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THE STATE SENATE
Monday, February 28, 2005

Senate Bill No. 502

SENATE BILL NO. 502 - By: WILCOXSON of the Senate and INGMIRE and DANK of the House.

An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2001, Section 6-187, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 236, O.S.L. 2002 (70 O.S. Supp. 2004, Section 6-187), which relates to competency examinations; requiring Commission for Teacher Preparation to ensure certain subject area test emphasizes certain competencies; requiring Commission to ensure certain subject area tests are aligned with scientifically based reading-research guidelines; specifying additional program requirements for teachers seeking additional certification in certain areas; authorizing Commission to determine program requirements; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2001, Section 6-187, as amended by Section 2, Chapter 236, O.S.L. 2002 (70 O.S. Supp. 2004, Section 6-187), is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-187. A. A competency examination shall be adopted by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation for the general education, professional education and various subject areas and grade levels for purposes of ensuring academic achievement and competency of each teacher candidate or teacher in the subject area the person is seeking licensure or certification to teach which shall also include licensure or certification as an administrator, as prescribed by the State Board of Education.

1 1. The Commission, consistent with the purposes of this
2 section, shall ~~promulgate~~ adopt rules and procedures to guarantee
3 the confidentiality of examinations.

4 2. The Commission shall ensure that the subject area test for
5 elementary education places a higher emphasis on reading, language
6 arts, and mathematics than on other competencies. Further, the
7 reading competencies assessed in the subject area tests for early
8 childhood, elementary, and special education shall be aligned with
9 scientifically based reading-research guidelines.

10 B. No teacher candidate shall be eligible for licensing until
11 successfully completing the competency examination except those
12 candidates who make application to the State Board and meet the
13 criteria for the Alternative Placement Program pursuant to Section
14 6-122.3 of this title. Certification shall be limited to areas of
15 approval in which the licensed or certified teacher has successfully
16 completed the examination. Testing for certification for subjects
17 in which a teacher candidate or teacher is seeking a minor teaching
18 assignment or an endorsement to teach shall be limited to the
19 specific subject area test, except as provided for in subsection C
20 of this section.

21 A teacher candidate or teacher may take the general education,
22 professional education or subject area portions of the examination
23 subject to any limit imposed by the Commission.

1 C. A teacher may be certified in as many areas as the teacher
2 meets the necessary requirements provided by law and has
3 successfully completed the subject area portion of the examination;
4 however, a teacher seeking additional certification in the areas of
5 early childhood, elementary or special education shall be subject to
6 additional program requirements, as determined by the Commission.
7 Additional certification by subject area test shall be limited to
8 the level of licensure or certification currently held by the
9 teacher. Program requirements must be met along with the successful
10 completion of the subject area test for certification in areas not
11 within the current level of certification.

12 D. The Commission shall offer the competency examination at
13 least four times per calendar year on dates to be established by the
14 Commission.

15 E. Nothing in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act shall
16 restrict the right of the State Board of Education to issue an
17 emergency or provisional certificate, as needed. Provided, however,
18 prior to the issuance of an emergency certificate, the local
19 district shall document substantial efforts to employ a teacher who
20 holds a provisional or standard certificate or who is licensed in
21 the teaching profession. In the event a district is unable to hire
22 an individual meeting this criteria, the district shall document
23 efforts to employ an individual with a provisional or standard

1 certificate or with a license in another curricular area with
2 academic preparation in the field of need. Only after these
3 alternatives have been exhausted shall the district be allowed to
4 employ an individual meeting minimum standards as established by the
5 State Board of Education for the issuance of emergency certificates.

6 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2005.

7 SECTION 3. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
8 of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby
9 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
10 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

11 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, dated 2-21-05 - DO
12 PASS, As Coauthored.