

Item 12: COVER PAGE

Type of Agenda Board Item:

- Discussion Only:** TEA staff will present board items with an update, potential future items, and/or seek SBEC direction on potential future board action items. TEA staff will draft future action items from the board's discussion and direction.
- Board Action:** SBEC members will take action on the agenda item and the effective date will be immediately upon board approval.

Summary:

This item allows the SBEC to discuss and take action on approving a new format for the Core Subjects EC-6 examination. TEA staff provided an update and report to the SBEC at the April 2016 meeting on the Core Subjects certification examinations recommending the removal of the fifth domain to help ensure that elementary teachers who are teaching in the core subject areas (English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) as well as those teaching Fine Arts, Health, and Physical Education, are better prepared to instruct students and have demonstrated sufficient subject matter knowledge. TEA staff will update the Board on an action plan with time-line for test redesign and assignment concerns.

Statutory Authority:

All of the relevant statutes, if applicable, pertaining to this item are listed for you on the agenda title page and the entire statutory language is on Attachment I. This is always helpful in referencing the law the TEA staff was working under when preparing this item.

TEA Staff Recommendation:

To approve the redesign of the Core Subjects EC-6 examination as presented.

Relevant SBEC Core Principles:

- *We believe well-prepared educators are essential.*
- *We believe high certification standards measured by rigorous and reliable assessments are essential.*
- *We believe stakeholder input is essential, and we are accountable to all Texas stakeholders.*
- *We believe we must continually improve our policies and processes in response to changing needs.*

Item 12:

Consider and Take Appropriate Action on the Core Subjects Early Childhood-Grade 6 Certification Examination

DISCUSSION AND ACTION

SUMMARY: This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) an opportunity to discuss and approve a new format for the Core Subjects Early Childhood-Grade 6 examination.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.041(b)(4) and §21.048(a).

TEC, §21.041(b)(4), requires the SBEC to propose rules that specify the requirements for the issuance and renewal of an educator certificate.

TEC, §21.048(a), requires the SBEC to propose rules prescribing comprehensive examinations for each class of certificate issued by the SBEC.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION: The Core Subjects examinations were last discussed at the April 2016 SBEC meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION: House Bill 2012, 83rd Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2013, amended TEC §21.048 to require an assessment of performance in each core subject area for Generalist exams. In response to this legislation, Core Subjects examinations were developed for Early Childhood through Grade 6 (EC-6) and Grades 4 through 8 (4-8).

The current structure of the Core Subjects EC-6 examination is comprised of five domains (four core subject areas and one with fine arts, health, and physical education):

1. English Language Arts and Reading and the Science of Teaching Reading
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Science
5. Fine Arts, Health, and Physical Education

The current structure of the Core Subjects 4-8 examination is comprised of four domains:

1. English Language Arts and Reading
2. Mathematics
3. Social Studies
4. Science

As mentioned during the April 2016 SBEC meeting, TEA staff believes the best next step for the Core Subjects EC-6 examination is to remove the fifth domain (Fine Arts, Health, and Physical Education) from the test. This change will help ensure that elementary teachers who are teaching in the core subject areas (English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) as well as those teaching Fine Arts, Health, and Physical Education, are

better prepared to instruct students and have demonstrated sufficient subject matter knowledge. Redevelopment of the Core Subjects EC-6 test will take at least a year, so until this step can be completed, TEA staff recommends continuing the use of the current examination until the new test is finalized and ready for administration in the 2017-2018 testing year.

TEA staff recognizes the importance of involving stakeholders to develop recommendations that will ensure opportunities remain in place for individuals to teach fine arts, health, and physical education at the elementary level as well as their input on potential test format changes for these subject areas. In the interim, individuals who hold a Generalist EC-6 certificate or the current Core Subjects EC-6 certificate, remain eligible for placement in fine arts, health, and physical education assignments. Also because there may be more candidates eligible for issuance of the Generalist EC-6 certificate through 2017, staff believes there will be a sufficient number of certified individuals for elementary assignments. There are also tests already in place to obtain Early Childhood through Grade 12 certification to teach Art, Music, Health, and Physical Education.

TEA staff anticipates revisiting teaching assignments and appropriate credentials for placement to teach various courses and/or serve in specified roles, following the four-year rule review of Chapter 231, Requirements for Public School Personnel Assignments, scheduled to occur in March 2017.

The anticipated feedback from the four-year rule review of personnel assignments combined with the stakeholder involvement focused on fine arts, health, and physical education elementary subject areas and assignments will ensure that TEA staff bring solid recommendations for the SBEC review and action at future meetings.

PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT: Students will benefit from having teachers certified in the core subject areas for elementary and middle school classroom assignments, and will also have certified teachers for elementary grade-level fine arts assignments.

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

Approve the TEA staff recommendation for the redesign of the Core Subjects EC-6 test to include only the four core subject areas: English Language Arts and Reading, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies.

Staff Members Responsible: Marilyn Cook, Director
Educator Certification and Testing

Becky McCoy, Manager
Educator Testing

Attachments: I. Statutory Citations

ATTACHMENT I**Statutory Citations Relating to Core Subjects EC-6 and Core Subjects 4-8 Exams****Texas Education Code, §21.041, Rules; Fees (excerpt):**

- (b) The board shall propose rules that:
 - (4) specify the requirements for the issuance and renewal of an educator certificate;

Texas Education Code, §21.048, Certification Examinations (excerpt):

- (a) The board shall propose rules prescribing comprehensive examinations for each class of certificate issued by the board. The commissioner shall determine the satisfactory level of performance required for each certification examination. For the issuance of a generalist certificate, the commissioner shall require a satisfactory level of examination performance in each core subject covered by the examination.