

**Item 15:**

**Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, Subchapter A, General Provisions, §249.3, Definitions, Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §249.12, Administrative Denial; Appeal, §249.14, Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition, §249.15, Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification, §249.17, Decision-Making Guidelines, and Subchapter D, Hearing Procedures, §249.35, Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default**

**DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

**SUMMARY:** This item presents the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) an opportunity to discuss and propose amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, Subchapter A, General Provisions, §249.3, Definitions, Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §249.12, Administrative Denial; Appeal, §249.14, Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition, §249.15, Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification, §249.17, Decision-Making Guidelines, and Subchapter D, Hearing Procedures, §249.35, Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default. The proposed amendments would implement the statutory requirements of Senate Bill (SB) 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017; set minimum sanctions for administrators who fail to report educator misconduct; clarify the reasons for which the SBEC can deny a certificate to an applicant; require reporting administrators to provide additional factual details in educator misconduct reports; and clarify the law that applies when educators default after failing to answer a petition.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** The statutory authority for 19 TAC §§249.3, 249.12, 249.14, 249.15, 249.17, and 249.35 is the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.006, as amended by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017; §§21.007; 21.009, as added by SB 7; 21.031(a); 21.035; 21.041; 21.044; 21.058, as amended by SB 7; §21.0581, as added by SB 7; 21.060; 21.105(c); 21.160(c); 21.210(c); 22.085; 22.087; and 57.491(g); Texas Government Code, §2001.058; Texas Occupations Code, §§53.021(a), 53.022-53.025, 53.051, and 53.052; and Texas Penal Code, §21.12(a), as amended by SB 7.

TEC, §21.006, as amended by SB 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017, requires superintendents or directors of school districts, districts of innovation, open-enrollment charter schools, regional education service centers, or shared services arrangements to report to the SBEC within seven business days of when the superintendent or director knows that an educator has a criminal record or has been terminated or resigned when there is evidence that the educator has committed certain misconduct; requires principals to report to superintendents or directors within seven business days of an educator's termination or resignation when there

is evidence that the educator has committed certain misconduct or knew about an educator's criminal record; gives the SBEC authority to sanction certified educators who fail to fulfill the reporting requirements timely, including administrative penalties of \$500-\$10,000; gives the SBEC authority to revoke the certificate of an administrator who employs an applicant in a certified position at a school despite knowing the educator has been adjudicated for or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor; and requires the SBEC to adopt rules to require the reporting of educator misconduct and to sanction educators who fail to report.

TEC, §21.007, requires the SBEC to propose rules that provide for a procedure for placing a public notice of alleged misconduct on an educator's certificate immediately when the educator is alleged to have committed misconduct that presents a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor, and allows the SBEC to determine what types of misconduct would present such a risk.

TEC, §21.009, as added by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017, states that the SBEC may revoke the certificate of an administrator if the board determines it is reasonable to believe that the administrator employed an applicant despite being aware that the applicant had been adjudicated for or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a student or minor.

TEC, §21.031(a), charges the SBEC with regulating and overseeing all aspects of the certification, continuing education, and standards of conduct for public school educators.

TEC, §21.035, states that Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff provides administrative functions and services for SBEC and gives SBEC the authority to delegate to either the commissioner of education or to TEA staff the authority to settle or otherwise informally dispose of contested cases involving educator certification.

TEC, §21.041, authorizes the SBEC to adopt rules as necessary to regulate educators, administer statutory requirements, and provide for educator disciplinary proceedings.

TEC, §21.044, requires the SBEC to propose rules establishing training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate.

TEC, §21.058, as amended by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017, requires SBEC to revoke an educator's certificate if the educator is required to register as a sex offender or is convicted of certain felony offenses and the victim of the offense was under 18 years old.

TEC, §21.0581, as added by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017, allows the SBEC to suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue an educator's certificate if the person has assisted another person in obtaining employment at a school district or charter school when the person knew that the other person had previously engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor or student in violation of the law.

TEC, §21.060, sets out crimes that relate to the education profession and authorizes the SBEC to sanction or refuse to issue a certificate to any person who has been convicted of one of these offenses.

TEC, §§21.105(c), 21.160(c), and 21.210(c), give SBEC authority to sanction an educator who has a continuing, term, or probationary contract and who resigns without good cause.

TEC, §22.085, allows the SBEC to sanction educators who fail to fire or to refuse to hire an applicant when the educator knew or should have known from the background check that the employee had a criminal record reflecting certain offenses and requires a superintendent to certify to the commissioner of education that the school district is in compliance with this section.

TEC, §22.087, requires a superintendent to report to SBEC if the superintendent knows of information showing that an educator or an applicant for an educator certificate has criminal history that is not reflected in the criminal history information provided by the Texas Department of Public Safety in response to a background check.

TEC, §57.491(g), requires the SBEC to refuse to renew the certificate of any educator who is in default on student loan payments.

Texas Government Code, §2001.058, sets out the powers and duties of the State Office of Administrative Hearings and other state agencies with regard to contested case proceedings.

Texas Occupations Code, §§53.021(a), 53.022-53.025, 53.051, and 53.052, give the SBEC the authority to automatically suspend, revoke, or disqualify a person from receiving an educator certificate if the person has been convicted of certain offenses.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** If approved for filing as proposed in October 2017 and if adopted, subject to State Board of Education (SBOE) review, at the December 2017 SBEC meeting, the proposed effective date of the proposed amendments to 19 TAC §§249.3, 249.12, 249.14, 249.15, 249.17, and 249.35 would be March 8, 2018 (20 days after filing as adopted with the *Texas Register*). The proposed effective date is also based on the SBEC and SBOE meeting schedules.

**PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION:** The SBEC last amended §249.3 effective December 17, 2013; §249.12 effective December 19, 2011; §249.14 and §249.17 effective December 27, 2016; and §249.15 and §249.35 effective May 15, 2016.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION:** SB 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017, effective September 1, 2017, makes significant changes to administrator reporting requirements and reporting enforcement regarding educator misconduct, requiring amendments to 19 TAC §§249.3, 249.12, 249.14, 249.15, and 249.17.

SB 7 creates a new requirement that principals report to their superintendents or directors within seven business days of an educator's resignation following an incident of certain misconduct or of when the principal knew of the educator's criminal record. SB 7 clarifies that superintendents must report to the SBEC within seven business days after receiving a report from a principal or within seven business days of when the superintendent or director knew about an educator's criminal record or resignation or termination following an alleged incident of misconduct. SB 7 creates new authority for the SBEC to issue administrative penalties between \$500-\$10,000 for superintendents, directors, and principals that fail to report educator misconduct. The proposed amendments to §§249.14(d)-(f), 249.15(a)(6), and 249.17(j) would implement these legislative requirements.

As part of implementing SB 7, the proposed amendments include minimum penalties for administrators who fail to report educator misconduct but sign agreed orders without proceeding

to a contested case hearing. The proposed amendments create lower minimum penalties for principals who fail to report to superintendents than for superintendents who fail to report to the SBEC. The variation in penalties reflects the difference in reporting obligations under TEC, §21.006, as amended by SB 7, which requires superintendents to report only when they know of misconduct but requires principals to report within seven business days regardless of when they discover the misconduct. It also reflects the greater responsibility superintendents have, as a result of their positions of authority over principals and teachers, to ensure a safe educational environment for students where there is no tolerance for educator misconduct.

SB 7 also gives the SBEC explicit authority to suspend, revoke, or refuse to issue a certificate of a person who has assisted another person in obtaining employment at a school when the person knew that the other person had previously engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor or student in violation of the law and to revoke the certificate of an administrator who employed an applicant when the administrator knew that the applicant had been adjudicated for or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor. The proposed amendments to §249.3 and §249.15(b) would implement these legislative requirements.

Additionally, the proposed amendment to 19 TAC §249.12(b) is necessary to clarify the reasons for which the SBEC can deny certification to an applicant, including when the applicant has committed an act that would make them subject to required revocation under TEC, §21.058, and when the applicant has committed an act that would make them subject to mandatory permanent revocation or denial under 19 TAC §249.17(i).

The proposed amendment to 19 TAC §249.14(f) would increase the factual details that administrators are required to provide when reporting educators to the SBEC for misconduct to include the current employment status of the subject and any involvement by a law enforcement or other agency. This information would give the Educator Investigations Division additional information to allow for more efficient investigations.

The proposed amendment to 19 TAC §249.35(f) clarifies that the Board will enter final orders on defaults that occur either under Texas Government Code, §2001.056, or 1 TAC, Part 7, §155.501. The use of "and" had led to confusion regarding which code provisions applied to defaults that resulted from an educator failing to answer a petition prior to the contested case being set for hearing before the State Office of Administrative Hearings.

The proposed amendments would also remove redundancies and include technical edits to conform with *Texas Register* style and formatting requirements.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff has determined that the proposed amendments would not create foreseeable additional cost to state or local government or a foreseeable reduction in cost to local government, but may create a slight reduction in costs to state government from efficiencies that could come as a result of the clearer and more enforceable rules. There will be an extremely small increase in revenue to the state estimated at \$7,000 each year for Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 through FY 2022 as a result of implementing the administrative penalties as sanctions on principals and superintendents who fail to report educator misconduct. This estimate is based on the small number of superintendents whom the SBEC currently sanctions for failure to report, which averages to one per year. There will be no increase in revenue to local government.

There will be a cost of \$500-\$10,000 each to principals, superintendents, and directors who fail to report educator misconduct timely and become subject to administrative penalties under the

proposed amendments to 19 TAC §249.15(a)(6) and §249.17(j). The costs to persons required to comply with the proposed amendments is estimated at \$7,000 each year for FY 2018 through FY 2022. This estimate is based on the small number of superintendents whom the SBEC currently sanctions for failure to report, which averages to one per year.

There is no direct adverse economic impact for small businesses, microbusinesses, and rural communities; therefore, no regulatory flexibility analysis, specified in Texas Government Code, §2006.002, is required. There is no effect on local economy; therefore, no local employment impact statement is required under Texas Government Code, §2001.022. TEA staff has determined that the proposed amendments could impose an indirect cost on regulated persons, if a person subject to the law fails to comply. However, the proposed amendments are exempt from Texas Government Code, §2001.0045, as provided under this statute, because the amendments are necessary to implement SB 7.

**GOVERNMENT GROWTH IMPACT:** In accordance with Texas Government Code, §2001.0221, TEA staff has determined that the proposed amendments do not result in an increase in fees paid to the agency. The proposal would allow the SBEC to levy administrative fines of \$500-\$10,000 against a certified principal, superintendent, or director who fails to report educator misconduct, in accordance with SB 7. An administrative penalty is not a fee; it is a penalty for failure to comply with the applicable law. The SBEC currently sanctions fewer than 10 administrators per year for failing to report educator misconduct, so only very few individuals would be impacted by this increase.

**PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT:** The public benefit anticipated as a result of the proposed amendments would be fewer educators who go from one school district to another without being reported for having inappropriate relationships with students or minors. An additional benefit is that there are fewer opportunities for individuals to become certified educators if they have been required to register as sex offenders or have committed misconduct that would result in permanent revocation if they were certified educators.

**PROCEDURAL AND REPORTING IMPLICATIONS:** SB 7 creates additional reporting responsibilities for principals, who must report educator misconduct to superintendents. SB 7 does not change the requirements with respect to who reports to the SBEC or when reporting to the SBEC is required. The proposed amendments change the information that a superintendent is required to report to the SBEC when making a report, but this change should not impose a significant additional burden on reporting superintendents.

**LOCALLY MAINTAINED PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS:** The proposed amendments do not create any additional requirements for locally maintained paperwork.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** The public comment period on the proposal begins November 3, 2017, and ends December 4, 2017. The SBEC will take registered oral and written comments on this item at the December 8, 2017 meeting in accordance with the SBEC board operating policies and procedures.

**ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:** I recommend that the State Board for Educator Certification:

Approve the proposed amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, Subchapter A, General Provisions, §249.3, Definitions, Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §249.12, Administrative Denial; Appeal, §249.14, Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition, §249.15, Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification, and §249.17, Decision-Making Guidelines, and Subchapter D, Hearing Procedures, §249.35, Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default, to be published as proposed in the *Texas Register*.

**Staff Members Responsible:** Laura Moriaty, Director  
Legal Services for Educator Leadership and Quality

Doug Phillips, Director  
Educator Investigations

**Attachments:**

- I. Statutory Citations
- II. Text of Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, Subchapter A, General Provisions, §249.3, Definitions, Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §249.12, Administrative Denial; Appeal, §249.14, Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition, §249.15, Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification, §249.17, Decision-Making Guidelines, and Subchapter D, Hearing Procedures, §249.35, Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default

**ATTACHMENT I**

**Statutory Citations Relating to Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, Subchapter A, General Provisions, §249.3, Definitions, Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §249.12, Administrative Denial; Appeal, §249.14, Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition, §249.15, Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification, §249.17, Decision-Making Guidelines, and Subchapter D, Hearings Procedures, §249.35, Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default**

**Texas Education Code, §21.006, Requirement to Report Misconduct, as amended by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017 (excerpts):**

- (a) In this section, "abuse" has the meaning assigned by Section 261.001, Family Code, and includes any sexual conduct involving an educator and a student or minor.
- (b) In addition to the reporting requirement under Section 261.101, Family Code, the superintendent or director of a school district, district of innovation, open-enrollment charter school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement shall notify the State Board for Educator Certification if:
  - (1) an educator employed by or seeking employment by the school district, district of innovation, charter school, service center, or shared services arrangement has a criminal record and the school district, district of innovation, charter school, service center, or shared services arrangement obtained information about the educator's criminal record by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse established under Section 411.0845, Government Code;
  - (2) an educator's employment at the school district, district of innovation, charter school, service center, or shared services arrangement was terminated and there is ~~based on~~ evidence that the educator:
    - (A) abused or otherwise committed an unlawful act with a student or minor;
    - (A-1) was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor;
    - (B) possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance, as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or by 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.;
    - (C) illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended funds or other property of the school district, district of innovation, charter school, service center, or shared services arrangement;
    - (D) attempted by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter a professional certificate or license for the purpose of promotion or additional compensation; or
    - (E) committed a criminal offense or any part of a criminal offense on school property or at a school-sponsored event;
  - (3) the educator resigned and there is evidence that the educator engaged in misconduct described by Subdivision (2); or

- (4) the educator engaged in conduct that violated the assessment instrument security procedures established under Section 39.0301.
- (b-1) A superintendent or director of a school district, district of innovation, ~~[or]~~ open-enrollment charter school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement shall complete an investigation of an educator that involves ~~[is based on]~~ evidence that the educator may have engaged in misconduct described by Subsection (b)(2)(A) or (A-1), despite the educator's resignation from ~~[district or school]~~ employment before completion of the investigation.
- (b-2) The principal of a school district, district of innovation, or open-enrollment charter school campus must notify the superintendent or director of the school district, district of innovation, or charter school not later than the seventh business day after the date:
- (1) of an educator's termination of employment or resignation following an alleged incident of misconduct described by Subsection (b); or
- (2) the principal knew about an educator's criminal record under Subsection (b)(1).
- (c) The superintendent or director must notify the State Board for Educator Certification by filing a report with the board not later than the seventh business day after the date the superintendent or director receives a report from a principal under Subsection (b-2) or knew about an educator's ~~[employee's criminal record under Subsection (b)(1) or a]~~ termination of employment or resignation following an alleged incident of misconduct described by Subsection (b) or an employee's criminal record under Subsection (b)(1).
- (c-1) The report under Subsection (c) must be:
- (1) in writing; and
- (2) in a form prescribed by the board.
- (e) A superintendent, ~~[or]~~ director, or principal of a school district, district of innovation, open-enrollment charter school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement who in good faith and while acting in an official capacity files a report with the State Board for Educator Certification under this section or communicates with another superintendent, director, or principal concerning an educator's criminal record or alleged incident of misconduct is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed.
- (f) The State Board for Educator Certification shall determine whether to impose sanctions, including an administrative penalty under Subsection (i), against a principal who fails to provide notification to a superintendent or director in violation of Subsection (b-2) or against a superintendent or director who fails to file a report in violation of Subsection (c).
- (i) If an educator serving as a superintendent or director is required to file a report under Subsection (c) and fails to file the report by the date required by that subsection, or if an educator serving as a principal is required to notify a superintendent or director about an educator's criminal record or alleged incident of misconduct under Subsection (b-2) and fails to provide the notice by the date required by that subsection, the State Board for Educator Certification may impose on the educator an administrative penalty of not less than \$500 and not more than \$10,000. The State Board for Educator Certification may not renew the certification of an educator against whom an administrative penalty is imposed under this subsection until the penalty is paid.



- (j) A superintendent or director required to file a report under Subsection (c) commits an offense if the superintendent or director fails to file the report by the date required by that subsection with intent to conceal an educator's criminal record or alleged incident of misconduct. A principal required to notify a superintendent or director about an educator's criminal record or alleged incident of misconduct under Subsection (b-2) commits an offense if the principal fails to provide the notice by the date required by that subsection with intent to conceal an educator's criminal record or alleged incident of misconduct. An offense under this subsection is a state jail felony.

**Texas Education Code, §21.007, Notice on Certification Record of Alleged Misconduct:**

- (a) In this section, "board" means the State Board for Educator Certification.
- (b) The board shall adopt a procedure for placing a notice of alleged misconduct on an educator's public certification records. The procedure adopted by the board must provide for immediate placement of a notice of alleged misconduct on an educator's public certification records if the alleged misconduct presents a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor as determined by the board.
- (c) The board must notify an educator in writing when placing a notice of an alleged incident of misconduct on the public certification records of the educator.
- (d) The board must provide an opportunity for an educator to show cause why the notice should not be placed on the educator's public certification records. The board shall propose rules establishing the length of time that a notice may remain on the educator's public certification records before the board must:
- (1) initiate a proceeding to impose a sanction on the educator on the basis of the alleged misconduct; or
  - (2) remove the notice from the educator's public certification records.
- (e) If it is determined that the educator has not engaged in the alleged incident of misconduct, the board shall immediately remove the notice from the educator's public certification records.
- (f) The board shall propose rules necessary to administer this section.

**Texas Education Code, §21.009, Pre-employment Affidavit, as added by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017:**

- (a) An applicant for a position described by Section 21.003(a) or (b) with a school district, district of innovation, open-enrollment charter school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement must submit, using a form adopted by the agency, a pre-employment affidavit disclosing whether the applicant has ever been charged with, adjudicated for, or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor.
- (b) An applicant who answers affirmatively concerning an inappropriate relationship with a minor must disclose in the affidavit all relevant facts pertaining to the charge, adjudication, or conviction, including, for a charge, whether the charge was determined to be true or false.
- (c) An applicant is not precluded from being employed based on a disclosed charge if the employing entity determines based on the information disclosed in the affidavit that the charge was false.
- (d) A determination that an employee failed to disclose information required to be disclosed by an applicant under this section is grounds for termination of employment.

- (e) The State Board for Educator Certification may revoke the certificate of an administrator if the board determines it is reasonable to believe that the administrator employed an applicant for a position described by Section 21.003(a) or (b) despite being aware that the applicant had been adjudicated for or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor.

**Texas Education Code, §21.031, Purpose (excerpt):**

- (a) The State Board for Educator Certification is established to recognize public school educators as professionals and to grant educators the authority to govern the standards of their profession. The board shall regulate and oversee all aspects of the certification, continuing education, and standards of conduct of public school educators.

**Texas Education Code, §21.035, Delegation Authority; Administration by Agency:**

- (a) The board is permitted to make a written delegation of authority to the commissioner or the agency to informally dispose of a contested case involving educator certification.
- (b) The agency shall provide the board's administrative functions and services.

**Texas Education Code, §21.041, Rules; Fees (excerpts):**

- (a) The board may adopt rules as necessary for its own procedures.
- (b) The board shall propose rules that:
- (1) provide for the regulation of educators and the general administration of this subchapter in a manner consistent with this subchapter;
  - (4) specify the requirements for the issuance and renewal of an educator certificate;
  - (7) provide for disciplinary proceedings, including the suspension or revocation of an educator certificate, as provided by Chapter 2001, Government Code;
  - (8) provide for the adoption, amendment, and enforcement of an educator's code of ethics;

**Texas Education Code, §21.044, Educator Preparation (excerpt):**

- (a) The board shall propose rules establishing the training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, enter an internship, or enter an induction-year program. The board shall specify the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate.

