

1 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3 1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

4 ENGROSSED SENATE  
5 BILL NO. 67

By: Simpson of the Senate

and

6  
7 McCall and Lawson of the  
House

8  
9  
10 An Act relating to teacher certification; amending 70  
11 O.S. 2011, Section 6-187, as last amended by Section  
12 1, Chapter 139, O.S.L. 2020 (70 O.S. Supp. 2020,  
13 Section 6-187), which relates to competency  
14 examinations for teacher certification; allowing the  
15 State Board of Education to grant exceptions to the  
16 certification examinations for certain teacher  
17 candidates who are deaf; providing definition;  
18 providing criteria for exceptions; providing for  
19 promulgation of rules; providing for applicable  
20 teaching environments; providing an effective date;  
21 and declaring an emergency.

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

23 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-187, as  
24 last amended by Section 1, Chapter 139, O.S.L. 2020 (70 O.S. Supp.  
2020, Section 6-187), is amended to read as follows:

Section 6-187. A. Prior to July 1, 2014, a competency  
examination shall be adopted by the Oklahoma Commission for Teacher

1 Preparation and beginning July 1, 2014, a competency examination  
2 shall be adopted by the Commission for Educational Quality and  
3 Accountability for the general education, professional education and  
4 various subject areas and grade levels for purposes of ensuring  
5 academic achievement and competency of each teacher candidate or  
6 teacher in the subject area the person is seeking certification to  
7 teach which shall also include certification as an administrator, as  
8 prescribed by the State Board of Education.

9       The Commission, consistent with the purposes of this section,  
10 shall promulgate rules and procedures to guarantee the  
11 confidentiality of examinations.

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

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1 A teacher candidate or teacher may take the general education,  
2 professional education or subject area portions of the examination  
3 subject to any 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. 1. Nothing in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act shall  
10 restrict the right of the State Board of Education to issue an  
11 emergency or provisional certificate, as needed. Provided, however,  
12 prior to the issuance of an emergency certificate, the district  
13 shall document substantial efforts to employ a teacher who holds a  
14 provisional or standard certificate. In the event a district is  
15 unable to hire an individual meeting this criteria, the district  
16 shall document efforts to employ an individual with a provisional or  
17 standard certificate in another curricular area with academic  
18 preparation in the field of need. Only after these alternatives  
19 have been exhausted shall the district be allowed to employ an  
20 individual meeting minimum standards as established by the State  
21 Board of Education for the issuance of emergency certificates.

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

- 3 a. the individual has been granted an emergency or  
4 provisional certificate pursuant to paragraph 1 of  
5 this subsection for two (2) years,
- 6 b. the individual has not successfully completed the  
7 competency examinations required by this section,
- 8 c. the individual submits a portfolio of his or her work  
9 to the State Board of Education, which shall include  
10 evidence of progress toward standard certification,
- 11 d. the employing school district board of education  
12 agrees to renew the individual's contract to teach for  
13 the ensuing fiscal year, and
- 14 e. the superintendent of the employing school district  
15 submits to the State Board of Education the reason the  
16 emergency or provisional certificate should be renewed  
17 and provides evidence of the district's inability to  
18 hire a teacher who holds a standard certificate.

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

23 G. The State Board of Education may grant an exception to the  
24 requirements for all certification examinations for teacher

1 candidates who are "deaf," which for the purposes of this section  
2 shall mean having a hearing loss so severe that the person cannot  
3 process auditory linguistic information with or without  
4 accommodation and whose primary language and teaching environment is  
5 American Sign Language. The Board may grant an exception upon:

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

9 2. Demonstration of fluency in American Sign Language;

10 3. Demonstration of competency in the subject area of  
11 specialization as approved by the Board in lieu of certification  
12 examinations; and

13 4. Sponsorship by a certified deaf education teacher for a  
14 mentorship program.

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

17 Applicable teaching environments may include American Sign Language  
18 immersion programs, the Oklahoma School for the Deaf, programs for  
19 the deaf or other classroom settings in which American Sign Language  
20 is the language of instruction.

21 SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2021.

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

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4 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON RULES, dated 04/08/2021 - DO PASS.

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