

Item 15:

Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Request for State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Action Related to TeacherBuilder.com, an Educator Preparation Program

DISCUSSION AND ACTION

SUMMARY:

This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) an opportunity to consider a proposed Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff recommendation that the SBEC take action to impose conditions on the continuing approval of TeacherBuilder.com to provide educator preparation.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Texas Education Code (TEC) §21.045 authorizes the SBEC to propose rules establishing minimum standards for approval or renewal of approval of educator preparation programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon SBEC approval.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION: The provisions of 19 TAC §228.10(b), which require continuing board approval of educator preparation programs at least once every five years, were first adopted to be effective July 11, 1999, and were last amended to be effective December 14, 2008. 19 TAC §229.6, authorizing the imposition of conditions upon the continuing approval of an educator preparation program, was adopted to be effective April 18, 2010, and was last amended effective March 12, 2015. The original proposal of TeacherBuilder.com to provide educator preparation was approved at the March 4, 2005 SBEC meeting.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:

The six major educator preparation program (EPP) components addressed by SBEC rules are governance (19 TAC §§228.20 and 228.35), admission criteria (19 TAC §227.10), curriculum (19 TAC §228.30), program delivery and on-going support (19 TAC §228.35), performance-based evaluation of candidate readiness and program effectiveness (19 TAC §228.40) and professional conduct (19 TAC §228.50). TEA staff monitoring of EPPs focuses on these six areas. Since its original approval to provide educator preparation, TEA staff made six site visits (2005, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2012, and 2014) to TeacherBuilder.com and conducted two desk reviews (2009 and 2015) of TeacherBuilder.com.

Based on the review history of TeacherBuilder.com and the findings from the October 2014 site visit and March 2015 desk review, TEA staff identified continued failures to correct alleged program deficiencies despite repeated notices and offers of assistance over a period of ten years. These alleged deficiencies constitute a repeated failure to comply with SBEC rules.

Pursuant to 19 TAC §229.6, TEA staff provided notice to TeacherBuilder.com on May 20, 2015 that it intended to recommend that the SBEC impose conditions on the continuing approval of

TeacherBuilder.com to provide educator preparation. TeacherBuilder.com was informed of its right to an informal review of the proposed recommendations pursuant to 19 TAC §§ 229.6 and 229.7. If an informal review is requested, the proposed recommendation may be amended or dismissed by TEA staff at the conclusion of the informal review. More information will be provided to the SBEC prior to or at the August meeting.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.

PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT: Proposed recommendations will ensure that, as a condition of its continued operation, educator preparation provided by a program will meet the requirements of SBEC rules.

PROCEDURAL AND REPORTING IMPLICATIONS: None.

LOCALLY MAINTAINED PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS: None.

ALTERNATIVES: None.

OTHER COMMENTS AND RELATED ISSUES: None.

Staff Members Responsible: Tim Miller, Director
Educator Preparation

Laura Moriaty, Administrative Law Judge
Legal Services

Attachments: I. Statutory Citations
II. Text of 19 TAC §§229.6 and 229.7

ATTACHMENT I**Statutory Citations Relating to a Request for State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Action Related to TeacherBuilder.com, an Educator Preparation Program****Texas Education Code §21.045, Accountability System for Educator Preparation Programs**

- (a) The board shall propose rules establishing standards to govern the approval and continuing accountability of all educator preparation programs based on the following information that is disaggregated with respect to sex and ethnicity:
- (1) results of the certification examinations prescribed under Section 21.048(a);
 - (2) performance based on the appraisal system for beginning teachers adopted by the board;
 - (3) achievement, including improvement in achievement, of students taught by beginning teachers for the first three years following certification, to the extent practicable; and
 - (4) compliance with board requirements regarding the frequency, duration, and quality of structural guidance and ongoing support provided by field supervisors to beginning teachers during their first year in the classroom.
- (b) Each educator preparation program shall submit data elements as required by the board for an annual performance report to ensure access and equity. At a minimum, the annual report must contain the performance data from Subsection (a), other than the data required for purposes of Subsection (a)(3), and the following information, disaggregated by sex and ethnicity:
- (1) the number of candidates who apply;
 - (2) the number of candidates admitted;
 - (3) the number of candidates retained;
 - (4) the number of candidates completing the program;
 - (5) the number of candidates employed in the profession after completing the program;
 - (6) the number of candidates retained in the profession; and
 - (7) any other information required by federal law.
- (c) The board shall propose rules establishing performance standards for the Accountability System for Educator Preparation for accrediting educator preparation programs. At a minimum, performance standards must be based on Subsection (a). The board may propose rules establishing minimum standards for approval or renewal of approval of:
- (1) educator preparation programs; or
 - (2) certification fields authorized to be offered by an educator preparation program.