**Texas Education Code, §21.058, Revocation of Certificate and Termination of Employment Based on Conviction of or Placement on Deferred Adjudication Community Supervision for Certain Offenses, as amended by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017:**

- (a) The procedures described by Subsections (b) and (c) apply only:
- (1) to conviction of or placement on deferred adjudication community supervision for an offense for which a defendant is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure; or
  - (2) to conviction of a felony offense under Title 5, Penal Code, [or an offense on conviction of which a defendant is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure; and

- ~~[(2)]~~ if the victim of the offense was ~~[is]~~ under 18 years of age at the time the offense was committed.
- (b) Notwithstanding Section 21.041(b)(7), not later than the fifth day after the date the board receives notice under Article 42.018, Code of Criminal Procedure, of the conviction or placement on deferred adjudication community supervision of a person who holds a certificate under this subchapter, the board shall:
- (1) revoke the certificate held by the person; and
  - (2) provide to the person, to the agency, and to any school district or open-enrollment charter school employing the person at the time of revocation written notice of:
    - (A) the revocation; and
    - (B) the basis for the revocation.
- (c) A school district or open-enrollment charter school that receives notice under Subsection (b) of the revocation of a certificate issued under this subchapter shall:
- (1) immediately remove the person whose certificate has been revoked from campus or from an administrative office, as applicable, to prevent the person from having any contact with a student; and
  - (2) if the person is employed under a probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter, with the approval of the board of trustees or governing body or a designee of the board or governing body:
    - (A) suspend the person without pay;
    - (B) provide the person with written notice that the person's contract is void as provided by Subsection (c-2); and
    - (C) terminate the employment of the person as soon as practicable.
- (c-1) If a school district or open-enrollment charter school becomes aware that a person employed by the district or school under a probationary, continuing, or term contract under this chapter has been convicted of or received deferred adjudication for a felony offense, and the person is not subject to Subsection (c), the district or school may, with the approval of the board of trustees or governing body or a designee of the board of trustees or governing body:
- (1) suspend the person without pay;
  - (2) provide the person with written notice that the person's contract is void as provided by Subsection (c-2); and
  - (3) terminate the employment of the person as soon as practicable.
- (c-2) A person's probationary, continuing, or term contract is void if, with the approval of the board of trustees or governing body or a designee of the board or governing body, the school district or open-enrollment charter school takes action under Subsection (c)(2)(B) or (c-1)(2).

**Texas Education Code, §22.0581, Revocation for Assisting Person who Engaged in Sexual Misconduct Obtain Employment, as added by Senate Bill 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017:**

- (a) The board may suspend or revoke a certificate held by a person under this subchapter, impose other sanctions against the person, or refuse to issue a certificate to the person under this subchapter if:
  - (1) the person assists another person in obtaining employment at a school district or open-enrollment charter school, other than by the routine transmission of administrative and personnel files; and
  - (2) the person knew that the other person has previously engaged in sexual misconduct with a minor or student in violation of the law.
- (b) The commissioner may require a school district to revoke or decline to issue a school district teaching permit under Section 21.055 issued to or requested by a person subject to board action under Subsection (a).

**Texas Education Code, §21.060, Eligibility of Persons Convicted of Certain Offenses:**

The board may suspend or revoke the certificate or permit held by a person under this subchapter, impose other sanctions against the person, or refuse to issue a certificate or permit to a person under this subchapter if the person has been convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense relating to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession, including:

- (1) an offense involving moral turpitude;
- (2) an offense involving a form of sexual or physical abuse of a minor or student or other illegal conduct in which the victim is a minor or student;
- (3) a felony offense involving the possession, transfer, sale, or distribution of or conspiracy to possess, transfer, sell, or distribute a controlled substance, as defined by Chapter 481, Health and Safety Code, or by 21 U.S.C. Section 801 et seq.;
- (4) an offense involving the illegal transfer, appropriation, or use of school district funds or other district property; or
- (5) an offense involving an attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter a professional certificate or license issued under this subchapter.

**Texas Education Code, §21.105, Resignations Under Probationary Contract (excerpt):**

- (c) On written complaint by the employing district, the State Board for Educator Certification may impose sanctions against a teacher employed under a probationary contract who:
  - (1) resigns;
  - (2) fails without good cause to comply with Subsection (a) or (b); and
  - (3) fails to perform the contract.

**Texas Education Code, §21.160, Resignation Under Continuing Contract (excerpt):**

- (c) On written complaint by the employing district, the State Board for Educator Certification may impose sanctions against a teacher who is employed under a continuing contract that obligates the district to employ the person for the following school year and who:
  - (1) resigns;
  - (2) fails without good cause to comply with Subsection (a) or (b); and
  - (3) fails to perform the contract.

**Texas Education Code, §21.210, Resignation Under Term Contract (excerpt):**

- (c) On written complaint by the employing district, the State Board for Educator Certification may impose sanctions against a teacher who is employed under a term contract that obligates the district to employ the person for the following school year and who:
  - (1) resigns;
  - (2) fails without good cause to comply with Subsection (a) or (b); and
  - (3) fails to perform the contract.

**Texas Education Code, §22.085, Employees and Applicants Convicted of Certain Offenses, as amended by House Bill 3270, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017:**

- (a) A school district, open-enrollment charter school, or shared services arrangement shall discharge or refuse to hire an employee or applicant for employment if the district, school, or shared services arrangement obtains information through a criminal history record information review that:
  - (1) the employee or applicant has been convicted of:
    - (A) a felony offense under Title 5, Penal Code;
    - (B) an offense on conviction of which a defendant is required to register as a sex offender under Chapter 62, Code of Criminal Procedure; or
    - (C) an offense under the laws of another state or federal law that is equivalent to an offense under Paragraph (A) or (B); and
  - (2) at the time the offense occurred, the victim of the offense described by Subdivision (1) was under 18 years of age or was enrolled in a public school.
- (b) Subsection (a) does not apply if the employee or applicant for employment committed an offense under Title 5, Penal Code and:
  - (1) the date of the offense is more than 30 years before:
    - (A) the effective date of S.B. No. 9, Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, in the case of a person employed by a school district, open-enrollment charter school, or shared services arrangement as of that date; or
    - (B) the date the person's employment will begin, in the case of a person applying for employment with a school district, open-enrollment charter school, or shared services arrangement after the effective date of S.B. No. 9, Acts of the 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007; and

- (2) the employee or applicant for employment satisfied all terms of the court order entered on conviction.
- (c) A school district, open-enrollment charter school, or shared services arrangement may not allow a person who is an employee of or applicant for employment by an entity that contracts with the district, school, or shared services arrangement to serve at the district or school or for the shared services arrangement if the district, school, or shared services arrangement obtains information described by Subsection (a) through a criminal history record information review concerning the employee or applicant. A school district, open-enrollment charter school, or shared services arrangement must ensure that an entity that the district, school, or shared services arrangement contracts with for services has obtained all criminal history record information as required by Section 22.0834 or 22.08341.
- (d) A school district, open-enrollment charter school, private school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement may discharge an employee if the district or school obtains information of the employee's conviction of a felony or of a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude that the employee did not disclose to the State Board for Educator Certification or the district, school, service center, or shared services arrangement. An employee discharged under this section is considered to have been discharged for misconduct for purposes of Section 207.044, Labor Code.
- (e) The State Board for Educator Certification may impose a sanction on an educator who does not discharge an employee or refuse to hire an applicant if the educator knows or should have known, through a criminal history record information review, that the employee or applicant has been convicted of an offense described by Subsection (a).
- (f) Each school year, the superintendent of a school district or chief operating officer of an open-enrollment charter school shall certify to the commissioner that the district or school has complied with this section.

**Texas Education Code, §22.087, Notification to State Board for Educator Certification:**

The superintendent of a school district or the director of an open-enrollment charter school, private school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement shall promptly notify the State Board for Educator Certification in writing if:

- (1) the person obtains or has knowledge of information showing that an applicant for or holder of a certificate issued under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, has a reported criminal history; and
- (2) the person obtained the information by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse established under Section 411.0845, Government Code.

**Texas Education Code, §57.491, Loan Default Ground for Nonrenewal of Professional or Occupational License (excerpt):**

- (g) A licensing agency shall not renew the license of a licensee who defaults on a repayment agreement unless the person presents to the agency a certificate issued by the corporation certifying that:
  - (1) the licensee has entered another repayment agreement on the defaulted loan; or
  - (2) the licensee is not in default on a loan guaranteed by the corporation or on a repayment agreement.

**Texas Government Code, §2001.058, Hearing Conducted by State Office of Administrative Hearings:**

- (a) This section applies only to an administrative law judge employed by the State Office of Administrative Hearings.
- (b) An administrative law judge who conducts a contested case hearing shall consider applicable agency rules or policies in conducting the hearing, but the state agency deciding the case may not supervise the administrative law judge.
- (c) A state agency shall provide the administrative law judge with a written statement of applicable rules or policies.
- (d) A state agency may not attempt to influence the finding of facts or the administrative law judge's application of the law in a contested case except by proper evidence and legal argument.
- (d-1) On making a finding that a party to a contested case has defaulted under the rules of the State Office of Administrative Hearings, the administrative law judge may dismiss the case from the docket of the State Office of Administrative Hearings and remand it to the referring agency for informal disposition under Section 2001.056. After the case is dismissed and remanded, the agency may informally dispose of the case by applying its own rules or the procedural rules of the State Office of Administrative Hearings relating to default proceedings. This subsection does not apply to a contested case in which the administrative law judge is authorized to render a final decision.
- (e) A state agency may change a finding of fact or conclusion of law made by the administrative law judge, or may vacate or modify an order issued by the administrative judge, only if the agency determines:
  - (1) that the administrative law judge did not properly apply or interpret applicable law, agency rules, written policies provided under Subsection (c), or prior administrative decisions;
  - (2) that a prior administrative decision on which the administrative law judge relied is incorrect or should be changed; or
  - (3) that a technical error in a finding of fact should be changed.The agency shall state in writing the specific reason and legal basis for a change made under this subsection.
- (f) A state agency by rule may provide that, in a contested case before the agency that concerns licensing in relation to an occupational license and that is not disposed of by stipulation, agreed settlement, or consent order, the administrative law judge shall render the final decision in the contested case. If a state agency adopts such a rule, the following provisions apply to contested cases covered by the rule:
  - (1) the administrative law judge shall render the decision that may become final under Section 2001.144 not later than the 60th day after the latter of the date on which the hearing is finally closed or the date by which the judge has ordered all briefs, reply briefs, and other posthearing documents to be filed, and the 60-day period may be extended only with the consent of all parties, including the occupational licensing agency;
  - (2) the administrative law judge shall include in the findings of fact and conclusions of law a determination whether the license at issue is primarily a license to engage in an occupation;

- (3) the State Office of Administrative Hearings is the state agency with which a motion for rehearing or a reply to a motion for rehearing is filed under Section 2001.146 and is the state agency that acts on the motion or extends a time period under Section 2001.146;
- (4) the State Office of Administrative Hearings is the state agency responsible for sending a copy of the decision that may become final under Section 2001.144 or an order ruling on a motion for rehearing to the parties, including the occupational licensing agency, in accordance with Section 2001.142; and
- (5) the occupational licensing agency and any other party to the contested case is entitled to obtain judicial review of the final decision in accordance with this chapter.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.021 [2 Versions: Effective Until January 1, 2017], Authority to Revoke, Suspend, or Deny License (excerpt):**

- (a) A licensing authority may suspend or revoke a license, disqualify a person from receiving a license, or deny to a person the opportunity to take a licensing examination on the grounds that the person has been convicted of:
  - (1) an offense that directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation;
  - (2) an offense that does not directly relate to the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation and that was committed less than five years before the date the person applies for the license;
  - (3) an offense listed in Section 3g, Article 42.12, Code of Criminal Procedure; or
  - (4) a sexually violent offense, as defined by Article 62.001, Code of Criminal Procedure.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.021 [2 Versions: Effective January 1, 2017], Authority to Revoke, Suspend, or Deny License (excerpt):**

