

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2nd Session of the 58th Legislature (2022)

SENATE BILL 1255

By: Montgomery

AS INTRODUCED

An Act relating to teacher certification; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 6-122.3, which relates to alternative certification; removing reference to specific master degrees; allowing any master's degree to meet certain requirement; amending 70 O.S. 2021, Section 6-187, as last amended by Section 1, Chapter 319, O.S.L. 2021, which relates to teacher competency examinations; requiring the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability to contract with multiple vendors to provide certain examinations; 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. 2021, Section 6-122.3, is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-122.3. A. The State Board of Education shall grant an alternative placement teaching certificate to a person who makes application to the Board and meets the following criteria:

1. a. holds at least a baccalaureate degree from an institution whose accreditation is recognized by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and has

1 attained a retention grade point average of not less
2 than 2.50 on a 4.0 scale, or

3 b. has successfully completed a terminal degree, such as
4 a doctorate of philosophy, a doctorate in education,
5 professional doctorates, ~~a master of fine arts degree~~
6 or a ~~master of library science degree~~, master's degree
7 from an institution accredited by a national or
8 regional accrediting agency which is recognized by the
9 Secretary of the United States Department of
10 Education. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher
11 Education shall be consulted to verify other terminal
12 degrees, or

13 c. holds at least a baccalaureate degree from an
14 institution whose accreditation is recognized by the
15 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education and has
16 qualified work experience in a field that corresponds
17 to an area of certification as determined by the State
18 Board of Education, and

19 d. in addition to the requirements of subparagraphs a, b
20 and c of this paragraph, has demonstrated competency
21 or completed a major in a field that corresponds to an
22 area of specialization for an Elementary-Secondary
23 Certificate or a Secondary Certificate as determined
24 by the State Board of Education or a vocational-

1 technical certificate as recommended by the Oklahoma
2 Department of Career and Technology Education;

3 2. Declares the intention to earn standard certification by
4 means of an alternative placement program in not more than three (3)
5 years. The State Board of Education shall determine the subject
6 matter and the number of clock or semester hours required for the
7 professional education component for each person making application
8 for an alternative placement teaching certificate based on the
9 criteria of paragraph 1 of this subsection.

10 The State Board of Education shall establish a core minimum of
11 six (6) semester hours or ninety (90) clock hours and a maximum of
12 eighteen (18) semester hours or two hundred seventy (270) clock
13 hours for the professional education component.

14 The requirements set forth in this subsection shall exclude all
15 student teaching requirements pursuant to the provisions of
16 subsection E of this section;

17 3. Has passed the general education and subject area portions
18 of the competency examination required in Section 6-187 of this
19 title in the area of specialization for which certification is
20 sought; and

21 4. Either presents a document from an accredited public school
22 district in this state offering employment in the area of
23 specialization for which certification is sought on condition that
24 the person enroll in an alternative placement program approved by
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1 the State Board of Education or declares the intention to seek
2 employment as a teacher at an accredited public school district in
3 this state. The certificate granted pursuant to this subsection
4 shall be considered a "valid certificate of qualification" for the
5 purposes of Sections 6-107 and 6-108 of this title, and the holder
6 of the certificate shall be considered an inductee for the purposes
7 of Section 6-195 of this title.

8 B. An alternative placement teaching certificate shall be
9 renewed for not more than a maximum of three (3) years upon
10 presentation of a document from an accredited public school district
11 in this state offering renewed employment in the same area of
12 specialization and a document from a teacher education institution
13 verifying satisfactory progress in an appropriate alternative
14 placement program.

15 C. Persons enrolled in an alternative placement program shall:

16 1. Have never been denied admittance to a teacher education
17 program approved by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education,
18 the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools and by the
19 Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation to offer teacher
20 education programs, nor have enrolled in and subsequently failed
21 courses necessary to successfully meet the minimum requirements of
22 the program, except those persons who hold a certificate;
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1 2. Have on file with the director of teacher education at an
2 Oklahoma institution of higher education a plan for meeting standard
3 certification requirements within three (3) years; and

4 3. Participate in an induction program as required in Section
5 6-195 of this title and have the same duties and responsibilities as
6 other inductees.

