

**Your Question:** You wanted examples of state policies designed to limit barriers to entry into the teaching profession. Specifically you were interested in: 1.) single and multi-tiered licensure systems, 2.) out-of-state teacher certification and reciprocity, and 3.) minority teacher recruitment and retention.

**Our Response:** Policy staff at the Education Commission of the States recently examined teacher shortages across the country and put together a series of reports that might be helpful to you. The first report “Teacher Shortages: What We Know,” addresses shortages more generally and provides summaries of the findings from teacher shortage task forces in seven states. The remaining five reports analyzed common state policy responses to teacher shortages. The reports can be accessed by clicking on the links below:

- [Teacher Shortages: What We Know](#)
- [Alternative Teacher Certification](#)
- [Financial Incentives](#)
- [Induction & Mentorship](#)
- [Evaluation & Feedback](#)
- [Teacher Leadership](#)

### Single and multi-tiered licensure systems

The National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification ([NASDTEC](#)) collects 50-state data on teacher certification. NASDTEC’s members are the representatives from state education agencies or teacher standards boards who oversee teacher licensure. According to their [data on teaching certificates](#), multi-tiered licensure systems consisting of at least three tiers are common throughout the states. Despite the trend towards multi-tiered licensure systems, however, many states maintain less complex systems consisting of one or two tiers.

As is demonstrated on the NASDTEC data referenced above, the qualifications for entrance into a tier and advancement to the next also vary quite significantly. According to [this American Institutes for Research report](#), many states have started to include output measures (such as impact on student growth and performance evaluations) in addition to input measures (such as induction, professional development and advanced degrees) when setting licensure tier requirements.

### State Examples

For your reference, **Table 1**, provided as an attachment to this document, outlines the licensure tiers in Connecticut and six additional states. You can also explore other variations to state licensure systems by clicking the links below:

- **Single certification system:** [Arizona](#), [Arkansas](#), [Idaho](#), [Florida](#) and [Minnesota](#)
- **Two tiers:** [District of Columbia](#), [North Carolina](#)
- **Three or more tiers:** [Maryland](#), [New Mexico](#), [Ohio](#), [Wisconsin](#)

#### Additional ECS Resources

- ✓ State Policy Database pages on [Teaching Quality, Certification and Licensure](#), [Alternative Certification](#), [Recruitment and Retention](#), [Recruitment and Retention for At-Risk Schools](#), and [Recruitment and Retention for High Needs Subjects](#)
- ✓ Research Studies Database page on [recruiting and retaining good teachers](#)

## Out-of-state teacher certification and reciprocity

Though the requirements to become a teacher vary by state, most states participate in teaching credential [reciprocity agreements](#) (interstate and regional) to ease the transfer of credentialed out-of-state teachers.

The [National Council on Teacher Quality](#) (p.68) argues that licenses should be made fully portable for **effective** teachers, subject to **some safeguards**.

They recommend states:

1. offer a standard license to fully certified teachers moving from other states, without relying on transcript analysis or recency requirements as a means of judging eligibility,
2. require evidence of effective teaching in previous employment,
3. uphold their standards for all teachers by insisting that certified teachers coming from other states meet their own testing requirements,
4. accord the same license to teachers from other states who completed an approved alternate route program as it accords teachers prepared in a traditional preparation program, and
5. offer a test-out option for any additional, reasonable coursework requirements.

### State Examples

For your reference, **Table 1**, provided as an attachment to this document, outlines licensure portability provisions and provides links to the NASDTEC “Jurisdiction Specific Requirements” in Connecticut and six additional states. Two additional state highlights are provided below:

#### Arizona

In 2016 the legislature passed [S.B. 1208](#), which, among other things, altered certification requirements for out-of-state teachers to improve recruitment. Out-of-state candidates are eligible for a standard teaching certificate if they: 1.) possess a valid certificate from another state that included passing that state’s knowledge and professional exams, 2.) are in good standing with the state, and 3.) possess a valid fingerprint clearance card. Out-of-state candidates who obtain a standard certificate through reciprocity do not have to take the state’s teacher proficiency exam.

In addition, to improve out-of-state recruitment of special education teachers, the Arizona State Board of Education recently changed certification requirements so that training for special education teachers is not based on disability category but rather on the level of student support needed, as is the case in a growing number of states. (See p. 12 of [this task force report](#) for a summary of this and other changes to certification requirements in the state.)

