



POLICY BRIEF

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Texas Classroom Teacher Certification

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Introduction

Highly effective teachers are an important component in student learning, academic achievement, and workforce outcomes (Chetty et al., 2014; Goldhaber et al., 2015; Hanushek, 2011; Rivkin et al., 2005). As such, state and federal policies have encouraged the creation of multiple pathways to the classroom and mandated standards for teacher preparation and certification to ensure students have high-quality teachers (Sutcher et al., 2019). However, as schools have reported difficulty in recruiting and retaining classroom teachers, states have relaxed certification and preparation requirements (Aragon, 2016). In Texas, Governor Greg Abbott created a Teacher Vacancy Task Force in 2022 to examine school district difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers and make recommendations for improvement (Teacher Vacancy Task Force, 2023). In its report, the task force expressed concern that increasing proportions of first-year teacher cohorts were uncertified, and it suggested expanding pathways within existing high-quality Grow Your Own preparation programs to encourage teacher certification among high school students and paraprofessionals as well as creating paid teacher residency pathways within educator preparation programs (Teacher Vacancy Task Force, 2023).

Addressing the recommendations by the Teacher Vacancy Task Force to increase certified teachers in classrooms is important, as the proportion of classroom teachers without certification granted by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) has increased three percentage points since 2009–10. Table 1 displays the certification status of Texas public school teachers, including charter

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Since 2009–10, the percentage of Texas teachers holding standard teacher certifications has decreased as more teachers are uncertified or hold local teacher permits.

The certification status of teachers in charter schools and traditional public schools differ, as a lower percentage of charter school teachers hold standard teacher certifications, and a higher percentage of charter school teachers have no teacher certification.

In traditional public schools, the percentage of teachers with no teacher certification and the percentage of teachers with local teacher permits have increased, especially in recent years.

school teachers, from the 2009–10 through 2021–22 school years.

The number of total public school classroom teachers in Texas—both traditional and charter school—increased from 338,190 in 2009–10 to 375,959 in 2021–22. Since 2009–10, when 5,099 classroom teachers had no teacher certification, the percentage of those without a teacher certification has increased nearly every year, hovering between 1.5% and 3.3% of total teachers. In 2021–22, the percentage of classroom teachers with no teacher

TABLE 1

Certification Status of Texas Public School Teachers, 2009–10 through 2021–22

	No Teacher Certification		Local Teacher Permit		Intern or Probationary Teacher Certification		Standard Teacher Certification		Total Count
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
2009–10	5,099	1.5%	1,174	0.3%	17,799	5.3%	314,118	92.9%	338,190
2010–11	5,109	1.5%	1,027	0.3%	15,705	4.6%	318,440	93.6%	340,281
2011–12	4,844	1.5%	887	0.3%	10,825	3.3%	312,796	95.0%	329,352
2012–13	4,853	1.5%	1,129	0.3%	10,800	3.2%	315,805	95.0%	332,587
2013–14	5,090	1.5%	1,587	0.5%	14,535	4.3%	318,439	93.8%	339,651
2014–15	5,613	1.6%	1,921	0.6%	17,422	5.0%	322,513	92.8%	347,469
2015–16	6,132	1.7%	2,150	0.6%	18,822	5.3%	325,527	92.3%	352,631
2016–17	7,033	2.0%	2,412	0.7%	19,058	5.3%	330,010	92.0%	358,513
2017–18	8,466	2.3%	2,380	0.7%	18,006	5.0%	333,337	92.0%	362,189
2018–19	9,902	2.7%	2,500	0.7%	15,747	4.3%	335,832	92.3%	363,981
2019–20	11,644	3.2%	2,606	0.7%	15,595	4.2%	338,332	91.9%	368,177
2020–21	12,556	3.3%	2,453	0.7%	19,739	5.3%	340,320	90.7%	375,068
2021–22	17,112	4.6%	3,057	0.8%	15,346	4.1%	340,444	90.6%	375,959

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center

Notes. Active certifications reported were effective prior to September 1 and expired after June 1 of the academic year. “No teacher certification” means there was no active teacher certification. “Local teacher permit” refers to one-year permits (emergency teacher permits, visiting international teacher permits, temporary teacher permits, and vocational teacher permits) recognized only by issuing Independent School Districts or charter schools. “Intern or probationary teacher certifications” are one-year State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)-issued certifications held by individuals enrolled in certification programs. And “standard teacher certifications” are SBEC five-year teacher certifications and out-of-state certifications. The counts refer to individual teachers, and percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers.

certification increased to more than 17,000 teachers, or 4.6% of total teachers.

