

## Item 17: Discussion of Certification Test Development Updates

### DISCUSSION

**SUMMARY:** This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) an update on the Science of Teaching Reading (STR) examination requirement transition and upcoming educator certification test development.

**STATUTORY AUTHORITY:** The statutory authority for the classroom teacher class certificate structure is Texas Education Code (TEC), §§21.003(a), 21.031, and 21.041(b)(1), (2), and (4), 21.041(c), 21.044(a), 21.0441, 21.0418(a).

**FUTURE ACTION EXPECTED:** Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff anticipates presenting an update on educator certification test development to the Board at each SBEC meeting.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION:** This item provides an update on the plan to communicate to the field the House Bill (HB) 3, 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, 2019 requirement that all educators that teach any grade level from prekindergarten through grade six demonstrate proficiency in the science of teaching reading on a certification examination beginning January 1, 2021. In addition, the item provides an update regarding upcoming test development dates. The updated assessments are a part of the teacher certification redesign plan that was discussed with the Board at the August 2018 work session and the October and December 2018 SBEC meetings to improve the quality and consistency of newly certified teachers.

#### Test Development Update

Staff is actively working to update the current content pedagogy tests to increase their rigor and relevance and to ensure alignment with the current Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS). A summary of the anticipated first operational dates of the new assessments are in the table below.

January 1, 2021	September 1, 2021	January 1, 2022	TBD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EC–3 Content (292)</li> <li>• Science of Teaching Reading (293)</li> <li>• Educational Diagnostician (253)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Counselor (252)</li> <li>• Trade and Industrial Education PPR (370)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language Arts and Reading 4–8 (217)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English Language Arts and Reading 7–12</li> <li>• ESL Supplemental</li> <li>• BTLPT–Spanish</li> <li>• Bilingual Spanish</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Early Childhood–Grade 6 Core Subjects (391)</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special Education and related assessments</li> <li>• Health (258)</li> <li>• Physical Education (257)</li> </ul>
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The English Language Arts and Reading: 7–12 Test Framework was reviewed by the Equity Assurance and Content Advisory Panels in September 2020 and will be posted for public comment and reviewed through a content validation survey in early 2021 prior to finalization. TEA staff plan to share a projected operational date for the ELAR 7–12 TExES exam at the December 2020 SBEC meeting.

In addition, with the Board’s adoption of the Bilingual Spanish, Special Education EC–6, Special Education 6–12, and DeafBlind teacher standards at the July 2020 SBEC meeting, TEA staff will begin test development vision setting in collaboration with internal and external stakeholder groups. TEA staff plan to bring updates related the test development processes related to these standards at an upcoming meeting.

STR Exam Requirement Update

The STR standards were adopted by the SBEC in March 2018. In 2019, House Bill (HB) 3, 86th Texas Legislature, required that all educators who become certified to teach any grade level from prekindergarten through grade six demonstrate proficiency in the science of teaching reading on a certification examination beginning January 1, 2021. Since the July 2019 SBEC work session, TEA staff has provided the Board with regular updates regarding the STR examination as a part of the comprehensive test development timeline.

Since the STR legislative requirement was enacted, TEA staff have actively communicated with the field regarding the associated timelines and requirements for educator preparation programs and teacher candidates. In addition, TEA staff have provided resources to support educator preparation programs in aligning their curriculum for impacted certification fields to the Science of Teaching Reading standards. The certification fields impacted are:

- Core Subjects with Science of Teaching Reading: Early Childhood–Grade 6
- Core Subjects with Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4–8
- English Language Arts and Reading with Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4–8, and
- English Language Arts and Reading/Social Studies with Science of Teaching Reading: Grades 4–8

Included in those efforts is a requirement that all EPPs indicate their ability and readiness to successfully prepare candidates for certification in those impacted certification fields. EPPs that choose not to prepare candidates in these fields that require successful completion of the STR exam will lose the authorization to certify candidates in these areas. To date, 70 EPPs have submitted a letter of attestation to the TEA, indicating the alignment of relevant curriculum to the

STR standards. 122 EPPs currently offer preparation in certificate fields impacted by the HB 3 STR requirement. The STR letter of attestation is due to TEA staff by December 1, 2020.

