

REMOVING BARRIERS TO TEACHER LICENSURE

Eliminating Teacher Licensure Exams

BACKGROUND

In Minnesota, a teacher who has completed teacher preparation must pass licensure exams in order to obtain a professional license (Tier 3 license). Additionally, in order to move to a Tier 4 license, a teacher must pass basic skills exams in reading, writing, and math.

CONTENT AND PEDAGOGY EXAMS

- National research shows that licensure exams are not strong predictors of teaching effectiveness (Goldhaber 2007; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007).
- Research also shows that licensure exams do not predict teacher quality (Angrist & Guryan, 2008; Shuls, 2017).
- There is no strong correlation between teacher licensure scores and student achievement (Goldhaber, 2007; Goldhaber, Cowan, & Theobald, 2017; Goldhaber & Hansen, 2010).
- States that have eliminated content and/or pedagogy exams for completers of teacher preparation: Iowa (2022), New Mexico (2022), and Montana (with 3.0 GPA or higher) (2022).

BASIC SKILLS EXAMS

- Black and Latino teachers pass these exams at lower rates than their White peers, resulting in fewer teachers of color (Nettles, Scatton, Steinberg, & Tyler, 2011).
- The gap in pass rates represents test bias and a barrier to getting qualified teachers in the classroom (Bennett, McWhorter, & Kuykendall, 2006; Memory, Coleman, & Watkins, 2003; Petchauer, Baker-Doyle, Mawhinney, & Ciarkowski, 2015; Petchauer, 2012).
- States that have eliminated basic skills examinations: West Virginia (with 3.0 GPA or higher) (2022).

IMPACT

- 835 teachers currently hold a Tier 2 license because they are unable to pass content and pedagogy exams. Nearly 30% of these teachers are teachers of color.
- Removing exams will eliminate financial barriers to entering the profession (the average cost to take the content and pedagogy exams is \$214 and the average cost to take the basic skills exams is \$162).

SOURCES

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