- (a) A licensing authority may suspend or revoke a license, disqualify a person from receiving a license, or deny to a person the opportunity to take a licensing examination on the grounds that the person has been convicted of:
  - (1) an offense that directly relates to the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation;
  - (2) an offense that does not directly relate to the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation and that was committed less than five years before the date the person applies for the license;
  - (3) an offense listed in Article 42A.054, Code of Criminal Procedure; or
  - (4) a sexually violent offense, as defined by Article 62.001, Code of Criminal Procedure.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.022, Factors in Determining Whether Conviction Relates to Occupation:**

In determining whether a criminal conviction directly relates to an occupation, the licensing authority shall consider:



- (1) the nature and seriousness of the crime;
- (2) the relationship of the crime to the purposes for requiring a license to engage in the occupation;
- (3) the extent to which a license might offer an opportunity to engage in further criminal activity of the same type as that in which the person previously had been involved; and
- (4) the relationship of the crime to the ability, capacity, or fitness required to perform the duties and discharge the responsibilities of the licensed occupation.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.023, Additional Factors for Licensing Authority to Consider:**

- (a) In determining the fitness to perform the duties and discharge the responsibilities of the licensed occupation of a person who has been convicted of a crime, the licensing authority shall consider, in addition to the factors listed in Section 53.022:
  - (1) the extent and nature of the person's past criminal activity;
  - (2) the age of the person when the crime was committed;
  - (3) the amount of time that has elapsed since the person's last criminal activity;
  - (4) the conduct and work activity of the person before and after the criminal activity;
  - (5) evidence of the person's rehabilitation or rehabilitative effort while incarcerated or after release; and
  - (6) other evidence of the person's fitness, including letters of recommendation from:
    - (A) prosecutors and law enforcement and correctional officers who prosecuted, arrested, or had custodial responsibility for the person;
    - (B) the sheriff or chief of police in the community where the person resides; and
    - (C) any other person in contact with the convicted person.
- (b) The applicant has the responsibility, to the extent possible, to obtain and provide to the licensing authority the recommendations of the prosecution, law enforcement, and correctional authorities as required by Subsection (a)(6).
- (c) In addition to fulfilling the requirements of Subsection (b), the applicant shall furnish proof in the form required by the licensing authority that the applicant has:
  - (1) maintained a record of steady employment;
  - (2) supported the applicant's dependents;
  - (3) maintained a record of good conduct; and
  - (4) paid all outstanding court costs, supervision fees, fines, and restitution ordered in any criminal case in which the applicant has been convicted.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.024, Proceedings Governed by Administrative Procedure Act:**

A proceeding before a licensing authority to establish factors required to be considered under this subchapter is governed by Chapter 2001, Government Code.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.025, Guidelines:**

- (a) Each licensing authority shall issue guidelines relating to the practice of the licensing authority under this chapter. The guidelines must state the reasons a particular crime is considered to relate to a particular license and any other criterion that affects the decisions of the licensing authority.
- (b) A state licensing authority that issues guidelines under this section shall file the guidelines with the secretary of state for publication in the Texas Register.
- (c) A local or county licensing authority that issues guidelines under this section shall post the guidelines at the courthouse for the county in which the licensing authority is located or publish the guidelines in a newspaper having countywide circulation in that county.
- (d) Amendments to the guidelines, if any, shall be issued annually.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.051, Notice:**

A licensing authority that suspends or revokes a license or denies a person a license or the opportunity to be examined for a license because of the person's prior conviction of a crime and the relationship of the crime to the license shall notify the person in writing of:

- (1) the reason for the suspension, revocation, denial, or disqualification;
- (2) the review procedure provided by Section 53.052; and
- (3) the earliest date the person may appeal the action of the licensing authority.

**Texas Occupations Code, §53.052, Judicial Review:**

- (a) A person whose license has been suspended or revoked or who has been denied a license or the opportunity to take an examination under Section 53.021 and who has exhausted the person's administrative appeals may file an action in the district court in the county in which the licensing authority is located for review of the evidence presented to the licensing authority and the decision of the licensing authority.
- (b) The petition for an action under Subsection (a) must be filed not later than the 30th day after the date the licensing authority's decision is final and appealable.

**Texas Penal Code, §21.12(a), as amended by SB 7, 85th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2017 (excerpt):**

- (a) An employee of a public or private primary or secondary school commits an offense if the employee:
  - (1) engages in sexual contact, sexual intercourse, or deviate sexual intercourse with a person who is enrolled in a public or private primary or secondary school at which the employee works;
  - (2) holds a position described by Section 21.003(a) or (b), Education Code, regardless of whether the employee holds the appropriate certificate, permit, license, or credential for the position, [a certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Education Code, or is a person who is required to be licensed by a state agency as provided by Section 21.003(b), Education Code,] and engages in sexual contact, sexual intercourse, or deviate sexual intercourse with a person the employee knows is:

- (A) enrolled in a public or private primary or secondary school, other than a school described by Subdivision (1) [in the same school district as the school at which the employee works]; or
- (B) a student participant in an educational activity that is sponsored by a school district or a public or private primary or secondary school, if:
  - ~~[(i)]~~ students enrolled in a public or private primary or secondary school are the primary participants in the activity; ~~[and~~
  - ~~[(ii)] the employee provides education services to those participants;~~  
or
- (3) engages in conduct described by Section 33.021, with a person described by Subdivision (1), or a person the employee knows is a person described by Subdivision (2)(A) or (B), regardless of the age of that person.

**ATTACHMENT II**  
**Text of Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC**

**Chapter 249. Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases**

**Subchapter A. General Provisions**

**§249.3. Definitions.**

The following words, terms, and phrases, when used in this chapter, shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

- (1) Abuse--Includes the following acts or omissions:
  - (A) mental or emotional injury to a student or minor that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
  - (B) causing or permitting a student or minor to be in a situation in which the student or minor sustains a mental or emotional injury that results in an observable and material impairment in the student's or minor's development, learning, or psychological functioning;
  - (C) physical injury that results in substantial harm to a student or minor, or the genuine threat of substantial harm from physical injury to the student or minor, including an injury that is at variance with the history or explanation given and excluding an accident or reasonable discipline; or
  - (D) sexual conduct harmful to a student's or minor's mental, emotional, or physical welfare.
- (2) Administrative denial--A decision or action by the Texas Education Agency staff, acting on behalf of the State Board for Educator Certification, to deny certification (including certification following revocation, cancellation, or surrender of a previously issued certificate), renewal of certification, or reinstatement of a previously suspended certificate based on the withholding or voiding of certification test scores; the invalidation of a certification test registration; evidence of a lack of good moral character; or evidence of improper conduct.
- (3) Administrative law judge--A person appointed by the chief judge of the State Office of Administrative Hearings under the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2003.
- (4) Answer--The responsive pleading filed in reply to factual and legal issues raised in a petition.
- (5) Applicant--A party seeking issuance, renewal, or reinstatement of a certificate from the Texas Education Agency staff or the State Board for Educator Certification.
- (6) Cancellation--The invalidation of an erroneously issued certificate.
- (7) Certificate--The whole or part of any educator credential, license, or permit issued under the Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subchapter B. The official certificate is the record of the certificate as maintained on the Texas Education Agency's website.
- (8) Certificate holder--A person who holds an educator certificate issued under the Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subchapter B.
- (9) Chair--The presiding officer of the State Board for Educator Certification, elected pursuant to the Texas Education Code, §21.036, or other person designated by the chair to act in his or her absence or inability to serve.
- (10) Chief judge--The chief administrative law judge of the State Office of Administrative Hearings.
- (11) Code of Ethics--The Educators' Code of Ethics codified in Chapter 247 of this title (relating to the Educators' Code of Ethics).

- (12) Complaint--A written statement submitted to the Texas Education Agency staff that contains essential facts alleging improper conduct by an educator, applicant, or examinee, the complainant's verifiable contact information, including full name, complete address, and phone number, which provides grounds for sanctions.
- (13) Contested case--A proceeding under this chapter in which the legal rights, duties, and privileges related to a party's educator certificate are to be determined by the State Board for Educator Certification and/or the State Office of Administrative Hearings commencing when a petition is properly served under this chapter.
- (14) Conviction--An adjudication of guilt for a criminal offense. The term does not include the imposition of deferred adjudication for which the judge has not proceeded to an adjudication of guilt.
- (15) Deferred adjudication--The resolution of a criminal charge, based on a defendant's plea to the offense of guilty or nolo contendere, which results in the suspension of adjudication of the defendant's guilt and the imposition of conditions such as community supervision or restitution, and, upon successful completion of those conditions, the dismissal of the criminal case. In a contested case under this chapter, the defendant's acceptance of deferred adjudication in a criminal case may be considered as provided by the Texas Occupations Code, §53.021.
- (16) Disciplinary proceedings--Any matter arising under this chapter or Chapter 247 of this title (relating to the Educators' Code of Ethics) that results in a final order or finding issued by the Texas Education Agency staff, the State Office of Administrative Hearings, or the State Board for Educator Certification relating to the legal rights, duties, privileges, and status of a party's educator certificate.
- (17) Educator--A person who is required to hold a certificate issued under the Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subchapter B.
- (18) Effective date--The date the decision or action taken by the State Board for Educator Certification or the Texas Education Agency staff becomes final under the appropriate legal authority.
- (19) Endanger--Exposure of a student or minor to unjustified risk of injury or to injury that jeopardizes the physical health or safety of the student or minor without regard to whether there has been an actual injury to the student or minor.
- (20) Examinee--A person who registers to take or who takes any examination required by the State Board for Educator Certification for admission to an educator preparation program or to obtain an educator certificate.
- (21) Expired--No longer valid because a specific period or term of validity of a certificate has ended; an expired certificate is not subject to renewal or revalidation and a new certificate must be issued.
- (22) Filing--Any written petition, answer, motion, response, other written instrument, or item appropriately filed under this chapter with the Texas Education Agency staff, the State Board for Educator Certification, or the State Office of Administrative Hearings.
- (23) Good moral character--The virtues of a person as evidenced by patterns of personal, academic, and occupational behaviors that, in the judgment of the State Board for Educator Certification, indicate honesty, accountability, trustworthiness, reliability, and integrity. Lack of good moral character may be evidenced by the commission of crimes relating directly to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession as described in §249.16(b) of this title (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal History [~~Convictions~~] for a Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53, and Texas Education Code, Chapter 21 ), or by the commission of acts involving moral turpitude, but conduct that evidences a lack of good moral character is not necessarily limited to such crimes or acts.
- (24) Inactive--Lacking current effectiveness. An inactive certificate does not currently entitle the certificate holder to work as a professional educator in Texas public schools. An inactive certificate is distinguished from a certificate that is void or expired by the fact that it can be reactivated by satisfying the condition or conditions that caused it to be placed in inactive status

(failure to renew, failure to submit fingerprint information, or payment of fees), subject to any other certification requirements applicable to active certificates.

