



Input to SBEC on Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 230, Subchapter E

January 29, 2020

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** and the **Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE)** jointly offer the following comments to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) regarding proposed changes to 19 TAC Chapter 230, Subchapter E, Educational Aide Certificate.

House Bill (HB) 22 passed by the 85th Texas Legislature in 2017 ensures that school districts receive recognition within the public-school accountability system for their students who earn industry certifications. The 2019-20 approved list of industry-based certifications (IBCs) includes over 300 certificates that students can obtain with their coursework. These certificates include the Educational Aide credential, which is a valuable step for young, aspiring teachers.

In current rule (19 TAC 230.55), the pathway to gain an Educational Aide certificate stipulates that applicants must hold a high school diploma or its equivalent. Unlike other IBCs, this requirement excludes current high school students from reaping the benefits of the Educational Aide certificate. With this certificate, aspiring teachers can obtain employment and enjoy access to the Texas Educational Aide Exemption, which provides financial support to eligible educational aides as they complete their teaching degree. The exclusion of high school students from the Educational Aide IBC is also a missed opportunity for school districts. Under current rule, districts are barred from receiving the accountability benefits associated with the Educational Aide IBC, even though enrollment in the Education and Training cluster courses reached nearly 38,000 during the 2018-19 school year.

To address these issues, the proposed rule language uses the accountability system to incentivize districts to recruit and prepare young educators by allowing certain high school students to receive the Educational Aide credential. (Eligible students will be those who are at least 18 years old and have completed three or more credits in the Education and Training cluster, including either the Instructional Practices or Practicum in Education and Training course.) In the 2018-19 school year, over 7,000 students were enrolled in the Instructional Practices course. Encouraging these students to continue down the path to teaching could make a sizeable bump in the Texas teaching force.

In supporting the proposed change, our only suggestion to this rule language is that the age for eligibility be lowered to 17 to include the many students who will not turn 18 until after the end of their senior year of high school. The foundation of learning and experience that Educational Aides receive makes them more likely to become teachers and more likely to be more effective teachers earlier in their career. By including *all* high school seniors, this rule can maximize the benefit to Texas school districts and students.

ATPE and TAFE appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback during this process and invite board members and TEA staff to reach out to us for any additional information. Contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org. Contact Donita Garza of TAFE at (512) 443-2100, ext. 8512, or donita@tassp.org.

The Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE) has been a strong voice for Texas educators since 1980. It is the leading educators' association in Texas with approximately 100,000 members statewide. With its strong collaborative philosophy, ATPE speaks for classroom teachers, administrators, future, retired, and para-educators and works to create better opportunities for 5 million public schoolchildren. ATPE is the ally and the voice of Texas public school educators.

The Texas Association of Future Educators (TAFE) is a statewide non-profit 501(c)(3) student organization created to allow young men and women an opportunity to explore the teaching profession. The organization was created in 1984 to provide the best and brightest high school and middle school students in Texas with the necessary knowledge to make informed decisions about pursuing careers in education.