

Item 15:

Discussion of Quality Components of Educator Preparation Programs

DISCUSSION

SUMMARY: This item provides the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) an opportunity to discuss the Board's vision for educator preparation program (EPP) quality.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: The statutory authority for educator preparation program quality is the Texas Education Code (TEC), §21.031.

FUTURE ACTION EXPECTED: Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff anticipates presenting an update on the process for building a framework for quality Texas educator preparation programs at the October 2021 SBEC meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND JUSTIFICATION: This item provides the SBEC the opportunity to provide input to TEA staff regarding policy and process options to identify quality components of educator preparation in an effective educator preparation program framework. TEA staff will outline Board policy changes since 2015, recent TEA actions in providing effective frameworks for school districts and campuses, and options to provide a similar framework for EPPs.

Educator Preparation and Certification Redesign Background:

The SBEC has clarified its commitment to quality educator preparation for future teachers in its Mission Statement:

*SBEC is dedicated to improving student achievement and ensuring the safety and welfare of Texas school children **by upholding the highest level of educator preparation, performance, continuing education, and standards of conduct.***

In alignment with this mission, the SBEC has been consistently focused on ensuring that future educators across Texas receive high-quality educator preparation, to ensure that Texas teachers are ready to meet the needs of their students from Day 1.

In 2015, with this focus on the highest-level educator preparation in mind, the SBEC requested that TEA staff and stakeholders generate and recommend policy options to improve educator quality. The Board's directive was to develop a set of policy recommendations that would ensure that Texas educators were ready to meet the needs of all Texas students from Day 1. In developing the set of policy recommendations, TEA staff and stakeholders had two primary directives in mind:

1. To define what success looked like for the educator entering their role, and
2. To implement the educator preparation program accountability structure that would effectively indicate that a program was on track.

As an outcome of the directive and associated policy recommendations, the SBEC instituted significant and transformative rules in alignment with the Board's mission over the past five years. A summary of some notable policies and results can be found below.

Year	Policy	Results
2016	More training requirements prior to becoming a teacher of record.	Shift from.... Candidates serving as teachers of record for up to three years without demonstrating proficiency in content or teaching ability. To.... Candidates demonstrating content knowledge as a requirement to become a teacher of record for one year. Candidates demonstrating teaching ability as a requirement to continue as teacher of record for up to two years.
2016	Requiring candidates to receive more support.	Shift from: Candidates receiving three formal observations from their EPP while serving as the teacher of record. To: Candidates receiving five formal observations from their EPP while serving as the teacher of record.
2016	Requiring more student teaching.	Shift from: Candidates only completing a minimum of 12 weeks of student teaching. To: Candidates completing a minimum of 14 weeks of student teaching.
2016	Requiring EPPs to be accountable for all exams approved	Shift from: EPPs only being held accountable for the final test a candidate takes that leads to certification. To: EPPs being held accountable for a candidate's first two attempts on the test that the program has recommended the candidate for based on preparation by the program.
2018	Adopting the EPP Commendations.	Shift from... The SBEC only assigning ASEP statuses based on minimum performance standards. To... The SBEC assigning commendations based on four categories of high-performing performance standards and innovation to recognize and reward EPPs that go beyond minimum standards in preparing educators.

2018	Charging TEA staff to begin the ongoing process of redesigning the content pedagogy exams, in alignment with updated TEKS and educator standards.	<p>Shift from... Candidates taking multiple-choice only exams that were not aligned in rigor or relevance to the reality of Texas classrooms.</p> <p>To... Candidates beginning to take exams that include multiple-choice and constructed-response questions and are well aligned with updates to the TEKS, rigorous, and relevant to Texas classrooms.</p>
2019	Adopting an updated definition of the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) requirement and associated PACT exams.	<p>Shift from... EPPs having the option to require candidates to take their content exam for admission into the program.</p> <p>To... Candidates completing the content exam while being supported by a program and EPPs being held accountable for candidate exam performance.</p>
2019	Adopting the edTPA pilot, a performance-based portfolio assessment used for teacher certification, for a three-year pilot.	<p>Shift from... Candidates demonstrating the ability to teach by passing the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) certification exam, a multiple-choice only exam that is not content or grade specific.</p> <p>To... Candidates having the option to take the edTPA through the edTPA pilot, demonstrating their competence in a Texas classroom through the development of a performance-based portfolio that measures planning, instruction, and assessment while also receiving meaningful feedback on their strengths and areas for growth as an educator.</p>
2020	Adopting the Science of Teaching Reading (STR) exam requirement.	<p>Shift from... Candidates demonstrating their understanding of foundational reading practices through the English Language Arts (ELAR) subtest of the Core Subjects: Early Childhood through Grade 6 (EC-6) exam.</p> <p>To... Candidates demonstrating their extensive depth and breadth of science of teaching reading knowledge and skills through the standalone STR exam, which includes multiple-choice and constructed response questions.</p>
2020	Adopting updates to ASEP to implement the index model and include Index 3, student growth.	<p>Shift from... EPPs being held accountable for candidate performance on certification exams, observations, and principal/teacher feedback.</p>

		<p>To... EPPs also being held accountable for their candidates' ability to effectively increase student growth as a component of the SBEC Accountability System for Educator Preparation (ASEP).</p>
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SBEC and EPAC Discussions on Educator Preparation Program Quality:

In recent SBEC policy decisions, as well as discussions with the SBEC commendations committee and the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC), as well as directives from the SBEC Chair, Dr. Cavazos, there has been a heightened interest in continuing to pursue policy options for recognizing high-quality educator preparation and supporting EPP continuous improvement.