7 D. The State Board of Education may grant an exception to the
8 requirements for certification and, upon demonstration by an
9 individual of specific competency in the subject area of
10 specialization, may grant a certificate to the individual. The
11 State Board may establish other requirements necessary to grant
12 exceptions.

13 E. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
14 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability, may grant an
15 exception to the requirement to complete a subject area examination
16 for initial certification in a field which does not require an
17 advanced degree pursuant to this section if the candidate has an
18 advanced degree in a subject that is substantially comparable to the
19 content assessed on a subject area examination. The degree shall be
20 from an institution accredited by a national or regional accrediting
21 agency which is recognized by the Secretary of the U.S. Department
22 of Education. The Commission shall provide the Board with the
23 necessary information to determine comparability.

1 F. Student teaching and a prestudent teaching field experience
2 shall not be required of alternative placement program participants
3 for standard certification.

4 G. The State Board of Education shall promulgate rules
5 authorizing adjunct teachers who shall be persons with distinguished
6 qualifications in their field. Adjunct teachers shall not be
7 required to meet standard certification. Adjunct teachers shall be
8 limited to two hundred seventy (270) clock hours of classroom
9 teaching per semester.

10 H. Each teacher education institution shall provide the
11 Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation an annual report of
12 information as specified by the Commission regarding participation
13 in the alternative placement programs offered by the institution.

14 I. The Oklahoma Commission for Teacher Preparation shall not
15 accredit, renew the accreditation of, or otherwise approve any
16 teacher education program of any institution of higher education in
17 this state that has not implemented alternative placement programs
18 in at least four areas of specialization, including mathematics,
19 science and a foreign language. Each institution shall allow
20 individuals who meet the criteria of subsections A and C of this
21 section to be:

22 1. Admitted to an alternative placement program without further
23 qualification; and
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1 2. Offered the opportunity to complete the requirements for
2 standard certification set forth in subsection A of this section
3 during the summer preceding and the summer following the first year
4 of teaching with an alternative placement teaching certificate. Any
5 person seeking standard certification through an alternative
6 placement program shall be permitted to take necessary courses
7 during regular semesters if offered.

8 J. The criteria specified in subsection I of this section can
9 be met through a cooperative arrangement entered into by two or more
10 institutions of higher education.

11 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 6-187, as
12 last amended by Section 1, Chapter 319, O.S.L. 2021, is amended to
13 read as follows:

14 Section 6-187. A. Prior to July 1, 2014, a competency
15 examination shall be adopted by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher
16 Preparation and beginning July 1, 2014, a competency examination
17 shall be adopted by the Commission for Educational Quality and
18 Accountability for the general education, professional education,
19 and various subject areas and grade levels for purposes of ensuring
20 academic achievement and competency of each teacher candidate or
21 teacher in the subject area the person is seeking certification to
22 teach which shall also include certification as an administrator, as
23 prescribed by the State Board of Education.

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

4 B. No teacher candidate shall be eligible for certification
5 until successfully completing the competency examination except
6 those candidates who make application to the State Board and meet
7 the criteria for the alternative placement program pursuant to
8 Section 6-122.3 of this title. Certification shall be limited to
9 areas of approval in which the certified teacher has successfully
10 completed the examination. Subject to the provisions of subsection
11 C of this section, testing for certification for subjects in which a
12 teacher candidate or teacher is seeking a minor teaching assignment
13 or an endorsement to teach shall be limited to the specific subject
14 area test.

15 A teacher candidate or teacher may take the general education,
16 professional education, or subject area portions of the examination
17 subject to any limit imposed by the Commission.

18 C. 1. Except as otherwise provided for in this subsection, a
19 teacher may be certified in as many areas as the teacher meets the
20 necessary requirements provided by law and has successfully
21 completed the subject area portion of the examination.

22 2. Except as otherwise provided for in this paragraph,
23 certification in early childhood, elementary, or special education
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1 shall require completion of an appropriate teacher education program
2 approved by the Commission.