### Additional Resources on Teacher Licensure and Reciprocity

- ✓ [Tiered Licensure: Connecting Educator Effectiveness Policies](#) (AIR, 2013)
- ✓ [Promises to Keep: Transforming Educator Preparation to Better Serve a Diverse Range of Learners](#) (CCSSO, 2015)
- ✓ [Strengthening State Teacher Licensure Standards to Advance Teaching Effectiveness](#) (AACTE, 2010)
- ✓ [Tiered Teacher Certification and Performance-Based Assessment](#) (REL Midwest, 2011)
- ✓ The National Council on Teacher Quality collects information on [state licensure requirements](#) and [licensure reciprocity](#) that might also be helpful to you. The information can be filtered by sub-issue, state and year.
- ✓ Forty-seven states plus D.C. and Guam have NASDTEC interstate agreements in place. State-specific details can be accessed [here](#).
- ✓ [National Board Certificates](#) are recognized in most states. Teachers with these certificates have greater ease transferring credentials from one state to the next.

## Indiana

Indiana's 2015 [Interim Study Committee of Education](#) identified a subject-area specific shortage in the state and recommended, among other things, improved licensure reciprocity with other states (p. 4). In 2016, the legislature passed [H.B. 1005](#), which among other things, altered certification requirements for out-of-state teachers to improve recruitment. Out-of-state candidates are eligible for a teaching certificate if they: 1.) hold a valid teaching license issued by another state in the same content area or areas for which the individual is applying for a license; and 2.) were required to pass a content licensure test to obtain the license. The law provides that if the individual has less than three years of full-time teaching experience, the individual is granted an initial practitioner's license and if the individual has at least three years of full-time teaching experience, the individual is granted a practitioner's license.

## Oklahoma

Oklahoma's 2015 [Teacher Shortage Task Force](#) identified a statewide teacher shortage and provided a host of recommendations to address the shortage. (See also this 2014 [Oklahoma Educator Workforce Shortage Task Force Initial Report](#) for additional findings/recommendations.) In 2016, the legislature passed [H.B. 2946](#) which modified certification requirements to help address shortages. The bill requires the state Board of Education to issue a certificate to teach to a person holding an out-of-country certificate or a person who has completed a competency examination used in the majority of other states or comparable customized exam. The bill specifies that the certificate to teach must only be for subject areas and grade levels that correspond with a certification area used in Oklahoma. The bill also removes the requirement that a person who holds a valid out-of-state or out-of-country certificate must complete five years of successful teaching experience to be eligible for a license without completing competency exams.

For more changes to state policy related to teacher licensure and reciprocity, see [this policy database](#) page.

## Minority teacher recruitment and retention

### Recruitment

Recent research has identified a number of strategies for improving minority teacher recruitment, including approaches that leverage 1.) reporting and data, 2.) financial investments, and 3.) preparation pathways.

#### 1. Reporting & Data

- Require teacher preparation programs to publicly report information on teacher candidate outcomes disaggregated by race;
- Require schools and districts to publicly report on the race and ethnicity of teachers;
- Offer forums for teachers of color to gather and reflect on their own pathway into teaching and generate new ideas for recruiting future colleagues.

#### 2. Financial Investments

- Invest in and support high-quality teacher education programs at historically black colleges and universities and public colleges and universities serving large numbers of minority students;
- Provide generous scholarship support to future teachers of color that are tied to the effectiveness of the training program and the performance of the teacher candidates;
- Improve compensation packages to attract the brightest, most resilient people of color into the teaching profession with the aim of ensuring that teachers of color are paid comparable to other jobs with similar knowledge, skills, and responsibilities.

### 3. Preparation Pathways

- Support “grow your own” teacher preparation programs and career ladders for educational aides and paraprofessionals seeking to become teachers;
- Ensure that alternative certification programs are affordable to a wide range of nontraditional candidates by limiting university courses and learning experiences to those that are essential to beginning teachers;
- Develop a comprehensive system of incentives and supports for recruiting and supporting prospective teacher candidates of color from high school through college. Recruitment efforts should start at least as early as high school, as students who aspire to teach while in high school become teachers at a higher rate than students who did not express teaching aspirations;
- Encourage school- or community-based teacher preparation pathways.

