



State Board for Educator Certification

Staff Contact: Charles Sallee

S.B. 418 by Shapleigh (Grusendorf)

Summary

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) oversees the preparation and regulation of public school educators. The Legislature created SBEC in 1995. Before 1995, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) was responsible for teacher certification.

SBEC oversees more than 250,000 certified educators, with a staff of 63 employees and an annual fee-supported budget of \$17.5 million. SBEC's major functions include ensuring the quality of educators upon entry into the teaching profession through testing, certification, and the accreditation of educator preparation programs; enforcing professional standards of conduct; and creating and promoting strategies for the recruitment and retention of educators in the public school system. The State Board of Education (SBOE) has a continued role with the profession through its veto authority over SBEC rule proposals.

Senate Bill 418 as introduced contained all of the Sunset Commission's recommendations on SBEC. The recommendations included continuing SBEC for 12 years; expanding SBOE's authority over SBEC rule proposals and improving stakeholder involvement in rule development; improving SBEC's process of conducting criminal history checks of prospective educators; and ensuring timely resolution of disciplinary investigations. The Sunset Commission also recommended providing SBEC authority to approve teaching permits, issue certification waivers, and certify educational diagnosticians.

The Senate Committee on Government Organization reported Senate Bill 418 favorably without amendment to the full Senate. The Senate did not bring up the bill for consideration and as a result S.B. 418 did not pass. The House did not consider the companion Sunset bill, H.B. 1633.

However, separate legislation continues SBEC's policy board but transfers its staff functions to TEA. House Bill 1116 continues SBEC indefinitely by removing the agency from separate Sunset review. The Sunset Commission will review the policy board and teacher certification as part of its upcoming review of TEA in 2007. The bill also repeals the statutory executive director position and requires TEA to carry out the Board's administrative functions and services. As a result, SBEC's policy board will continue to propose rules to SBOE and issue final disciplinary orders, and TEA staff will carry out the day-to-day operations and educator certification duties.

The Legislature is currently meeting in special session to consider education reform and public school finance. Senate Bill 2 and House Bill 2, the education reform bills, contain provisions to abolish SBEC and transfer its powers and duties to the Commissioner of Education. Sunset staff will track the progress of this legislation.

