

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 54
By: Zaffirini
Education
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The purpose of this legislation is to improve the quality of education provided to students with visual impairments. S.B. 54 would require teachers of students with visual impairments (TVIs) to complete all of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)-approved essential coursework before taking the certification test to become certified.

By requiring teachers to complete required coursework, the legislation also would promote long-term stability and growth opportunities for TVI certification programs at universities and the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Current law requires that a student with visual impairments be taught by a certified teacher. TVIs are able to obtain the supplemental visual impairment certification in several ways and not all of these require approved coursework.

S.B. 54 amends current law relating to certification to teach public school students who have visual impairments.

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 Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Education Code, by adding Section 21.0485, as follows:

Sec. 21.0485. CERTIFICATION TO TEACH STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS. (a) Requires a person, to be eligible to be issued a certificate to teach students with visual impairments, to:

(1) complete either all course work required for that certification in an approved educator preparation program or an alternative educator certification program approved for the purpose by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC);

(2) perform satisfactorily on each examination prescribed under Section 21.048 (Certification Examinations), for certification to teach students with visual impairments, after completing the course work or program described by Subdivision (1); and

(3) satisfy any other requirements prescribed by SBEC.

(b) Provides that Subsection (a) does not apply to eligibility for a certificate to teach students with visual impairments, including eligibility for renewal of that certificate, if the application for the initial certificate was submitted on or before September 1, 2011.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2011.