- (25) Inappropriate relationship--A violation of Texas Penal Code, §21.12(a); a sexual or romantic relationship with a student or minor; or solicitation of a sexual or romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- (26) ~~(25)~~ Informal conference--An informal meeting between the Texas Education Agency staff and an educator, applicant, or examinee; such a meeting may be used to give the person an opportunity to show compliance with all requirements of law for the granting or retention of a certificate or test score pursuant to Texas Government Code, §2001.054(c).
- (27) ~~(26)~~ Invalid--Rendered void; lacking legal or administrative efficacy.
- (28) ~~(27)~~ Law--The United States and Texas Constitutions, state and federal statutes, regulations, rules, relevant case law, and decisions and orders of the State Board for Educator Certification and the commissioner of education.
- (29) ~~(28)~~ Mail--Certified United States mail, return receipt requested, unless otherwise provided by this chapter.
- (30) ~~(29)~~ Majority--A majority of the voting members of the State Board for Educator Certification who are present and voting on the issue at the time the vote is recorded.
- (31) ~~(30)~~ Moral turpitude--Improper conduct, including, but not limited to, the following: dishonesty; fraud; deceit; theft; misrepresentation; deliberate violence; base, vile, or depraved acts that are intended to arouse or to gratify the sexual desire of the actor; drug or alcohol related offenses as described in §249.16(b) of this title (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal History ~~[Convictions]~~ for a Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53, and Texas Education Code, Chapter 21 ); or acts constituting abuse or neglect under the Texas Family Code, §261.001.
- (32) ~~(31)~~ Neglect--The placing or leaving of a student or minor in a situation where the student or minor would be exposed to a substantial risk of physical or mental harm.
- (33) ~~(32)~~ Party--Each person named or admitted to participate in a contested case under this chapter.
- (34) ~~(33)~~ Permanent revocation--Revocation without the opportunity to reapply for a new certificate.
- (35) ~~(34)~~ Person--Any individual, representative, corporation, or other entity, including the following: an educator, applicant, or examinee; the Texas Education Agency staff; or the State Board for Educator Certification, the State Office of Administrative Hearings, or any other agency or instrumentality of federal, state, or local government.
- (36) ~~(35)~~ Petition--The written pleading served by the petitioner in a contested case under this chapter.
- (37) ~~(36)~~ Petitioner--The party seeking relief, requesting a contested case hearing under this chapter, and having the burden of proof by a preponderance of the evidence in any contested case hearing or proceeding under this chapter.
- (38) ~~(37)~~ Physical mistreatment--Any act of unreasonable or offensive touching that would be offensive to a reasonable person in a similar circumstance. It is an affirmative defense that any unreasonable or offensive touching was justified under the circumstances, using a reasonable person standard.
- (39) ~~(38)~~ Presiding officer--The chair or acting chair of the State Board for Educator Certification.
- (40) ~~(39)~~ Proposal for decision--A recommended decision issued by an administrative law judge in accordance with the Texas Government Code, §2001.062.

- (41) ~~(40)~~ Quorum--A majority of the 14 members appointed to and serving on the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) pursuant to the Texas Education Code, §21.033; eight SBEC members, including both voting and non-voting members, as specified in the SBEC Operating Policies and Procedures.
- (42) ~~(41)~~ Recklessly--An educator acts recklessly, or is reckless, with respect to circumstances surrounding his or her conduct or the results of his or her conduct when he or she is aware of but consciously disregards a substantial and unjustifiable risk that the circumstances exist or the result will occur.
- (43) ~~(42)~~ Reinstatement--The restoration of a suspended certificate to valid status by the State Board for Educator Certification.
- (44) ~~(43)~~ Reported criminal history--Information concerning any formal criminal justice system charges and dispositions. The term includes, without limitation, arrests, detentions, indictments, criminal informations, convictions, deferred adjudications, and probations in any state or federal jurisdiction.
- (45) ~~(44)~~ Representative--A person representing an educator, applicant, or examinee in matters arising under this chapter; in a contested case proceeding before the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH), an attorney licensed to practice law in the State of Texas or other person authorized as a party representative under SOAH rules.
- (46) ~~(45)~~ Reprimand--The State Board for Educator Certification's formal censuring of a certificate holder.
- (A) An "inscribed reprimand" is a formal, published censure appearing on the face of the educator's virtual certificate.
- (B) A "non-inscribed reprimand" is a formal, unpublished censure that does not appear on the face of the educator's virtual certificate.
- (47) ~~(46)~~ Respondent--The party who contests factual or legal issues or both raised in a petition; the party filing an answer in response to a petition.
- (48) ~~(47)~~ Restricted--The condition of an educator certificate that has had limitations or conditions on its use imposed by State Board for Educator Certification order.
- (49) ~~(48)~~ Revocation--A sanction imposed by the State Board for Educator Certification invalidating an educator's certificate.
- (50) ~~(49)~~ Sanction--A disciplinary action by the State Board for Educator Certification, including a restriction, reprimand, suspension, revocation of a certificate, or a surrender in lieu of disciplinary action.
- (51) ~~(50)~~ Solicitation of a romantic relationship--Deliberate or repeated acts that can be reasonably interpreted as the solicitation by an educator of a relationship with a student that is romantic in nature. A romantic relationship is often characterized by a strong emotional or sexual attachment and/or by patterns of exclusivity, but does not include appropriate educator-student relationships that arise out of legitimate contexts such as familial connections or longtime acquaintance. The following acts, considered in context, may constitute prima facie evidence of the solicitation by an educator of a romantic relationship with a student:
- (A) behavior, gestures, expressions, or communications with a student that are unrelated to the educator's job duties and evidence a romantic intent or interest in the student, including statements of love, affection, or attraction. Factors that may be considered in determining the romantic intent of such communications or behavior, include, without limitation:
- (i) the nature of the communications;
- (ii) the timing of the communications;
- (iii) the extent of the communications;

- (iv) whether the communications were made openly or secretly;
  - (v) the extent that the educator attempts to conceal the communications;
  - (vi) if the educator claims to be counseling a student, the State Board for Educator Certification may consider whether the educator's job duties included counseling, whether the educator reported the subject of the counseling to the student's guardians or to the appropriate school personnel, or, in the case of alleged abuse or neglect, whether the educator reported the abuse or neglect to the appropriate authorities; and
  - (vii) any other evidence tending to show the context of the communications between educator and student;
- (B) making inappropriate comments about a student's body, creating or transmitting sexually suggestive photographs or images, or encouraging the student to transmit sexually suggestive photographs or images;
- (C) making sexually demeaning comments to a student;
- (D) making comments about a student's potential sexual performance;
- (E) requesting details of a student's sexual history;
- (F) requesting a date, sexual contact, or any activity intended for the sexual gratification of the educator;
- (G) engaging in conversations regarding the sexual problems, preferences, or fantasies of either party;
- (H) inappropriate hugging, kissing, or excessive touching;
- (I) providing the student with drugs or alcohol;
- (J) suggestions that a romantic relationship is desired after the student graduates, including post-graduation plans for dating or marriage; and
- (K) any other acts tending to show that the educator solicited a romantic relationship with a student.
- (52) ~~[(51)]~~ State assessment testing violation--Conduct that violates the security or confidential integrity of any test or assessment required by the Texas Education Code, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, or conduct that is a departure from the test administration procedures established by the commissioner of education in Chapter 101 of this title (relating to Assessment). The term does not include benchmark tests or other locally required assessments.
- (53) ~~[(52)]~~ State Board for Educator Certification--The State Board for Educator Certification acting through its voting members in a decision-making capacity.
- (54) ~~[(53)]~~ State Board for Educator Certification member(s)--One or more of the members of the State Board for Educator Certification, appointed and qualified under the Texas Education Code, §21.033.
- (55) ~~[(54)]~~ Student--A person enrolled in a primary or secondary school, whether public, private, or charter, regardless of the person's age, or a person 18 years of age or younger who is eligible to be enrolled in a primary or secondary school, whether public, private, or charter.
- (56) ~~[(55)]~~ Surrender--An educator's voluntary relinquishment of a particular certificate in lieu of disciplinary proceedings under this chapter resulting in an order of revocation of the certificate.
- (57) ~~[(56)]~~ Suspension--A sanction imposed by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) temporarily invalidating a particular certificate until reinstated by the SBEC.
- (58) ~~[(57)]~~ Test administration rules or procedures--Rules and procedures governing professional examinations administered by the State Board for Educator Certification through the Texas



Education Agency staff and a test contractor, including policies, regulations, and procedures set out in a test registration bulletin.

(59) ~~[(58)]~~ Texas Education Agency staff--Staff of the Texas Education Agency assigned by the commissioner of education to perform the State Board for Educator Certification's administrative functions and services.

(60) ~~[(59)]~~ Unworthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of this state--Absence of those moral, mental, and psychological qualities that are required to enable an educator to render the service essential to the accomplishment of the goals and mission of the State Board for Educator Certification policy and Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators' Code of Ethics). Unworthy to instruct serves as a basis for sanctions under §249.15(b)(2) of this title (relating to Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification) and for administrative denial under §249.12(b) of this title (relating to Administrative Denial; Appeal). A determination that a person is unworthy to instruct does not require a criminal conviction.

(61) ~~[(60)]~~ Virtual certificate--The official record of a person's certificate status as maintained on the Texas Education Agency's website.

## Subchapter B. Enforcement Actions and Guidelines

### §249.12. Administrative Denial; Appeal.

- (a) This section applies to administrative denials, as that term is defined in §249.3 of this title (relating to Definitions). This section does not apply to the denial of an application for a certificate that has been permanently revoked, and it does not apply to the failure to issue a certificate because specific certification requirements have not been met.
- (b) The Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff may administratively deny any of the matters set out in subsection (a) of this section based on satisfactory evidence that:
  - (1) the person filed a fraudulent application;
  - (2) the person assisted another person in obtaining permanent employment at a school district or open-enrollment charter school, other than by the routine transmission of administrative or personnel files when the person knew that the other person had previously engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a minor or student in violation of the law;
  - (3) the person has committed an act that would make them subject to required revocation under the Texas Education Code, §21.058;
  - (4) the person has committed an act that would make them subject to mandatory permanent revocation or denial under §249.17(i) of this title (relating to Decision-Making Guidelines);
  - (5) ~~(2)~~ the person has engaged in conduct or committed a crime or an offense that:
    - (A) demonstrates that the person lacks good moral character;
    - (B) demonstrates that the person is unworthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of this state; or
    - (C) constitutes the elements of a crime or offense relating directly to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession; or
  - (6) ~~(3)~~ the person failed to comply with the terms or conditions of an order issued by or on behalf of the State Board for Educator Certification or the TEA staff.
- (c) The TEA staff shall provide written notice of the denial and the factual and legal reasons for it to the person whose application or request has been administratively denied. The notice shall be given by registered or certified mail to the address the person has provided in the application or request that is being denied. The person may attempt to show compliance with legal requirements by written submission or by requesting an informal conference, and/or may appeal and request a State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) hearing as hereafter provided. The 30-day deadline to appeal and request a hearing is not tolled during any attempts to show cause.
- (d) The appeal and request for a SOAH hearing of an administrative denial shall be in the form of a petition that complies in content and form with §249.26 of this title (relating to Petition) and 1 Texas Administrative Code, Part 7, §155.301 (relating to Required Form of Pleadings). In order to be referred to the SOAH for a contested case hearing, an appeal petition must be filed with the TEA staff within 30 calendar days after the person received or is deemed to have received written notice of the administrative denial. Unless otherwise proved by the person, the notice shall be deemed to have been received by the examinee no later than five calendar days after mailing to the most recent address provided by the person. The TEA staff may dismiss an appeal that is not timely filed without further action.
- (e) The TEA staff shall send an answer to the petition to the person appealing an administrative denial and shall refer the petition and answer to the SOAH for a contested case hearing.

