

**Item 13:****Consider and Take Appropriate Action on Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, Subchapter A, General Provisions, §249.5, Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings; Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §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****DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

**SUMMARY:** This item provides 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, §249.5, Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings; Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §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. The proposed amendments to 19 TAC §§249.5, 249.15, 249.17, and 249.35 would create more specific penalty guidelines for Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff to follow in settling or prosecuting educator discipline cases. In addition, the proposed amendments would set out the process that the SBEC will use when the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) dismisses and remands a case in accordance with Texas Government Code, §2001.058(d-1), as amended by House Bill (HB) 2154, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, after a respondent fails to appear for a contested case hearing.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** The statutory authority for 19 TAC §§249.5, 249.15, 249.17, and 249.35 is Texas Education Code (TEC), §§21.006(b-1) and (g), as amended by HB 1783, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015; 21.007; 21.031(a); 21.035, as amended by HB 2205, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015; 21.040(6) and (7); 21.041(a) and (b)(1), (4), (7), and (8); 21.044(a); 21.058; 21.060; 21.105(c); 21.160(c); 21.210(c); 22.082; 22.0831; 22.085; 22.087, as amended by HB 1783, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015; and 57.491(g); Texas Government Code, §§411.087, as amended by Senate Bill (SB) 1902, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015; 411.090; and 2001.058(d-1) and (e), as amended by HB 2154, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015; Texas Family Code, §§261.308(d) and (e) and §261.406(a) and (b), as amended by SB 206, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015; and Texas Occupations Code, §§53.021(a), as amended by HB 2299, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, effective January 1, 2017; 53.022-53.025; 53.051; and 53.052.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** The proposed effective date of the proposed amendments to 19 TAC §§249.5, 249.15, 249.17, and 249.35 would be May 15, 2016 (20 days after filing as adopted

with the *Texas Register*). The proposed effective date is also based on the SBEC and State Board of Education meeting schedules.

**PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION:** The SBEC adopted 19 TAC §§249.5, 249.15, 249.17, and 249.35 effective March 31, 1999. The SBEC last amended §249.5 effective December 23, 2013; last amended §249.15 and §249.35 effective October 8, 2015; and last amended §249.17 effective October 27, 2014.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES:** On March 27, 2015, the SBEC established a Committee on Educator Discipline (Committee), and on August 7, 2015, the SBEC charged the Committee with creating more specific penalty guidelines for TEA staff to follow in settling or prosecuting educator discipline cases. The Committee met on October 15, 2015, and developed recommendations for penalty guidance. The proposed amendments to 19 TAC §249.5 and §249.17 reflect the recommendations of the Committee on how to improve and clarify the SBEC's rules regarding penalties for certified educators subject to discipline.

The proposed amendment to 19 TAC §249.5 would allow the SBEC to impose higher sanctions for certified administrators subject to discipline than for teachers and paraprofessionals because administrators have, as a result of their positions of authority over both students and other educators, an even greater obligation to maintain good moral character than teachers and paraprofessionals.

The proposed amendment to 19 TAC §249.15 would allow the SBEC a clearer and more efficient means to discipline educators who violate SBEC disciplinary orders.

The proposed amendment to 19 TAC §249.17 would clarify the factors that the SBEC considers as mitigating or enhancing factors in making sanctioning decisions for educators subject to discipline; set minimum sanctions for contract abandonment, felony-level conduct, misdemeanor-level conduct, and test security violations to achieve more consistency in sanctions; and clarify the factors that SBEC considers as good cause for contract abandonment.

With regard to contract abandonment, if an educator has worked at a school district after abandoning a contract at another school district, the educator's suspension would begin at the start of the next school year so as to neither harm the students the educator is instructing nor to allow the educator to use summer months to count as suspension time.

For educators who have not worked as educators while on felony community supervision or deferred adjudication, the suspension sanction in an agreed settlement order would run concurrently with the period the individual is on felony community supervision or deferred adjudication, because an educator on felony community supervision or deferred adjudication is not an appropriate role model worthy to instruct the students of Texas. For individuals who continue to work while on felony community supervision or deferred adjudication, the period of the suspension sanction in an agreed settlement order would be equal to the court-ordered term of felony community supervision or deferred adjudication, but would begin from the effective date of the agreed order so that the educator serves the same length of suspension as for an individual who had not worked as an educator while on felony community supervision or deferred adjudication.

