



SBEC Testimony on Agenda Item 10: Adoption of Proposed Amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 239

October 9, 2020

The **Association of Texas Professional Educators (ATPE)** offers its full support of the proposed amendments to 19 TAC Chapter 239, Student Services Certificates, Subchapter E, Legacy Master Teacher Certificate.

ATPE is grateful to Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff and State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) members for honoring the work and expertise of Legacy Master Teacher certificate holders. The amendments to this rule will allow these experienced and valued educators to maintain their credential and teaching assignments.

House Bill (HB) 3 passed in 2019 eliminated the authorizing statutes for the Master Teacher certificates, made the certificates non-renewable, and required that SBEC rename these certificates as "Legacy Master Teacher certificates." Because of this statutory change, Master Teacher certificate holders faced a pending expiration of their credential and the potential of losing their current teaching assignment, which in some cases they could only obtain by virtue of their Master Teacher certificate.

ATPE requested assistance for these Master Teachers, whose certificates were no small feat to earn. Requirements included holding an existing teaching certificate, years of teaching experience, completing (and paying for) an EPP program, and taking (and paying for) the certification exam. ATPE was especially concerned for the over 80% of Master Teachers holding a Master Reading Teacher certificate, which qualified them for reading-focused teaching assignments that schools desperately need to fulfill increasing state requirements.

By adopting the proposed language in Rules 239.101 and 239.103, SBEC will help teachers avoid unintended, negative consequences of HB 3. The changes will convert Legacy Master Teacher certificates into lifetime certificates, allowing Legacy Master Teachers to maintain their teaching assignments and preserving the expertise these educators have honed. ATPE thanks SBEC for their work on this issue and strongly urges the board to adopt the proposed language with no changes.

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.