### §249.14. Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition.

- (a) The Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff may obtain and investigate information concerning alleged improper conduct by an educator, applicant, examinee, or other person subject to this chapter that would

- warrant the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) denying relief to or taking disciplinary action against the person or certificate.
- (b) Complaints against an educator, applicant, or examinee must be filed in writing.
- (c) The TEA staff may also obtain and act on other information providing grounds for investigation and possible action under this chapter.
- (d) A person who serves as the superintendent of a school district or district of innovation or the director of an open-enrollment charter school, private school, regional education service center, or shared services arrangement may notify the SBEC of any educator misconduct that the person believes in good faith may be subject to sanctions under this chapter and/or Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators' Code of Ethics). However, under any of the following circumstances, a person who serves in such a position shall promptly notify the SBEC in writing by filing a report with the TEA staff within seven business ~~calendar~~ days of the date the person either receives a report from a principal under subsection (e) of this section or knew of those circumstances, and may be subject to sanctions for failure to do so, pursuant to §249.15(b)(4) of this title (relating to Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification):
- (1) that an applicant for or a holder of a certificate has a reported criminal history , which the superintendent or director obtained information by a means other than the criminal history clearinghouse established under Texas Government Code, §411.0845;
  - (2) that a certificate holder was terminated from employment and there is ~~based on~~ evidence that he or she committed any of the following acts:
    - (A) sexually or physically abused a student or minor or engaged in any other illegal conduct with a student or minor;
    - ~~(B) was involved in a romantic relationship with or solicited or engaged in sexual contact with a student or minor;~~
    - ~~(B)~~ ~~(C)~~ possessed, transferred, sold, or distributed a controlled substance;
    - ~~(C)~~ ~~(D)~~ illegally transferred, appropriated, or expended school property or funds;
    - ~~(D)~~ ~~(E)~~ attempted by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or to alter any certificate or permit that would entitle the individual to be employed in a position requiring such certificate or permit or to receive additional compensation associated with a position;
    - ~~(E)~~ ~~(F)~~ committed a crime, any part of such crime having occurred on school property or at a school-sponsored event; or
    - ~~(F)~~ ~~(G)~~ solicited or engaged in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor;
  - (3) that a certificate holder has submitted a notice of resignation and that there exists evidence that he or she committed one of the acts specified in paragraph (2) of this subsection.
    - (A) Before accepting an employee's resignation that, under this paragraph, requires a person to notify the SBEC by filing a report with the TEA staff, the person shall inform the certificate holder in writing that such a report will be filed and that sanctions against his or her certificate may result as a consequence.
    - (B) A person required to comply with this paragraph shall notify the governing body of the employing school district before filing the report with the TEA staff.
    - (C) A superintendent or director of a school district shall complete an investigation of an educator if there is reasonable cause to believe the educator may have engaged in misconduct described in paragraph (2)(A) of this subsection despite the educator's resignation from district employment before completion of the investigation; or
  - (4) any other circumstances requiring a report under the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.006.
- (e) A person who serves as a principal in a school district, a district of innovation, or an open-enrollment charter school must notify the superintendent or director of the school district, district of innovation, or

charter school and may be subject to sanctions for failure to do so, pursuant to §249.15(b)(4) of this title (relating to Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification), no later than seven business days after:

- (1) an educator's termination or resignation following an alleged incident of misconduct involving one of the acts described in subsection (d)(2); or
  - (2) the principal knew about an educator's reported criminal history.
- (f) ~~(e)~~ Pursuant to the TEC, §21.006 (b-2), (c) ~~;~~ and (h), and (i), a report filed under subsections ~~[subsection]~~ (d) and (e) of this section must include :
- (1) the name or names of any student or minor who is the victim of abuse or unlawful conduct by an educator ; and ~~[shall, at a minimum, describe in detail]~~
  - (2) the factual circumstances requiring the report and ~~[identify]~~ the subject of the report by providing the following available information:
    - (A) name and any aliases; certificate number, if any, or social security number;
    - (B) last known mailing address and home and daytime phone numbers;
    - (C) all available contact information for any alleged victim or victims; ~~[and]~~
    - (D) name or names and any available contact information of any relevant witnesses to the circumstances requiring the report ; ~~[;]~~
    - (E) current employment status of the subject, including any information about proposed termination, notice of resignation, or pending employment actions; and
    - (F) involvement by a law enforcement or other agency, including the name of the agency.
- (g) Pursuant to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 United States Code, §1232g(a)(4), and the federal regulations interpreting it at 34 Code of Federal Regulations, §99.3, education records that are protected by FERPA must be records that are directly related to a student, and the term "education records" does not include records that relate to a school employee in his or her capacity as a school employee.
- (h) A person who is required to file a report under subsections ~~[subsection]~~ (d) and (e) of this section but fails to do so timely is subject to sanctions under this chapter.
- (i) ~~(f)~~ If a school district board of trustees learns of a failure by the superintendent of the district or a district principal to provide a notice required under the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure (TCCP), §15.27(a), (a-1), or (b), the board of trustees shall report the failure to the SBEC. If the governing body of a private primary or secondary school learns of a failure by the principal of the school to provide a notice required under the TCCP, §15.27(e), and the principal holds a certificate issued under the TEC, Chapter 21, Subchapter B, the governing body shall report the failure to the SBEC.
- (j) ~~(g)~~ The TEA staff shall not pursue sanctions against an educator who is alleged to have abandoned his or her TEC, Chapter 21, contract in violation of the TEC, §§21.105(c), 21.160(c), or 21.210(c), subject to the limitations imposed by the TEC, §21.4021(g), unless the board of trustees of the employing school district:
- (1) submits a written complaint to the TEA staff within 30 calendar days after the effective date of the educator's separation from employment from the school district. For purposes of this section, unless the school district and the educator have a written agreement to the contrary, the effective date of separation from employment is the first day that, without district permission, the educator fails to appear for work under the contract;
  - (2) renders a finding that good cause did not exist under the TEC, §§21.105(c)(2), 21.160(c)(2), or 21.210(c)(2). This finding constitutes prima facie evidence of the educator's lack of good cause, but is not a conclusive determination; and
  - (3) submits the following required attachments to the written complaint:
    - (A) the educator's resignation letter, if any;

- (B) the agreement with the educator regarding the effective date of separation from employment, if any;
- (C) the educator's contract; and
- (D) school board meeting minutes indicating a finding of "no good cause" (if the board does not meet within 30 calendar days of the educator's separation from employment, the minutes may be submitted within 10 calendar days after the next board meeting).

(k) ~~(h)~~ To efficiently administer and implement the SBEC's purpose under this chapter and the TEC, the TEA staff may set priorities for the investigation of complaints based on the severity and immediacy of the allegations and the likelihood of harm posed by the subject of the investigation. All cases accepted for investigation shall be assigned one of the following priorities.

- (1) Priority 1: conduct that may result in the placement of an investigative notice pursuant to the TEC, §21.007, and subsection ~~(l)~~ ~~(h)~~ of this section because it presents a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor, parent of a student, fellow employee, or professional colleague, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - (A) any conduct constituting a felony criminal offense;
  - (B) indecent exposure;
  - (C) public lewdness;
  - (D) child abuse and/or neglect;
  - (E) possession of a weapon on school property;
  - (F) drug offenses occurring on school property;
  - (G) sale to or making alcohol or other drugs available to a student or minor;
  - (H) sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a student or minor;
  - (I) certificate fraud;
  - (J) state assessment testing violations;
  - (K) deadly conduct; and
  - (L) conduct that involves inappropriate communication with a student as described in §247.2(3)(I) of this title (relating to Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators), inappropriate professional educator-student relationships and boundaries, or otherwise soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor.
- (2) Priority 2: any sanctionable conduct that is not Priority 1 conduct under paragraph (1) of this subsection. An investigative notice will not be placed on an educator's certification records on the basis of an allegation of Priority 2 conduct. The TEA staff may change a case's priority at any time based on information received. Priority 2 conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
  - (A) any conduct constituting a misdemeanor criminal offense or testing violation that is not Priority 1 conduct;
  - (B) contract abandonment; and
  - (C) code of ethics violations that do not constitute Priority 1 conduct.

~~(l)~~ ~~(h)~~ After accepting a case for investigation, if the alleged conduct indicates a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor, as described in subsection ~~(k)~~ ~~(h)~~ (1) of this section, the TEA staff shall immediately place an investigative notice on the certificate holder's certification records stating that the certificate holder is currently under investigation. The placement of such an investigative notice must follow the procedures set forth in subsection ~~(m)~~ ~~(h)~~ (1) of this section. After accepting a case for investigation, if the alleged conduct indicates a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a parent of a student, fellow employee, or professional colleague, as described in subsection ~~(k)~~ ~~(h)~~ (1) of this section, the TEA

staff may place an investigative notice on the certificate holder's certification records stating that the certificate holder is currently under investigation. The placement of an investigative notice must follow the procedures set forth in subsection (m) ~~[(4)]~~ (2) of this section.

(m) ~~[(4)]~~ The following procedures must be followed for placing an investigative notice on the educator's certification records.

