A Closer Look at Selection Criteria
Undergraduate Elementary Programs

KEY FINDING: A quarter of the 875 programs evaluated ensure that they draw most aspiring teachers from the top-half of the college-going population – including 113 that are both selective and diverse.

Why teacher prep programs should have strong selection criteria
Sixty years of research and evidence from nations whose students outperform American students demonstrate that raising the selection criteria of teacher preparation programs will help improve the effectiveness of new teachers. This analysis examined the admissions requirements for undergraduate teacher candidates to determine if the requirements help ensure that programs draw from the top half of the college-going population. Programs earn an A or better if they ensure that their candidates come from the top half of the college-going population, as measured by whether the institution housing the program is selective or whether the program takes proactive measures to set high admissions standards. Programs earning an A+ do this while maintaining a diverse teacher candidate cohort, proving that selectivity need not come at the expense of diversity.

For more information about analysis and program grades, including how programs’ GPA requirements are evaluated, see the Methodology in brief and Understanding program grades sections below.

How likely are undergraduate elementary programs to select aspiring teachers from the top half of college students?
(N=875 undergraduate elementary teacher prep programs)

The 2014 Teacher Prep Review found 36 percent of programs were sufficiently selective. Since then, we have raised the criteria for this standard to reflect new research and accreditation standards,¹ and now 26 percent of programs are sufficiently selective.

¹ For more on how and why this standard has changed, visit a brief on this topic here.

updated 2016
Paths to being a selective teacher prep program

Half of programs (50 percent) are housed in institutions that are moderately or highly selective, based on their average SAT or ACT scores or other measures, such as Barron’s ratings. The other half of programs must take additional steps to ensure that they only admit aspiring teachers from the top half of the college-going population. Only a fraction of all programs (6 percent) are proactively selective, admitting cohorts of teacher candidates with high standardized test scores or setting a high minimum GPA for admission despite being housed in a less selective institution. However, nearly half of all programs (44 percent) do not take these measures, and so they fail to ensure that their incoming candidates are among the top half of college students.

As mentioned above, one step programs could take is to set a minimum GPA for admission – or in lieu of a minimum GPA, they could demonstrate that the cohort average GPA is high. We evaluated programs' GPA requirements only if they did not earn an A for the selectivity of their institutions. For this reason, we collected GPA data for only a subset of programs. Of those, we collect these data in both 2014 and 2016 for 370 programs. A comparison of these data reveals that 71 programs now require at least a 3.0 GPA for admission into the program, compared with 44 programs in 2014, representing a small but notable improvement. These programs are among those taking additional steps to ensure that their teacher candidates meet acceptable admissions standards.

A closer look at diversity

Programs that are selective and diverse earn an A+

In 2016, programs earn an A+ when they both are selective and maintain a level of racial diversity that is the same or greater than that of the institution itself, or of the teacher workforce in the state. Previously, programs could earn an A+ through two pathways: by being selective and racially diverse compared with the diversity of the institution or by being selective based on multiple measures (GPA and standardized test scores). Of the 225 programs that earn at least an A on selection criteria, 113 programs earned an A+ based on this updated measure of selectivity and diversity, compared with 56 programs in 2014.

2 These programs earn an A or B based on the selectivity of their institution.
3 These programs earn an A or B based on the selectivity of admission into the teacher prep program.
4 These programs earn a C or lower on Selection Criteria.
5 While programs only earn a C on Selection Criteria for setting a 3.0 GPA minimum, this finding nonetheless represents a positive trend of programs moving toward a higher bar for admissions.
Selective and diverse programs

