Teacher Licensure Exam Requirements

Executive Summary

Twenty-eight states require elementary teacher candidates to pass a test of their content knowledge. Twenty of the remaining offer candidates an alternative to passing a licensure test, including having a degree or major in the content area or completing a content-based portfolio, and one (Iowa) dropped a requirement to demonstrate content knowledge altogether. North Carolina considered legislation during the 2026 session to remove the requirement for a test to enter a teacher preparation program. While the legislation died in committee, the State Board of Education voted to remove the requirement itself effective July 1, 2026. This ***CSG South Research Memo*** compares existing exam requirements for teacher licensure in the South as well as recent and pending legislation.

Findings and Analysis – Teacher Licensure Exam Requirements and Statistics

State	Test(s) Required	Best Attempt Pass Rate	First-Time Pass Rate	Walk Away Rate*	Three or More Attempts
Alabama	• Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001)	85%	53%	23%	11%
Arkansas	• Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001)	80%	39%	25%	18%
Florida	• Florida Teacher Certification Examination Elementary Education (060)	67%	34%	16%	11%
Georgia	• Georgia Assessments for the Certification of Educators (GACE) Elementary Education	99%	95%	-	-
Kentucky	• Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001)	86%	46%	17%	16%
Louisiana	• Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001)	80%	45%	21%	16%
Mississippi	• Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (5017) • Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018)	95% 57%	88% 50%	22% 50%	4% 12%
Missouri	• Missouri Educator Gateway Assessments (MEGA): Elementary Education Multi-Content	94%	70%	-	-
North Carolina	• Pearson General Curriculum	84%	53%	15%	21%
Oklahoma	-	-	-	-	-
South Carolina	• Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001)	82%	52%	30%	10%

* Meaning test takers who fail their first test attempt and do not attempt to take the test again.

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State	Test(s) Required	Best Attempt Pass Rate	First-Time Pass Rate	Walk Away Rate*	Three or More Attempts
Tennessee	• Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (5017) • Praxis Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018)	97% 84%	91% 67%	27% 21%	2% 16%
Texas	• Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES) Core Subjects EC-6 (291)	87%	71%	-	-
Virginia	• Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001)	87%	57%	22%	8%
West Virginia	• Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001)	82%	39%	16%	20%

Source: *National Council on Teacher Quality (2025)*.

Findings and Analysis – Teacher Licensure Exam Requirements and Legislative Proposals

During the 2026 legislative session, lawmakers in the Mississippi House passed House Bill 1528 to update teacher licensure exam requirements. However, the measure ultimately died in the Senate without a hearing after passing the lower chamber. The bill would remove the minimum ACT/SAT score, Praxis passing score, and 3.0 GPA requirement for entry into educator preparation programs for both traditional and nontraditional teaching routes, instead deferring to standards set by the State Board of Education and national accrediting bodies. As an alternative, participants can complete two semesters of six-hour internships and have up to 15 credit hours count toward a provisional teaching license, with these hours potentially applicable to a Master of Arts in Teaching degree.

In North Carolina, lawmakers considered Senate Bill 840 (2026) to amend teacher licensure requirements, which died in committee. The bill would have repealed the requirement that prospective teachers take standardized tests to be admitted to educator preparation programs. It would also allow applicants to fulfill examination obligations at any point before or during the third year of licensure, without the prior requirement that the exam be taken at least once in the first year. Furthermore, for teachers holding a limited license, if they have available growth data in the state monitoring system and demonstrate a positive growth score in two of the three most recent years, the state board must convert their limited license to a continuing professional license, waiving the standard examination requirement.