- (1) At the time of placing an investigative notice on an educator's certification records for alleged conduct that indicates a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor, the TEA staff shall serve the certificate holder with a letter informing the educator of the investigation and the basis of the complaint.
  - (A) Within ten calendar days of placing an investigative notice on the educator's certification records, the letter notifying the certificate holder of the investigation shall be mailed to the address provided to the TEA staff pursuant to the requirements set forth in §230.91 of this title (relating to Procedures in General).
  - (B) The letter notifying the certificate holder of the investigation shall include a statement of the alleged conduct, which forms the basis for the investigative notice, and shall provide the certificate holder the opportunity to show cause within ten calendar days why the notice should be removed from the educator's certification records.
- (2) Prior to placing an investigative notice on an educator's certification records for alleged conduct that indicates a risk to the health, safety, or welfare of a parent of a student, fellow employee, or professional colleague, as described in subsection (k) ~~[(4)]~~ (1) of this section, the TEA staff shall serve the certificate holder with a letter informing the educator of the investigation and the basis of the complaint.
  - (A) At least ten calendar days before placing an investigative notice on the educator's certification records, the letter notifying the certificate holder of the investigation shall be mailed to the address provided to the TEA staff pursuant to the requirements set forth in §230.91 of this title.
  - (B) The letter notifying the certificate holder of the investigation shall include a statement of the alleged conduct, which forms the basis for the investigative notice, and shall provide the certificate holder the opportunity to show cause within ten calendar days why the notice should not be placed on the educator's certification records.
- (3) The TEA staff shall determine whether or not to remove or place an investigative notice on the educator's certification records, taking into account the educator's response, if any, to the letter notifying the certificate holder of the investigation.

(n) ~~[(4)]~~ An investigative notice is subject to the following time limits.

- (1) An investigative notice may remain on the certification records of a certificate holder for a period not to exceed 240 calendar days.
- (2) The TEA staff may toll this time limit if information is received indicating that there is a pending criminal or administrative matter related to the alleged act of misconduct that gives rise to the investigative notice. For purposes of this subsection, a criminal or administrative matter includes an audit by a state or federal agency, an arrest, an investigation, related litigation or other enforcement action brought by a state or federal administrative agency, or a prosecution by a criminal law enforcement agency. Upon receiving notice that the criminal or administrative matter has been resolved the tolling period shall end. As part of its procedure, the TEA staff will attempt to make bimonthly (once every two months) contact with the agency where a related matter is pending to determine whether the related matter has been closed or otherwise resolved.
- (3) The TEA staff may toll this time limit if the matter is referred for a contested case hearing, upon agreement of the parties, or while the matter is pending action by the SBEC on a proposed agreed order.

(o) ~~[(4)]~~ The TEA staff shall remove an investigative notice from an educator's certification records:

- (1) when a case's final disposition occurs within the time limits established in subsection (n) ~~[(4e)]~~ of this section; or
  - (2) when the time limits for an investigative notice have been exceeded, if:
    - (A) the certificate holder has made a written demand to the TEA staff that the investigative notice be removed because the time limits have been exceeded; and
    - (B) the TEA staff has failed to refer the matter to the State Office of Administrative Hearings for a contested case hearing within 30 calendar days from the date of receipt of the written demand to remove the investigative notice.
- (p) ~~[(m)]~~ Only the TEA staff may file a petition seeking sanctions under §249.15 of this title. Prior to filing a petition, the TEA staff shall mail to the certificate holder affected by written notice of the facts or conduct alleged to warrant the intended action and shall provide the certificate holder an opportunity to show compliance with all requirements of law.

#### §249.15. Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification.

- (a) Pursuant to this chapter, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) may take any of the following actions:
  - (1) place restrictions on the issuance, renewal, or holding of a certificate, either indefinitely or for a set term;
  - (2) issue an inscribed or non-inscribed reprimand;
  - (3) suspend a certificate for a set term or issue a probated suspension for a set term;
  - (4) revoke or cancel, which includes accepting the surrender of, a certificate without opportunity for reapplication for a set term or permanently; ~~[(or)]~~
  - (5) impose any additional conditions or restrictions upon a certificate that the SBEC deems necessary to facilitate the rehabilitation and professional development of the educator or to protect students, parents of students, school personnel, or school officials ; or ~~[( ]~~
  - (6) impose an administrative penalty of \$500-\$10,000 on a superintendent or director who fails to file timely a report required under §249.14(d) of this title (relating to Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition) or on a principal who fails to timely notify a superintendent or director as required under §249.14(e) of this title under the circumstances and in the manner required by the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.006.
- (b) The SBEC may take any of the actions listed in subsection (a) of this section based on satisfactory evidence that:
  - (1) the person has conducted school or education activities in violation of law;
  - (2) the person is unworthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of this state;
  - (3) the person has violated a provision of the Educators' Code of Ethics;
  - (4) the person has failed to report or has hindered the reporting of child abuse pursuant to the Texas Family Code, §261.001, or has failed to notify the SBEC or the school superintendent or director under the circumstances and in the manner required by the TEC [Texas Education Code (TEC)] , §21.006, and §249.14(d)-(f) [§249.14(d) and (e)] of this title ~~[(relating to Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition)]~~ ;
  - (5) the person has abandoned a contract in violation of the TEC, §§21.105(c), 21.160(c), or 21.210(c);
  - (6) the person has failed to cooperate with the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in an investigation;
  - (7) the person has failed to provide information required to be provided by §229.3 of this title (relating to Required Submissions of Information, Surveys, and Other Data);

- (8) the person has violated the security or integrity of any assessment required by the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, as described in subsection (g) of this section or has committed an act that is a departure from the test administration procedures established by the commissioner of education in Chapter 101 of this title (relating to Assessment);
- (9) the person has committed an act described in §249.14(h)(1) of this title, which constitutes sanctionable Priority 1 conduct, as follows:
  - (A) any conduct constituting a felony criminal offense;
  - (B) indecent exposure;
  - (C) public lewdness;
  - (D) child abuse and/or neglect;
  - (E) possession of a weapon on school property;
  - (F) drug offenses occurring on school property;
  - (G) sale to or making alcohol or other drugs available to a student or minor;
  - (H) sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a student or minor;
  - (I) certificate fraud;
  - (J) state assessment testing violations;
  - (K) deadly conduct; or
  - (L) conduct that involves soliciting or engaging in sexual conduct or a romantic relationship with a student or minor;
- (10) the person has committed an act that would constitute an offense (without regard to whether there has been a criminal conviction) that is considered to relate directly to the duties and responsibilities of the education profession, as described in §249.16(c) of this title (relating to Eligibility of Persons with Criminal History for a Certificate under Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53, and Texas Education Code, Chapter 21). Such offenses indicate a threat to the health, safety, or welfare of a student or minor, parent of a student, fellow employee, or professional colleague; interfere with the orderly, efficient, or safe operation of a school district, campus, or activity; or indicate impaired ability or misrepresentation of qualifications to perform the functions of an educator and include, but are not limited to:
  - (A) offenses involving moral turpitude;
  - (B) offenses involving any form of sexual or physical abuse or neglect of a student or minor or other illegal conduct with a student or minor;
  - (C) offenses involving any felony possession or conspiracy to possess, or any misdemeanor or felony transfer, sale, distribution, or conspiracy to transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance defined in the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 481;
  - (D) offenses involving school property or funds;
  - (E) offenses involving any attempt by fraudulent or unauthorized means to obtain or alter any certificate or permit that would entitle any person to hold or obtain a position as an educator;
  - (F) offenses occurring wholly or in part on school property or at a school-sponsored activity; or
  - (G) felony offenses involving driving while intoxicated (DWI);
- (11) the person has intentionally failed to comply with the reporting, notification, and confidentiality requirements specified in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, §15.27(a), relating to student arrests, detentions, and juvenile referrals for certain offenses;



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- (12) the person has failed to discharge an employee or to refuse to hire an applicant when the person knew that the employee or applicant had been adjudicated for or convicted of having an inappropriate relationship with a minor in accordance with the TEC, §21.009(e), or knew or should have known through a criminal history record information review that the employee or applicant had been convicted of an offense in accordance with the TEC, §22.085;
  - (13) the person is a superintendent of a school district or the chief operating officer of an open-enrollment charter school who falsely or inaccurately certified to the commissioner of education that the district or charter school had complied with the TEC, §22.085; or
  - (14) the person has failed to comply with an order or decision of the SBEC.
- (c) The TEA staff may commence a contested case to take any of the actions listed in subsection (a) of this section by serving a petition to the certificate holder in accordance with this chapter describing the SBEC's intent to issue a sanction and specifying the legal and factual reasons for the sanction. The certificate holder shall have 30 calendar days to file an answer as provided in §249.27 of this title (relating to Answer).
  - (d) Upon the failure of the certificate holder to file a written answer as required by this chapter, the TEA staff may file a request for the issuance of a default judgment from the SBEC imposing the proposed sanction in accordance with §249.35 of this title (relating to Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default).
  - (e) If the certificate holder files a timely answer as provided in this section, the case will be referred to the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) for hearing in accordance with the SOAH rules; the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2001; and this chapter.
  - (f) The provisions of this section are not exclusive and do not preclude consideration of other grounds or measures available by law to the SBEC or the TEA staff, including student loan default or child support arrears. The SBEC may request the Office of the Attorney General to pursue available civil, equitable, or other legal remedies to enforce an order or decision of the SBEC under this chapter.
  - (g) The statewide assessment program as defined by the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, is a secure testing program.
    - (1) Procedures for maintaining security shall be specified in the appropriate test administration materials.
    - (2) Secure test materials must be accounted for before, during, and after each test administration. Only authorized personnel may have access to secure test materials.
    - (3) The contents of each test booklet and answer document are confidential in accordance with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 551, and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974. Individual student performance results are confidential as specified under the TEC, §39.030(b).
    - (4) Violation of security or confidential integrity of any test required by the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, shall be prohibited. A person who engages in conduct prohibited by this section may be subject to sanction of credentials, including any of the sanctions provided by subsection (a) of this section.
    - (5) Charter school test administrators are not required to be certified; however, any irregularity in the administration of any test required by the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, would cause the charter itself to come under review by the commissioner of education for possible sanctions or revocation, as provided under the TEC, §12.115(a)(4).
    - (6) Conduct that violates the security and confidential integrity of a test is evidenced by any departure from the test administration procedures established by the commissioner of education. Conduct of this nature may include, but is not limited to, the following acts and omissions:
      - (A) viewing a test before, during, or after an assessment unless specifically authorized to do so;
      - (B) duplicating secure examination materials;
      - (C) disclosing the contents of any portion of a secure test;

- (D) providing, suggesting, or indicating to an examinee a response or answer to a secure test item or prompt;
  - (E) changing or altering a response or answer of an examinee to a secure test item or prompt;
  - (F) aiding or assisting an examinee with a response or answer to a secure test item or prompt;
  - (G) fraudulently exempting or preventing a student from the administration of a required state assessment;
  - (H) encouraging or assisting an individual to engage in the conduct described in paragraphs (1)-(7) of this subsection; or
  - (I) failing to report to an appropriate authority that an individual has engaged in conduct outlined in paragraphs (1)-(8) of this subsection.
- (7) Any irregularities in test security or confidential integrity may also result in the invalidation of student results.
- (8) The superintendent and campus principal of each school district and chief administrative officer of each charter school and any private school administering the tests as allowed under the TEC, §39.033, shall develop procedures to ensure the security and confidential integrity of the tests specified in the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, and shall be responsible for notifying the TEA in writing of conduct that violates the security or confidential integrity of a test administered under the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B. A person who fails to report such conduct as required by this subsection may be subject to any of the sanctions provided by subsection (a) of this section.