Teachers are defined as classroom teachers of record¹ reported in the Public Education Information Management System, the statewide adminis-

¹ Those assigned Role Code o25, o29, or o87 in the Public Education Information Management System.

trative data repository. Certifications reported in Table 1 were active certifications, those that were effective prior to September 1 and expired after June 1 of the academic year. Table 1 reports teacher certification statuses in four categories:

No Teacher Certification. Teachers reported under the No Teacher Certification status had no active teacher certifications for the reported year.

These teachers could include those who were never awarded teacher certifications, those with expired teacher certifications, or those with other SBEC certifications (e.g., paraprofessionals, principals, counselors). The number of teachers with no teacher certification increased from a low of 4,844 (1.5% of all teachers) in 2011–12 to a high of 17,112 (4.6% of all teachers) in 2021–22.

Local Teacher Permit. Teachers reported under the Local Teacher Permit status held a one-year permit recognized only by the Independent School District or charter school that awarded the permit. These permits include emergency teacher permits, visiting international teacher permits, temporary teacher permits, and vocational teacher permits. The number of teachers with local teacher permits increased from a low of 887 (0.3% of all teachers) in 2011–12 to a high of 3,057 (0.8% of all teachers) in 2021–22.

Intern or Probationary Teacher Certification. Individuals enrolled in approved Texas educator preparation programs are issued intern or probationary teacher certifications. These are one-year certifications awarded to individuals working toward the standard teacher certification. From 2009–10 to 2021–22, between 3.2% and 5.3% of total classroom teachers held an intern or probationary teacher certification. The number of teachers with intern or probationary teacher certifications increased from a low of 10,800 in 2012–13 to a high of 19,739 in 2020–21.

Standard Teacher Certification. The standard teacher certification is a five-year teacher certification awarded by the SBEC.² From 2009–10 to 2019–20, the percentage of total teachers with standard teacher certifications ranged between 91.9% and 95%. In the past two school years, however, the percentage of total teachers with standard teacher certifications decreased to below 91%.

² In 1999, the SBEC mandated that standard teacher certifications needed to be renewed every five years to remain valid. Teachers who had been certified prior to that time were grandfathered into the new rule by converting their standard certification to a lifetime teacher certification.

Since 2009–10, the percentage of classroom teachers without a teacher certification has increased nearly every year, hovering between 1.5% and 3.3% of total teachers. In 2021–22, the percentage increased to 4.6%.

For a complete review of teacher certifications issued by the state of Texas, see Section 1: Key Texas Public School Teacher Certification Policy Review of the *Texas Classroom Teacher Certification report* (Templeton et. al, 2022).

Teacher Certification in Charter Schools and Traditional Public Schools

In Texas, charter schools and traditional public schools have different statutory teacher certification requirements. The state of Texas does not require charter school teachers to be certified. The state only requires that charter school teachers hold at least a bachelor's degree unless exempted as a residential center teacher for a noncore vocational class. However, special education teachers, bilingual teachers, and teachers of English as a Second Language in charter schools must be certified in the fields in which they teach, per federal requirements.³ Texas does have statutory teacher certification requirements for traditional public schools. However, it should be noted that these traditional public school requirements can be waived by the commissioner of education under TEC § 7.056; districts can be exempted from the requirement under the District of Innovation designation in TEC § 12A; and school districts can issue a local teacher permit per TEC § 21.055. For a full review of teacher certifica-

³ See [TAC §100.1212](#).