#### Testing Requirements and Cut Scores

The lower performance of minorities on licensure tests may screen them out of the pool of potential teachers. A [national analysis](#) of more than 300,000 Praxis test-takers who completed the paper-based test between November 2005 and November 2009 found a 41.4% pass rate gap between African-American and Caucasian test-takers in math and a 40.8% pass rate gap between African-American and Caucasian test-takers in reading.

There is no national cut score for licensure exams, resulting in [variation](#) amongst states. While higher cut scores pose barriers to minority teacher candidates, [one study](#) found that raising cut scores in one state would eliminate more effective teachers than ineffective teachers and would not improve teacher quality.

#### Retention

Given the potential for [positive effects](#) of minority teachers on minority students and [research](#) demonstrating that minority teachers are more likely to move schools or exit the profession, minority teacher retention is also crucial.

[Research](#) from 2010 indicates that a handful of innovative preparation programs that explicitly prepare and support teachers of color to work in urban schools have contributed to retention rates that are significantly higher than those for the overall teacher workforce. However, more research is needed to verify the impact of these programs and to specify the programs characteristics that contribute to the retention of teachers of color. Other [research](#) indicates that working conditions, especially “the level of collective faculty decision-making influence in the school and the degree of individual instructional autonomy held by teachers in their classrooms,” may be strong factors influencing minority teachers’ choice to remain at a school.

#### Additional Resources on Minority Teacher Recruitment and Retention

- ✓ [The State of Teacher Diversity in American Education](#) (Shanker Institute, 2015)
- ✓ [The Challenge of Recruiting and Hiring Teachers of Color: Lessons from Six High Performing, High-Poverty, Urban Schools](#) (Harvard School of Education, 2015)
- ✓ [Closing Gaps: Diversifying Minnesota’s Teacher Workforce](#) (Educators 4 Excellence, 2015)
- ✓ [America’s Leaky Pipeline for Teachers of Color: Getting More Teachers of Color into the Classroom](#) (CAP, 2014)
- ✓ [Teacher Diversity Revisited](#) (CAP, 2014)
- ✓ [The Student Has Become the Teacher: Tracking the Racial Diversity and Academic Composition of the Teacher Supply Pipeline](#) (IERC, 2013)
- ✓ [Increasing Teacher Diversity: Strategies to Improve the Teacher Workforce](#) (CAP, 2011)
- ✓ [Recruitment, Retention and the Minority Teacher Shortage](#) (CPRE, 2011)

## State Task Force Reports

### Colorado

In December 2014, Colorado's [minority teacher representation study](#) recommended:

- The state department of education study whether there are differences in teacher test pass rates by race/ethnicity, and whether the tests, or aspects of the tests, are barriers for minority teacher candidates.
- If evidence of barriers is found, then the department should review the tests for cultural bias, validity, and reliability as indicators of teacher preparation and success.
- If the tests are deemed valid, reliable predictors of educator effectiveness, and if there are still disparities in pass rates between racial/ethnic groups, then the focus should shift to helping minority candidates understand and effectively prepare for the tests.
  - This preparation could take the form of classes, coaching, tutoring, or other study strategies.

Additionally, the study noted that:

- Support for students that struggle with certification exams might include non-traditional certification criteria such as performance evaluations and individual portfolios.
- Oregon and **Connecticut** are examples of best practices in policies and initiatives related to minority teacher recruitment and retention (p. 57-61). However, the research indicates that because **Connecticut** has not seen much return on test preparation efforts, focus has shifted away from the strategy.

### Oregon

In July 2015, the Oregon Educator Equity Advisory Group released an "[Educator Equity Report](#)" that proposed to limit barriers associated with teacher tests by adopting the following strategies:

- Collaborating with deans and directors of educator prep programs when considering national accreditation to ensure that institutions are not required to increase GPA requirements or test scores for program applicants,
- Providing future candidates with free access to test preparation materials and workshops,
- Continuing to monitor potential biases in the EdTPA, a newly required performance assessment (see a summary of New York's dilemma relating to the use of a performance assessment for teachers [here](#)).

In addition, in June 2015, the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission voted to eliminate the rule requiring the passage of a Basic Skills Test for teacher licensure (see p. 38).

**Table 1: Licensure Tiers, Reciprocity, Assessments – Selected State Comparison**

The table below provides a glimpse of the licensure requirements in seven states: Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island. The summaries for out-of-state teacher certification and reciprocity were pulled directly from the National Council on Teacher Quality’s [state policy database](#). Detailed information from the state departments of education can be accessed by clicking the “Details” hyperlink under each summary. Due in large part to the nuances and ongoing changes to state licensure requirements, we cannot guarantee that this information is all-inclusive. We have provided what we believe is accurate to the best of our ability within the given time constraints.

