

Item 14: Discussion of Texas Certification Options for Individuals Certified Outside the State

DISCUSSION

SUMMARY: This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) the opportunity to discuss the process and options for individuals certified outside the state to receive Texas educator certification.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: The statutory authority for individuals certified outside the state to obtain a Texas educator certificate is Texas Education Code, §21.052.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION: Individuals certified outside the state who transfer to Texas to pursue educator certification are expected to meet the same minimum requirements as those established for in-state candidates for Texas educator certification. This item provides the SBEC with an opportunity to discuss the current process for obtaining a Texas educator certificate for those certified in another state or country and to discuss potential changes. Outlined below are the current processes for obtaining a Texas educator certificate for in-state candidates as well as for those certified in another state or country.

Figure 1: Current Process for In-State Candidates to Obtain Texas Educator Certificate



Figure 2: Current Processes for Individuals Certified in Another State

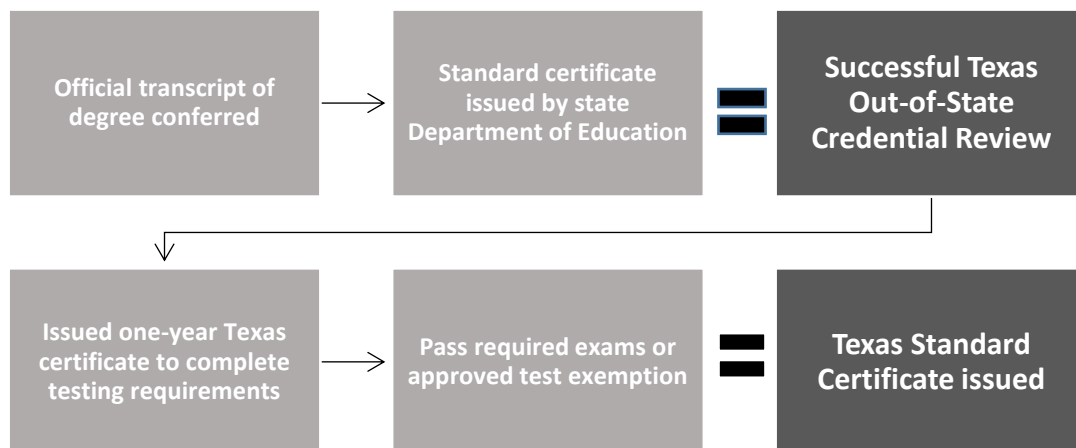
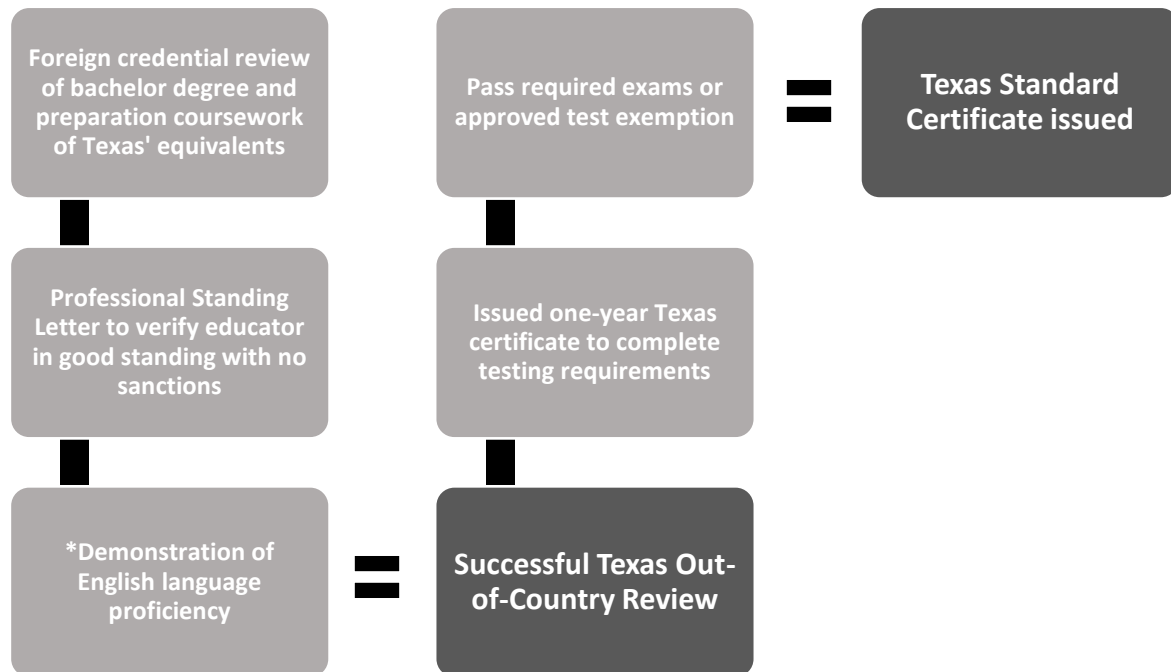


