

Item 13:

Request to Approve a New Educator Preparation Program: Southwest University College of Education

DISCUSSION AND ACTION

SUMMARY: This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) an opportunity to approve a request by Southwest University College of Education (SUCoE) to be approved as an educator preparation program (EPP) to prepare and recommend candidates for certification through the traditional undergraduate certification route. The SUCoE is within the Southwest University at El Paso located in El Paso, Texas. Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff reviewed the proposal and found that it complied with provisions of 19 TAC Chapter 227, Provisions for Educator Preparation Candidates, Chapter 228, Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs, Chapter 229, Accountability System for Educator Preparation Programs, and Chapter 230, Professional Educator Preparation and Certification, Subchapter B, General Certification Requirements.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: The statutory authority related to the approval of educator preparation programs are the Texas Education Code, and §21.0443

TEC, §21.044, §21.044, authorizes the SBEC to propose rules specifying what each educator is expected to know and be able to do, particularly with regard to students with disabilities, establishing the training requirements a person must accomplish to obtain a certificate, and specifying the minimum academic qualifications required for a certificate. It also sets requirements for training, coursework and qualifications that the SBEC is required to include.

TEC, §21.0443, requires the board to propose rules that establish standards for the approval of new educator preparation programs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon SBEC approval with enrollments and candidate coursework to begin January 2026.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION: The SBEC approves all EPPs. The EPP prepares and completes an extensive application addressing the SBEC-required ten components below.

Component	Component Description
1. Governance (19 TAC §228.25)	Pertaining to the responsibilities of the governing body and the EPP's advisory committee functions.
2. Admission (19 TAC §§227.10 and 227.17)	Pertaining to admission criteria and formal admission required of all applicants seeking initial certification in any class of certificate.

3. Educator Preparation Curriculum (19 TAC §228.57)	Pertaining to standards-based curriculum required for all candidates seeking certification.
4. Preparation Program Coursework and/or Training (19 TAC Chapter 228, Subchapters D, E, & F)	Pertaining to how the educator preparation program prepares candidates for educator certification and ensures they are effective in the classroom.
5. Assessment and Evaluation of Candidates for Certification and Program Improvement (19 TAC §228.25 & §228.31)	Pertaining to how the EPP has established benchmarks and structured assessments of a candidate's progress throughout the EPP. Pertaining to how the EPP continuously evaluates the design and delivery of the EPP components based on performance data, scientifically based research practices, and the results of internal and external feedback and assessments.
6. Professional Conduct (19 TAC §228.31 & §228.57)	Pertaining to how the educator preparation program ensures that the individuals preparing candidates, and the candidates themselves, understand and adhere to Chapter 247 relating to the Educators' Code of Ethics.
7. Complaints and Investigations Procedures (19 TAC §228.121 & §228.123)	Pertaining to the EPP's responsibilities for maintaining a process through which a candidate or former candidate in an EPP, an applicant for candidacy in an EPP, an employee or former employee of an EPP, a cooperating teacher, a host teacher, a mentor, a site supervisor, or an administrator in a public or private school that serves as a site for clinical teaching, residency, internship, or practicum experiences may submit a complaint about an EPP for investigation and resolution.
8. Certification Procedures (19 TAC §230.36 & §230.37 and 19 TAC Chapters 230, 239, 241, 242)	Pertaining to the requirements for the issuance of Intern, Probationary, and Standard certificates.
9. Required Submission of Information, Surveys, and Other Data (19 TAC §229.3)	Pertaining to all data and information an educator preparation program must submit to TEA.
10. Candidate Training and Support on Inclusive Practices for Students with Disabilities [19 TAC §228.11(a)(1)(J)/ TEC §21.0443(b)(1) & (2)]	Pertaining to coursework and clinical experience requirements for training educator candidates in proactive instructional planning techniques and inclusive practices for all students including students with disabilities and English language learners.

The proposal is reviewed by several TEA staff members who hold extensive discussions with the applying entity to ensure compliance with the SBEC rules. The SUCoE application meets the minimum requirements for approval by the SBEC. The attachment includes an Executive Summary that describes how the program will meet each of the SBEC-required components for program approval.

TEA staff members, Lorrie Ayers, and Rebecca Bunting conducted a pre-approval site visit on December 10, 2024, and found that SUCoE complied with the provisions of 19 TAC Chapter 227, Provisions for Educator Preparation Candidates, and Chapter 228, Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs, that govern approval of educator preparation programs. Following the site visit, the applicant modified the coursework and training to be offered in a synchronous format which delayed presentation to the SBEC. TEA staff reviewed the modifications and found the coursework met requirements.

Representatives from SUCoE will attend the December 4-5, 2025, SBEC meeting and will address the Board's questions related to their application as needed. SUCoE has prepared an executive summary in the item attachment that describes how their proposed program meets SBEC requirements.

Certifications Requested:

- Core Subjects with Science of Teaching Reading (STR): Early Childhood-Grade 6
- Core Subjects with Science of Teaching Reading (STR): Grades 4-8
- Health Science: Grades 6-12
- Special Education Specialist: Early Childhood-Grade 12
- Bilingual Education Supplemental - Spanish

Anticipated Candidate Start Date: January 2026

Anticipated Number of Candidates for the First Year: 30

Cost of the Program per Participant: \$55,000

PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT: The addition of this new educator preparation program will increase the number of qualified certified educators in Texas.

MOTION TO BE CONSIDERED:

Approve Southwest University College of Education as a new educator preparation program as presented.

