

Item 6:
Request to Approve July 22, 2021 Work Session Minutes

ACTION

ASSOCIATE COMMISSIONER'S RECOMMENDATION:

Approve the July 22, 2021 Work Session meeting minutes.

STATE BOARD FOR EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION
WORK SESSION AGENDA
JULY 22, 2021 AT 1:00 PM
1701 N. CONGRESS AVE. ROOM 1-104

The Board will meet in open session and after determining the presence of a quorum, discuss the following agenda items:

Moment of Silence

Pledge of Allegiance

1. Call to Order

The State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) convened its work session at 1:00 PM on Thursday, July 22, 2021.

Present: Dr. Robert Brescia, Ms. Rohanna Brooks-Sykes, Mr. Tommy Coleman, Ms. Julia Dvorak, Dr. Veronica Galvan, Mr. Rex Gore, Ms. Melissa Isaacs, Dr. John Kelly, Mr. Andrew Kim, Dr. Andrew Lofters, Ms. Courtney MacDonald, Ms. Shareefah Mason, Ms. Kelvey Oeser, Ms. Alma Rodriguez, and Ms. Jean Streepey.

2. Welcome and Overview

Ms. Brooks-Sykes welcomed the members to the work session to allow the Board the opportunity to dig deeper into their rules regarding educator conduct and disciplinary cases. She reminded the members that the work session was requested by the Board to focus solely on that topic to obtain a better understanding of SBEC's rules and to provide staff with any guidance where they may want to make some updates to those rules.

3. Review SBEC Mission, Core Principles, and Policy Regarding Educator Conduct

Associate Commissioner Emily Garcia presented this item to the Board. Ms. Garcia welcomed the Board and staff to the work session and provided data related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student achievement in Texas. She also provided data linking the work of the SBEC to actions intended to improve student outcomes across the state.

4. Review SBEC Educator's Code of Ethics

Mr. Rodriguez presented this item to the Board. He walked through the SBEC investigation and litigation process and presented the volume of cases opened in each category of the Code of Ethics (COE). Mr. Rodriguez asked the Board for feedback regarding prioritization of certain types of COE allegations, as well as which factors staff should use to evaluate reports of COE violations. Mr. Rodriguez provided examples of allegations that fell into the categories of "misappropriation of funds" and "discrimination and harassment." The distributed materials also included examples of allegations involving "falsification of records

and "certificate fraud." However, these two categories were not specifically discussed during the work session.

Relative to allegations involving misappropriation of funds, the Board stated that staff should have discretion to determine which allegations should be pursued, given that many districts are reporting in the abundance of caution. Board members also commented that some school districts are operating with minimum staff and therefore do not have resources to fully audit financial information. In addition to the factors for consideration that Mr. Rodriguez presented, the Board suggested that staff consider whether someone was trained or expected to be trained in how to properly handle funds and take into consideration if there is repeat behavior. The Board discussed varying opinions on whether monetary thresholds should be considered when prioritizing investigations. Board members suggested that, if possible, staff can offer guidance to school districts about how to remediate the issues. The Board stated that staff resources should be focused on protecting students.

Relative to discrimination and harassment involving colleagues, the Board agreed that the current factors that Mr. Rodriguez presented were appropriate to consider when determining whether allegations should be pursued. The Board also advised that the investigation of these type of allegations should be based on evidence that an educator violated a law. Additionally, relative to allegations of discrimination in the classroom, Board members referenced recent legislation that provided boundaries around what may be taught to students. However, several Board members also stated that this law and other related rulings were very recent. Therefore, the Board chose not make recommendations about changes to rules or prioritization of these issues at this time.

5. Review SBEC Contract Abandonment Rules

Ms. Moriarty presented this item to the Board. The Board discussed ideas for potential changes to contract abandonment sanctioning rules. The Board asked questions of and heard feedback from a panel of stakeholders that included Julie Leahy from the Texas Classroom Teachers' Association, Paul Tapp from the Association of Texas Professional Educators, Karen Dooley from the Texas Association of School Boards, and Crystal Dockery from the Texas Association of Community Schools.

6. Adjournment

Ms. Brooks-Sykes adjourned the meeting at 5:30 PM.

The Board may go into closed session regarding any item on the agenda to the extent it is authorized to do so pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 551.