

BILL ANALYSIS

H.B. 2256
By: Guerra
Public Education
Committee Report (Unamended)

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

It has been noted that there are approximately one million English-language learners or emergent bilingual students in Texas, making up roughly a fifth of all Texas students. Of these English-language learners or emergent bilingual students, almost 10 percent receive special education services. Educators wanting to effectively teach special education for students learning English must pursue two discrete certificates, a requirement that provides little to no benefit for educators or students alike. H.B. 2256 seeks to address this issue by creating a bilingual special education certification to teach students of limited English proficiency with disabilities.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

It is the committee's opinion that rulemaking authority is expressly granted to the State Board for Educator Certification in SECTION 2 of this bill.

ANALYSIS

H.B. 2256 amends the Education Code to require the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to establish a bilingual special education certificate to ensure that there are teachers with special training in providing instruction to students of limited English proficiency with disabilities. To be eligible for a certificate, a person must do the following:

- satisfactorily complete the coursework for that certificate in an educator preparation program, including a skills-based course of instruction on providing instruction to students of limited English proficiency with disabilities;
- perform satisfactorily on a bilingual special education certificate examination prescribed by the SBEC; and
- satisfy any other requirements prescribed by the SBEC.

The bill sets out specific matters that must be included in the course of instruction.

H.B. 2256 requires the SBEC to propose rules establishing requirements and prescribing an examination for a bilingual special education certificate and establishing standards to govern the approval and renewal of approval of educator preparation programs for such certification.

EFFECTIVE DATE

September 1, 2021.