**§249.17. Decision-Making Guidelines.**

- (a) Purpose. The purpose of these guidelines is to achieve the following objectives:
- (1) to provide a framework of analysis for the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff, the presiding administrative law judge (ALJ), and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) in considering matters under this chapter;
  - (2) to promote consistency in the exercise of sound discretion by the TEA staff, the presiding ALJ, and the SBEC in seeking, proposing, and making decisions under this chapter; and
  - (3) to provide guidance for the informal resolution of potentially contested matters.
- (b) Construction and application. This section shall be construed and applied so as to preserve SBEC members' discretion in making final decisions under this chapter. This section shall be further construed and applied so as to be consistent with §249.5(b) of this title (relating to Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings) and this chapter, the Texas Education Code (TEC), and other applicable law, including SBEC decisions and orders.
- (c) Consideration. The following factors may be considered in seeking, proposing, or making a decision under this chapter:
- (1) the seriousness of the violation;
  - (2) whether the misconduct was premeditated or intentional;
  - (3) attempted concealment of misconduct;
  - (4) prior misconduct and SBEC sanctions;
  - (5) the potential danger the conduct poses to the health and welfare of students;
  - (6) the effect of the prior conduct upon any victims of the conduct;
  - (7) whether sufficient time has passed and sufficient evidence is presented to demonstrate that the educator or applicant has been rehabilitated from the prior conduct;
  - (8) the effect of the conduct upon the educator's good moral character and ability to be a proper role model for students;

- (9) whether the sanction will deter future violations; and
  - (10) any other relevant circumstances or facts.
- (d) Contract abandonment.
- (1) Good cause. The following factors may be considered good cause when an educator is reported to have abandoned a contract in violation of the TEC, §§21.105(c), 21.160(c), or 21.210(c):
    - (A) serious illness or health condition of the educator or close family member of the educator;
    - (B) relocation to a new city as a result of change in employer of the educator's spouse or partner who resides with the educator; or
    - (C) significant change in the educator's family needs that requires the educator to relocate or to devote more time than allowed by current employment.
  - (2) Mitigating factors. The following factors may be considered in seeking, proposing, or making a decision under this chapter regarding an educator who has abandoned a contract in violation of the TEC, §§21.105(c), 21.160(c), or 21.210(c):
    - (A) educator gave written notice to school district 30 days or more in advance of the first day of instruction for which the educator will not be present;
    - (B) educator assisted school district in finding a replacement educator to fill the position;
    - (C) educator continued to work until the school district hired a replacement educator;
    - (D) educator assisted in training the replacement educator;
    - (E) educator showed good faith in communications and negotiations with school district; or
    - (F) educator provided lesson plans for classes following educator's resignation.
  - (3) Mandatory minimum sanction for contract abandonment. An educator subject to sanction, who has abandoned a contract in violation of the TEC, §§21.105(c), 21.160(c), or 21.210(c) in a case where the factors listed in paragraph (1) or (2) of this subsection do not apply, may not receive a sanction of less than:
    - (A) suspension for one year from the first day that, without district permission, the educator failed to appear for work under the contract, provided that the educator has not worked as an educator during that year and the case is resolved within that one year through an agreed final order; or
    - (B) suspension for one year from either the effective date of an agreed final order resolving the case or an agreed future date at the beginning of the following school year, if the educator has worked as an educator after abandoning the contract; or
    - (C) suspension for one year from the date that the SBEC adopts an order that becomes final following a default under §249.35 of this title (relating to Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default) or a contested case hearing at the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH).
- (e) Mandatory minimum sanction for felony-level conduct. An educator subject to sanction, who is court-ordered to complete a period of deferred adjudication or community supervision for a felony-level criminal offense under state or federal law, may not receive a sanction of less than:
- (1) suspension for a period concurrent with the term of deferred adjudication or community supervision, if the case is resolved through an agreed final order prior to the educator completing deferred adjudication or community supervision and the educator has not been employed as an educator during the period of deferred adjudication or community supervision; or
  - (2) suspension beginning on the effective date of an agreed final order for a period extending beyond the end of the educator's deferred adjudication or community supervision but may be less than the initial court-ordered term of deferred adjudication or community supervision, if the case is

- resolved through an agreed final order prior to the educator completing deferred adjudication or community supervision and the educator has been employed as an educator during the period of deferred adjudication or community supervision; or
- (3) suspension beginning on the effective date of an agreed final order for a period at least half as long as the initial court-ordered term of deferred adjudication or community supervision, if the case is resolved through an agreed final order after the educator has completed deferred adjudication or community supervision; or
  - (4) suspension for a period equal to the term of deferred adjudication or community supervision that the criminal court initially ordered but beginning from the date of the final board decision, if the case is resolved through a final board decision following a contested case hearing at the SOAH or a default under §249.35 of this title.
- (f) Mandatory minimum sanction for misdemeanor-level conduct. If an educator is subject to sanction, and a court has ordered the educator to complete a period of deferred adjudication, community supervision, or pretrial diversion for a misdemeanor-level criminal offense under state or federal law, the educator may not receive a sanction of less than an inscribed reprimand.
  - (g) Mandatory minimum sanction for test security violation. An educator who intentionally manipulates the results or violates the security or confidential integrity of any test required by the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, may not receive a sanction of less than suspension for one year from the effective date of an agreed final order or a final board decision following a contested case hearing at the SOAH.
  - (h) Mandatory minimum sanction for drugs and alcohol on school campus. An educator who is subject to sanction because the educator has tested positive for drugs or alcohol while on school campus, was under the influence of drugs or alcohol on school campus, or was in possession of drugs or alcohol on school campus may not receive a sanction of less than a one-year suspension and required completion of a drug or alcohol treatment program.
  - (i) Mandatory permanent revocation or denial. Notwithstanding subsection (c) of this section, the SBEC shall permanently revoke the teaching certificate of any educator or permanently deny the application of any applicant if, after a contested case hearing or a default under §249.35 of this title, it is determined that the educator or applicant:
    - (1) engaged in any sexual contact or romantic relationship with a student or minor;
    - (2) solicited any sexual contact or romantic relationship with a student or minor;
    - (3) possessed or distributed child pornography;
    - (4) was registered as a sex offender;
    - (5) committed criminal homicide;
    - (6) transferred, sold, distributed, or conspired to possess, transfer, sell, or distribute any controlled substance, the possession of which would be at least a Class A misdemeanor under the Texas Health and Safety Code, Chapter 481, on school property;
    - (7) intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly causes bodily injury to a student or minor when the conduct of the educator or applicant is not immune from disciplinary proceedings by TEC, §22.0512; or
    - (8) committed any offense described in the TEC, §21.058.
  - (j) Mandatory minimum for failure to report. An educator subject to sanction, who fails to report educator misconduct under the circumstances and in the manner required by the TEC, §21.006, and §249.14(d)-(f) of this title (relating to Complaint, Required Reporting, and Investigation; Investigative Notice; Filing of Petition), when the case is resolved through an agreed final order, may not receive a sanction of less than:
    - (1) an inscribed reprimand and a \$5,000 administrative penalty for a superintendent or director who fails to file timely a report to the SBEC; or

- (2) an inscribed reprimand and a \$500 administrative penalty for a principal who fails to timely notify a superintendent or director.
- (k) ~~(j)~~ Sanctioned misconduct in another state. The findings of fact contained in final orders from any other state jurisdiction may provide the factual basis for SBEC disciplinary action. If the underlying conduct for the administrative sanction of an educator's certificate or license issued in another state is a violation of SBEC rules, the SBEC may initiate a disciplinary action regarding the educator's Texas educator certificate and impose a sanction as provided under this chapter.

### Subchapter D. Hearing Procedures

#### §249.35. Disposition Prior to Hearing; Default.

- (a) This chapter and 1 Texas Administrative Code (TAC), Part 7, Chapter 155 (relating to Rules of Procedure) shall govern disposition prior to hearing, default, and attendant relief.
- (b) The Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff or the commissioner of education may issue and sign orders on behalf of the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) resolving a case, prior to the issuance of a proposal for decision by the presiding administrative law judge (ALJ) at the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH), by waiver, stipulation, compromise, agreed settlement, consent order, agreed statement of facts, or any other informal or alternative resolution agreed to by the parties and not precluded by law.
- (c) The SBEC or the SOAH may dispose of a case through dismissal, partial or final summary disposition, or any other procedure authorized by SOAH rules of procedure prior to a contested case hearing on the merits on the following grounds: unnecessary duplication of proceedings; res judicata; withdrawal; mootness; lack of jurisdiction; failure of a party requesting relief to timely file or file in proper form a pleading that would support an order or decision in that party's favor; failure to comply with an applicable order, deadline, rule, or other requirement issued by the SBEC, the TEA staff, or the presiding ALJ; failure to state a claim for which relief can be granted; or failure to prosecute.
- (d) In any contested case hearing conducted pursuant to this chapter, the findings made by a hearing examiner in a proceeding arising under the Texas Education Code, Chapter 21, Subchapter F, shall not be conclusive but, the record of such proceeding, including all testimony and evidence admitted in the hearing, as well as the findings of the hearing examiner, shall be deemed admissible in a proceeding brought pursuant to this chapter and shall be considered by the ALJ and the SBEC in issuing a proposed or final decision.
- (e) For purposes of this chapter, the following shall constitute a default in a contested case:
  - (1) the failure of the respondent to timely file a written answer in proper form as required by this chapter;
  - (2) the failure of the petitioner in an administrative denial case to timely file a petition in proper form as required by this chapter; or
  - (3) the failure of the certificate holder or applicant to appear in person or by authorized representative on the day and at the time set for hearing in a contested case, regardless of whether a written answer or petition has been filed.
- (f) Upon the occurrence of an event of default as defined in this section, the SBEC may enter a default judgment, as authorized by the Texas Government Code, §2001.056, or ~~and~~ 1 TAC, Part 7, §155.501 (relating to Default Proceedings).
  - (1) If a respondent has failed to timely file a written answer or a petitioner in an administrative denial case has failed to timely file a petition, TEA staff will provide the certificate holder or applicant with a notice of default specifying the factual and legal basis for imposing the proposed sanction at least 30 calendar days prior to presenting a motion for default to the SBEC. It is a rebuttable presumption that the notice was served on the certificate holder or applicant no later than five calendar days after mailing.
  - (2) If the case is dismissed and remanded to the SBEC by the SOAH after a certificate holder or applicant failed to appear in person or by authorized representative on the day and at the time set for hearing in a contested case, the TEA staff attorney shall present to the SBEC a motion for default. After consideration of the petition and the motion for default, the SBEC may then issue a default order deeming the allegations in the petition as true.
  - (3) Prior to issuance of a default decision or order, the certificate holder may contest the issuance of a default judgment by written notice filed with TEA staff or by written request to appear before the SBEC at an SBEC meeting to show good cause for failure to file an answer or appear at the contested case proceeding.