If the educator has completed felony community supervision or deferred adjudication before the SBEC disciplines the educator, the educator's suspension sanction in an agreed final order would be at least half as long as the initial court-ordered term of felony community supervision or deferred adjudication to prevent inequities that could be caused by the length of time required for the SBEC disciplinary process to run its course, while still requiring the educator to serve a suspension as a deterrent punishment for the educator's misconduct.

In accordance with Texas Government Code, §2001.058(d-1), as amended by HB 2154, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, the proposed amendment to 19 TAC §249.35 would allow an administrative law judge to dismiss and remand a contested case to the SBEC without issuing a proposal for decision when a licensee defaults by failing to appear at a contested case hearing before the SOAH. The proposed amendment would create procedures for the SBEC to issue a default order in such situations.

**FISCAL IMPACT:** The TEA staff has determined that there is no additional fiscal impact on state and local governments and there are no additional costs to persons or entities required to comply with the proposed amendments. In addition, there is no direct adverse economic impact for small businesses and microbusinesses; therefore, no regulatory flexibility analysis, specified in Texas Government Code, §2006.002, is required.

**PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT:** The public and student benefit anticipated as a result of the proposed amendments to 19 TAC §§249.5, 249.15, 249.17, and 249.35 would be the continued effective regulation and discipline of certified educators to ensure that certified educators are qualified, safe, and worthy to instruct the students of Texas.

**PROCEDURAL AND REPORTING IMPLICATIONS:** The proposed amendments would have no additional procedural and reporting implications.

**LOCALLY MAINTAINED PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS:** The proposed amendments would have no additional locally maintained paperwork requirements.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** The public comment period on the proposal begins January 1, 2016, and ends February 1, 2016. The SBEC will take registered oral and written comments on this item at the February 12, 2016 meeting in accordance with the SBEC board operating policies and procedures.

**ALTERNATIVES:** None.

**OTHER COMMENTS AND RELATED ISSUES:** A separate item is presented in this agenda to consider and take appropriate action on amendments to the SBEC Disciplinary Sanction Policy to reflect other recommendations of the Committee regarding educator discipline.

**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, §249.5, Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings; Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §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 Moriarty, 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, §249.5, Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings; Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §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

**ATTACHMENT I****Statutory Citations Relating to Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, Subchapter A, General Provisions, §249.5, Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings; Subchapter B, Enforcement Actions and Guidelines, §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****Texas Education Code, §21.006, Requirement to Report Misconduct, as amended by House Bill 1783, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015 (excerpts):**

- (b-1) A superintendent or director of a school district or open-enrollment charter school shall complete an investigation of an educator that is based on evidence that [~~reasonable cause to believe~~] 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.
- (g) The State Board for Educator Certification shall propose rules as necessary to implement this section.

**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, §21.031, 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, as amended by House Bill 2205, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015:**

- (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 [~~Texas Education Agency~~] shall provide the board's administrative functions and services.

**Texas Education Code, §21.040, General Powers and Duties of Board (excerpts):**

The board shall:

- (6) develop and implement policies that clearly define the respective responsibilities of the board and the board's staff; and
- (7) execute interagency contracts to perform routine administrative functions.

**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 Certain Offenses:**

- (a) The procedures described by Subsections (b) and (c) apply only:
- (1) 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 is under 18 years of age.
- (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 of a person who holds a certificate under this subchapter, the board shall:
- (1) revoke the certificate held by the person; and

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- (2) provide to the person 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:
      - (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:
    - (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 the school district or open-enrollment charter school takes action under Subsection (c)(2)(B) or (c-1)(2).
  - (d) A person whose certificate is revoked under Subsection (b) may reapply for a certificate in accordance with board rules.
  - (e) Action taken by a school district or open-enrollment charter school under Subsection (c) or (c-1) is not subject to appeal under this chapter, and the notice and hearing requirements of this chapter do not apply to the action.

**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, §22.082, Access to Criminal History Records by State Board for Educator Certification:**

The State Board for Educator Certification shall subscribe to the criminal history clearinghouse as provided by Section 411.0845, Government Code, and may obtain from any law enforcement or criminal justice agency all criminal history record information and all records contained in any closed criminal investigation file that relate to a specific applicant for or holder of a certificate issued under Subchapter B, Chapter 21.

**Texas Education Code, §22.0831, National Criminal History Record Information Review of Certified Educators:**

- (a) In this section, "board" means the State Board for Educator Certification.

