

**RECOMMENDATIONS for the SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION
on the
STATE BOARD for EDUCATOR CERTIFICATION**

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Recommendation 1: Reject SBEC's Proposal to Remove SBOE's Authority to Reject SBEC Rules

- The SBOE exercises this authority infrequently - The SBOE has only rejected three rules in seven years;
- The SBOE exercises this authority prudently - The three rejections stimulated SBEC to improve and resubmit the rules, according to the Sunset Staff Report; and
- The SBOE exercises this authority wisely - SBEC would have allowed schools to place unqualified teachers in classrooms for two years if the SBOE had passed the SBEC's Transitional Permit in February 2001. Twelve members of the SBOE voted unanimously to deny schools the ability to assign teachers outside their area of academic expertise.

Recommendation 2: Expand the SBOE's Authority Over SBEC

- SBEC does not exercise sufficient fiscal responsibility - According to the State Auditor's Report, operating inefficiencies cost SBEC \$500,000 annually (duplicative information services and faulty electronic application scanning); and no controls have been established to ensure contractors deliver services (these services cost SBEC an amount representing one-third of the agency's annual expenditures);
- SBEC has not created sufficient protections for students - According to the State Auditor's Report, SBEC's background check for criminal offenses only examines records in Texas and does not examine prospective teachers' background in other states;
- SBEC does not exercise sufficient operating efficiency - According to the State Auditor's report, SBEC has not established adequate procedures for accurate, timely data collection for teacher complaints and, in addition to having incomplete information, SBEC staff does not follow SBEC procedures for data collection; SBEC lacks a comprehensive complaint policy that could "discourage persons" from filing complaints; and over 50 percent of the time period required for processing teacher certification could be reduced; and
- SBEC has not substantively enlarged the supply of individuals teaching with alternative certifications, an effort that is needed to address the critical shortage of qualified teachers. Since alternative certification was established seven years ago, the percentage of educators in public schools who have secured alternative certification has increased only 7 percent (increasing from 17 to 24 percent).

Recommendation 3: Return Authority over SBEC to Elected Representatives

- Because teacher certification is intimately tied to public education, governance of the two should be rejoined under the State Board of Education (this consolidation will encourage policy alignment as well as increase fiscal efficiency);
- Because members of the public and education community often disagree about education policy, educational governance of SBEC should be exercised by elected representatives; and
- Because policy decisions made by SBEC do not reflect the research linking academic expertise to teacher qualifications, elected governance should be charged with auditing and revising requirements for teacher certification. Over the past seven years, SBEC has defied evidence of research and eliminated academic requirements for teacher certification - replacing academic qualifications with requirements that prospective teachers demonstrate the academic proficiency of students they expect to teach.