

Senate Engrossed

~~empowerment scholarship accounts; debit cards~~
(now: subject matter expert certification)

State of Arizona
Senate
Fifty-seventh Legislature
First Regular Session
2025

SENATE BILL 1454

AN ACT

AMENDING SECTION 15-501.01, ARIZONA REVISED STATUTES; RELATING TO TEACHER
CERTIFICATION.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Arizona:

2 Section 1. Section 15-501.01, Arizona Revised Statutes, is amended
3 to read:

4 15-501.01. Requirements for teachers; teaching certificates;
5 rules; reciprocity; placement; posting

6 A. Notwithstanding any other law, all teachers who are certificated
7 pursuant to this section must have a baccalaureate degree and a valid
8 fingerprint clearance card.

9 B. The state board of education shall adopt rules for the issuance
10 of the following types of certificates for teachers:

11 1. Standard teaching certificate.

12 2. Alternative teaching certificate for persons who obtain training
13 pursuant to subsection C, paragraph 1 of this section.

14 3. Subject-matter expert standard teaching certificate for persons
15 who obtain training pursuant to subsection C, paragraph 8 of this section.

16 4. Classroom-based standard teaching certificate for individuals
17 who obtain training from a school district or charter school.

18 5. Career and technical education teaching certificate.

19 C. The state board of education shall adopt rules to carry out the
20 purposes of this section. The rules:

21 1. Shall provide for a variety of alternative teacher and
22 administrator preparation programs that allow for variations in program
23 sequence and design to apply for program approval. The state board shall
24 adopt rules pursuant to this paragraph designed to allow for a variety of
25 formats and shall not require a prescribed answer or design from the
26 program provider in order to obtain approval from the state board. Any
27 rules adopted by the state board pursuant to this paragraph shall be
28 substantially different from the rules adopted for the approval of
29 traditional preparation programs and may not unnecessarily restrict a
30 variety of alternative preparation programs from operating and providing
31 instruction in this state. The state board shall evaluate each program
32 provider based on the program's ability to prepare teachers and
33 administrators and to recruit teachers and administrators with a variety
34 of experiences and talents. The state board shall allow universities
35 under the jurisdiction of the Arizona board of regents, community colleges
36 in this state, private postsecondary institutions licensed by this state,
37 school districts, charter schools, professional organizations, nonprofit
38 organizations and private entities to apply for program approval and shall
39 create application procedures and certification criteria that are
40 substantially less restrictive than those for traditional preparation
41 programs. At the completion of an alternative preparation program,
42 graduates shall:

43 (a) Hold a bachelor's degree from an accredited postsecondary
44 education institution.

45 (b) If applicable, demonstrate professional knowledge and subject
46 knowledge proficiency pursuant to section 15-533.

47 (c) Obtain a valid fingerprint clearance card pursuant to section
48 15-534.

1 (d) If applicable, complete training in structured English
2 immersion as prescribed by the state board pursuant to section 15-756.09.

3 (e) If applicable, complete training in research-based systematic
4 phonics instruction as prescribed in paragraph 2 of this subsection.

5 (f) Demonstrate the required proficiency in the Constitutions of
6 the United States and Arizona as prescribed in section 15-532.

7 2. Shall require that, within three years after a certificate for
8 elementary education or early childhood education is issued, the
9 certificate holder complete, from a public or private provider, at least
10 forty-five classroom hours or three college-level credit hours, or the
11 equivalent, in both research-based:

12 (a) Science of reading instruction, including systematic phonics
13 instruction.

14 (b) Reading instruction, including training on assessments,
15 instructional practices and interventions to improve student reading
16 proficiency. ~~Beginning July 1, 2021,~~ Instruction provided pursuant to
17 this subdivision must meet the requirements for dyslexia training
18 prescribed in section 15-219.

19 3. Beginning August 1, 2025, shall establish a literacy endorsement
20 as a requirement for all certificated teachers who provide literacy
21 instruction in kindergarten programs or in any of grades one through five
22 as determined by the board. The rules shall require that a certificated
23 teacher who receives a certificate after August 1, 2025 and who provides
24 literacy instruction in kindergarten programs or in any of grades one
25 through five must obtain a literacy endorsement within three years after
26 the teacher's certificate is issued. The rules shall require that a
27 certificated teacher who received a certificate before August 1, 2025 and
28 who provides literacy instruction in kindergarten programs or in any of
29 grades one through five must obtain a literacy endorsement on or before
30 August 1, 2028. The literacy endorsement shall require the teacher to
31 complete evidence-based science of reading training or coursework as
32 determined by the board and to pass a literacy instruction assessment to
33 show that the teacher is capable of doing all of the following:

34 (a) Effectively teaching foundational reading skills, phonological
35 awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension.

36 (b) Implementing reading instruction using high-quality
37 instructional materials.