- (b) This section applies to a person who is an applicant for or holder of a certificate under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, and who is employed by or is an applicant for employment by a school district, open-enrollment charter school, or shared services arrangement.
- (c) The board shall review the national criminal history record information of a person who has not previously submitted fingerprints to the department or been subject to a national criminal history record information review.
- (d) The board shall place an educator's certificate on inactive status for failure to comply with a deadline for submitting information required under this section.
- (e) The board may allow a person who is applying for a certificate under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, and who currently resides in another state to submit the person's fingerprints and other required information in a manner that does not impose an undue hardship on the person.
- (f) The board may propose rules to implement this section, including rules establishing:
  - (1) deadlines for a person to submit fingerprints and photographs in compliance with this section; and
  - (2) sanctions for a person's failure to comply with the requirements of this section, including suspension or revocation of a certificate or refusal to issue a certificate.
- (g) Expired.

**Texas Education Code, §22.085, Employees and Applicants Convicted of Certain Offenses:**

- (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.
- (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, as amended by House Bill 1783, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015:**

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, §411.087, Access to Criminal History Record Information Maintained by Federal Bureau of Investigation or Local Criminal Justice Agency, as amended by Senate Bill 1902, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015:**

- (a) Unless otherwise authorized by Subsection (e), a person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is authorized by this subchapter or Subchapter E-1 to obtain from the department criminal history record information maintained by the department that relates to another person is authorized to:
  - (1) obtain through the Federal Bureau of Investigation criminal history record information maintained or indexed by that bureau that pertains to that person; or
  - (2) obtain from any other criminal justice agency in this state criminal history record information maintained by that criminal justice agency that relates to that person.
- (b) Any restriction or limitation in this subchapter or Subchapter E-1 on criminal history record information that a person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity is entitled to obtain from the department applies equally to the criminal history record information that the person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity is entitled to obtain from the identification division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation or other criminal justice agency.
- (c) Subsection (a) does not authorize a person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity to obtain criminal history record information from the identification division of the Federal Bureau of Investigation if dissemination of criminal history record information by the division is prohibited by federal law, executive order, or rule.
- (d) A person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity that is not a criminal justice agency is entitled to obtain criminal history record information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation only if:
  - (1) the requestor submits a complete set of the individual's fingerprints and other identifying information and pays any fee required or approved by the bureau;
  - (2) no disqualifying record or information from a state or local criminal justice agency is known to the requestor; and
  - (3) the request is not for the purpose of discriminating against a person because of the person's race, sex, age, disability, religion, color, or national origin.
- (e) The department may provide access to state and national criminal history record information to qualified entities entitled to that information under 42 U.S.C. Section 5119a. The department must follow federal law and regulation, federal executive orders, and federal policy in releasing information under this subsection.
- (f) Notwithstanding any other law, a person, agency, department, political subdivision, or other entity entitled to access the criminal history record information of a person under Subsection (e) is not required to collect or submit the person's fingerprints if:
  - (1) a complete set of the person's fingerprints was previously submitted under Subsection (d)(1);
  - (2) the department retained the fingerprints;

- (3) the fingerprints are acceptable to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for access to criminal history record information; and
- (4) the only purpose for which the person's fingerprints are collected is to access criminal history record information under Subsection (e).

**Texas Government Code, §411.090, Access to Criminal History Record Information: State Board for Educator Certification:**

- (a) The State Board for Educator Certification is entitled to obtain from the department any criminal history record information maintained by the department about a person who has applied to the board for a certificate under Subchapter B, Chapter 21, Education Code.
- (b) Criminal history record information obtained by the board in the original form or any subsequent form:
  - (1) may be used only for a purpose related to the issuance, denial, suspension, or cancellation of a certificate issued by the board;
  - (2) may not be released to any person except:
    - (A) the person who is the subject of the information;
    - (B) the Texas Education Agency;
    - (C) a local or regional educational entity as provided by Section 411.097; or
    - (D) by court order;
  - (3) is not subject to disclosure as provided by Chapter 552; and
  - (4) shall be destroyed by the board after the information is used for the authorized purposes.
- (c) The department shall notify the State Board for Educator Certification of the arrest of any educator, as defined by Section 5.001, Education Code, who has fingerprints on file with the department. Any record of the notification and any information contained in the notification is not subject to disclosure as provided by Chapter 552.