SBEC Policy Decisions Regarding EPP Quality:

As the SBEC has raised the bar on the expectations of educators and preparation programs, the Board also recognized the critical importance of identifying and celebrating those educator preparation programs that go above and beyond to not only ensure that their educators are Day 1 ready, but to continually seek opportunities to excel in ensuring all students receive a quality teacher. This led to the SBEC’s implementation of EPP Commendations in 2018, which aim to recognize innovative and high performing EPP practice beyond the accountability system. The EPP Commendation categories are:

- Rigorous and Robust Preparation:
- Preparing the Educators Texas Needs;
- Preparing Educators for Long-Term Success; and
- Innovative Educator Preparation.

In recognizing high-performing EPPs, by recognizing and rewarding their excellence in preparing future teachers, the SBEC developed the EPP Commendations to:

- recognize EPPs leading the development of positive and impactful practices,
- encourage innovation towards quality, to better serve Texas schools and students, and
- inform the Board of innovation in the field, to inform their future discussions.

SBEC EPP Commendations Committee Decisions and Discussions Regarding EPP Quality:

Category four, Innovative Educator Preparation, is selected by an SBEC committee. The SBEC EPP Commendations Committee determines the focus of the innovative practice, reviews EPP applications, and makes a recommendation to the full Board of which EPPs should receive the commendation in that category. The 2019-2020 SBEC EPP Commendation Committee generated meaningful discussion with the SBEC about the innovative and high-quality practices effective EPPs engage in daily, including the implementation of best practices in practice-based preparation and teacher residency models. The three EPPs recognized in the first Innovative Educator Preparation Commendation category, Urban Teachers, Texas Tech University, and University of Houston, now serve as examples for the SBEC and the field for high-quality, practice-based preparation.

EPAC Discussions Regarding EPP Quality:

The EPAC, the SBEC's only standing advisory committee, convened with its new membership in March 2021. At the first meeting with updated membership, members of the EPAC had the opportunity to share what they were most excited about in their role as an advisory committee. In summary of their reflections, the EPAC shared a desire to focus on ensuring that future educators have access to and are prepared within high-quality educator preparation programs, so that Texas teachers are ready to meet the needs of all Texas students. At the May 2021 EPAC meeting, the members of the EPAC began to build a shared vision for high-quality educator preparation, collectively sharing their organization's and/or their top three characteristics that exemplify high-quality educator preparation.

SBEC Chair Directives Regarding EPP Quality:

The SBEC Chair, Dr. Cavazos, also directed TEA staff to examine additional opportunities to recognize EPPs of innovation, similar to the Districts of Innovation (DOI) structure. Dr. Cavazos, in his directive, shared that the recognition of EPPs of Innovation could allow high-performing, high-quality EPPs flexibility regarding some SBEC rules and regulations as well as provide access to additional incentives.

Across the SBEC, SBEC Commendations Committee, and the EPAC, TEA staff have heard a consistent desire to examine closer ways to define our Texas vision for high-quality educator preparation and ways to support EPPs to improve.

Alignment with and Lessons Learned from TEA's Approach to Supporting Texas School Districts and Campuses:

TEA staff have collaborated with other staff in the agency who have done similar work in supporting Local Education Agencies (LEAs) improvement through establishing a shared vision for Texas school quality, the Effective Schools Framework (ESF). In observing the process staff engaged in to develop the ESF, TEA staff have identified many parallels and potential lessons to learn from about the process of defining common components of quality that can be used to recognize excellence as well as provide a model for continuing improvement.

TEA staff and stakeholders developed the ESF to build a common, shared vision for the actions that effective Texas schools take on a day-to-day basis that lead to student success. In developing the ESF, TEA staff:

- Observed high-performing schools in Texas across regional and demographic contexts to identify core best practices,
- Engaged in extensive stakeholder engagement, and
- Solicited iterative rounds of feedback on the framework components.

In its implementation, the ESF has established a common, aspirational bar for what districts and schools across Texas do to ensure an excellent education for all students and fostered action toward continuous improvement across Texas schools.