ATTACHMENT II**Text of 19 TAC §229.6, Continuing Approval and §229.7, Informal Review of Texas Education Agency Recommendations****§229.6. Continuing Approval.**

- (a) The continuing approval of an educator preparation program (EPP) to recommend candidates for educator certification, which shall be reviewed pursuant to §228.10(b) of this title (relating to Approval Process), will be based upon the EPP's accreditation status and compliance with the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) rules regarding program admissions, operations, coursework, training, recommendation for certification, and the integrity of required data submissions.
- (b) After a continuing approval review pursuant to §228.10(b) of this title or a complaint investigation pursuant to §228.70 of this title (relating to Complaints and Investigations Procedures), if the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff finds that an EPP has failed to comply with SBEC rules, the TEA staff may issue a proposed recommendation for SBEC action relating to the EPP's approval to recommend candidates for educator certification. The proposed recommendation for SBEC action may include, but is not limited to, public reprimand, revocation of program approval, or the imposition of conditions upon continuing program approval.
- (c) TEA staff shall provide notice of the proposed recommendation for SBEC action relating to the EPP's continuing approval to recommend candidates for educator certification in the manner provided by §229.7 of this title (relating to Informal Review of Texas Education Agency Recommendations), and an EPP shall be entitled to an informal review of the proposed recommendation, under the conditions and procedures set out in §229.7 of this title, prior to the submission of the recommendation for action to either the SBEC or the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH). If the EPP fails to request an informal review in a timely manner, the proposed recommendation will become a final recommendation.
- (d) Following the informal review, a final recommendation will be issued by the TEA staff. The final recommendation may include changes or additions to the proposed recommendation and such modifications are not subject to another informal review procedure.
- (e) If the final recommendation proposes revocation of approval of an EPP to recommend candidates for educator certification, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the final recommendation, the EPP may agree in writing to accept the final revocation without further proceedings or may request that TEA staff schedule the matter for a hearing before an administrative law judge at the SOAH, as provided by §229.8 of this title (relating to Contested Cases for Accreditation Revocation).
- (f) If the final recommendation does not propose revocation of approval of an EPP to recommend candidates for educator certification, the final recommendation will be submitted to SBEC for consideration and entry of a final order.

§229.7. Informal Review of Texas Education Agency Recommendations.

- (a) Applicability. This section applies only to a notice required under §229.5(e) of this title (relating to Accreditation Sanctions and Procedures) or under §229.6(c) of this title (relating to Continuing Approval) proposing to:
 - (1) require an educator preparation program (EPP) or a particular field of certification offered by an EPP to obtain technical assistance as provided by the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.0451(a)(2)(A);
 - (2) require an EPP or a particular field of certification offered by an EPP to obtain professional services as provided by the TEC, §21.0451(a)(2)(B);
 - (3) appoint a monitor for an EPP or a particular field of certification offered by an EPP as provided by the TEC, §21.0451(a)(2)(C);
 - (4) assign an accreditation status of Accredited-Warned, Accredited-Probation, or Not Accredited-Revoked, as specified in §229.4 of this title (relating to Determination of Accreditation Status);