### STR Exam Transition Overview

By statutory mandate, beginning January 1, 2021 all teacher candidates will be required to take the STR exam for issuance of an intern, probationary, and standard certificate if seeking certification in an HB 3 impacted certificate field. This includes:

1. Teacher candidates currently enrolled in an EPP who are not issued their standard certificate prior to December 30, 2020.
2. All future teacher candidates pursuing certification in an HB 3 impacted certification field.
3. Teacher candidates who may have previously completed a preparation program who have not been issued a standard certificate prior to December 30, 2020.
4. Teacher candidates issued the Waiver Probationary Certificate who have not completed all testing requirements and have not been issued a standard certificate prior to December 30, 2020.
5. Certified teachers seeking to add an HB 3 impacted certificate through certification by exam after January 1, 2021.

TEA staff has actively communicated with key stakeholders regarding the timelines and requirements associated with the implementation of the HB 3 STR requirement. TEA staff has encouraged EPPs to communicate early and consistently with teacher candidates regarding the upcoming transitions to ensure that teacher candidates impacted by the HB 3 STR requirement are well aware and take the necessary actions to achieve their certification.

A timeline of TEA staff communication related to the STR transition can be found in Attachment I.

An updated STR communication plan related to the STR transition can be found in Attachment II.

**PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT:** The public and student benefit anticipated as a result of the recommendations and assessments would be more rigorous, relevant, and reliable requirements for the preparation, certification, and testing of classroom teachers upon entry into the profession, and retention of these qualified professionals for years to come.

#### **Staff Members Responsible:**

Jessica McLoughlin, Director, Educator Standards and Testing  
Guiomar Andujar, Education Specialist, Educator Standards

#### **Attachments:**

- I. Science of Teaching Reading Transition Communication Timeline
- II. Science of Teaching Reading Transition Communication Plan

**ATTACHMENT I****STR Transition Communication Timeline:  
Implementation of the STR Exam as a Requirement of HB 3**

Date	Action
June 11, 2019	TEA staff provides legislative update to educator preparation program professional organizations, including Texas Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs (TACCTEP), Texas Association of Certification Officers (TACO), Texas Coordinators for Teacher Certification Testing (TCTCT), Texas Directors of Field Experiences (TDFE), and Texas Association of Teacher Educators (TxATE) Summer Meeting
July 12, 2019	TEA discusses the science of teaching reading requirements and implications with SBEC's Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC), including a deep dive on reading with Dr. Jennifer Schnakenberg from the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk
July 25, 2019	TEA staff provides legislative update to SBEC, including the requirements around the science of teaching reading
September 20, 2019	TEA staff updates EPAC about early literacy training for educator preparation programs and implementation timelines for new science of teaching reading assessments
October 4, 2019	TEA staff updates SBEC regarding the science of teaching reading rule changes and test development timeline
October 24, 2019	TEA staff updates Texas Association of School Personnel Administrators (TASPA) about updates to science of teaching reading rule changes
October 27, 2019	TEA staff provides a STR Application Deep Dive for preparation programs
October 29, 2019	TEA staff provides updates to Consortium of State Organizations for Texas Teacher Education (CSOTTE) regarding the science of teaching reading and associated timelines
October 30, 2019	TEA provides initial application and associated guidance for preparation programs to offer the science of teaching reading assessment
November 12, 2019	TEA staff provides a STR Application Scope and Sequence Deep Dive for preparation programs