Potential Pathway for Texas Educator Preparation Programs:

The directives from the SBEC and feedback from the EPAC provide an opportunity to create a framework for EPPs, similar to the ESF, that distinguishes effective practices that result in improved outcomes for school children, future educators, local school districts, and the EPPs. The development of the framework would codify the “what, when, where, and how” of effective educator preparation in alignment with the SBEC’s mission and purpose.

Effective Preparation Framework Purpose and Development:

The process for developing an Effective Preparation Framework would allow the SBEC to partner with EPPs and the educational community to establish a clear and common vision for educator preparation best practices that result in strong candidate and student outcomes. This framework would provide an aspirational bar for educator preparation quality and a route to get there. As with the ESF, the Effective Preparation Framework would capture the most foundational practices that are essential for all 123 Texas EPPs, across program types and contexts.

The SBEC has already set the foundation for the development of an Effective Preparation Framework. The SBEC, through the work of the EPP Commendation Committee, has recognized exemplar EPPs from which components of the framework can be built. The SBEC has also provided consistent feedback around components of EPP quality in ongoing discussions and policy decisions. Additionally, the EPAC, at the March 2021 meeting, stated a strong desire to focus on educator preparation program quality in their role as an advisory committee and engaged in initial reflections on characteristics of quality educator preparation at their May 2021 meeting.

The development of an Effective Preparation Framework would serve three proposed functions: to build a common language, foster continuous improvement, and support alignment. A summary of the proposed purposes and what they could mean for Texas EPPs can be found below.

Function	Description	What this could mean for Texas EPPs
Common Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would build a common language among the SBEC, TEA, EPPs, candidates and Texas LEAs around the best practices EPPs engage in daily. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The components of the Effective Preparation Framework would be codified in SBEC rule. All EPPs would share a clear, aspirational vision for educator preparation best practice. The framework could foster collaboration and continuous improvement practices within and across EPPs, grounded in common language. The framework would build a foundation for Texas EPP-LEA partnerships.

<p>Continuous Improvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would support EPP continuous improvement through an aligned continuing approval review process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SBEC could recognize and celebrate EPP innovation and best practices in alignment with the framework. • All EPPs are required to engage in a continuing approval review every five years. An updated continuing approval review process could be aligned with the framework and provide meaningful feedback on EPP outcomes and quality, in addition to ensuring compliance. • A framework-aligned continuing approval review could yield prioritized focus areas to inform EPP continuous improvement.
<p>Alignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would provide the foundation for alignment of statewide resources and supports to the needs of Texas EPPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TEA could provide and connect programs with meaningful training, resources, and supports in alignment with the framework. • External EPP technical assistance providers and organizations could align their resources and supports with the framework. • EPPs could better align their preparation of candidates with the LEA framework, priorities, and TEA/LEA initiatives.

Proposed Next Steps:

This item will allow SBEC to provide feedback and input on exploring the establishment of an Effective Preparation Framework. Based on the Board’s feedback, TEA staff will begin stakeholder engagement to develop the key components of the framework. Developing a framework for effective Texas educator preparation has significant potential impact on the field and therefore deserves focused, prioritized deep dives with end users and experts in the field. With this in mind, TEA staff will:

- Facilitate development and feedback sessions with the EPAC
- Engage in learning conversations with the SBEC’s Innovative EPP Commendation recipients, and
- Seek feedback and recommendations from Educate Texas’s advisory committee focused on educator preparation practices.

Throughout this stakeholder engagement process, TEA staff will provide comprehensive updates and draft framework language to the SBEC for the Board’s discussion and feedback.

TEA staff will tentatively plan to bring draft components of the framework to the SBEC for discussion in October 2021.

Senate Bill (SB) 1590 Regarding Virtual Observation Options:

SB 1590, 87th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, requires the SBEC to adopt rule changes to allow for two formal observations to be completed virtually in a manner equivalent in rigor to in-person formal observations. TEA staff will solicit feedback on the criteria for the virtual formal observations from the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC) and will bring back proposed rule text for TAC Chapter 228, Requirements for Educator Preparation Programs, to implement SB 1590 at the October 2021 SBEC meeting.

PUBLIC AND STUDENT BENEFIT: The public and student benefit anticipated as a result of the recommendations would be rigorous, relevant, and reliable preparation of educators for entry into the profession, and retention of these qualified professionals for years to come.

Staff Member Responsible:

Jessica McLoughlin, Director, Educator Standards, Testing, and Preparation

Attachment:

Statutory Citations Relating to the SBEC's Purpose Regarding Educator Preparation Program Quality

ATTACHMENT**Statutory Citations Relating to the State Board for Educator Certification's Purpose
Regarding Educator Preparation Program Quality****Texas Education Code, §21.031, Purpose:**

- (a) The State Board for Educator Certification is established to recognize public school educators as professionals and to grant educators the authority to govern the standards of their profession. The board shall regulate and oversee all aspects of the certification, continuing education, and standards of conduct of public school educators.
- (b) In proposing rules under this subchapter, the board shall ensure that all candidates for certification or renewal of certification demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to improve the performance of the diverse student population of this state.