

By: West
(Patrick)

S.B. No. 1511

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to minimum standards for approval of educator preparation programs.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 21.044, Education Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 21.044. EDUCATOR PREPARATION. (a) The board shall propose rules establishing the training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, enter an internship, or enter an induction-year program. The board shall propose rules specifying ~~[specify]~~ the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate.

(b) In addition to satisfying applicable requirements and meeting applicable qualifications established under Subsection (a), to obtain a classroom teaching certificate, including a certificate qualifying a person to teach career and technical or special education classes, unless a certificate is awarded under Subsection (c), a person must:

(1) maintain an overall grade point average of at least 2.5 on a four-point scale or the equivalent while enrolled in an educator preparation program; or

(2) earn a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a four-point scale or the equivalent for the last 60 semester credit hours attempted at a public or private institution of higher

1 education.

2 (c) Based on extraordinary circumstances, as determined by
3 the board in accordance with board rule, the board may award a
4 certificate to a person who would be eligible for a certificate if
5 not for the person's failure to satisfy a grade point average
6 requirement as specified under Subsection (b)(1) or (2). In any
7 year, the board may not award certificates under this subsection to
8 more than five percent of an educator preparation program's
9 candidates for certification for that year.

10 (d) An educator preparation program may impose requirements
11 or qualifications in addition to requirements and qualifications
12 established under this section.

13 SECTION 2. Section 21.045, Education Code, is amended by
14 adding Subsections (d) and (e) to read as follows:

15 (d) The performance standards under Subsection (c) must
16 include a requirement that an educator preparation program,
17 including an undergraduate, alternative certification, or
18 postbaccalaureate program, admit only an applicant for admission
19 who:

20 (1) has, except as provided by Subsection (e):

21 (A) maintained an overall grade point average of
22 at least 2.5 on a four-point scale or the equivalent on any course
23 work previously attempted at a public or private institution of
24 higher education; or

25 (B) earned a grade point average of at least 2.5
26 on a four-point scale or the equivalent for the last 60 semester
27 credit hours attempted at a public or private institution of higher

1 education;

2 (2) demonstrates, in a manner determined by the
3 board, basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics; and

4 (3) either:

5 (A) has successfully completed at least 18
6 semester credit hours in the subject-specific content area in which
7 the applicant is pursuing certification; or

8 (B) if the applicant is seeking initial
9 certification, has achieved a satisfactory level of performance on
10 a content certification examination, which may be a content
11 certification examination administered by a vendor approved by the
12 commissioner for purposes of administering such an examination for
13 the year for which the applicant is applying for admission to the
14 program.

15 (e) The performance standards under Subsection (c) must
16 permit an educator preparation program to admit an applicant who
17 fails to satisfy a grade point average requirement prescribed by
18 Subsection (d)(1)(A) or (B), provided that:

19 (1) not more than five percent of the total number of
20 applicants admitted to the program in a year fail to satisfy the
21 requirement under Subsection (d)(1)(A) or (B); and

22 (2) for each applicant admitted as described by this
23 subsection, the director of the program:

24 (A) determines, based on documentation provided
25 by the applicant, that the applicant's work, business, or career
26 experience demonstrates achievement; and

27 (B) maintains and makes available at the request

1 of the board the documentation provided under Paragraph (A).

2 SECTION 3. Subsection (a), Section 21.048, Education Code,
3 is amended to read as follows:

4 (a) The board shall propose rules prescribing comprehensive
5 examinations for each class of certificate issued by the board. The
6 board shall determine the satisfactory level of performance
7 required for each certification examination. The board shall
8 require a satisfactory level of examination performance in English
9 language arts, reading, mathematics, science, and social studies
10 for the issuance of a generalist or multi-subject certificate.

11 SECTION 4. Subchapter A, Chapter 21, Education Code, is
12 amended by adding Section 21.008 to read as follows:

13 Sec. 21.008. BIENNIAL REPORT ON EDUCATORS. (a) Subject to
14 Subsection (d), not later than December 1 of each even-numbered
15 year, the agency shall prepare, publish, and submit to the
16 legislature a report regarding public school staffing and the
17 working conditions for public school educators. The report also
18 shall be posted on the agency's Internet website.

19 (b) The report must contain, at a minimum, the following
20 staffing information for each public school campus:

21 (1) the percentage of teachers assigned to teach
22 subjects outside the teacher's area of certification or expertise;

23 (2) the percentage of teachers employed under
24 emergency certificates;

25 (3) teacher turnover rates; and

26 (4) the number and percentage of teachers who have
27 less than one year of teaching experience.

1 (c) The report must contain information regarding working
2 conditions in each school district based on a statewide survey
3 conducted by the agency of educators. To encourage the uninhibited
4 participation of educators, the survey must be designed to prevent
5 the disclosure of the identity of a survey participant. The agency
6 shall include in the report recommendations for improving the
7 working conditions at campuses identified by the agency, based on
8 the results of the survey, as having poor working conditions.

9 (d) The commissioner shall seek from private sources the
10 funding necessary to pay the costs for the creation,
11 implementation, and analysis of the statewide survey described by
12 Subsection (c). If the commissioner does not acquire the necessary
13 funding to pay the costs of the survey, the agency may not, for the
14 applicable year, prepare, publish, or submit the report described
15 by this section.

16 SECTION 5. Sections 21.044 and 21.045, Education Code, as
17 amended by this Act, apply only to a person admitted to an educator
18 preparation program on or after January 1, 2012.

19 SECTION 6. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives
20 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as
21 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this
22 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this
23 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.