**Preliminary Background Checks**

Pursuant to the Texas Education code (TEC) 22.083, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator; and pursuant to the TEC, 22.0835, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching.

Per TAC Title 19, section 249.16Pursuant to the Texas Occupations Code (TOC), Chapter 53, and the Texas Education Code (TEC), Chapter 21, Subchapter B, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) may suspend or revoke an existing valid certificate, deny an applicant a certificate, bar a person from being assessed or examined for a certificate, or take other disciplinary action because of a person's conviction of a felony or misdemeanor or certain other criminal history.

If you feel that you have the potential to be ineligible because you have been convicted of an offense, it is in your best interest to request a preliminary criminal history evaluation.

**1. What is a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation?**

A Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation (PCHE) is an evaluation of eligibility for a Texas educator certificate based on your self-reported criminal history. As a service to prospective candidates, TEA staff may perform an evaluation for a non-refundable fee of $50. The evaluation is voluntary and non-binding.

During the process, agency staff will obtain your name-based Texas criminal history information from the Texas Department of Public Safety. Once the evaluation is complete, TEA staff will send you an evaluation letter advising of your potential eligibility for educator certification. The determination of eligibility is based in part on the information you provide to the agency.  Therefore, failure to provide complete and accurate information may result in an inaccurate criminal history evaluation.  Agency staff performs the evaluations under the authority of the Texas Occupations Code §53.102 and Texas Administrative Code 19 Ch. 227.

You may request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation **only if**:

* You are enrolled or planning to enroll in an educator preparation program **or** you are planning to take a certification exam for initial educator certification, **and**
* You have reason to believe that you may be ineligible for educator certification due to a conviction or deferred adjudication for a felony or misdemeanor offense.

Additional information regarding pre-liminary background checks can be found on the [TEA Website](https://tea.texas.gov/texas-educators/investigations/preliminary-criminal-history-evaluation-faqs).

To complete the TEA preliminary evaluation form, please follow this [link](https://helpdesk.tea.texas.gov/Fingerprinting-and-Do-Not-Hire-Registry)