



Opposition to HB 622

Reducing educator preparation requirements for subject-specific certifications

April 6, 2021

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers the following input in opposition to **House Bill (HB) 622** by Rep. Barbara Gervin-Hawkins. HB 622 would require the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) to propose rules to create abbreviated educator preparation programs (EPPs) for persons seeking certification to teach courses in marketing and health science technology.

Research shows that access to an effective educator is the most important school-based factor affecting a student's academic success, and ATPE believes all students deserve access to a well-trained educator. ATPE supports rigorous standards for initial educator certification based on the recognition that we cannot expect a teacher to achieve excellence without the foundation of strong preparation.

Texas state law and SBEC rules already provide for expedited routes to certification, especially in subject areas for which there may be a shortage of teachers. In fact, existing law (TEC Section 21.044) already requires special accommodations for individuals seeking health science technology certification. Adding another statute to the Texas Education Code (TEC) to create an additional, special provision for certain certification areas is ineffective and unnecessary, potentially leading to a complex patchwork of certification-related statutes and curtailing SBEC's statutory role as the entity responsible for regulating and overseeing all aspects of certification, including required training.

It is critical to note that the expedited process created by HB 622 would not necessarily be limited to marketing and health science technology. **HB 622 would create a shortcut for potentially underqualified applicants to become certified teachers in core subject areas.** TEC Section 21.056 requires SBEC to "provide for a certified educator to qualify for additional certification to teach at a grade level or in a subject area not covered by the educator's certificate upon satisfactory completion of an examination or other assessment of the educator's qualification." This process, often termed "cert-by-exam," allows certified educators to leverage their initial training and experience in the classroom to seek additional certifications simply by passing a test. This is done based on the recognition that all initial certifications require the same 300 hours of training, including the critical emphasis on pedagogy.

HB 622 would undermine this by allowing applicants initially certified under an abbreviated 200-hour marketing or health science technology program to obtain additional teaching certifications without first obtaining the prerequisite pedagogical training. This could result in many students being taught by underqualified instructors in core subjects.

HB 622 would dangerously and unnecessarily lower the bar for educator certification, potentially placing students in the care of instructors who are underprepared for the rigors of the classroom, as well as doing a disservice to those future educators. **We therefore respectfully urge members to OPPOSE HB 622.** For additional information, contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org.