



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

October 17, 2014

Dear Director Levine and Sunset Advisory Commission Members:

As you once again consider abolishing the State Board for Educator Certification, I would like to underscore the crucial role the Board plays in both policy setting and disciplinary action. To that end, I offer the following points:

1. While the policy making process is slow and burdensome, the Board has frequently served in a “watch dog” capacity to insure that the field has proactive and repeated opportunities for input. Well-intended legislation rarely assesses the impact on practitioners with regard to implementation. Stakeholder meetings are not enough. Staff must also listen and show responsiveness to needs and conflicts to prevent disabling and unnecessary chaos in the field. A strong Board helps make policy “doable” instead of disruptive.
2. The Board is a representative cross section of the profession and concerned citizens who volunteer many hours in the intensive study and deliberation requisite to its function. The educator members bring decades of experience and expertise to the table. The citizens are the voices for communities, parents, businesses, and civic engagement. The combined expertise of the Board is unique and different from that of agency employees. Relegating these duties to the office of the Commissioner is not only denying the voice of the profession and community but also eliminating considerable intellectual capital required for complicated issues. The recommendation for an Advisory Council would be seen by many as perfunctory and powerless. The minimal travel expenses for the Board buy enormous experience and expertise.
3. Every profession has similar governance structures as SBEC to inform its policy development, set standards, and take disciplinary action as needed. While the staff is able and efficient in settling the great majority of cases, the hundreds that come to the Board annually are more difficult or contested. The 40-50 cases at each meeting require hours of reading with each case ranging from 5 to 200 pages. The scrutiny and deliberation of the Board comes free. The Commissioner would need to add staff to accomplish this, and that would also incur an imbalance of power. Please leave “policing” the profession where it belongs....in the hands of peers.

Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Grant W. Simpson, Ph.D.  
Dean and Professor  
SBEC Board Member

3001 South Congress Avenue  
Austin, TX 78704-6489  
512.448.8651  
fax 512.428.1372  
www.stedwards.edu