

## Texas Data Policy Landscape

Texas has a rich data environment with three major separate databases that have information on teacher preparation, licensure, and where teachers teach. However, the databases are not easily integrated. Nevertheless, a number of researchers have been able to conduct analysis of teacher qualifications, placement, and retention by school and preparation institution. There is some pressure from a PK-16 Council to more comprehensively integrate this data and potentially to use these data more often.

### *Current Database Capacities*

Texas has two main teacher databases. Managed by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Teacher Assignment Records database is part of the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS). Districts turn in the Teacher Assignment Records each fall. The Teacher Assignment Records include teacher name, Social Security Number (SSN), experience, where teaching, subjects taught (only for full-time teachers), and demographics (age, race, and gender). However, data are not linked to individual courses and students.

The second database is the licensure database managed by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) with about 750,000 entries updated daily. The licensure database has data on everyone who applies for a license or permit, including where they are prepared and their scores on the state teaching tests. The licensure database allows the user to look up individual certification level by name. This database is. SBEC gathers licensure data from everyone who applies for a license or a permit, including the following: SSN number as primary identifier; demographics (age race, gender, address, e-mail); current certification; field approved to work in; licensure test scores; process data on fees, fingerprints, notes, and requests; education level, and professional development.

Regarding education level, if a degree is required for certification, the database has institution, degree, and date received. All initial certification requires a bachelor's degree, so that information is included as well as other information related to educational level, such as requirements for administration, reading specialist, and diagnostician.

Professional development taken is related to relicensure: 150 clock hours are required over a 5-year period. However, the database does not specify courses taken, only faculty report hours by the approved provider. Providers are approved based on either if the material is related to a taught content area or NSDC standards for process.

Data also include teacher test scores by domain. From 1987 to 2000, SBEC used primarily a basic skills test with some focus on content and pedagogy. Beginning in 2003, the state began using the Texas Examination for Educator Standards (TexES), a teaching test that is not comparable to the previous assessment.

The database does not include whether a person is currently teaching.

The higher education coordinating board also has data on degree and when enrolled; individual campuses have data on coursework taken.

TEA could also provide student scores on ACT using SSN.

SBEC also gathers information from higher education institutions. This system is called the Accountability System for Education Preparation (ASEP). ASEP includes individual records for people who are in (or have completed) teacher education programs. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) has individual records for all students using SSN as the unique identifier (the state is trying to move toward assigning a non-SSN unique identifier).

These records have semester credits (not individual courses), major if declared, demographics (age, gender, ethnicity), status (freshman, sophomore, etc.), alien status (if graduated from a Texas high school), county of residence, educational transfer data, and (as of Fall 2004) SAT score. The records can identify those who are in teacher preparation programs; however, teacher preparation programs only admit juniors and seniors. This field was put in place 2-3 years ago and has not yet been used for analysis. Programmers are confident they can clean up future data if made a priority.

SBEC has its own database on teacher preparation candidates. The board needs these data from preparation institutions because not all graduates apply for certification. SBEC then gives the pass-rate data from ASEP to the THECB for use as needed for new program approval.

The NCLB surveys all districts to determine at the campus level how many teachers are highly qualified. These data are at the campus level rather than at the individual level. Districts inform TEA how many teachers are highly qualified, which is then reported on the TEA Web site: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/nclb/hqreport.html>

### *Data Systems Compatibility and Barriers*

The licensure database is not integrated with TEA teacher records (i.e., the PIEMS). Staffers reportedly do not have time and resources to write and maintain the software needed to integrate the two databases. However, the databases have been integrated for specific studies. See the following SBEC Web page:  
<http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/reprtdatarsch/rptspdf.asp>.

There is some interest in following students from graduation with the THECB data through certification at SBEC and then into teaching using TEA data. However, other barriers include the following:

1. THECB does not have clear understanding of SBEC rules for sharing data.
2. THECB does not have data on teachers prepared in private universities or from the rather significant number prepared in alternative certification programs that

- are conducted by school districts or service centers. (However, SBEC may have these data).
3. HQ teacher requirements gave states a lot of leeway, so do not put much pressure on the state to integrate databases.

The main barriers to integration appear to be interest and resources to pay for the integration. Data linking teachers with student assessment are not available at the state level but can be created by districts. There is a little pressure from state policymakers to create these links; however, this will be very difficult for districts to implement, given districts' wide range in capacity. Currently, the TEA does not gather teacher IDs with state student assessments. Typically, the TEA does not tie individual student assessment data to teachers because the records are assembled in such a way as to make it difficult to determine which teachers are responsible for which students.