TABLE 2

Certification Status of Texas Charter School Teachers, 2009–10 through 2021–22

	No Teacher Certification		Local Teacher Permit		Intern or Probationary Teacher Certification		Standard Teacher Certification		Total Count
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
2009–10	2,177	28.0%	10	0.1%	1,133	14.6%	4,444	57.2%	7,764
2010–11	2,193	24.3%	10	0.1%	1,321	14.6%	5,496	60.9%	9,020
2011–12	2,096	21.2%	6	0.1%	1,232	12.4%	6,569	66.3%	9,903
2012–13	2,247	20.3%	5	0.0%	1,189	10.7%	7,627	68.9%	11,068
2013–14	2,660	21.4%	7	0.1%	1,483	11.9%	8,302	66.7%	12,452
2014–15	3,136	22.5%	23	0.2%	1,641	11.8%	9,134	65.6%	13,934
2015–16	3,520	23.4%	37	0.2%	1,842	12.3%	9,612	64.0%	15,011
2016–17	4,097	24.6%	74	0.4%	1,916	11.5%	10,591	63.5%	16,678
2017–18	5,034	27.4%	96	0.5%	1,893	10.3%	11,362	61.8%	18,385
2018–19	5,602	28.9%	83	0.4%	1,816	9.4%	11,901	61.3%	19,402
2019–20	6,666	32.3%	79	0.4%	1,716	8.3%	12,204	59.1%	20,665
2020–21	7,005	31.7%	168	0.8%	2,133	9.7%	12,781	57.9%	22,087
2021–22	8,994	37.3%	196	0.8%	1,862	7.7%	13,085	54.2%	24,137

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center

Notes. Active certifications reported were effective prior to September 1 and expired after June 1 of the academic year. “No teacher certification” means there was no active teacher certification. “Local teacher permit” refers to one-year permits (emergency teacher permits, visiting international teacher permits, temporary teacher permits, and vocational teaching permits) recognized only by issuing Independent School Districts or charter schools. “Intern or probationary teacher certifications” are one-year State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)-issued certifications held by individuals enrolled in certification programs. And “standard teacher certifications” are SBEC five-year teacher certifications and out-of-state certifications. The counts refer to individual teachers, and percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers.

tion requirements, see Section 1: Key Texas Public School Teacher Certification Policy Review of the *Texas Classroom Teacher Certification* report.

When teacher certification status among charter school teachers and traditional public school teachers is compared, a substantially lower percentage of charter school teachers hold standard

teacher certifications than traditional public school teachers. Over the past 13 years, an average of 62.1% of charter school teachers held standard teacher certifications compared with 94.1% in traditional public schools. Additionally, teachers with no teacher certification are disproportionately represented in charter schools. Though charter schools employed 6.4% of teachers in 2021–22,

TABLE 3

Certification Status of Texas Traditional Public School Teachers, 2009–10 through 2021–22

	No Teacher Certification		Local Teacher Permit		Intern or Probationary Teacher Certification		Standard Teacher Certification		Total Count
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	
2009–10	2,922	0.9%	1,164	0.4%	16,666	5.0%	309,674	93.7%	330,426
2010–11	2,916	0.9%	1,017	0.3%	14,384	4.3%	312,944	94.5%	331,261
2011–12	2,748	0.9%	881	0.3%	9,593	3.0%	306,227	95.9%	319,449
2012–13	2,606	0.8%	1,124	0.3%	9,611	3.0%	308,178	95.9%	321,519
2013–14	2,430	0.7%	1,580	0.5%	13,052	4.0%	310,137	94.8%	327,199
2014–15	2,477	0.7%	1,898	0.6%	15,781	4.7%	313,379	94.0%	333,535
2015–16	2,612	0.8%	2,113	0.6%	16,980	5.0%	315,915	93.6%	337,620
2016–17	2,936	0.9%	2,338	0.7%	17,142	5.0%	319,419	93.4%	341,835
2017–18	3,432	1.0%	2,284	0.7%	16,113	4.7%	321,975	93.7%	343,804
2018–19	4,300	1.2%	2,417	0.7%	13,931	4.0%	323,931	94.0%	344,579
2019–20	4,978	1.4%	2,527	0.7%	13,879	4.0%	326,128	93.8%	347,512
2020–21	5,551	1.6%	2,285	0.6%	17,606	5.0%	327,539	92.8%	352,981
2021–22	8,118	2.3%	2,861	0.8%	13,484	3.8%	327,359	93.0%	351,822