**Texas Government Code, §2001.058, Hearing Conducted by State Office of Administrative Hearings, as amended by House Bill 2154, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015 (excerpts):**

- (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.

**Texas Family Code, §261.308, Submission of Investigation Report (excerpts):**

- (d) The department shall release information regarding a person alleged to have committed abuse or neglect to persons who have control over the person's access to children, including, as appropriate, the Texas Education Agency, the State Board for Educator Certification, the local school board or the school's governing body, the superintendent of the school district, or the school principal or director if the department determines that:
  - (1) the person alleged to have committed abuse or neglect poses a substantial and immediate risk of harm to one or more children outside the family of a child who is the subject of the investigation; and
  - (2) the release of the information is necessary to assist in protecting one or more children from the person alleged to have committed abuse or neglect.
- (e) On request, the department shall release information about a person alleged to have committed abuse or neglect to the State Board for Educator Certification if the board has a reasonable basis for believing that the information is necessary to assist the board in protecting children from the person alleged to have committed abuse or neglect.

**Texas Family Code, §261.406, Investigations in Schools, as amended by Senate Bill 206, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015 (excerpts):**

- (a) On receipt of a report of alleged or suspected abuse or neglect of a child in a public or private school under the jurisdiction of the Texas Education Agency, the department shall perform an investigation as provided by this chapter.
- (b) The department shall send a copy of the completed report of the department's investigation to the Texas Education Agency. On request, the department shall provide a copy of the completed report of the department's investigation to[.] the State Board for Educator Certification, the local school board or the school's governing body, the superintendent of the school district, and the school principal or director, unless the principal or director is alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect, for appropriate action. On request, the department shall provide a copy of the report of investigation to the parent, managing conservator, or legal guardian of a child who is the subject of the investigation and to the person alleged to have committed the abuse or neglect. The report of investigation shall be edited to protect the identity of the persons who made the report of abuse or neglect. Other than the persons authorized by the section to receive a copy of the report, Section 261.201(b) applies to the release of the report relating to the investigation of abuse or neglect under this section and to the identity of the person who made the report of abuse or neglect.

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**Texas Occupations Code, §53.021, Authority to Revoke, Suspend, or Deny License, as amended by House Bill 2299, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, effective January 1, 2017 (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 [~~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, §53.022, 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.

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

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

**Subchapter A. General Provisions**

**§249.5. Purpose; Policy Governing Disciplinary Proceedings.**

- (a) Purpose. The purpose of this chapter is:
- (1) to protect the safety and welfare of Texas schoolchildren and school personnel;
  - (2) to ensure educators and applicants are morally fit and worthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of the state;
  - (3) to regulate and to enforce the standards of conduct of educators and applicants;
  - (4) to provide for disciplinary proceedings in conformity with the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2001, and the rules of practice and procedure of the State Office of Administrative Hearings;
  - (5) to enforce an educators' code of ethics;
  - (6) to fairly and efficiently resolve disciplinary proceedings at the least expense possible to the parties and the state;
  - (7) to promote the development of legal precedents through State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) decisions to the end that disciplinary proceedings may be justly resolved; and
  - (8) to provide for regulation and general administration pursuant to the SBEC's enabling statutes.
- (b) Policy governing disciplinary proceedings [~~Governing Disciplinary Proceedings~~].
- (1) A certified educator holds a unique position of public trust with almost unparalleled access to the hearts and minds of impressionable students. The conduct of an educator must be held to the highest standard. Because SBEC sanctions are imposed for reasons of public policy, and are not penal in nature, criminal procedural and punishment standards are not appropriate to educator disciplinary proceedings.
  - (2) The following general principles shall apply.
    - (A) Because the SBEC's primary duty is to safeguard the interests of Texas students, educator certification must be considered a privilege and not a right.
    - (B) The SBEC may pursue disciplinary proceedings and sanctions based on convictions of felonies and misdemeanors as provided by the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.060; the Texas Occupations Code, Chapter 53; and this chapter.
    - (C) The SBEC may also pursue disciplinary proceedings and sanctions based on educator conduct that is proved by a preponderance of the evidence, and such proceedings and sanctions do not require a criminal conviction, deferred adjudication, community supervision, an indictment, or an arrest.
    - (D) An educator's good moral character, as defined in §249.3 of this title (relating to Definitions), constitutes the essence of the role model that the educator represents to students both inside and outside the classroom. Chapter 247 of this title (relating to Educators' Code of Ethics) and this chapter provide for educator disciplinary proceedings and provide a minimum standard for educator conduct. Conduct or conditions that may demonstrate that an educator or applicant lacks good moral character, is a negative role model to students, and does not possess the moral fitness necessary to be a certified educator include, but are not limited to:
      - (i) active community supervision or criminal probation;

