

DATE:	August 21, 2025
SUBJECT:	House Bill 2 (HB 2) Implementation: New Teacher Certification Requirements for Foundation Curriculum; Incentive for Uncertified Teachers
CATEGORY:	Educator Certification
NEXT STEPS:	Review and share with district and campus personnel

House Bill 2 (HB 2) passed during the 89th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, and was signed into law by Governor Abbott. A previous TAA, [Legislative Updates Related to District of Innovation Prohibitions](#), released by the agency on July 31, 2025, included brief information on Texas Education Code (TEC) §21.0032, Employment of Uncertified Classroom Teachers. This communication provides additional information on teacher certification requirements for foundation curriculum, which may impact district of innovation (DOI) plans, and provides information on an incentive for uncertified teachers to achieve certification.

Teacher Certification Requirements for Foundation Curriculum

Update to District of Innovation Provision:

Per TEC, §21.003, a person may not be employed as a teacher, teacher intern or teacher trainee, librarian, educational aide, administrator, educational diagnostician, or school counselor by a school district unless the person holds an appropriate certificate or permit issued as provided by Subchapter B, which includes any State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)-issued certificate (intern, probationary, standard, or enhanced standard) or emergency permit for the subject area and grade level. Information regarding the appropriate certificate for a given personnel assignment can be found in 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 231, Requirements for Public School Personnel Assignments.

Many districts have chosen to exempt themselves from this certification requirement and hire uncertified individuals through an approved DOI plan. HB 2's new TEC, §21.0032, now limits districts' ability to include exemptions from some certification requirements under TEC, §21.003, in their DOI plan. These limitations phase in over the next three academic years.

New Restrictions on DOI Plans Regarding Certification:

Academic Year	DOI Restrictions
2025-2026	District maintains currently approved DOI plan which may include exemptions from 21.003
2026-2027	District can no longer include K-5 reading and mathematics teachers in DOI plan exemptions from 21.003
2027-2028	District can no longer include all foundational subject teachers (i.e., reading/English language arts, math, science, and social studies) in any grade level in DOI plan exemptions from 21.003

Note, districts with the appropriate and allowable approved exemptions in their plans maintain certification flexibility for non-foundation subjects, allowing career and technical education (CTE) and other enrichment subject teachers to continue serving in assignments.

Districts can submit a plan for commissioner of education approval to delay the implementation of teacher certification requirements for teachers of record in foundation curriculum courses until the beginning of the 2029-2030 school year.

Delay of Teacher Certification Requirements Application and Process:

TEC, §21.0032 (a-1), authorizes the commissioner of education to approve district requests to delay implementation of certification requirements for foundation curriculum courses until the beginning of the 2029-2030 school year.

The application must include an evaluation of how the district will transition to certification during the extension, and will require a district to:

- Identify the total number of uncertified individuals currently assigned to teach foundation curriculum courses (by subject area and grade level);
- Indicate the total number of new, uncertified teachers hired on average each of the last three years;
- Identify at least one Educator Preparation Program partner who will be used to support certification efforts during the extension;
- Obtain approval from the district board of trustees to delay teacher certification requirements until the beginning of the 2029-2030 school year; and
- Include confirmation of the board of trustees' approval with the application submission to the commissioner of education.

All applications will be subject to review and approval by the commissioner of education. The application submission process will be shared via TAA no later than October 2025. Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff anticipate the request submission window will open early October 2025, with notifications to districts being shared on a rolling schedule of reviews and approvals, and a goal to complete all notifications to districts by the end of February 2026.

Alternative Ways to Qualify an Uncertified Teacher:

Independent of the District of Innovation exceptions, state law allows for the following ways to qualify an uncertified teacher to address some of the most challenging certification assignment issues and scenarios:

- a school district teaching permit under TEC, §21.055, for the assigned area; or
- a teacher certification waiver under TEC, §7.056, for the assigned area.

These flexibilities are not applicable for assignments in special education, bilingual education, English as a Second Language (ESL), or prekindergarten programs.

Incentive for Uncertified Teachers

TEC, §21.0033, provides an incentive to help currently employed, uncertified individuals complete the certification process and support districts with teacher retention.

A one-time \$1,000 incentive will be paid by the TEA to the district for each eligible classroom teacher upon successful completion of the preparation requirements and issuance of a standard certificate.

Eligible teachers must meet the following criteria:

- Hired as an uncertified first-year teacher in 2022-2023, or 2023-2024 school year, and were still uncertified as of 1/1/25.
- Achieve standard certification by the end of the 2026-2027 school year.
- Continuously employed as a teacher by the district.

Beginning in 2025-26, TEA will send a list of eligible individuals to the district for employment verification in the early spring of each school year. Districts will complete verification by late spring. Payments for eligible teachers who achieve certification by August 1, 2026, will be issued no earlier than August 2026, and the process will repeat in the 2026-2027 school year. A final distribution of incentive payments will occur in August 2027.

Actions Districts Can Take Now

Districts can plan now to support eligible individuals as they work to achieve standard certification. TEA recommends that districts take the following steps beginning in the fall of 2025:

- Identify the uncertified teachers in the district who meet the criteria for the incentive.
- Become familiar with the [requirements for standard certification](#)
- Consider and plan for any additional steps eligible teachers must take to achieve standard certification.

TEA will provide additional information, resources, and support for districts regarding this incentive in future communications beginning in the fall of 2025.

For immediate questions regarding the contents of this TAA, please email HB2@tea.texas.gov.