

Association of Texas Professional Educators

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Supporting Your Freedom to TeachSM

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SBEC to vote on major changes to educator prep program standards

The State Board for Educator Certification will take its first vote tomorrow on major changes to the state's accreditation system for all educator preparation programs.

The changes, spurred by recent state and federal legislation, will also enable SBEC to collect fees from educator preparation programs and to sanction any programs that fail to meet the new standards.

Currently, the state only requires educator preparation programs to receive an annual accreditation based solely on the certification test scores of their graduates. The new accreditation system will incorporate additional data on how well the programs prepare future educators for careers in the classroom and will require recent graduates of those programs to evaluate the preparation they received. The system will eventually include appraisals by school administrators and data on the achievement of students taught by graduates of each program.

“As the need for high-quality educators continues to grow, we must look for ways to ensure that these programs are giving new teachers the support and tools they need to succeed in the classroom rather than simply training them to pass a test,” said Jennifer Canaday, senior lobbyist for the 112,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators.

The legislation that prompted the educator preparation rule changes also calls for the Texas Education Agency to establish a consumer information Web site with information on the quality of educator preparations programs, as well as notices of employment opportunities for teachers.

“Just as a consumer would do research before buying a car, prospective teachers who are getting ready to invest their money and time enrolling in an educator preparation program should have information about that program's reputation and the success of its graduates,” Canaday said. “We are pleased that individuals who are considering entering the education profession will soon be able to make more informed choices about their educational options.”

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The 112,000-member Association of Texas Professional Educators is the largest educators' group in Texas and the largest nonunion educators' group nationwide. Its membership consists of classroom teachers, para-educators, administrators, college students and retired educators. ATPE is committed to advocating for better benefits for all educators, promoting a collaborative work environment and the right of educators to choose the association they feel represents their interests, and providing the best education possible for all Texas school children.