

Examining states' testing systems

The three hallmarks of a strong licensure test system for elementary content knowledge are:

- 1** **The test is required of all candidates.** In some cases, states (a) give candidates a choice among tests of varying rigor, or (b) provide alternatives to testing that may not have the same comprehensive content, validity, and reliability as licensure tests.

- 2** **The test is structured to separately score each content area.** Elementary content tests most often look for teacher knowledge of the four subjects they will be licensed to teach. For more on the subjects contained in each state's test, see *A look at the subjects tested in elementary licensure content tests in use in 2015-18*, below.

- 3** **The minimum passing score, or the cut score, follows the recommendation from the test's standard setting process.** States should publish both their minimum passing score as well as the score recommended by the standard setting process.

Out of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, 21 states met these three hallmarks of a strong testing system during the 2015 to 2018 window of data used in these state dashboards.

Strengths and weaknesses of states' testing systems in the 2015–2018 data window

State	State meets all hallmarks	State meets all hallmarks except in the areas identified below				Notes
		Permits multiple test options, including some weaker tests (Criteria 1a)	Offers non-content test alternatives to licensure test (Criteria 1b)	Does not separately score each subject area (Criteria 2)	Uses a cut score below the recommended level' (Criteria 3)	
Alabama		Yes				
Alaska		Yes				During this data window, Alaska transitioned from allowing as options the weaker 5017 or 5018 tests (and gave teachers up to three years to pass it) to requiring all candidates to pass either the weaker 5017 or 5018 test or the stronger 5001 test before earning a teaching license.
Arizona			Yes	Yes	Unknown	Policy to allow alternatives to passing content test began during data period
Arkansas	Yes					
California			Yes (non-test alternatives)	Yes	Unknown	Adopted policy during data window allowing candidates alternative means to demonstrate content knowledge.
Colorado	Yes					
Connecticut	Yes					
Delaware	Yes					During this data window, Delaware introduced a new test option, the 7801, and gave candidates the choice of passing the 7801 or the 5001. The 7801 separately tests each subject, although has some limitations in its science subtest.
District of Columbia	Yes					
Florida	Yes					
Georgia						
				Yes	Unknown	
Hawaii		Yes				

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		Permits multiple test options, including some weaker tests (Criteria 1a)	Offers non-content test alternatives to licensure test (Criteria 1b)	Does not separately score each subject area (Criteria 2)	Uses a cut score below the recommended level ¹ (Criteria 3)	
Idaho	Yes					
Illinois				Yes	Unknown	
Indiana				Yes	Unknown	
Iowa			Yes	Yes	Yes	Candidates can pass either content test or edTPA, which does not assess broad content knowledge
Kansas				Yes in former test		Adopted a new test during data period that separately tests each subject
Kentucky	Yes					
Louisiana	Yes					
Maine	Yes					
Maryland				Yes in former test		Adopted a new test during data period that separately tests each subject
Massachusetts				Yes	Unknown	
Michigan				Yes		In the test used in this analysis, all subjects are combined under a single score. However, Michigan is in the process of adopting a test that will separately assess each subject.
Minnesota				Yes	Unknown	
Mississippi				Yes		
Missouri	Yes				Unknown	Adopted new test after data period that does not separately test each subject
Montana				Yes		Montana's licensure test requirement went into effect during the 2015-18 data window.

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Nebraska				Yes		
Nevada				Yes		Adopted a new test after data period that separately tests each subject
New Hampshire	Yes					
New Jersey	Yes					Adopted policy during data period that allows an exemption to candidates who have failed to meet the passing score by 5% if they have a GPA of 3.5 or higher.
New Mexico				Yes	Unknown	
New York				Yes	Unknown	
North Carolina			Yes	Yes		Adopted policy during data window that passing test is not required until after teacher is teacher of record
North Dakota				Yes		
Ohio			Yes	Yes	Unknown	During the data window, teachers with an Early Childhood Education (P-3) license were only required to pass the content test if they sought to add grades 4-5 onto their license. ²
Oklahoma				Yes	Unknown	
Oregon				Yes	Unknown	
Pennsylvania				Yes	Unknown	
Rhode Island	Yes					
South Carolina	Yes					
South Dakota		Yes			Yes	

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Tennessee			Yes	Yes		Adopted a new test during data period that separately tests each subject, but does not require teachers to pass the test until after becoming a teacher of record.
Texas	Yes				Unknown	
Utah	Yes					
Vermont	Yes					
Virginia	Yes					
Washington				Yes	Unknown	
West Virginia	Yes					
Wisconsin				Yes	Yes	State adopted new policy within the data period that allows candidates alternative means to demonstrate content knowledge.
Wyoming	Yes					

A look at the subjects tested in elementary licensure content tests in use in 2015-18

A sufficient content test should assess candidates' core content knowledge with separately scored subtests in mathematics, English language arts, science, and social studies. Strong tests require candidates to pass each subtest in order to earn a passing score on the test. The table below describes the subject areas covered in each subtest of a state's required content assessment. States may appear multiple times in the table if they require multiple tests or offer candidates licensure test options. This information reflects the tests states were using during the time period for which the licensure test pass rate data was collected for this study. Any subsequent changes to states' tests are noted in footnotes

Test name	States that use test	Subtest 1	Subtest 2	Subtest 3	Subtest 4	Subtest 5	
SUFFICIENT	Florida Teacher Certification Examinations (FTCE) Elementary Education K-6 test	Florida	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Science	Social studies	
	Missouri Educator Gateway Assessments (MEGA) Elementary Education Multi-content test ³	Missouri	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Science	Social studies	
	Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Alabama	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Science	Social studies	
		Alaska					
		Arkansas					
		Colorado					
		Connecticut					
		Delaware					
		District of Columbia					
		Hawaii					
Idaho							
Kentucky							
Louisiana							
Maine							
New Hampshire							
New Jersey							
Rhode Island							
South Carolina							
South Dakota							
Tennessee							
Utah							
Vermont							
Virginia							
West Virginia							
Wyoming							
Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TEXES) Core Subjects EC-6 (291) exam	Texas	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Science	Social studies	Fine arts/ Health/ Physical Education	

The following tests do not require a separately scored subtest for each core content area. Without such subtests, a candidate’s strong knowledge in one core content area may mask deficiencies in another.