Staff Members Responsible:

Lorrie Ayers, Director of EPP Management, Educator Preparation and Certification
Rebecca Bunting, Education Specialist, Educator Preparation and Certification

Attachment:

Executive Summary for Southwest University College of Education

ATTACHMENT

Executive Summary

Introduction

Southwest University at El Paso (SU), located at 6101 Montana Ave, El Paso, TX 79925 (ESC Region 19), is a private, accredited institution of higher education with two decades of experience serving non-traditional learners. SU seeks approval to establish a traditional undergraduate educator preparation program (EPP), with a proposed name of Southwest University College of Education (SUCoE), to certify candidates in Core Subjects with STR EC–6, Core Subjects with STR 4–8, Bilingual Education Supplemental: Spanish, Special Education Specialist EC–12, and Health Science 6–12. Candidates will be certified concurrently with earning a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education with Health Sciences or a bachelor's degree in Education in Middle Grades with Health Sciences. Regional labor data and local superintendent endorsements confirm the urgent need for certified teachers. SU's program is unique in integrating training for candidates with prior experience and licensure, allowing them to challenge core subjects and Career and Technical Education (CTE) certifications. The curriculum is designed with input from subject matter experts and regional stakeholders. SU anticipates enrolling thirty candidates annually, with a projected launch in January 2026. Estimated cost per candidate is \$55,000.

Component 1: Governance of Educator Preparation Programs

SU's EPP, SUCoE, is supported by a cross-sector advisory committee representing TEA-accredited schools, higher education, regional service centers, and business/community interests. Members are selected through professional networks and recommendations for their commitment to regional educational improvement and receive written instructions on their roles. Quarterly meetings, offering in-person and virtual attendance, provide input on curriculum and program evaluation. SU's leadership ensures oversight, resource support, and compliance with TEA requirements, including record retention.

Component 2: Admission Criteria

To be accepted into the EPP, applicants must be enrolled in SU in a degree-granting program, with at least sixty completed semester credit hours and a 2.5 GPA. Admission into the EPP includes a multi-measure screening process: interviews, writing samples, and evaluation of communication and leadership skills. Candidates must demonstrate English proficiency and agree to the Texas Educator's Code of Ethics. Admissions decisions are documented digitally, records are securely maintained for five years, and an appeal process is available. Out-of-country applicants are not considered for admission at this time.

Component 3: Educator Preparation Curriculum

The EPP's curriculum aligns with Texas Educator Standards and TEKS, incorporating SBEC quality indicators, regionally informed needs, empirical research, and local stakeholder feedback. Coursework progresses from foundational knowledge to applied skills in instructional planning, classroom management, content pedagogy, student development, and inclusive practices. Candidates learn to align lessons with TEKS, differentiate instruction, and use assessment and technology to support achievement. Mastery is determined through performance tasks, assessments, and completion of a portfolio.

Component 4: Preparation Program Coursework, Delivery & Ongoing Support

Instruction is delivered in a blended face-to-face and synchronous online instruction format, with interactive elements and personalized faculty feedback. The program is accelerated, allowing completion in as few as 3.5 years, with no summer or winter breaks. Candidates complete a 490-hour clinical teaching assignment with structured, increasing responsibilities. District

partners coordinate placements based on certification area and mentoring quality, and candidates receive ongoing feedback from cooperating teachers and field supervisors, with at least four formal observations. At-risk candidates receive targeted support through individualized improvement plans.

Component 5: Assessment & Evaluation of Candidates & Program

SUCoE provides candidates with ongoing academic progress updates, milestone check-ins, and written performance reports. Certification testing approval is contingent upon completion of all program requirements and practice exams. The program is evaluated annually by SUCoE leadership and the advisory committee, using data on satisfaction, clinical experience, employer feedback, and certification exam results. Continuous data collection guides evidence-based improvements. All documentation is maintained for transparency and certification readiness per TEA standards.

Component 6: Professional Conduct

SUCoE fosters adherence to the Texas Educator's Code of Ethics through orientations, development sessions, and clearly communicated policies. Faculty and candidates sign ethics acknowledgments, and FERPA-compliant data confidentiality protocols are enforced. Ethical practices are documented in program handbooks and integrated throughout coursework to maintain a culture of responsibility and legal compliance.

Component 7: Complaints Process

SUCoE maintains a defined, accessible complaints policy, emphasizing resolution at the program level. The grievance process is posted on the SUCoE website and shared with candidates through the handbook and digital communication. Complaints are first submitted to faculty; if unresolved, they escalate to program directors and deans. All personnel have a one-week timeline to respond. TEA complaint instructions and website links are prominently posted.

Component 8: Issuance of Certificates

SUCoE currently offers only standard certification, as there is no internship option for candidates. Candidates must complete the full curriculum, including a successful clinical teaching experience, pass all TExES exams, and meet degree and work experience requirements (for CTE, where applicable). The Program Director reviews and recommends candidates for certification, ensuring compliance with certification requirements in the Texas Administrative Code (TAC).

Component 9: Data Reporting

SU assures SUCoE compliance with all state and federal data reporting requirements.

Component 10: Proactive Instructional Planning Techniques & Inclusive Practices for All Students, Including Students with Disabilities

SUCoE integrates inclusive practices and evidence-based strategies throughout coursework and clinical teaching. Candidates learn to implement multimodal instruction, scaffold content, and provide individualized accommodations and assessments. Proficiency is verified through observations, and evaluation of portfolio submissions and candidate reflections.