

Your Question:

You asked for policy examples that address barriers to the PRAXIS exam for educators.

Our Response:

Teacher certification and ways to expand pathways to get qualified teachers into the classroom has been top of mind for many policy makers for many years. When considering policies around licensure, policymakers balance the need to fill vacant positions with the need to maintain a highly qualified teacher workforce. We have collected broader efforts to recruit and retain teachers in our [50 state comparison](#) on teacher recruitment and retention. There, you'll find efforts to create new pathways into the profession and other state actions to recruit and retain educators such as teacher leader licenses, induction and mentoring efforts, and financial incentives.

Candidate assessment is a tool that policy makers have used to ensure a high level of quality and skill of teachers entering the classroom. However, some educators and policymakers have raised [concerns](#) that teacher licensure exams may not be an effective tool for measuring quality and that these exams may be unintentionally keeping talented teachers out of the classroom. There is also [evidence](#) these exams may be negatively impacting efforts to diversify the teacher workforce. In contrast with efforts to remove testing barriers, recent [studies](#) have found that licensure assessments tend to be positively associated with student outcomes.

Another barrier associated with licensure assessment can be the cost of exams. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) published a [blog post](#) outlining some of the work states are doing to subsidize licensure testing for teachers. In response to concerns about cost and otherwise excluding teachers who may be able to prove they are qualified to teach in alternate way, some states have established [licensure exam exemptions](#) to remove a potential barrier for qualified individuals who can prove their qualifications through other metrics.

Below you'll find a review of state efforts to address barriers for aspiring educators such as providing alternative assessment approach instead of a traditional licensure exam. Most of these examples are from years impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic policies to address teacher shortages, as this is when most recent actions in this area were implemented.

Recent State Examples for Alternative Pathways for a Teacher Licensure

- **California A.B. 130** (2021) exempts teacher candidates from the basic skills proficiency test requirement if they earn at least a letter grade of B in qualifying coursework. The bill also exempts an applicant who has demonstrated proficiency in the basic skills through a combination of qualifying coursework, passage of components of the state basic skills proficiency test and scores on certain tests. The bill also exempts candidates for certain credentials from the subject matter exam if they: 1) complete a subject matter program approved by the commission; 2) complete coursework that addresses each of the domains of the subject matter requirements or a professional program reviews transcripts and confirms that each domain

has been addressed; or 3) addresses each of the domains of subject matter requirements through a combination of subtests and coursework.

- **Colorado:** [H.B. 22-1220](#) (2022) awards stipends to approved teacher preparation programs to cover the costs for eligible students for assessments required for licensure and endorsements, as well as additional costs incurred such as travel and lodging. In addition, the bill amended requirements for a [multiple measures](#) approach to teacher licensure. Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, candidates for initial licensure may demonstrate professional competencies through an approved assessment, approved coursework, or grades earned within relevant courses.
- **Illinois:** [S.B. 2043](#) (2021) amends provisions for teacher certification, removing the requirement to demonstrate English language proficiency. Additionally, in 2019, the state passed [S.B. 1952](#), which permanently eliminated the test of basic skills as a requirement for educator licensure, including for out-of-state teachers.
- **Maryland** [H.B. 888](#) (2025) added an option to include passing a portfolio-based assessment of a nationally accredited teacher preparation program for an initial qualifications for an initial teacher certificate
- Starting in 2020, the **Massachusetts** Department of Elementary and Secondary Education began piloting alternatives to the [Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure](#) (MTEL), aiming “to create and evaluate increased flexibility in assessments for educator licensure.” The commissioner approved three alternative assessments to pilot. A recent study of the pilot found that teachers who passed the alternative assessment performed [comparably](#) to teachers who took the traditional MTEL assessments. Through October 2025, Massachusetts is seeking public [comment](#) on new guidelines for the alternative assessments to MTEL assessments. In addition, Massachusetts also offers [MTEL-Flex](#), which is a flexible testing option for eligible teacher candidates that came very close to the passing score of the MTEL test.
- **Nevada** [A.B. 286](#) (2025) authorizes the Nevada System of Higher Education to establish a pilot program for alternative methods for teacher competency assessment. The alternative assessment method must make competency determinations equivalent to the Principles of Learning and Teaching Test administered by the Educational Testing Service.
- **New Jersey** [A, 1669](#) (2024) waives the requirement to pass the PRAXIS exam to earn certification.
- **Oklahoma** [H.B. 3658](#) (2022) removes the requirement that teacher candidates pass the general education portion of the competency examination. The bill redefines “competency examination” as “the assessment required in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act for certification as a teacher and shall consist of tests over general education, professional education and subject areas as defined by the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability.”
- **Washington** [H.B. 1028](#) (2021) repeals requirements related to the educator performance assessment (edTPA). The bill also amends provisions regarding educator preparation program certification recommendations, specifying that candidates should demonstrate effectiveness through multiple measures and requires educator preparation programs to publish a list of program completion requirements.
- **Wyoming** [S.F. 86](#) (2025) directs the Professional Teaching Standards Board to create an alternative certification of teachers. The alternative certification is limited to the subject areas and grade levels an applicant has successfully completed. The alternative certification must require the applicant to pass a subject area exam, pedagogy exam, U.S. Constitution exam and a Wyoming Constitution exam.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [State edTPA Policy Overview](#): edTPA, 2025
- [National Scan of Pathways to Becoming a First-Time Teacher](#): New America, 2023