

1 ENGROSSED SENATE  
2 BILL NO. 1128

By: Simpson of the Senate

3 and

4 McCall of the House

5  
6 An Act relating to teacher certification; amending 70  
7 O.S. 2011, Section 6-187, as last amended by Section  
8 1, Chapter 50, O.S.L. 2017 (70 O.S. Supp. 2019,  
9 Section 6-187), which relates to competency  
10 examinations for teacher certification; allowing the  
11 State Board of Education to grant exceptions to the  
12 certification examinations for certain teacher  
13 candidates who are deaf; providing definition;  
14 providing criteria for exceptions; providing for  
15 promulgation of rules; providing for applicable  
16 teaching environments; providing an effective date;  
17 and declaring an emergency.

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

19 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-187, as  
20 last amended by Section 1, Chapter 50, O.S.L. 2017 (70 O.S. Supp.  
21 2019, Section 6-187), is amended to read as follows:

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

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

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

7 B. No teacher candidate shall be eligible for certification  
8 until successfully completing the competency examination except  
9 those candidates who make application to the State Board and meet  
10 the criteria for the alternative placement program pursuant to  
11 Section 6-122.3 of this title. Certification shall be limited to  
12 areas of approval in which the certified teacher has successfully  
13 completed the examination. Subject to the provisions of subsection  
14 C of this section, testing for certification for subjects in which a  
15 teacher candidate or teacher is seeking a minor teaching assignment  
16 or an endorsement to teach shall be limited to the specific subject  
17 area test.

18 A teacher candidate or teacher may take the general education,  
19 professional education or subject area portions of the examination  
20 subject to any limit imposed by the Commission.

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

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

5           Any teacher who is certified to teach elementary education may  
6 be certified in early childhood education upon meeting the  
7 requirements provided in law and successful completion of the  
8 appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any teacher  
9 who is certified to teach early childhood education may be certified  
10 in elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in  
11 law and successful completion of the appropriate subject area  
12 portion of the examination. Any special education teacher who  
13 becomes certified to teach through completion of an accredited  
14 teacher preparation program may be certified in early childhood or  
15 elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in law  
16 and successful completion of the appropriate subject portion of the  
17 examination. Any teacher who becomes certified to teach through  
18 completion of an accredited teacher preparation program or becomes  
19 alternatively certified to teach through the Troops to Teachers  
20 program may be certified in special education upon meeting the  
21 requirements provided in law and successful completion of the  
22 appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any special  
23 education teacher who has not completed a Commission-approved  
24 teacher education program in elementary education or early childhood

1 education but who has successfully completed the subject area  
2 portion of the examination may be certified in elementary education  
3 or early childhood education for the purpose of providing direct  
4 instruction and serving as the teacher of record for grading  
5 purposes in special education settings only.

6 D. The Commission shall offer the competency examination at  
7 least four times per calendar year on dates to be established by the  
8 Commission.

9 E. If a teacher candidate or teacher is a non-native-English  
10 speaker, the Commission shall offer the subject area competency  
11 examination in the native language of the teacher candidate or  
12 teacher only if the teacher candidate or teacher is employed or has  
13 been offered employment by a school district as a teacher in a  
14 foreign language immersion program offered by the school district.  
15 If a non-native-English speaker who has received certification in a  
16 subject area after taking the subject area competency examination in  
17 the native language of the speaker seeks to add a certification area  
18 in the future and that person is no longer employed as a teacher in  
19 a foreign language immersion program, the examination for the  
20 additional certification area shall be taken in English. The State  
21 Board of Education shall issue a restricted license or certificate  
22 to any teacher who has completed a subject area competency  
23 examination in the native language of the teacher as provided for in  
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1 this subsection restricting the teacher to teaching only in a  
2 foreign language immersion program.

3 F. Nothing in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act shall  
4 restrict the right of the State Board of Education to issue an  
5 emergency or provisional certificate, as needed. Provided, however,  
6 prior to the issuance of an emergency certificate, the district  
7 shall document substantial efforts to employ a teacher who holds a  
8 provisional or standard certificate. In the event a district is  
9 unable to hire an individual meeting this criteria, the district  
10 shall document efforts to employ an individual with a provisional or  
11 standard certificate in another curricular area with academic  
12 preparation in the field of need. Only after these alternatives  
13 have been exhausted shall the district be allowed to employ an  
14 individual meeting minimum standards as established by the State  
15 Board of Education for the issuance of emergency certificates.

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

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

4        2. Demonstration of fluency in American Sign Language;

5        3. Demonstration of competency in the subject area of  
6 specialization as approved by the Board in lieu of certification  
7 examinations; and

8        4. Sponsorship by a certified deaf education teacher for a  
9 mentorship program.

10       The Board may promulgate rules and other requirements as  
11 necessary to grant the exceptions described in this subsection.

12 Applicable teaching environments may include American Sign Language  
13 immersion programs, the Oklahoma School for the Deaf, programs for  
14 the deaf or other classroom settings in which American Sign Language  
15 is the language of instruction.

16       SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2020.

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

1 Passed the Senate the 25th day of February, 2020.

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4 Presiding Officer of the Senate

5 Passed the House of Representatives the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_,  
6 2020.

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9 Presiding Officer of the House  
10 of Representatives