

Certification of Staff

12/13/2021

TEACHER CERTIFICATION

(Texas Education Code §§ 21.003, 21.057; 21.0031; 21.053)

The Texas Education Code requires a public school employee to have the appropriate certification for his or her current assignment unless the appropriate permit has been issued. The credentials appropriate to each assignment are set forth in the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rules at 19 Administrative Code Chapter 231. In the event an appropriately certified teacher cannot be found, the District must request an emergency certification from TEA and SBEC. These rules are burdensome and do not take into account the unique needs and circumstances of the district. Certain subject areas, in particular, are often very difficult to find properly-certified teachers.

Relief from this statute could potentially allow the following:

- Allow a non-certified yet highly qualified professional to teach OR a certified educator to teach in a related field for which he or she is not credentialed by the state.
- Allow the district to establish its own local qualification requirements for hard to fill positions or positions with no applicants.

All decisions on teacher certification and assignments will be handled locally. Examples may include the following:

- Allow an elementary certified teacher with expertise in early grades such as first and/or second to teach kindergarten.
- Allow a teacher certified to teach through grade 6 to teach courses in grades seven and/or eight.
- Allow a teacher certified to teach elementary level that has specific training in a specific content area to be teacher of record in that content area for middle and/or high school students.
- Allow a teacher certified in middle school or high school in a specific content area to teach that content at the elementary or middle school level.

The District will always first seek to hire a certified and highly qualified teacher. All open teaching positions would be posted. Certified teachers will be considered first. However, the candidate who is considered of highest quality may be selected regardless of certification.

While this exemption would be exercised in a limited way for specific situations, it would allow the District to recruit teachers with a strong knowledge base, including individuals from certain trades and/or vocations with industry knowledge and real world experience.

In order to best serve students, certain decisions on certification would be handled locally, within the following parameters:

- Will require teachers who teach Special Education, Bilingual, and English as a Second Language grades/courses to be certified.
- Certain industry-based experts will not be required to obtain a teaching certificate. Examples could be computer science, carpentry, health science.

- Experienced college instructors or professors will not be required to obtain a teaching certificate if hired for a dual credit teaching position that contains only dual credit classes.
- Candidates for non CTE or dual credit positions must hold a Bachelor's Degree. Teachers hired under this exemption must complete the Texas teacher certification process and present documentation of valid certification to Human Resources within three years of hire. The three year period for those hired after January 1 would not start until the next school year.
- Out-of-state certified staff must complete the Texas teacher certification process and present documentation of valid certification to Human Resources within three years of hire.

Staff hired under this exemption will be provided with district identified training and resources, and the support of a mentor to ensure their success.

In the event that the District is unable to find a certified teacher, the following procedures would be implemented:

After the required posting period and candidate interviews, if the principal desires to hire a candidate with other qualifications, the principal must specify in writing, to Human Resources, the reason for the request and document what specific credentials (i.e. experience, expertise, and/or industry certifications) the candidate possesses that would qualify the individual to teach that subject(s).

Human Resources will submit a request for a district permit to the Superintendent or designee for the candidate and will include the following locally determined criteria:

- a. College teaching experience; or
- b. Industry experience; or
- c. TEA educator certification to teach a subject in a related field; or
- d. Any combination of work experience, training, education, or industry-related credentials related to the subject matter he/she will be teaching.

The written request will outline the reason for the request and it will document the credentials possessed by the recommended teacher which will qualify him/her to teach the subject.

Parents will be notified in writing if students are being taught by a teacher hired under this exemption.

Chapter 21 contracts vs teacher agreements will be established.

The Superintendent or designee will approve all local certifications and will report to the board of trustees.