



The Texas State Teachers Association offers the following comments to the State Board for Educator Certification regarding agenda item #16: *Discussion of Certificate Options for Legacy Master Teachers.*

The Texas State Teachers Association (TSTA) urges the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) to exercise its authority to make Legacy Master Teacher (LMT) certificates valid with no expiration date, provided the educator renew their underlying certificate by continuing professional education as prescribed by 19 TAC Chapter 232.

House Bill 3 of the 86th Texas Legislature (2019) stipulates that SBEC can no longer issue or renew master teacher certificates, specifying that master teacher certificates will be designated as “legacy” and only recognized for assignment purposes until they expire. However, at the February 21, 2020 SBEC meeting, Chairman Dan Huberty affirmed in a letter to SBEC that the legislative intent was solely to avoid a confusing duplication of statutory terms and was not in any way intended to prevent educators who hold a master teacher certificate from continuing in their placement.

Chairman Huberty also highlighted the fact that HB3 gives significant attention to increasing literacy, and maintaining the certificates and assignments of LMTs is very much aligned with this legislative priority. Of the nearly 5000 LMT certificate holders, 82% are master reading teachers with a unique passion and skill for increasing reading and literacy outcomes. Approximately 75% also have advanced degrees in education. This group of educators has gone above and beyond, investing significant amounts of time and money to pursue these specialized certificates and to advance themselves in the profession. They are natural campus leaders that stay abreast of the most current research, mentor and coach colleagues and provide professional development for faculty.

TSTA appreciates the efforts by the Texas Education Agency to solicit stakeholder feedback and draft options to present to SBEC related to LMT certificates, and there was nearly unanimous support for honoring LMT with lifetime certificates.