Date	Action
November 18, 2019	TEA staff provides deep dive into substance and implications for different pathways regarding the science of teaching reading assessment for the EPAC.
November 21–22, 2019	Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) Training: Group 1, Session 1
December 6, 2019	TEA staff updates SBEC regarding the science of teaching reading rule changes and test development timeline
December 12, 2019	TEA provides a STR Application Performance Task Deep Dive for preparation programs
December 16–17, 2019	LETRS Training: Group 1, Session 2
December 18, 2019	TEA provides updated guidance via email around the science of teaching reading application and allowing programs to offer the science of teaching reading assessment without an application but with an attestation and updated curriculum.
January 20–21, 2020	LETRS Training: Group 2, Session 1
January 22–23, 2020	LETRS Training for Administrators
January 31, 2020	TEA staff presented to TACTE regarding the upcoming requirements for certification related to STR and the necessary timing for EPP recommendation of certificates
February 7, 2020	TEA staff provides deep dive into substance and implications for different pathways regarding the science of teaching reading assessment for the EPAC.
February 11–12, 2020	LETRS Training: Group 2, Session 2
February 20, 2020	TEA staff discusses with SBEC the replacement of the certification names for the HB 3 impacted certification fields to more clearly indicate the science of teaching reading requirement
March 5, 2020	TEA staff provides update to Data Working Group. The update includes requirements for certification related to STR and the necessary timing for EPP recommendation of certificates
March 13, 2020	Governor Abbott declares a state of disaster due to COVID-19.

Date	Action
April 20, 2020	TEA staff provides an overview of proposed replacement certificate names for HB3 impacted certificate fields, an overview of the timelines and requirements for the STR exam implementation, and a summary of STR related communication methods for the EPAC.
May 1, 2020	TEA staff proposed with SBEC the replacement of the certification names for the HB 3 impacted certification fields to more clearly indicate the science of teaching reading requirement and discussed communication regarding the STR exam requirement to date and plans for ongoing communication methods to ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of and take necessary action to support the implementation of the STR exam requirement.
May 29, 2020	TEA staff presented an update on STR exam requirement, timelines, and curriculum alignment resources at the TACTE Retreat.
June 15, 2020	TEA staff presented an update on STR exam requirements, timelines, and curriculum alignment resources at the TxATE Summer Convening
July 16, 2020	Pearson staff facilitates the first “STR in Focus” webinar for EPPs, providing information regarding the STR exam structure and an overview of STR exam assessment item types, including constructed response questions.
July 20, 2020	The STR exam page goes live on the TEA website, which includes a webinar detailing the timelines and requirements associated with the STR exam.
July 24, 2020	TEA staff proposes for the SBEC’s adoption the replacement of the certification names for the HB 3 impacted certification fields to more clearly indicate the science of teaching reading requirement and discusses updates regarding the STR exam transition, including the communication regarding the STR exam requirement to date and plans for ongoing communication methods
July 28, 2020	TEA staff provides an update on the STR exam requirements and timelines with the Texas Consortium of Educator Preparation Programs for ESCs.
August 14, 2020	TEA staff facilitate a webinar to introduce the opportunity for EPP faculty to participate in Reading Academy training.

Date	Action
September 1, 2020	The Educator Preparation Program Newsletter launches, distributed to EPP points of contact at all EPPs, which includes reminders about the STR Letter of Attestation requirement and the launch of the STR exam webpage.
September 2, 2020	The STR Exam Preparation Manual is live on the Texas Examination Program website and notification is distributed to all EPPs.
September 18, 2020	TEA staff facilitate a webinar to provide additional guidance regarding the opportunity for EPP faculty to participate in Reading Academy training.
September 25, 2020	The STR Exam Frequently Asked Questions document posts to the TEA STR Exam webpage.
September 25, 2020	TEA staff provides an update on STR exam requirement communication and supports provided to date to the EPAC and solicits feedback on further communication necessary.
September 30, 2020	TEA staff facilitates EPP Form and Function Webinar, which includes an overview of the STR exam related rules and the associated implementation dates and requirements.
October 6, 2020	Targeted email communications are sent to candidates with a history within the past calendar year of registration in the impacted fields notifying them of the STR exam requirement beginning January 1, 2021.
October 6, 2020	Pearson adds field-specific messaging to the Exam Selection page in the Texas registration system, notifying candidates that certification requirements have changed for their certification field beginning January 1, 2021.

