

Written Testimony Submitted on Senate Bill 15

Tuesday, August 24, 2021

Texas House Public Education Committee
Submitted by Educate Texas on behalf of the Signed Below

Chairman Dutton and House Committee Members: Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony on Senate Bill 15.

The group reflected on this testimony includes organizations that are each committed to effective educator preparation and ensuring that Texas students have the most effective teachers possible.

As drafted, Section 1 of SB 15 would give the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) the authority to allow teacher candidates to satisfy all certification requirements, including clinical experiences and internships, solely through a virtual format if the teacher candidate is teaching courses offered through a local remote program. The early phases of the pandemic required the allowance of virtual observations for teacher candidates, and that flexibility was necessary at the time.

We recommend that virtual settings be used in addition to or as only a portion of the certification requirements a teacher candidate must complete and not in place of all in-person experiences. Doing otherwise would allow a candidate to become fully certified without being in the classroom with students. To support feedback from the field supervisor, campus principal, and mentor teacher and the continuous improvement of the candidate, in-person experiences of teacher candidates are essential to capture the true interaction and lesson delivery of a teacher candidate with their students.

Virtual experiences for teacher candidates should only complement in-person experiences to develop strong teachers. We know that effective educator preparation is largely based on practice-based skills, and our teacher candidates should have the most comprehensive support possible, especially as they are learning their craft.

We appreciate your consideration as SB 15 is discussed by the Legislature. If you have any further questions or would like any additional information, please contact a representative from any of these organizations for further discussion of this topic.

Sincerely,

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