- (ii) conduct that indicates dishonesty or untruthfulness;
  - (iii) habitual impairment through drugs or alcohol;
  - (iv) abuse or neglect of students and minors, including the educator's own children; and
  - (v) reckless endangerment of the safety of others.
- (E) "Unworthy to instruct or to supervise the youth of this state," defined in §249.3 of this title, which serves as a basis for sanctions under §249.15(b)(2) of this title (relating to Disciplinary Action by State Board for Educator Certification), is a broad concept that is not limited to the specific criminal convictions that are described in the TEC, §21.058 and §21.060. The moral fitness of a person to instruct the youth of this state must be determined from an examination of all relevant conduct, is not limited to conduct that occurs while performing the duties of a professional educator, and is not limited to conduct that constitutes a criminal violation or results in a criminal conviction or to conduct that constitutes a violation of Chapter 247 of this title .
- (F) Educators have positions of authority, have extensive access to students when no other adults (or even other students, in some cases) are present, and have access to confidential information that could provide a unique opportunity to exploit student vulnerabilities. Educators must clearly understand the boundaries of the educator-student relationship that they are trusted not to cross. Any violation of that trust, such as soliciting or engaging in a romantic or sexual relationship with any student or minor, is considered conduct that may result in permanent revocation of an educator's certificate.
- (G) Administrators who hold Superintendent, Principal, or Mid-Management Administrator certificates issued by the SBEC have, as a result of their actual or potential positions of authority over both students and other educators, an even greater obligation to maintain good moral character than teachers and paraprofessionals. When an administrator's conduct demonstrates that the administrator lacks good moral character, is a negative role model to students, or does not possess the moral fitness necessary to be a certified educator as described in subparagraph (D) of this paragraph, the administrator may be subject to greater sanction than a teacher or paraprofessional would receive for the same conduct.
- (H) [~~G~~] Evidence of rehabilitation with regard to educator conduct that could result in sanction, denial of a certification application, or denial of an application for reinstatement of a certificate shall be recognized and considered. In addition, the following shall also be considered:
- (i) the nature and seriousness of prior conduct;
  - (ii) the potential danger the conduct poses to the health and welfare of students;
  - (iii) the effect of the prior conduct upon any victims of the conduct;
  - (iv) whether sufficient time has passed and sufficient evidence is presented to demonstrate that the educator or applicant has been rehabilitated from the prior conduct; and
  - (v) the effect of the conduct upon the educator's good moral character and ability to be a proper role model for students.

## Subchapter B. Enforcement Actions and Guidelines

### §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.
- (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 under the circumstances and in the manner required by the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.006, and §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;

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- (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;
- (12) the person has failed to discharge an employee or to refuse to hire an applicant when the person 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; ~~or~~
- (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) ~~(5)~~ whether the sanction will deter future violations; and
  - (10) ~~(6)~~ 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 two weeks 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 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.
- (f) Mandatory minimum sanction for misdemeanor-level conduct. An educator subject to sanction, who a court has ordered to complete a period of deferred adjudication, community supervision, or pretrial diversion for a misdemeanor-level criminal offense under state or federal law, may not receive a sanction of less than an inscribed reprimand.
- (g) Mandatory minimum sanction for test security violation. An educator who violates the security or confidential integrity of any test required by the TEC, Chapter 39, Subchapter B, by providing students with answers or direct assistance in answering test questions, by altering a student's answers to test questions, or by tampering with secure test documents, 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) ~~(4)~~ Mandatory permanent ~~[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, 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; or
  - (7) committed any offense described in the TEC, §21.058.
- (i) ~~(e)~~ 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 [State Office of Administrative Hearings (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 [administrative law judge (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, and 1 TAC, Part 7, §155.501 (relating to Default Proceedings) ~~[, whether or not the case has been referred to the SOAH, upon 30 calendar days~~

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~~notice. It is a rebuttable presumption that the notice was served on the certificate holder or applicant no later than five calendar days after mailing. The notice shall specify the factual and legal basis for imposing the proposed sanction. 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 the 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] .~~

- (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 to the certificate holder or applicant. 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.~~