State	Licensure Tiers	Out-of-state Teacher Certification and Reciprocity	New Teacher Assessments
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Colorado</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency License</li> <li>• Initial License</li> <li>• Professional License</li> <li>• Master Certificate</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p>Participant in the <a href="#">NASDTEC Interstate Agreement</a> (click link for state-specific information)</p> <p>Out-of-state teachers are eligible for Colorado's professional license if they hold a comparable certificate and have at least three years of "continuous, successful, evaluated experience" as a teacher. The state does not specifically require evidence of effective teaching during previous employment in its reciprocity policy. The state grants waivers for its licensing tests to out-of-state teachers with three years of teaching experience.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PLACE</li> <li>• PRAXIS Subject Assessment</li> </ul> <p>Candidates for initial educator licenses in Colorado may be required to take and pass one or more of the <a href="#">PLACE</a> assessments. For certain educator endorsements, candidates take the <a href="#">Praxis Subject Assessment</a>.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Connecticut</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim Initial Educator</li> <li>• Interim Provisional Educator</li> <li>• Initial Educator</li> <li>• Provisional Educator</li> <li>• Professional Educator</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p>Participant in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement</p> <p>Out-of-state educators may be exempt from Board-approved assessment requirements, if they meet the following criteria: Hold a valid certificate in another state that is equivalent to at least a Connecticut initial educator certificate AND have one of the following: 1. Three years of successful appropriate experience in the same state (outside CT) in the endorsement requested within the past</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRAXIS Subject Assessment</li> </ul> <p>Applicants seeking an endorsement for which a subject area test has been adopted take the Praxis Subject Assessments. Additional tests are required of applicants seeking special endorsements.</p> <p>The state no longer requires applicants to take the Praxis Core Academic Skills Test. However, Praxis Core Academic Skills tests</p>

State	Licensure Tiers	Out-of-state Teacher Certification and Reciprocity	New Teacher Assessments
		<p>10 years; OR 2. A master’s degree in the academic subject area for which Connecticut certification is being requested. Pedagogical degrees in the subject area (e.g., physical education, elementary education, special education, etc.) do not meet the requirements of the exemption. Out-of-state applicants who meet all criteria except for Connecticut's assessment requirements may be issued a one-year, nonrenewable interim certificate.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p>may still be required for state-approved educator preparation programs</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>
<p><b>Delaware</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency</li> <li>• Initial</li> <li>• Continuing</li> <li>• Advanced</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p>Participant in the <a href="#">NASDTEC Interstate Agreement</a> (click link for state-specific information)</p> <p>Teachers with current, comparable out-of-state certificates are eligible for a continuing license. The state does not mandate additional coursework or impose recency requirements; rather, requires that all out-of-state teachers (both traditional and alternate routes) have at least three years of "successful" experience. This can be demonstrated by submitting two satisfactory evaluations from the other jurisdiction that Delaware finds are equivalent to the summative evaluations required of a Delaware teacher. The state allows a waiver for its licensing tests to any out-of-state teacher who has passed a test in a previous state, regardless of whether he or she has met its passing scores.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRAXIS Core Academic Skills</li> <li>• PRAXIS Subject Assessment</li> </ul> <p>All candidates seeking initial licensure/certification in Delaware, with the exception of out-of-state educators holding a full and current license/certificate, must meet the established qualifying scores on the PRAXIS Core Academic Skills test or on some combination of exams that have been deemed <a href="#">exemption options</a> by the Delaware Department of Education. For certain educator endorsements, candidates take the Praxis Subject Assessment.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>
<p><b>Massachusetts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Temporary</li> <li>• Preliminary</li> </ul>	<p>A participant in the <a href="#">NASDTEC Interstate Agreement</a> (click link for state-specific</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)</li> </ul>