AK › University of Alaska Fairbanks
AR › John Brown University
AZ › Arizona State University
AZ › University of Arizona
CA › Loyola Marymount University
CA › University of Redlands
CA › University of the Pacific
CO › University of Colorado – Colorado Springs
CO › University of Colorado Boulder
FL › Florida International University
FL › University of Miami
FL › University of South Florida
GA › Georgia College and State University
GA › Mercer University
ID › Northwest Nazarene University
IL › DePaul University
IL › Illinois Wesleyan University
IL › Knox College
IL › University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
IN › Goshen College
IN › Indiana University – Bloomington
IN › Purdue University
IN › Saint Mary's College
KS › Benedictine College
KS › Newman University
KS › University of Kansas
KY › Asbury University
KY › University of Kentucky
KY › University of Louisville
MA › Boston College
MA › Gordon College
MA › Mount Holyoke College
MA › Smith College
MA › Stonehill College
MD › University of Maryland – College Park
MI › Calvin College
MI › Michigan State University
MI › University of Detroit Mercy
MI › University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
MI › University of Michigan – Dearborn
MN › Bethel University
MN › College of St. Benedict and St. John's University
MN › Gustavus Adolphus College
MN › Hamline University
MN › St. Catherine University
MN › University of Minnesota – Duluth
MN › University of Minnesota – Morris
MN › University of Northwestern – St. Paul
MN › University of St. Thomas
MO › Maryville University of St. Louis
MO › Rockhurst University
MO › St. Louis University
MO › University of Missouri - St. Louis
MO › Westminster College
MO › William Jewell College
MO › William Woods University
MT › Carroll College
MT › Montana State University
NC › Guilford College
NC › High Point University
NC › University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
NE › Creighton University
NE › University of Nebraska – Lincoln
NJ › College of New Jersey
NJ › Seton Hall University
NY › Barnard College
NY › College of Mount Saint Vincent
NY › Columbia University
NY › CUNY – Hunter College
NY › Five Towns College
NY › Manhattan College
OH › John Carroll University
OH › Miami University of Ohio
OH › University of Cincinnati
OH › University of Dayton
OH › Xavier University
OK › University of Oklahoma
OR › Linfield College
OR › Oregon State University
PA › Arcadia University
PA › Bucknell University
PA › Drexel University
PA › Elizabethtown College
PA › Grove City College
PA › Juniata College
PA › Messiah College
PA › Misericordia University
PA › Pennsylvania State University
PA › Saint Joseph's University
PA › Susquehanna University
PA › University of Scranton
RI › Providence College
SC › College of Charleston
TN › Belmont University
TN › Lee University
TN › Maryville College
TN › University of Tennessee
TX › LeTourneau University
TX › St. Edward's University
TX › Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi
TX › Texas Christian University
TX › University of Houston
TX › University of St. Thomas
TX › University of Texas at Arlington
TX › University of Texas at Austin
TX › University of Texas at Dallas
UT › Brigham Young University
UT › University of Utah
VT › University of Vermont
WA › Pacific Lutheran University
WA › Walla Walla University
WA › Western Washington University
WY › University of Wyoming

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**Methodology in brief**

We examine admissions data and requirements to see if aspiring teachers are strong students — in the top half academically of college-goers. We do this through the average SAT/ACT scores of the university overall, the institution’s Barron’s selectivity rating in the absence of SAT/ACT data, the minimum required GPA to enroll in the teaching program, or the average GPA of the program’s teacher candidates upon enrollment. Click [here](#) to read more.

**Understanding program grades on Selection Criteria**

- **A+** The program is both selective (highly likely to draw almost all potential teachers from the top half of students, as measured by an institutional average SAT or ACT score in the 70th percentile or better or by other measures of selectivity such as Barron’s rankings of “most competitive,” or by program average SAT or ACT scores at the 60th percentile), and diverse (as measured by comparing the diversity of the teacher prep program with the diversity of the institution or the state’s teacher workforce).

- **A** The program is highly likely to draw almost all potential teachers from the top half of students, as measured by an institutional average SAT or ACT score in the 70th percentile or better or by other measures of selectivity such as Barron’s rankings of “most competitive,” or by program average SAT or ACT scores at the 60th percentile.

- **B** The program is likely drawing a majority of potential teachers from the top half of students, as measured by an institutional average SAT or ACT score in the 60th percentile or better or by other measures of selectivity such as Barron’s rankings of “highly competitive,” or by program average SAT or ACT scores at the 50th percentile, minimum GPA requirements of 3.3, or by cohort average GPA requirements of 3.5.

- **C** The program likely draws a moderate number of potential teachers from the top half of students, as measured by an institutional average SAT or ACT score in the 50th percentile or better or by other measures of selectivity such as Barron’s rankings of “very competitive,” by minimum GPA requirements of 3.0, or by cohort average GPA requirements of 3.3.

- **D** The program likely draws a small number of potential teachers from the top half of students, as measured by Barron’s rankings of “competitive” or by minimum GPA requirements of 2.75.

- **F** The program is unlikely to draw more than a few potential teachers from the top half of students, as measured by the institution’s not requiring an ACT or SAT score, Barron’s rankings of “less competitive” or “noncompetitive,” or minimum GPA requirements of less than 2.75.