Figure 2: Current Processes for Individuals Certified in Another Country

*Demonstrated through completion of an undergraduate/graduate degree program in the United States or completion of a degree program outside the United States where the primary language of instruction is English and the country is included in the SBEC-approved list or successful completion of all sections of the TOEFL-iBT; Speaking, Listening, Reading and Writing.

Credential Review Process:

An individual that is certified in another state or country who wants to obtain a Texas educator certificate must first satisfy the requirements of the issuing state or country prior to engaging in the Texas credentials review process. The requirement to have completed all licensure processes in another state ensures that an educator transferring to Texas has already met equivalent criteria and standards to become a certified educator in his or her home state prior to applying for a Texas educator certificate.

The steps taken by TEA staff to ensure each candidate certified outside the state and seeking Texas educator certification has complied with the requirements for certificate issuance are:

1. Successful review of credentials
 2. Verified completion of educator preparation program
 3. Confirmation of subject area knowledge and competency to teach
 4. Completion of required Texas certification examinations
- or
- Successful review and processing of documents for exemption from Texas examinations

19 Texas Administrative Code Chapter 152, Commissioner's Rules Concerning Examination Requirements, provides a pathway to exempt individuals already certified in other states from Texas certification requirements. These individuals must hold a standard certificate issued in another state based on successful completion of that state's examination requirements and have at least one year of experience in the role of a classroom teacher and/or two years of

experience in other than classroom teacher roles (e.g., principal, superintendent, school counselor, school librarian, reading specialist, and educational diagnostician). Individuals certified outside the state that provide the required documentation (i.e., verification of examinations taken and passed for licensure in the other state, and verification of experience in the role of classroom teacher or other than classroom teacher) will qualify for an exemption from Texas examinations and be eligible for issuance of the Texas standard certificate.

The following statistics highlight the credential reviews completed during the last three years to inform any changes considered for the current process of individuals from out-of-state or out-of-country seeking a Texas educator certificate.

Out-of-State/Out-of-Country Credentials and Test Exemption Reviews Completed During the Last Three Fiscal Years (FYs):

FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021*
7,626 Credential Reviews Completed	6,766 Credential Reviews Completed	3,824 Credential Reviews Completed
1,934 Test Exemption Reviews Processed	1,975 Test Exemption Reviews Processed	786 Test Exemption Reviews Processed
7,226 One-Year Certificates Issued	6,378 One-Year Certificates Issued	3,735 One-Year Certificates Issued
5,796 Standard Certificates Issued	5,270 Standard Certificates Issued	3,819 Standard Certificates Issued

*FY 2021 totals include timeframe of 9/1/2020 through 5/31/2021 only since fiscal year is not over and work continues.

Top 20 States for Texas out-of-state credential reviews:

California	Oklahoma	Louisiana	Florida	Arizona
Utah	Illinois	Arkansas	New Mexico	Mississippi
Colorado	Georgia	New York	Virginia	Missouri
North Carolina	Ohio	Tennessee	Pennsylvania	Kansas

Top 10 Countries for Texas out-of-country credential reviews:

Mexico	Spain	Venezuela	Columbia	United Kingdom
Philippines	Canada	India	Turkey	Jamaica

In addition to the current process outlined above, TEA staff will also update the SBEC on feedback from the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC).

Questions for SBEC's discussion:

1. When considering the Board's rules in Chapter 245, Certification of Educators from Other Countries, are there concerns with eliminating the professional standing letter as part of the requirements to successfully complete a review of out-of-country credentials?

Currently, individuals licensed in other countries must obtain an original written statement, provided by the authorized licensing agency in the issuing country, that the educator

certificate is in good standing and has not been revoked, suspended, or sanctioned for misconduct and is not pending disciplinary or adverse action. The statement must be written in the English language or must be accompanied by a translation in the English language from a foreign credential evaluation service recognized by the TEA staff or an accredited translation service. The letter of professional standing is a longstanding requirement that has become more challenging and sometimes dangerous to obtain from certain countries over the years and is not always verifiable. However, the required Foreign Credential Evaluation and the successful completion of the Texas background check and fingerprinting processes are the verifiable safeguards to ensure an educator applying for issuance of a Texas certificate is in good standing.