- (5) issue a public reprimand or impose conditions on the continuing approval of an EPP to recommend candidates for certification pursuant to §229.5(e) of this title;
 - (6) revoke the approval of an EPP to recommend candidates for certification in a particular field of certification; or
 - (7) revoke the approval of an EPP to recommend candidates for certification.
- (b) Notice. Notice of a proposed recommendation for an order or change in accreditation status, subject to this section, shall be made as provided by §229.5(e) and §229.6(c) of this title, and this section.
- (1) The notice shall attach or make reference to all information on which the proposed recommendation is based.
 - (A) Information maintained on the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) websites may be referenced by providing a general citation to the information.
 - (B) The TEA and SBEC reports previously sent to the EPP may be referenced by providing the title and date of the report.
 - (C) On request, the TEA shall provide copies of, or reasonable access to, information referenced in the notice.
 - (2) The notice shall state the procedures for requesting an informal review of the proposed recommendation or change in accreditation status under this section, including the name and department of the TEA staff to whom a request for an informal review may be addressed.
 - (3) The notice shall set a deadline for requesting an informal review, which shall not be less than 14 calendar days from the date of receipt of the notice. The notice may be delivered by mail, personal delivery, facsimile, or email.
- (c) Request. The chief operating officer of the EPP may request, in writing, an informal review under this section.
- (1) The request must be properly addressed to the member of the TEA staff identified in the notice under subsection (b)(2) of this section and must be received by TEA staff on or before the deadline specified in subsection (b)(3) of this section.
 - (2) The request must set out the reasons the EPP believes the recommendation is incorrect, with citations to include supporting evidence. The EPP may submit any written information to TEA as evidence to support its request, without regard to admissibility under the Texas Rules of Evidence. The request for review shall concisely state, in numbered paragraphs:
 - (A) if alleging the proposed recommendation would violate a statutory provision, the statutory provision violated and the specific facts supporting a conclusion that the statute was violated by the proposed recommendation;
 - (B) if alleging the proposed recommendation would be in excess of the SBEC's statutory authority, the SBEC's statutory authority and the specific facts supporting a conclusion that the proposed recommendation would be in excess of this authority;
 - (C) if alleging the proposed recommendation was made through unlawful procedure, the lawful procedure and the specific facts supporting a conclusion that the proposed recommendation was made through unlawful procedure;
 - (D) if alleging the proposed recommendation is affected by other error of law, the law violated and the specific facts supporting a conclusion that the proposed recommendation violated that law;
 - (E) if alleging the proposed recommendation is not reasonably supported by a preponderance of the evidence, each finding, inference, or conclusion of the proposed recommendation that is unsupported by a preponderance of the evidence, and the evidence that creates a preponderance against the specific finding, inference, or conclusion at issue;

- (F) if alleging the proposed recommendation is arbitrary or capricious or characterized by abuse of discretion or clearly unwarranted exercise of discretion, each finding, inference, conclusion, or proposed recommendation affected and the specific facts supporting a conclusion that each is so affected;
 - (G) for each violation, error, or defect alleged under subparagraphs (A)-(F) of this paragraph, the substantial rights of the EPP that are prejudiced by such violation, error, or defect;
 - (H) a concise statement of the relief sought by the EPP (petitioner); and
 - (I) the name, mailing address, telephone number, facsimile number, and email address of the petitioner's representative.
- (3) Failure to comply with the requirements of this subsection shall result in dismissal of the request for informal review.
- (d) No review requested. If the TEA staff does not receive the EPP's request for an informal review by the deadline set in accordance with subsection (b)(3) of this section, the proposed recommendation will become a final recommendation and will proceed in accordance with subsection (f) of this section.
- (e) Informal review. In response to a request under subsection (c) of this section, TEA staff will review the materials and documents provided by the EPP and issue a final recommendation. The final recommendation may include changes or additions to the proposed recommendation and such modifications are not subject to another informal review.
- (f) Final recommendation.
- (1) If the final recommendation proposes revocation of approval of an EPP to recommend candidates for educator certification, within 14 calendar days of receipt of the final recommendation, the EPP may agree in writing to accept the final revocation without further proceedings or may request that TEA staff schedule the matter for a hearing before an administrative law judge at the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH), as provided by §229.8 of this title (relating to Contested Cases for Accreditation Revocation).
 - (2) If the final recommendation does not propose revocation of approval of an EPP to recommend candidates for educator certification, the final recommendation will be submitted to SBEC for consideration of a final order.
- (g) Other law. Texas Government Code, Chapter 2001, and the TEC, §7.057, do not apply to an informal review under this section.