S.B. 1963 amends Section 21.044 of the Education Code to return greater flexibility to educator preparation programs, other than a classroom teacher, and permit formal observations to occur on the candidate's site or through use of electronic transmission or other technology-based method.

S.B. 1963 amends current law relating to requirements for educator preparation program support for certain candidates for certification.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the Texas Education Agency on behalf of the State Board of Education is modified in SECTION 1 (Section 21.044, Education Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 21.044, Education Code, by adding Subsection (f-1), as follows:

(f-1) Prohibits State Board for Educator Certification rules addressing ongoing educator preparation program support for a candidate seeking certification in a certification class other than classroom teacher from requiring that an educator preparation program conduct one or more formal observations of the candidate on the candidate's site in a face-to-face setting. Requires that the rules permit each required formal observation to occur on the candidate's site or through use of electronic transmission or other video-based or technology-based method.

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2017.