38 (c) Providing effective instruction and interventions for students
39 with reading deficiencies, including students with characteristics of
40 dyslexia.

41 4. ~~Beginning August 1, 2022,~~ Shall require all approved educator
42 preparation programs in elementary education and early childhood education
43 to require the courses that are necessary to obtain a literacy endorsement
44 pursuant to paragraph 3 of this subsection.

45 5. Shall establish a process to allow a local education agency, at
46 the request of a teacher, to verify to the department of education that
47 the teacher possesses the instructional knowledge and skills prescribed in
48 paragraph 3 of this subsection, demonstrated through classroom

1 observations and student achievement data across subgroups using
2 evidence-based measures. A certificated teacher who has had a local
3 education agency verify the teacher's knowledge and skills in the science
4 of reading pursuant to this paragraph is not required to complete the
5 coursework, training or assessment requirements prescribed in paragraph 3
6 of this subsection to obtain the literacy endorsement.

7 6. Shall not require a teacher to obtain a master's degree or to
8 take any additional graduate courses as a condition of certification or
9 recertification.

10 7. Shall allow but shall not require the superintendent of a school
11 district to obtain certification from the state board of education.

12 8. Shall provide for the issuance of a subject-matter expert
13 standard teaching certificate to persons who have expertise in a content
14 area or a subject matter. Persons who are certified pursuant to this
15 paragraph shall complete training, if applicable, in structured English
16 immersion as prescribed by the state board pursuant to section 15-756.09.
17 **PERSONS WHO ARE CERTIFIED PURSUANT TO THIS PARAGRAPH AND WHO PROVIDE**
18 **LITERACY INSTRUCTION IN KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS OR IN ANY OF GRADES ONE**
19 **THROUGH FIVE AS DETERMINED BY THE BOARD SHALL OBTAIN A LITERACY**
20 **ENDORSEMENT AS PRESCRIBED BY THE STATE BOARD PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 3 OF**
21 **THIS SUBSECTION.** Persons who are certified pursuant to this paragraph are
22 exempt from the subject knowledge proficiency requirements prescribed in
23 section 15-533 and from the proficiency requirements prescribed in section
24 15-532 on the Constitutions of the United States and Arizona. Persons who
25 are subject to subdivision (a) of this paragraph are also exempt from the
26 professional knowledge proficiency requirements pursuant to section
27 15-533. A person who obtains a subject-matter expert standard teaching
28 certificate pursuant to this paragraph may provide instruction in the
29 person's field of expertise in **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS AND ANY OF** grades ~~six~~
30 **ONE** through twelve at any public school in this state. Issuance of the
31 subject-matter expert standard teaching certificate may not be conditioned
32 on the person's employment with a local education agency. A person who
33 meets the requirements of this paragraph shall be issued a subject-matter
34 expert standard teaching certificate without having to demonstrate
35 professional knowledge proficiency pursuant to section 15-533, except that
36 the person shall have at least two years to demonstrate professional
37 knowledge proficiency pursuant to section 15-533. School districts shall
38 evaluate and provide support pursuant to section 15-537 to teachers who
39 are certified pursuant to this paragraph. If a person fails to meet the
40 professional knowledge requirements of this section within two years, the
41 department of education or state board of education may temporarily
42 suspend the subject-matter expert standard teaching certificate. A
43 certificate that is temporarily suspended pursuant to this paragraph is
44 not considered a disciplinary action, and a person shall be allowed to
45 correct the deficiency within the remaining time of the subject-matter
46 expert standard teaching certification. This paragraph does not require a
47 person who has obtained another type of teaching certificate from the
48 state board to obtain a subject-matter expert standard teaching

1 certificate pursuant to this paragraph in order to provide instruction in
2 **KINDERGARTEN PROGRAMS AND ANY OF** grades ~~six~~ **ONE** through twelve. Persons
3 who are certificated pursuant to this paragraph shall review and attest to
4 reviewing the best practices for social media and cellular telephone use
5 between students and school personnel adopted by the state board of
6 education pursuant to section 15-203, subsection A, paragraph 44 before
7 receiving a certificate and, within two years after receiving a
8 certificate, complete training in professionalism and ethics from a public
9 or private provider approved by the state board of education, which may
10 include a no-cost option to the person provided by the state board. A
11 person is eligible for a subject-matter expert standard teaching
12 certificate pursuant to this paragraph if the person has a baccalaureate
13 degree and meets any of the following requirements:

14 (a) Has taught courses relevant to a content area or subject matter
15 for the last two consecutive years and for a total of at least three years
16 at one or more regionally or nationally accredited public or private
17 postsecondary institutions. A person demonstrates compliance with this
18 requirement by providing the state board with written proof of employment
19 for specific durations from one or more qualifying postsecondary
20 institutions.

