



JOY HOFMEISTER

STATE SUPERINTENDENT *of* PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT *of* EDUCATION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Joy Hofmeister

DATE: December 19, 2019

SUBJECT: Appeal for exception to an alternative certification requirement

The statute that authorizes the State Board of Education to issue alternative placement teaching certificates and outlines the requirements for the alternative certification program provides that “[t]he State Board of Education may grant an exception to the requirements for certification and, upon demonstration by an individual of specific competency in the subject area of specialization, may grant a certificate to the individual” (70 O.S. § 6-122.3(D)).

One of the listed requirements for entry into the alternative certification program is that an applicant may never have received a failing grade in a course taken as part of a teacher preparation program. Connor Burnett received failing grades in two education courses several years ago has requested that the State Board grant an exception to this provision so that he may receive alternative certification to teach in Oklahoma public schools.

Mr. Burnett has submitted documentation demonstrating specific competency in the science areas in which he is applying in the form of teaching experience. He is in his second year of employment in the Perkins-Tryon district as a science teacher. Joe McElroy, Perkins-Tryon High School principal has supplemented this request with a letter attesting to the quality performance of the applicant. Upon review by the State Department of Education, the applicant has demonstrated competency in his subject areas by having successful teaching experience, and approval is recommended.

JH/js
Attachments

Conner M Burnett
4521 E. 104th St.
Perkins, OK 74059

November 7, 2019

Oklahoma State Board of Education
2500 N Lincoln Blvd
Oklahoma City, OK 73105

Dear Mrs. Joy Hofmeister:

I am requesting a special consideration regarding my application for alternative teaching certification. My application was denied because of Oklahoma Law 70 O.S. § 6122.3. I am seeking an exception and certificate due to my demonstration of competency in the subject area of specialization, as authorized in (70 O.S. § 6122.3(D)).

My application was denied based on my college transcript reflecting a failing grade in an education course. I enrolled in this course at a time I was young and exploring possible careers because it would satisfy multiple possible majors I was considering. I withdrew from the course hoping for a "W," but the drop deadline had passed, so the professor chose to report an "F". I believe the grade does not imply a lack of qualification.

In the summer of 2018 I was hired at Perkins-Tryon High School under emergency certification. Upon securing a job teaching Physical Science and Biology as well as coaching girls basketball, I began working on the requirements for alternative placement. During this time of teaching I was observed and evaluated multiple times by Principal McElroy. I was recommended for rehire for the 2019-2020 school year and have since continued to receive an impression of competency and consistent positive feedback from my principal and fellow educators. I have proven my knowledge and ability by passing the OGET and OSAT on my first attempt and have also obtained my CDL allowing me to further assist Perkins-Tryon Public Schools as they are experiencing a major shortage in bus drivers.

I believe my two years experience during emergency certification and the passing of the OGET and OSAT have shown my qualification as a teacher and that it greatly counters the issue with my certification. I understand there are requirements and expectations, and I am happy to retake the course in addition to the other required credit hours upon certification. I believe, under this circumstance, the law is preventing a qualified candidate from teaching during a time of extreme need for educators in Oklahoma.

I appreciate your time and consideration on this matter and look forward to being able to enjoy my career in education for many years. Thank you again for your time and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Conner M. Burnett

Enclosure



Perkins-Tryon High School

1003 East Highway 33 • Perkins, Oklahoma • 74059

Principal Joe McElroy
(405) 547-5724 ext 11

Athletic Director Bobby Buck
(405) 547-5724 ext 12

6 November 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

It is with great pride that I write this letter of recommendation for Conner Burnett. Conner was hired here due to a lack of any other candidates. To be honest since this was my first alternative/emergency certified hire, I wasn't sure what to expect. It didn't take long for Conner to alleviate all my fears and become a productive member of the High School Staff.

Conner's evaluations have all been very good. He has a great relationship with the students and does a great job preparing and executing daily lessons. His genuine concern for the well-being of his students provides motivation for the students to work hard in his class. He serves as a model for our students as well as other teachers.

Conner always represents our school and community in a great way. He reflects the highest standards in the areas of integrity, dedication, service, and character. We are fortunate to have Mr. Burnett in our school system and it is my pleasure to recommend him as a candidate for alternative certification.

Sincerely,

Joe McElroy
High school Principal
Perkins-Tryon Public Schools

Home of the Demons!