



JANET BARRESI
STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
STATE OF OKLAHOMA

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Janet Barresi

DATE: June 12, 2013

SUBJECT: Non-Traditional Route to Special Education Teacher Certification

State Board approval is requested for 1) Establishing criteria of a special education program also referred to as the "Boot Camp" to assist with meeting the initial training requirement for candidates who are pursuing the Non-Traditional Route to Special Education Teacher Certification. 2) Determining an appropriate procedure for approval special education programs (Boot Camps). The State Board of Education previously approved Options for Non-Traditional Teacher Licensure and Certification Programs as listed in the attachment.

HB 1233, states:

"Candidates who wish to obtain a Non-Traditional Special Education Certification will complete a 150-clock-hour special education program as approved by the State Board of Education."

The State Board of Education shall adopt the curriculum for the special education program on June 12, 2013.

However, continuing concern over the shortage of applicants in the field of special education led to the development of HB 1233. This bill was designed to create a way for individuals, who do not have a degree in education, to enter the special education teaching profession.

HB 1233 will allow Non-Traditional Route Teachers to complete their certification while serving as a classroom teacher. A group of stakeholders including the State Department of Education, Board of Regents, Teacher Preparation Commission State Certification, district representatives from Norman, Edmond, Lawton, Tulsa, and local universities collaborated to develop guidelines for candidates who apply for the Non-Traditional Route to Certification. The recommendations of the working group were codified into law by HB 1233, which allows individuals who meet the following criteria to pursue non-traditional certification in the area of special education:



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- 1) Have earned any four-year degree from an Institution of Higher Education holding Regional Accreditation;
- 2) Have a Grade Point Average of 2.75 or higher;
- 3) Have a recommendation from a school district or an Institution of Higher Education;
- 4) Pass a National Background Check;
- 5) Commit to complete a Master's Degree or Certification in Special Education; and
- 6) Commit to remain with a district for at least three years after earning Standard

The proposed special education program or "Boot Camp" includes Oklahoma Teacher Certification competencies and Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards. Oklahoma established criteria for applicants who apply for teacher certification. CEC established ethics, practices, and guidelines to ensure that individuals with exceptionalities have access to well-prepared, career-oriented special educators.

JB/ra
attachments