21 (b) Has either a baccalaureate degree, a master's degree or a
22 doctoral degree in a specific subject area that is relevant to a content
23 area or subject matter taught in public schools.

24 (c) Demonstrates expertise through relevant work experience of at
25 least five years in a field that is relevant to a content area or subject
26 matter taught in public schools. A person demonstrates compliance with
27 this requirement by providing the state board with written proof of
28 employment.

29 **(d) DEMONSTRATES PROFICIENCY IN A SPECIFIC GRADE-LEVEL CONTENT**
30 **KNOWLEDGE AND CURRICULUM, AS DEMONSTRATED BY A STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT**
31 **THAT IS USED TO ASSESS SUBJECT-SPECIFIC SKILLS AND TEACHING ABILITIES.**

32 **(e) HAS DONE ALL OF THE FOLLOWING, AS ATTESTED BY THE SCHOOL**
33 **PRINCIPAL:**

34 **(i) DEMONSTRATED THAT THE PERSON HAS EXPERIENCE THROUGH AN**
35 **APPROPRIATE ALTERNATIVE, AS DETERMINED BY THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL.**

36 **(ii) COMPLETED THE REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, IF**
37 **APPLICABLE.**

38 **(iii) DEMONSTRATED EXPERTISE FOR A SPECIFIC SUBJECT AREA AND GRADE**
39 **LEVEL.**

40 9. Notwithstanding section 15-533, shall exempt persons applying
41 for a secondary education certificate from the subject knowledge portion
42 of the proficiency examination if the state board determines that the
43 person has work experience in science, technology, engineering or
44 mathematics and can demonstrate adequate knowledge of a particular subject
45 through a postsecondary education degree or twenty-four credit hours of
46 relevant coursework.

47 10. Shall allow for a certificate issued to a person pursuant to
48 subsection B, paragraph 1, 3, 4 or 5 of this section or section 15-203 or

1 15-782.01, as applicable, to be both issued and renewed for at least
2 twelve years and may not require more than fifteen hours of continuing
3 education credits each year in order to renew that certificate pursuant to
4 this paragraph.

5 11. Shall allow for a certificate issued to a person pursuant to
6 subsection B of this section or section 15-132, 15-203 or 15-782.01, as
7 applicable, and any endorsement or approved area related to that
8 certificate, to be renewed at least two years but not more than ten years
9 after that certificate expires without any other requirements adopted by
10 the state board of education or the department of education if the person
11 is in good standing and possesses a valid fingerprint clearance card
12 issued pursuant to section 15-534. A certificate renewed pursuant to this
13 paragraph shall be identical to the expired certificate.

14 D. The rules for certification reciprocity shall include a
15 requirement that the applicant possess a comparable valid certification
16 from another state and be in good standing with that other state. An
17 applicant who possesses a valid certification from another state and a
18 fingerprint clearance card pursuant to section 15-534 and who is in good
19 standing with that other state shall be issued a comparable standard
20 certificate or a comparable certificate issued pursuant to section 15-132,
21 15-203 or 15-782.01, as applicable, without any other requirements from
22 the state board of education or the department of education. A person who
23 is issued a certificate pursuant to this subsection is not required to
24 meet any requirement prescribed in section 15-533.

25 E. Placement decisions of teaching intern certificate holders
26 issued pursuant to subsection C, paragraph 1 of this section and section
27 15-552 shall be based on agreements between the teacher preparation
28 provider, the provider's partner organizations and the local education
29 agency. The practices of the department of education and the rules and
30 policies of the state board of education may not restrict placement of
31 teaching intern certification holders based on local education agency
32 instructional models and may only consider the academic quality of the
33 school, the effectiveness of the teaching intern certification holder's
34 on-site mentor and the opportunity for a wide variety of schools and
35 school models to access teaching intern certification holders.

36 F. Notwithstanding subsection A of this section, the following
37 persons are not required to have a baccalaureate degree:

38 1. A teacher who is otherwise exempt by law from obtaining a
39 baccalaureate degree and who provides instruction in STEM or career and
40 technical education pursuant to section 15-782.01.

41 2. A person who obtains any of the following:

- 42 (a) A Native American language certificate.
- 43 (b) A student teaching intern certificate.
- 44 (c) A junior reserve officer training corps certificate.
- 45 (d) An athletic coaching certificate.
- 46 (e) An emergency substitute certificate.

47 G. On or before November 15 of each year, the department of
48 education shall report and post on its website all of the following:

1 1. The total number of teaching certificates issued in the previous
2 calendar year disaggregated by the type of teaching certificate and
3 demographics.

4 2. The total number of currently issued teaching certificates in
5 this state disaggregated by the type of teaching certificate and
6 demographics.

7 3. Any other historical data or trends regarding certificated
8 individuals in this state.