2. When considering the Board's last updates to English language proficiency (ELP) requirements in Chapter 230, Subchapter B, General Certificate Requirements, is there openness to expand the list of countries where English is the primary or predominant language spoken and of instruction?

In 2017, the SBEC approved a list of countries with verification of English as the official language of the country. Attachment II includes the current list of 27 SBEC-approved countries that permits individuals who have obtained the equivalent of a United States bachelor's degree or master's degree to be exempt from the English Language Proficiency requirement.

As part of the initial development of the list of countries proposed for SBEC approval, TEA staff engaged in a thorough review of multiple websites, researched countries that have designated English as their official and/or primary language of instruction in their country, and leaned heavily on the list of qualifying countries utilized by the University of Texas and Texas A & M University system colleges and universities as relates to exemption from English language proficiency requirements for student admissions.

TEA staff has identified the following three countries they would like the Board to consider adding to the approved list:

- Federated States of Micronesia
- Ireland
- New Zealand

These countries appear on one or both Texas university systems lists of qualifying countries exempt from the ELP requirements for student admissions. It is possible that additional recommendations for consideration may surface following stakeholder engagement on this topic. TEA staff will provide an update on their findings at the October SBEC meeting prior to the Board acting on proposed rule changes.

Next Steps:

TEA staff will seek stakeholder feedback with the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC) and will bring proposed rule changes to the SBEC at the October 2021 Board meeting to update the rules with feedback from the SBEC and the EPAC.

Staff Member Responsible:

Marilyn Cook, Director, Educator Certification

Attachments:

- I. Statutory Citations
- II. SBEC-approved List of Countries

ATTACHMENT I**Statutory Citations Relating to Individuals Certified Outside the State to Obtain a Texas Educator Certificate****Texas Education Code, §21.052, Certification of Educators From Outside the State (excerpts):**

- (a) The board may issue a certificate to an educator who applies for a certificate and:
 - (1) holds:
 - (A) a degree issued by an institution accredited by a regional accrediting agency or group that is recognized by a nationally recognized accreditation board; or
 - (B) a degree issued by an institution located in a foreign country, if the degree is equivalent to a degree described by Paragraph (A);
 - (2) holds an appropriate certificate or other credential issued by another state or country; and
 - (3) performs satisfactorily on:
 - (A) the examination prescribed under Section 21.048; or
 - (B) if the educator holds a certificate or other credential issued by another state or country, an examination similar to and at least as rigorous as that described by Paragraph (A) administered to the educator under the authority of that state.
- (b) For purposes of Subsection (a)(2), a person is considered to hold a certificate or other credential if the credential is not valid solely because it has expired.
- (c) The board may issue a temporary certificate under this section to an educator who holds a degree required by Subsection (a)(1) and a certificate or other credential required by Subsection (a)(2) but who has not satisfied the requirements prescribed by Subsection (a)(3). Subject to Subsections (d) and (d-1), the board may specify the term of a temporary certificate issued under this subsection.
- (d) A temporary certificate issued under Subsection (c) to an educator employed by a school district that has constructed or expanded at least one instructional facility as a result of increased student enrollment due to actions taken under the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990 (10 U.S.C. Section 2687) may not expire before the first anniversary of the date on which the board completes the review of the educator's credentials and informs the educator of the examination or examinations under Section 21.048 on which the educator must perform successfully to receive a standard certificate.
- (d-1) A temporary certificate issued under Subsection (c) to an educator who is the spouse of a person who is serving on active duty as a member of the armed forces of the United States may not expire before the third anniversary of the date on which the board completes the review of the educator's credentials and informs the educator of the examination or examinations under Section 21.048 on which the educator must perform satisfactorily to receive a standard certificate.
- (e) An educator who has submitted all documents required by the board for certification and who receives a temporary certificate as provided by Subsection (c) must perform

satisfactorily on the examination prescribed under Section 21.048 not later than the first anniversary of the date the board completes the review of the educator's credentials and informs the educator of the examination or examinations under Section 21.048 on which the educator must perform successfully to receive a standard certificate.

Attachment II**SBEC-approved List of Countries****Countries in which English is the Official Language:**

American Samoa	Gibraltar
Anguilla	Grand Cayman
Antigua and Barbuda	Grenada
Australia	Guyana
Bahamas	Jamaica
Barbados	Liberia
Belize	Nigeria
Bermuda	Saint Kitts and Nevis
British Virgin Islands	Saint Lucia
Cayman Islands	Trinidad/Tobago
Canada (except Quebec)	Turks and Caicos
Dominica	United Kingdom
Gambia	U.S. Pacific Trust
Ghana	