**ATTACHMENT II**

**STR Transition Communication Plan:  
Implementation of the STR Exam as a Requirement of HB 3**

**Topic:** STR Implementation Requirements and Associated Timelines

**Audience:** Educator preparation programs, candidates currently being prepared to educate students in EC–Grade 6, and Texas local education agencies (LEAs)

**Communication Methods:**

Method	Description	Specific Actions: October 2020 Onward
Direct email communication	Direct email communication regarding STR timelines and requirements distributed through applicable teacher candidate listservs and monthly email communication updates to educator preparation programs through TEA Email Blast.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop STR exam requirement documents that can be shared with teacher candidates via their EPP</li> <li>• Direct email communication with teacher candidates who have completed all testing requirements but have not yet applied for certification in advance of the Jan. 1, 2021 STR mandate.</li> </ul>
Informational webinar series	Webinar series addressing STR transition requirements and timelines, guidance for programs and/or candidates, and frequently asked questions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop additional informational webinars based on EPP, candidate, and LEA needs.</li> </ul>
Timely updates to the TEA Standards and Testing website	Dedicated website page including all communication updates, access to recorded webinars, and timely Frequently Asked Questions documents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistently update STR exam webpage on the TEA website</li> <li>• Develop and post to the webpage informational handouts for EPPs, LEAs, and candidates.</li> </ul>
Professional Organization updates	Timely updates related to the STR timelines and requirements through professional organization communication channels and convenings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely updates at professional organization convenings, including upcoming CSOTTE presentations.</li> </ul>

Method	Description	Specific Actions: October 2020 Onward
LEA updates	Timely updates related to the STR timelines, requirements, and staffing implications through LEA communication channels and convenings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide informational handouts to LEA stakeholders related to the STR exam requirements.</li> </ul>
SBEC updates	Regular updates related to the STR timeline and requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide standing updates to the Board on STR communication.</li> </ul>
EPAC updates and discussion	Regular updates related to the STR timeline and requirements and opportunities for feedback and questions related to preparation program implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide relevant updates to the EPAC on STR timelines and requirements.</li> </ul>

**Topic:** STR Exam Specifications and Curriculum Alignment

**Audience:** Educator preparation programs

**Communication Methods:**

Method	Description	Specific Actions: October 2020 Onward
LETRS Training and Reading Academies Access	Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training series offered to all educator preparation programs to provide foundational context regarding the science of teaching reading to inform curriculum development. In addition, access to the Reading Academies training content at an audit level to inform curriculum development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Access to LETRS training online modules available through Fall 2021.</li> <li>• Provide access to Reading Academies blended model training and Reading Academies Overview webinar.</li> </ul>
Webinar series	Training series focused on alignment of curriculum with Science of Teaching Reading standards and associated examination requirements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “STR in Focus” webinar series</li> </ul>
Timely updates to the TEA Standards and Testing website	Dedicated website page including posting of the standards, test framework, and additional relevant examination resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STR exam webpage live on the TEA website with consistent updates.</li> </ul>

Method	Description	Specific Actions: October 2020 Onward
Professional Organization updates	Resources and guidance related to the STR transition through professional organization communication channels and convenings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide timely updates at professional organization convenings including CSOTTE presentations.</li> </ul>
SBEC updates	Regular updates related to the STR communication timeline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide standing updates to the Board on STR communication.</li> </ul>
EPAC updates and discussion	Regular updates regarding resources and supports related to STR curriculum alignment and opportunities for feedback and questions related to preparation program implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide relevant updates to the EPAC on STR content and curriculum alignment.</li> </ul>