

By: West

S.B. No. 1511

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the preparation, certification and working conditions of educators.

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 specify the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate.

(b) A person may not be admitted to an educator preparation program, including an undergraduate university program, alternative certification program, or postbaccalaureate program, unless the person:

(1) has an overall grade point average of at least 2.75 on a four-point scale or the equivalent;

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

(3) has successfully completed a minimum of 18 semester credit hours in the subject-specific content area for the certification sought, a passing score on a content certification examination, or a passing score on a content examination administered by a vendor on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) -

1 approved vendor list published by the commissioner of education for  
2 the calendar year during which the person seeks admission.

3 (c) The requirement in Subsection (b)(3) applies only to a  
4 person seeking an initial certificate.

5 (d) An educator preparation program may admit a person to  
6 the program who does not have at least the grade point average  
7 required by Subsection (b)(1) if the person's work, business, or  
8 career experience demonstrates achievement. The person must submit  
9 satisfactory documentation regarding the person's experience to  
10 the program director, and the program must maintain the  
11 documentation and make it available to the board on request. The  
12 number of persons admitted under this subsection in an academic  
13 year may not exceed five percent of the total number of program  
14 candidates admitted to the program in that year.

15 (e) An educator preparation program may not recommend any  
16 person for a standard classroom teacher certificates, including  
17 special education certificates, career and technical education  
18 certificates, and endorsement areas, unless the person has  
19 maintained an overall grade point average of at least 2.75 on a  
20 four-point scale or the equivalent while enrolled in the program.  
21 An educator preparation program may waive this requirement only in  
22 extraordinary circumstances and for no more than five percent of  
23 the cohort of candidates recommended by the program for  
24 certification in that year.

25 (f) An educator preparation program may impose requirements  
26 in addition to the requirements imposed under this section.

27 (g) The board shall propose rules to implement this Section.

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

3 Sec. 21.048. CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS. (a) The board  
4 shall propose rules prescribing comprehensive examinations for  
5 each class of certificate issued by the board. The board shall  
6 determine the satisfactory level of performance required for each  
7 certification examination. For the issuance of a generalist or  
8 multi-subject certificate, the board shall require satisfactory  
9 performance in each of subject areas of English Language Arts and  
10 Reading, Mathematics, Science and Social Studies

11 SECTION 3. 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) Not later  
14 than December 1 of each even-numbered year, the agency shall  
15 prepare, publish, and submit to the legislature a report regarding  
16 public school staffing and the working conditions for public school  
17 educators. The report also shall be posted on the agency's Website.

18 (b) The report must contain staffing information for each  
19 campus, including at least the following:

20 (1) the percentage of teachers assigned to teach  
21 subjects outside their areas of expertise or certification;

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

24 (3) teacher turnover rates; and

25 (4) the number and percentage of teachers who have  
26 less than one year of experience as a teacher.

27 (c) The report must contain information regarding working

1 conditions in each district based on a statewide survey conducted  
2 by the agency of certified educators. To encourage the uninhibited  
3 participation of educators, the survey should be designed to  
4 prevent the disclosure of the identities of individual respondents  
5 in the report. Based upon the results of the survey, the agency  
6 should include recommendations to for improving the working  
7 conditions at schools identified as having poor working conditions.

8 SECTION 4. Section 21.044(b)-(e), Education Code, as added  
9 by this Act, applies only to a person who is admitted to an educator  
10 preparation program on or after January 1, 2012.

11 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives  
12 a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as  
13 provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this  
14 Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this  
15 Act takes effect September 1, 2011.