



## SBEC May 2020 meeting

The State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) came together virtually for the first time on Friday for its May meeting and moved seamlessly through its regular agenda, which included discussion around how COVID-19 has impacted educators.

TEA presented the “three buckets” that SBEC-related issues have fallen into since the pandemic: those impacting clinical experiences, those impacting educator certification and testing requirements, and those impacting fall admission to educator preparation programs. A first round of governor-issued waivers helped to relax the time and placement requirements of internships and student teaching, and a second round increased flexibility for certain candidates to receive one-year probationary certificates. TEA’s Ryan Franklin explained that his team has only just begun planning for issues related to admission and entrance requirements for candidates entering programs in the fall.

SBEC heard testimony from representatives of the University of Texas at Austin who emphasized the need for relief dollars to be spent on targeted induction support for the newest teachers. Testifiers underscored how these teachers will not only be coming from limited preservice experiences but will be teaching students with lost learning. Kelvey Oeser of TEA commented that beginning teacher support is a “huge priority” of the agency and said they are already looking at the CARES Act as a potential funding source.

SBEC also took up a discussion-only agenda item to move forward with potential solutions for the master teacher certificates that were eliminated under House Bill (HB) 3. Though the master teacher certificates will have a “legacy” designation, per HB 3 they are non-renewable upon expiration and will result in some teachers being unable to maintain their current teaching assignments. In a letter delivered to the board at its February, 2020 meeting, Rep. Dan Huberty (R-Kingwood) clarified that the legislative intent of the elimination of the master teacher certificate in HB 3 was only to avoid a confusion of terms with the “master teacher” designation under the new teacher incentive allotment. Rep. Huberty affirmed that it was in no way intended to prevent educators who hold a master teacher certificate from continuing in their placements.

In Friday’s meeting, TSTA lobbyist, Carrie Griffith, provided testimony in support of an agency recommendation to remove the expiration date from the legacy certificates, arguing that these teachers should not only be permitted to continue in their teaching assignments without

disruption but should be honored with lifetime certificates. The board overwhelmingly agreed, and “stand proudly with master teachers.”

The board approved proposed amendments across five chapters of the Texas Administrative Code to implement the science of teaching reading (STR) exam requirements of HB 3. The changes include certificate name replacements to reflect STR competencies and adding to curriculum requirements of educator preparation programs according, among others.

In other action items, SBEC approved the adoption of revisions to 19 TAC Chapter 232 to update renewal and fingerprinting procedures and to implement recent legislative requirements for continuing professional education. TSTA participated in the chapter’s reorganization process, and of the 19 public comments received by the agency all were in support of and excited by the changes.

The board voted unanimously to deny a rulemaking petition submitted by a representative of Education Career Alternatives Program, an alternative certification program. The petition included four separate requests that together would ease accountability standards for EPPs. Member Shareefah Mason commented that the majority of candidates struggling to pass certification tests are candidates of color, and by maintaining high standards for institutions they will be forced to make adjustments in order to better serve all candidates. Despite support for the petition by several other alternative certification programs, the board overwhelmingly agreed on the importance of aligning the rigor of preparation with the rigor of school accountability and denied the requests.

Finally, SBEC member Carlos Villagrana, notified the board that he will be moving out of his roles as managing director of the Teaching Excellence, the alternative certification program of YES Prep charter schools. Because of this change, he is no longer able to serve as a member of SBEC. The vacancy marks the second on the board reserved for representatives of EPPs. Both replacements must be filled by governor appointment.