3 Any teacher who is certified to teach elementary education may
4 be certified in early childhood education upon meeting the
5 requirements provided in law and successful completion of the
6 appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any teacher
7 who is certified to teach early childhood education may be certified
8 in elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in
9 law and successful completion of the appropriate subject area
10 portion of the examination. Any special education teacher who
11 becomes certified to teach through completion of an accredited
12 teacher preparation program may be certified in early childhood or
13 elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in law
14 and successful completion of the appropriate subject portion of the
15 examination. Any teacher who becomes certified to teach through
16 completion of an accredited teacher preparation program or becomes
17 alternatively certified to teach through the Troops to Teachers
18 program may be certified in special education upon meeting the
19 requirements provided in law and successful completion of the
20 appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any special
21 education teacher who has not completed a Commission-approved
22 teacher education program in elementary education or early childhood
23 education but who has successfully completed the subject area
24 portion of the examination may be certified in elementary education

1 or early childhood education for the purpose of providing direct
2 instruction and serving as the teacher of record for grading
3 purposes in special education settings only.

4 D. 1. The Commission shall contract with multiple vendors to
5 provide the general education, professional education, and subject
6 area examinations required by this section.

7 2. The Commission shall offer the competency examination at
8 least four times per calendar year on dates to be established by the
9 Commission.

10 E. If a teacher candidate or teacher is a non-native-English
11 speaker, the Commission shall offer the subject area competency
12 examination in the native language of the teacher candidate or
13 teacher only if the teacher candidate or teacher is employed or has
14 been offered employment by a school district as a teacher in a
15 foreign language immersion program offered by the school district.
16 If a non-native-English speaker who has received certification in a
17 subject area after taking the subject area competency examination in
18 the native language of the speaker seeks to add a certification area
19 in the future and that person is no longer employed as a teacher in
20 a foreign language immersion program, the examination for the
21 additional certification area shall be taken in English. The State
22 Board of Education shall issue a restricted license or certificate
23 to any teacher who has completed a subject area competency
24 examination in the native language of the teacher as provided for in

1 this subsection restricting the teacher to teaching only in a
2 foreign language immersion program.

3 F. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the
4 Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability, may grant an
5 exception to the requirement to complete a subject area examination
6 for initial certification in a field which does not require an
7 advanced degree if the candidate has an advanced degree in a subject
8 that is substantially comparable to the content assessed on a
9 subject area examination. The advanced degree shall be from an
10 institution accredited by a national or regional accrediting agency
11 which is recognized by the Secretary of the United States Department
12 of Education. The Commission shall provide the Board with the
13 necessary information to determine comparability.

14 G. 1. Nothing in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act shall
15 restrict the right of the State Board of Education to issue an
16 emergency or provisional certificate, as needed. Provided, however,
17 prior to the issuance of an emergency certificate, the district
18 shall document substantial efforts to employ a teacher who holds a
19 provisional or standard certificate. In the event a district is
20 unable to hire an individual meeting this criteria, the district
21 shall document efforts to employ an individual with a provisional or
22 standard certificate in another curricular area with academic
23 preparation in the field of need. Only after these alternatives
24 have been exhausted shall the district be allowed to employ an

1 individual meeting minimum standards as established by the State
2 Board of Education for the issuance of emergency certificates.

3 2. The State Board of Education may renew the emergency or
4 provisional certificate of an individual who has been employed by a
5 school district board of education for at least two (2) years if the
6 following criteria are met:

- 7 a. the individual has been granted an emergency or
8 provisional certificate pursuant to paragraph 1 of
9 this subsection for two (2) years,
- 10 b. the individual has not successfully completed the
11 competency examinations required by this section,
- 12 c. the individual submits a portfolio of his or her work
13 to the State Board of Education, which shall include
14 evidence of progress toward standard certification,
- 15 d. the employing school district board of education
16 agrees to renew the individual's contract to teach for
17 the ensuing fiscal year, and
- 18 e. the superintendent of the employing school district
19 submits to the State Board of Education the reason the
20 emergency or provisional certificate should be renewed
21 and provides evidence of the district's inability to
22 hire a teacher who holds a standard certificate.

23 3. Individuals employed by a school district under an emergency
24 or provisional certificate shall not be considered career teachers

1 and therefore not entitled to the protections of the Teacher Due
2 Process Act of 1990.

3 SECTION 3. This act shall become effective July 1, 2022.

4 SECTION 4. It being immediately necessary for the preservation
5 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby
6 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and
7 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

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