An Act

ENROLLED HOUSE
BILL NO. 2548

By: Nelson, McDaniel (Jeannie), Coody, Walker and Henke of the House

and

Crain of the Senate

An Act relating to schools; amending 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-187, as last amended by Section 3, Chapter 336, O.S.L. 2013 (70 O.S. Supp. 2013, Section 6-187), which relates to teacher competency examinations; requiring certain subject area competency examinations to be offered in the native language of the teacher under certain circumstances; requiring additional examinations to be taken in English under certain circumstances; directing the State Board of Education to issue a restricted license or certificate; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

SUBJECT: Teacher competency examinations

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

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2011, Section 6-187, as last amended by Section 3, Chapter 336, O.S.L. 2013 (70 O.S. Supp. 2013, 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 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 teacher in the subject area the person is seeking licensure or

certification to teach which shall also include licensure or certification as an administrator, as prescribed by the State Board of Education.

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

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

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

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

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

Any teacher who is certified to teach elementary education may be certified in early childhood education upon meeting the requirements provided in law and successful completion of the appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any teacher who is certified to teach early childhood education may be certified in elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in law and successful completion of the appropriate subject area portion of the examination. Any special education teacher who becomes certified to teach through completion of an accredited teacher preparation program may be certified in early childhood or elementary education upon meeting the requirements provided in law

and successful completion of the appropriate subject portion of the examination. Any teacher who becomes certified to teach through completion of an accredited teacher preparation program or becomes alternatively certified to teach through the Troops to Teachers program may be certified in special education upon meeting the requirements provided in law and successful completion of the appropriate subject area portion of the examination.

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

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

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

SECTION 2. This act shall become effective July 1, 2014.

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

Passed the House of Representatives the 12th day of March, 2014.

Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives

Passed the Senate the 16th day of April, 2014.

Presiding Officer of the Senate

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Received by the Office of the Governor this 21st

day of April, 20 14, at 5:40 o'clock P M.

By: Audrey Rockwell

Approved by the Governor of the State of Oklahoma this 25th

day of April, 20 14, at 9:47 o'clock A M.

Governor of the State of Oklahoma

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE

Received by the Office of the Secretary of State this 25th

day of April, 20 14, at 1:50 o'clock P M.

By: Chi Benge