

Committee on Military and Veterans Affairs, Space, and Domestic Security

CS/SB 896 — Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans

by Education Committee; and Senators Burgess and Perry

The bill provides an alternative pathway for veterans seeking subject area certification by removing the requirement for a baccalaureate degree for issuance of their temporary educator certificate if certain requirements are met.

To qualify for a temporary certificate under this pathway, the applicant must:

- Be at least 18 years of age;
- File an affidavit in which the applicant subscribes to and agrees to uphold the principles of the state and federal Constitutions;
- Submit to criminal background screening;
- Competent and capable of performing the duties, functions, and responsibilities of an educator; and
- Demonstrates mastery of the subject matter pursuant to state board rule.

The exception for a bachelor's degree under this provision applies only to subject area specializations that require a bachelor's degree for issuance of a temporary certificate. To qualify for the exception, the applicant, must in addition to the qualifications above, also document:

- Completion of at least 48 months of active duty military service with an honorable discharge or medical separation; and
- Completion of at least 60 college credits with a minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 grade scale, as provided by one or more accredited institutions of higher learning or a non-accredited institution of higher learning that the Department of Education (DOE) has identified as having a quality program resulting in a bachelor's degree or higher.

While teaching under a temporary certificate, the person must be assigned a teacher mentor for a minimum of 2 school years after commencing employment. The teacher mentor must hold a valid professional teaching certificate, have at least 3 years of teaching experience, and have earned an effective or highly effective performance evaluation rating.

The issuance of a temporary certificate under this pathway is valid for five school fiscal years and is nonrenewable.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2022.

Vote: Senate 39-0; House 111-0