

January 19, 2017

TO THE ADMINISTRATOR ADDRESSED

Subject: Feedback Request for Industry-based Certifications and Certificates

Responding to this request is an opportunity for you to help inform the development of Domain IV of the state's accountability system that will be implemented in the 2017-18 school year. Please take advantage of this opportunity by providing feedback, as outlined below.

Background:

House Bill 2804 (84th Texas Legislature, 2015) requires the state to include the percentage of students who earn an industry certification in Domain IV (College and Career Readiness). In 19 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) §74.14 (e) (2), this certification is defined as

...an industry validated credential that complies with knowledge and skills standards promulgated by a nationally or internationally recognized business industry profession or government entity representing a particular profession or occupation that is issued by or endorsed by:

- (A) a national or international business, industry, or professional organization;
- (B) a state agency or other government entity; or
- (C) a state-based industry association.

TEA has compiled a list of third-party certifications and certificates currently being offered by local education agencies through a request made via a "To the Administrator Addressed" letter in September of 2016 as well as data from the Perkins Program Effectiveness Report (PER).

List of Certifications:

While there are hundreds of certifications offered throughout the public school system, it is critical to ensure that the state recognize those that are aligned with workforce needs. Certifications that provide opportunities for employment or continued study in fields offering middle and higher wage jobs are important in preparing students for the workforce. Local education agencies that offer these certification options for students will be eligible for acknowledgement under Domain IV of the state's accountability system.

The statute requires the criterion for inclusion in the accountability system to include recognition by industry groups, as defined by the certification being:

1. **Nationally- or internationally-recognized:** Certifications that are nationally or internationally recognized through a national or international business, industry, or professional organization.

OR

2. **State-recognized:** Texas-certified industry certifications are those that are recognized and valued by either a state agency or government entity, or a state-based industry association.

In addition to the base criterion, the Texas Education Agency has included additional criteria that is representative of extensive conversations with stakeholders, other agency partners, and best practices found in other states who have done similar work in identifying industry-based certifications of value. The additional criteria states that the certifications must also meet all of the following to be included in the accountability system:

3. **End of Program (High School):** In order for certifications to be recognized in the state’s accountability system, they must represent a culmination of knowledge and skills achievement through completion of a program of study in a high school Career and Technical Education program. While valuable certifications exist that serve as “building blocks” in attaining a targeted skill set, only certifications that are deemed as “end of program” will be considered for inclusion within the accountability system.
4. **Stackable (direct transference to postsecondary work or additional industry certifications and opportunities):** Certifications must either be accepted for credit or hours at an institution of higher education, or they must include additional opportunities for workplace advancement, whether through additional certifications or other industry-validated pathways.
5. **Industry Valued¹:** Industry certifications must be valued by respective career cluster industry groups and councils across the state in order to determine that the certifications are valid entry points for higher wage jobs. Industry-valued certifications may reflect either regional or statewide demand for employment, as determined by industry groups.

Using this criteria, TEA engaged in an extensive data analysis and review process to determine which certifications would meet criteria for acknowledgment within the state’s accountability system. This rigorous process included input from other agencies, industry partners, and various TEA staff. Within each round of review, certifications were identified that did not meet the criteria above and were, thus, eliminated. The final review and analysis identified 67 certifications for consideration (as outlined in the attached PDF “Proposed Industry-based Certifications”).

¹ TEA will engage in further outreach to collect feedback from industry representatives about the value and quality of the proposed list of certifications. Certifications should reflect the value of regional or statewide demand.

Request for Feedback

Local education agencies are encouraged to submit feedback regarding the attached proposed list of 67 certifications for inclusion within Domain IV of the state's new accountability system.

Feedback will be collected through completion of an online survey at the following link- <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TXCerts>. The survey will close on **March 15, 2017**.

When providing feedback, please consider the following:

1. Any proposed additions to the list of certifications must meet the statutory requirement of the certification being issued by a nationally-, internationally-, or state-recognized entity.
2. Proposed additions must also meet the additional criteria outlined above:
 - a. End of Program certification
 - b. Stackable (direct transference to postsecondary work or additional industry certifications and opportunities)
 - c. Industry Valued
3. All feedback should include a detailed rationale for the certification's inclusion, based on the required criteria.

For additional information and frequently asked questions about the list of certifications, please see the attached FAQ document. If you have further questions, please contact Kelly Ocasio at kelly.ocasio@tea.texas.gov.

Attachments: Proposed Industry-based Certifications
Industry Certifications FAQ