Source. University of Houston Education Research Center

Notes. Active certifications reported were effective prior to September 1 and expired after June 1 of the academic year. “No teacher certification” means there was no active teacher certification. “Local teacher permit” refers to one-year permits (emergency teacher permits, visiting international teacher permits, temporary teacher permits, and vocational teaching permits) recognized only by issuing Independent School Districts or charter schools. “Intern or probationary teacher certifications” are one-year State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)-issued certifications held by individuals enrolled in certification programs. And “standard teacher certifications” are SBEC five-year teacher certifications and out-of-state certifications. The counts refer to individual teachers, and percentages are calculated as the proportion of total teachers.

they employed 52.6% of all teachers with no teacher certification (8,994 of the total 17,112 teachers with no teacher certification). The following sections detail the certification status of teachers in charter schools and traditional public schools.

Charter Schools

Since 2009–10, when Texas charter schools em-

ployed 7,764 teachers, the charter school sector has grown substantially, employing more than 24,000 teachers in 2021–22, as shown in Table 2 on the previous page. In 2009–10, 28% of charter school teachers held no teacher certification (2,177 of 7,764 total charter school teachers), but this percentage steadily decreased to 20.3% by 2012–13 (2,247 of 11,068 total charter school teachers).

Since then, however, the percentage of charter school teachers with no teacher certification has increased nearly every year to 37.3% of all charter school teachers in 2021–22 (8,994 of 24,137 total charter school teachers). Charter schools rarely issue local teacher permits, with the percentage never exceeding 0.8% over the past 13 years. The percentage of charter school teachers with intern or probationary teacher certifications decreased from 14.6% (1,133 teachers) in 2009–10 to 7.7% (1,862 teachers) in 2021–22. Though the percentage of charter school teachers with standard teacher certifications increased from 57.2% in 2009–10 to 68.9% in 2012–13, the percentage decreased every year since then to 54.2% of charter school teachers in 2021–22.

Traditional Public Schools

The population of teachers in traditional public schools increased from 330,426 teachers in 2009–10 to 351,822 teachers in 2021–22, as seen in Table 3 on the previous page. In traditional public schools, the percentage of teachers with no teacher certification has historically sustained at 1% of the more than 330,000 total traditional public school teachers, though in 2020–21 and 2021–22, the percentage increased to 1.6% and 2.3% respectively—5,551 of the 352,981 total traditional public school teachers in 2020–21 and 8,118 of the 351,822 total traditional public school teachers in 2021–22. The percentage of teachers with local teacher permits has increased from a low of 0.3% in 2010–11 to a high of 0.8% in 2021–22. For each of the past 13 years, teachers with standard teacher certifications have made up more than 92% of teachers in traditional public schools, and an average of 4.3% of all traditional public school teachers have held intern or probationary teacher certifications.

Conclusion

Since 2009–10, the percentage of Texas teachers holding standard teacher certifications has decreased as more teachers are uncertified or hold

Teachers with no teacher certification are disproportionately represented in charter schools. Though charter schools employed 6.4% of teachers in 2021–22, they employed 52.6% of all teachers with no teacher certification.

local teacher permits. The certification status of teachers in charter schools and traditional public schools differ, as a lower percentage of charter school teachers hold standard teacher certifications, and a higher percentage of charter school teachers have no teacher certification. Still, in traditional public schools, the percentage of teachers with no teacher certification and the percentage of teachers with local teacher permits have increased, especially in recent years.

While the overwhelming proportion of Texas classroom teachers (>90%) holds a standard teacher certification, increasing numbers of uncertified and locally certified teachers in traditional public schools and charter schools signal changing practices in teacher hiring that could be the result of increased flexibilities in teacher certification requirements. Such shifts require careful additional research to understand their impact on teacher retention, mobility, and, ultimately, student outcomes. Additional research is also needed to understand what underlies hiring choices and determine how campus leaders are ensuring that all teachers are supported in their efforts to prepare students.

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