

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 60th Legislature (2025)

3 HOUSE BILL 1394

By: Provenzano

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6 AS INTRODUCED

7 An Act relating to teacher certification; amending 70  
8 O.S. 2021, Section 6-187, as last amended by Section  
9 164, Chapter 452, O.S.L. 2024 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024,  
10 Section 6-187), which relates to competency  
11 examinations; exempting certain candidates from  
12 competency examination; providing an effective date;  
13 and declaring an emergency.

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

15 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 6-  
16 187, as last amended by Section 164, Chapter 452, O.S.L. 2024  
17 (70 O.S. Supp. 2024, Section 6-187), is amended to read as  
18 follows:

19 Section 6-187. A. Prior to July 1, 2014, a competency  
20 examination shall be adopted by the Oklahoma Commission for  
21 Teacher Preparation and beginning July 1, 2014, a competency  
22 examination shall be adopted by the Commission for  
23 Educational Quality and Accountability for the professional  
24 education and various subject areas and grade levels for  
purposes of ensuring academic achievement and competency of

1 each teacher candidate or teacher in the subject area the  
2 person is seeking certification to teach which shall also  
3 include certification as an administrator, as prescribed by  
4 the State Board of Education.

5 The Commission, consistent with the purposes of this section,  
6 shall promulgate rules and procedures to guarantee the  
7 confidentiality of examinations.

8 B. No teacher candidate shall be eligible for certification  
9 until successfully completing the competency examination except  
10 those candidates who make application to the State Board and meet  
11 the criteria for the alternative placement program pursuant to  
12 Section 6-122.3 of this title or who have successfully completed and  
13 graduated from an institution of higher education approved by the  
14 State Board of Education for teacher training and have had two (2)  
15 years of effective evaluations at the same school district in  
16 accordance with Section 6-101.10 of this title. Certification shall  
17 be limited to areas of approval in which the certified teacher has  
18 successfully completed the examination. Subject to the provisions  
19 of subsection C of this section, testing for certification for  
20 subjects in which a teacher candidate or teacher is seeking a minor  
21 teaching assignment or an endorsement to teach shall be limited to  
22 the specific subject area test.

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1 A teacher candidate or teacher may take the professional  
2 education or subject area portions of the examination subject to any  
3 limit imposed by the Commission.

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

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

12 Any teacher who is certified to teach elementary education may  
13 be certified in early childhood education upon meeting the  
14 requirements provided in law and successful completion of the  
15 appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any teacher  
16 who is certified to teach early childhood education may be certified  
17 in elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in  
18 law and successful completion of the appropriate subject area  
19 portion of the examination. Any special education teacher who  
20 becomes certified to teach through completion of an accredited  
21 teacher preparation program may be certified in early childhood or  
22 elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in law  
23 and successful completion of the appropriate subject portion of the  
24 examination. Any teacher who becomes certified to teach through

1 completion of an accredited teacher preparation program or becomes  
2 alternatively certified to teach through the Troops to Teachers  
3 program may be certified in special education upon meeting the  
4 requirements provided in law and successful completion of the  
5 appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any special  
6 education teacher who has not completed a Commission-approved  
7 teacher education program in elementary education or early childhood  
8 education but who has successfully completed the subject area  
9 portion of the examination may be certified in elementary education  
10 or early childhood education for the purpose of providing direct  
11 instruction and serving as the teacher of record for grading  
12 purposes in special education settings only.

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

16 E. If a teacher candidate or teacher is a non-native-English  
17 speaker, the Commission shall offer the subject area competency  
18 examination in the native language of the teacher candidate or  
19 teacher only if the teacher candidate or teacher is employed or has  
20 been offered employment by a school district as a teacher in a  
21 foreign language immersion program offered by the school district.  
22 If a non-native-English speaker who has received certification in a  
23 subject area after taking the subject area competency examination in  
24 the native language of the speaker seeks to add a certification area

1 in the future and that person is no longer employed as a teacher in  
2 a foreign language immersion program, the examination for the  
3 additional certification area shall be taken in English. The State  
4 Board of Education shall issue a restricted license or certificate  
5 to any teacher who has completed a subject area competency  
6 examination in the native language of the teacher as provided for in  
7 this subsection restricting the teacher to teaching only in a  
8 foreign language immersion program.

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

20 G. 1. Nothing in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act shall  
21 restrict the right of the State Board of Education to issue an  
22 emergency or provisional certificate, as needed. Provided, however,  
23 prior to the issuance of an emergency certificate, the district  
24 shall document substantial efforts to employ a teacher who holds a

1 provisional or standard certificate. In the event a district is  
2 unable to hire an individual meeting this criteria, the district  
3 shall document efforts to employ an individual with a provisional or  
4 standard certificate in another curricular area with academic  
5 preparation in the field of need. Only after these alternatives  
6 have been exhausted shall the district be allowed to employ an  
7 individual meeting minimum standards as established by the State  
8 Board of Education for the issuance of emergency certificates.

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

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

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1 e. the superintendent of the employing school district  
2 submits to the State Board of Education the reason the  
3 emergency or provisional certificate should be renewed  
4 and provides evidence of the district's inability to  
5 hire a teacher who holds a standard certificate.

6 3. Individuals employed by a school district under an emergency  
7 or provisional certificate shall not be considered career teachers  
8 and therefore not entitled to the protections of the Teacher Due  
9 Process Act of 1990.

10 H. The State Board of Education may grant an exception to the  
11 requirements for all certification examinations for teacher  
12 candidates who are "deaf", which for the purposes of this section  
13 shall mean having a hearing loss so severe that the person cannot  
14 process auditory linguistic information with or without  
15 accommodation and whose primary language and teaching environment is  
16 American Sign Language. The Board may grant an exception upon:

17 1. Verification by a licensed audiologist of a hearing loss so  
18 severe that the teacher candidate cannot process auditory linguistic  
19 information with or without accommodation;

20 2. Demonstration of fluency in American Sign Language;

21 3. Demonstration of competency in the subject area of  
22 specialization as approved by the Board in lieu of certification  
23 examinations; and  
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1 4. Sponsorship by a certified deaf education teacher for a  
2 mentorship program.

3 The Board may promulgate rules and other requirements as  
4 necessary to grant the exceptions described in this subsection.  
5 Applicable teaching environments may include American Sign Language  
6 immersion programs, the Oklahoma School for the Deaf, programs for  
7 the deaf or other classroom settings in which American Sign Language  
8 is the language of instruction.

9 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

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

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15 60-1-11251 AQH 12/28/24

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