



Input to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) Regarding Proposed Repeal of 19 TAC Chapter 239, Subchapter E

October 4, 2019

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers the following comments regarding the proposed amendment to 19 TAC Chapter 239, Subchapter E, Master Teacher Certificate.

ATPE understands that the board must repeal the existing rules providing for Master Teacher certificates in order to implement the provisions of House Bill 3, passed this year by the 86th Texas Legislature. However, we believe that further changes can be made by SBEC to soften the impact on classrooms and Master Reading Teacher (MRT) certificate holders who will lose the ability to continue teaching in their current assignment once their Legacy Master Reading Teacher certificates expire.

The MRT certification process takes a full year to complete and can cost thousands of dollars, typically paid for out of pocket by the teacher applying for the MRT certificate. It would be inefficient to subject MRT certificate holders to additional, unnecessary burdens in order to keep their current teaching assignments. Furthermore, the loss of their expertise in the classroom would fundamentally undermine the goal of increasing student literacy prioritized by the legislature through HB 3.

The classroom assignments open to a holder of the MRT certificate are identical to those of a Reading Specialist – a related certification unaffected by HB 3. ATPE suggests that the board work toward adopting new language that will allow valid Legacy MRT certificate holders to transition to Reading Specialists through the regular renewal process. ATPE has met with and provided the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff with proposed language to accomplish this goal by amending 19 TAC 239.93 and 239.94, which specify the requirements for issuance and renewal of a Reading Specialist certificate.

These changes we are requesting would allow for the retention and utilization of the mastery already earned by teachers through the rigorous MRT certification process, allow MRT certificate holders to maintain their classroom placements, and impose the fewest additional burdens on MRTs in the process.

ATPE appreciates the opportunity to provide feedback during this process and invites board members and TEA staff to contact ATPE Governmental Relations at (800) 777-2873 or government@atpe.org for any additional information.