Test name	States that use test	Subtest 1	Subtest 2	Subtest 3	Subtest 4
California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET): Multiple Subjects Test (K-12)	California	English language arts and reading Social studies	Science Mathematics	Physical education Human development Visual and performing arts	None
Certification Examinations for Oklahoma Educators (CEOE) General Elementary content test	Oklahoma	English language arts and reading	Mathematics Social studies Science Health Fitness The arts	None	None
CORE Elementary Education Generalist test	Indiana	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Science Health Physical education	Social studies Fine arts
Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) Early Childhood Education Assessment	Georgia	English language arts and reading Social studies Analysis	Mathematics Science Health education Physical education The arts	None	None
Illinois Licensure Testing System (ILTS) Elementary Education (Grades 1-6) assessment ⁴	Illinois	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Science Social studies	Fine arts Physical development Health
Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) General Curriculum test	Massachusetts	Language Arts History and social science Science and technology/engineering Integration of knowledge and understanding	Mathematics	None	None

INSUFFICIENT

Test name	States that use test	Subtest 1	Subtest 2	Subtest 3	Subtest 4	
INSUFFICIENT	Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) Elementary Education Test	Michigan	English language arts Science Social studies Mathematics World languages Visual and performing arts Health education Physical education	None	None	None
	Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE) Elementary Education test	Minnesota	Reading and communication arts	Mathematics Health/fitness Finearts	Science Social studies	None
	National Evaluation Series (NES) Elementary Education content test	Arizona New Mexico ⁵ Oregon Washington	English language arts and reading Social Studies	Mathematics Science The arts Health Fitness	None	None
	New York State Teacher Certification Examination (NYSTCE) Multi-Subject: Teachers of Childhood (1-6) test	New York	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Social studies Science Technology Fine arts Health and fitness Family and consumer science Career development	None
	Ohio Assessments for Educators (OAE) Elementary Education exam	Ohio	English language arts and reading Social studies	Mathematics Science Arts Health Fitness	None	None
	Pearson General Curriculum test	North Carolina ⁶	English language arts History Social science Science Technology/ engineering Integration of knowledge and understanding	Mathematics	None	None
	Pennsylvania Educator Certification PreK-4 (PECT) test	Pennsylvania	Child development, learning, and assessment Collaboration and professionalism	Language and literacy development Social studies Arts Humanities	Mathematics Science Health	None

	Test name	States that use test	Subtest 1	Subtest 2	Subtest 3	Subtest 4
INSUFFICIENT	Praxis Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Alaska Mississippi Nebraska North Dakota Tennessee ⁷	English language arts and reading Mathematics Science Social studies Art Music Physical education	None	None	None
	Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Alaska Iowa Montana Wisconsin	English language arts and reading Mathematics Science Social studies	None	None	None
	Praxis Elementary Education: Instructional Practice and Applications (5019) test	Nevada ⁸	English language arts and reading Mathematics Science Social studies Art Music Physical education Content essays	None	None	None
	Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge for Teaching (7811) ⁹	Alaska Delaware Idaho Kansas Maryland South Carolina South Dakota	English language arts and reading	Mathematics	Science ¹⁰	Social studies

ENDNOTES

1. For tests designed and administered by Pearson, the score recommended by the standard setting process is generally not publicly available.
2. Ohio's elementary education licensure gradespan is now PreK through grade 5, and all candidates for that license must pass the content test. However, Ohio also offers a PreK–3 early childhood license which does not require the content test.
3. The last test administration of Missouri Educator Gateway Assessments (MEGA) Elementary Education Multi Content test with four subtests is August 23, 2021. This test will be replaced by a new version which has two subtests. One subtest contains English language arts and social studies content, and the second contains math and science content.
4. The last test administration of the Illinois Licensure Testing System (ILTS) Elementary Education (Grades 1–6) [#197–200] will be March 2022. It will be replaced by the ILTS Elementary Education (Grades 1–6) [#306] test which is a composite score test.
5. New Mexico no longer requires the National Evaluation Series (NES) Elementary Education test. Starting September 2020, the state now requires the Praxis Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (5017) test.
6. North Carolina now only requires passage of the math subtest of the Pearson General Curriculum test or the Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge for Teaching (7813) math subtest.
7. Tennessee no longer offers the Praxis Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test as an alternative to passing the Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test; now all candidates must pass the 5001 test.
8. Nevada no longer requires the Praxis Elementary Education: Instructional Practice and Applications (5019) test. The state now requires the Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test.
9. A review of the Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge for Teaching (7811) test determined that while it separately assesses each subject area, its assessment of science is insufficiently focused on content. This test sufficiently assesses English language arts, mathematics, and social studies.
10. The science subtest does not sufficiently assess candidates' content knowledge in science.