State	Licensure Tiers	Out-of-state Teacher Certification and Reciprocity	New Teacher Assessments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial</li> <li>Professional</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p>information)</p> <p>Teachers with valid out-of-state certificates may be eligible for Massachusetts's Temporary License, or the state's Initial License. The state does not require evidence of effective teaching during previous employment in its reciprocity policy. The state requires that all teachers meet its own passing scores on licensing tests; out-of-state teachers are allowed one year to meet its testing requirements.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p><a href="#">This chart</a> provides general information on the MTEL tests that are currently offered to meet the subject matter test requirement for each license. Additional requirements for a license, such as passing the Communication and Literacy Skills test, may need to be met.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>
New Jersey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Certificate of Eligibility</li> <li>Certificate of Eligibility with Advanced Setting</li> <li>Provisional</li> <li>Standard</li> <li>Non-citizen standard</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p>A participant in the <a href="#">NASDTEC Interstate Agreement</a> (click link for state-specific information)</p> <p>Teachers with valid out-of-state certificates are eligible for New Jersey's standard license. Does not require evidence of effective teaching during previous employment in its reciprocity policy. The state allows a waiver for its subject-matter test if the out-of-state teacher possesses an equivalent certificate and endorsement and was required to pass a subject-matter test in that previous state. Those who have not taught successfully for three years under their out-of-state certificate must meet New Jersey's minimum GPA requirement of 3.0. Successful teaching experience is documented by a letter from the applicant's supervisor or district representative.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRAXIS CORE Academic Skills or top 1/3 on SAT, ACT or GRE</li> <li>PRAXIS Subject Assessment</li> </ul> <p>Applicants for New Jersey licensure in subject teaching fields and elementary education must pass the appropriate PRAXIS Subject Assessment/Specialty Area test(s). Any candidate applying for a certificate of eligibility (CE) on or after September 1, 2015 must meet the basic skills requirement. A candidate may meet the requirement by passing a Commissioner-approved test of basic skills (Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading, Writing and Math), or scoring in the top one-third percentile on the SAT, ACT, or GRE for the year the test was taken.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>

State	Licensure Tiers	Out-of-state Teacher Certification and Reciprocity	New Teacher Assessments
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>New York</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial</li> <li>• Professional</li> <li>• Provisional</li> <li>• Permanent</li> <li>• Transitional</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Not a participant</a> in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement (click link for state-specific information)</p> <p>Out-of-state teachers are eligible for New York's initial certificate, if they have three years of experience within five years of the application date. Candidates may also apply for the professional certificate. The state does not require evidence of effective teaching during previous employment in its reciprocity policy. Out-of-state teachers must meet New York's passing scores on licensing tests. The state allows candidates to teach on a conditional initial certificate for one year to pass the edTPA test. To qualify for licensure in New York, out-of-state teachers must also have earned at least a 2.5 GPA, and have completed several workshops in areas such as child abuse identification and school violence prevention. According to New York's reciprocity requirements, the state "cannot comment on an applicant's eligibility for certification through reciprocity until [it has reviewed their credentials]." Transcripts are required for all candidates.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating All Students (EAS) test</li> <li>• Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST)</li> <li>• edTPA,</li> <li>• Content Specialty Test(s) (CST) in their area of certification.</li> </ul> <p>New York State candidates for a first Initial teaching certificate in most certificate areas must achieve passing scores on the Educating All Students (EAS) test, the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST), edTPA, and the Content Specialty Test(s) (CST) in their area of certification.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Rhode Island</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initial</li> <li>• Professional</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	<p>A participant in the <a href="#">NASDTEC Interstate Agreement</a> (click link for state-specific information)</p> <p>Out-of-state teachers with comparable, valid licenses may apply for full Rhode Island certification, without specifying any additional coursework or recency requirements to determine eligibility. The state does not require evidence of effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRAXIS Subject Assessment</li> </ul> <p>Applicants take the associated Praxis Subject Assessment for their certification area.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>

State	Licensure Tiers	Out-of-state Teacher Certification and Reciprocity	New Teacher Assessments
		<p>teaching during previous employment in its reciprocity policy. The state does not grant any waivers on its testing requirements, and all out-of-state teachers, no matter how many years of experience they have, must meet Rhode Island's passing scores on licensing tests.</p> <p><a href="#">Details</a></p>	

Sources: [Teaching Certificates](#) (National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, 2014; degree requirements, preparation requirements and the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement classifications for each tier in each state can be accessed by opening the excel doc. at the provided link); [Teaching Degrees by State](#) (Teach Tomorrow, 2016); [Licensure Reciprocity by State](#) (National Council on Teacher Quality, 2015; Primary sources can be retrieved by clicking on each state's info. page); [Required Examinations](#) (National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, 2015)