

Educator Certification

Current Challenges

- A lack of highly qualified staff for innovative and Languages Other Than English courses
- A lack of teachers with specialized certifications
- Inability to hire subject-matter experts for specialized courses
- Lack of opportunities for authentic, field-based experiences
- Competition from charter schools already utilizing this exemption offering specialized courses

Exemptions

- § 21.003 Certification Required (for CTE, Tech Apps, and Languages Other Than English in high school credit courses only)
- § 21.0031 Failure to Obtain Certification; Contract Void
- § 21.053 Presentation and Recording of Certificates

Requirements Imposed by the Texas Education Code That Inhibit the District's Goals

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.

An employee's probationary, continuing, or term contract is void if the employee does not hold a valid certificate or permit issued by the State Board for Educator Certification.

A person who desires to teach in a public school shall present the person's certificate for filing with the employing district before the person's contract with the board of trustees of the district is binding.

An educator who does not hold a valid certificate may not be paid for teaching or work done before the effective date of issuance of a valid certificate.

Rationale for Innovations

Students receiving high school credit need access to specific areas of study that promote career & technical educational pathways and technology application pathways. Some of these specialized courses require the expertise of field experts. In some instances, field-based experts are more qualified to teach career & technology (CTE) and Technology Application courses than certified educators, and the district needs the discretion to hire the most qualified individuals to teach these courses. Having the ability to recruit experts from the field will enhance community partnerships and increase field-based opportunities for students. Furthermore, the ability to hire subject matter experts from the field for specialized courses will reduce costs by eliminating the need to have a certified teacher of record in addition to the CTE or Tech Apps course instructor.

Students also need access to courses that promote college and career readiness including the ability to communicate in a language other than English. The district needs the discretion to hire the most qualified individuals to teach Languages Other Than English (LOTE) high school credit

courses. Having the ability to recruit language experts will help fill teachings position left vacant due to the lack of certified teachers.

Sections 21.003, 21.0031, and 21.053 of the TEC limit the district's ability to hire educators to teach CTE & Technology Applications and LOTE courses when quality certified teachers are not available.

Guiding Principles

Current expectations for employee certification should be maintained and a dedicated effort should be made to hire individuals with appropriate certifications for CTE & Technology Application, and LOTE teaching positions. However, when that is not reasonably possible, or a non-certified individual or industry/language expert is more highly qualified, flexibility to hire other individuals should be exercised. Those who are knowledgeable in CTE and Tech Apps areas should be considered for CTE and Tech Application Courses. Individuals who demonstrate superior or distinguished language proficiency on an exam recognized by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages should be considered for LOTE courses. Local qualification and training procedures, as well as an approval processes for non-certified instructors should be maintained, to include background checks and classroom management skill building. A policy should remain in place to notify parents if a non-certified teacher is employed for their child's class.

Alignment to AISD Strategic Plan

Commitment 1: Achieve excellence by delivering a high-quality education to every student.

- 1.1 We will individualize teaching and learning
- 1.2 We will provide our students a variety of unique opportunities for unlimited learning.

Commitment 5: Develop civically engaged students.

- 5.1 We will provide opportunities for civic engagement to all students.

Commitment 8: Generate, leverage, and utilize strategically all resources.

- 8.1 We will acquire necessary resources.

Commitment 11: Develop and maintain community partnerships.

- 11.1 We will build relationships with the City of Austin and other public, private, and nonprofit entities.