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ABSTRACT

Information on competency testing for teacher certification is reprinted exactly from four pages (70-71, 129-130) of a National Center for Education Statistics Publication (volume I of "The Condition of Education: Elementary and Secondary Education 1988," edited by J. D. Stern.) As of the fall of 1987, 45 states had enacted competency testing programs as part of the process of initially certifying teachers. In 31 states, regulations also required that students take an examination in order to be admitted to a teacher education program. Briefly described are subject coverage of competency tests, attitudes toward competency testing, and alternative routes to certification. A United States map is used to illustrate which states have and have not enacted testing programs for initially certifying teachers. In addition, a table lists the year each state enacted a testing program, the year the program became effective, and the test used. (JDD)

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Competency Testing for Teacher Certification

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# Information on Personnel Supply and Demand

## COMPETENCY TESTING FOR TEACHER CERTIFICATION

The following information is from:

Stern, J. D. (Ed.). (1988). The condition of education: Elementary and secondary education 1988, Volume I. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, pp. 70-71, 129-130. ED 294332

- By fall of 1987, 45 States had enacted competency testing programs as part of the process of initially certifying teachers.
- In 31 States, regulations had also required that students take an examination in order to be admitted to a teacher education program.

The States have taken the lead in the current educational reform movement and have been particularly active in seeking ways to improve the quality of teachers in elementary and secondary schools. To screen new teacher candidates, most States use competency testing, which had its beginnings among Southern States in the mid- to late 1970s. With these tests, States hope to exclude teaching candidates deficient in basic skills and knowledge.

One subject of debate concerns what competency tests should cover. No nationally accepted test exists, so some States use commercially developed tests, and some use tests of their own design. All tests cover basic skills, subject matter, pedagogy (i.e., teaching methods), or a combination.

While no one agrees which test or type of test is most suitable for competency testing, the concept of testing is generally viewed positively by the major teachers' unions and by teachers themselves.<sup>1</sup> The Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy recently proposed a three-stage voluntary assessment process covering subject matter, education courses, and teaching performance, all under the aegis of a National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.<sup>2</sup>

Many States, perceiving a drop in the number and quality of graduates from teacher education programs, have created alternative routes to certification. The vast majority of teachers, however, will continue to come from traditional postsecondary schools of education. But one striking phenomenon that has become more prevalent in the 1980s is State requirements a student must meet just to be *admitted* to teacher training programs. Thirty-one States required or were developing a competency test for admission to undergraduate or 5-year teacher education programs as of June 1987.

<sup>1</sup> Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and Louis Harris and Associates, *The American Teacher*, 1985 (New York City: 1986).

<sup>2</sup> Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy, *A Nation Prepared*, 1986.

SOURCES: Council of Chief State School Officers, *Education in the States, Volume 1*, 1987 Education Commission of the States; personal communication with the author. See also U.S. Department of Education, Office of Research, *What's Happening in Teacher Testing—1987*, August 1987.

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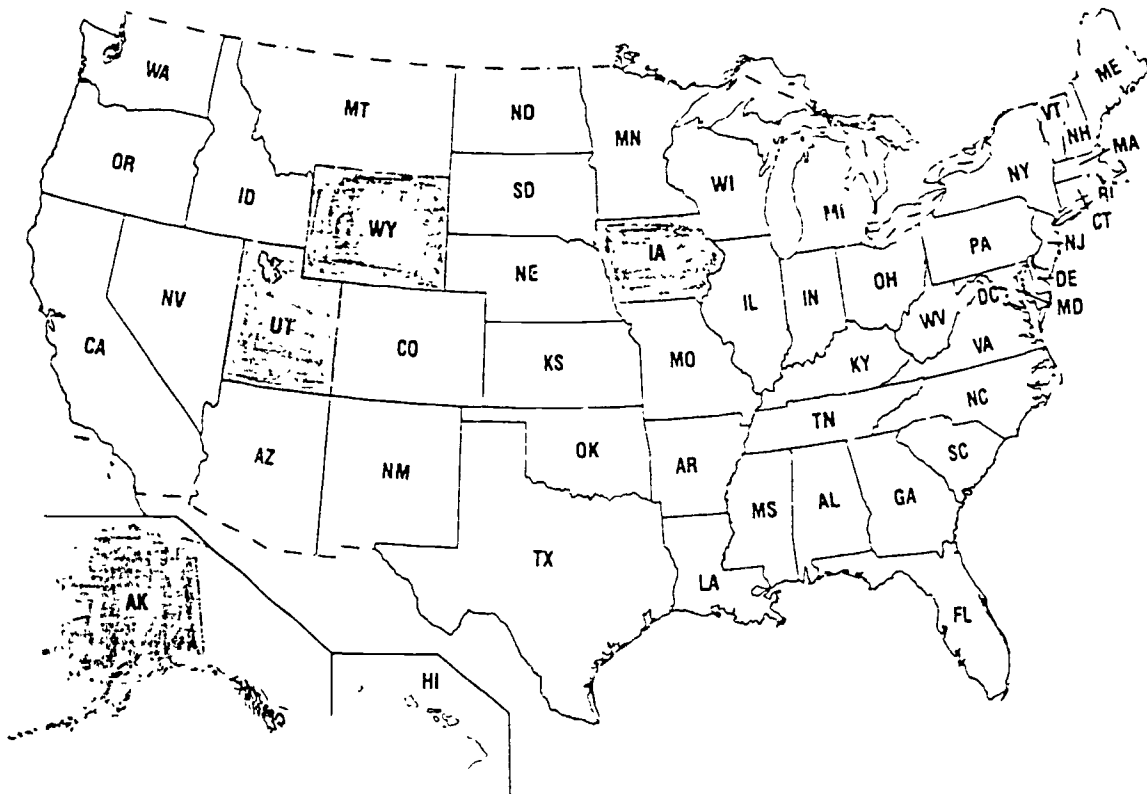
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**States that have enacted testing programs for initially certifying teachers: Fall 1987**



States with testing programs

States without testing programs

SOURCE: Office of Research, *What's Happening in Teacher Testing—1987* Education Commission of the States, personal communication with the author

Teacher Tests/8

States that have enacted testing programs for initially certifying teachers: Fall 1987

State	Enacted	Effective	Test used <sup>1</sup>
Alabama	1980	1981	State
Arizona	1980	1980	State
Arkansas	1979	1983	NTE
California	1981	1982	CBEST
Colorado	1981	1983	CAT
Connecticut	1982	1985	State
Delaware	1982	1983	PPST
Florida	1978	1980	State
Georgia	1975	1980	State
Hawaii	1986	1986	NTE
Idaho	1987	1988	NTE
Illinois	1985	1988	State
Indiana	1984	1985	NTE
Kansas	1984	1986	NTE and PPST
Kentucky	1984	1985	NTE
Louisiana	1977	1978	NTE
Maine	1984	1988	NTE
Maryland	1986	1986	NTE
Massachusetts	1985	(?)	(?)
Michigan	1986	1991	(?)
Minnesota	1986	1988	PPST
Mississippi	1975	1977	NTE
Missouri	1985	1988	(?)
Montana	1985	1986	NTE
Nebraska	1984	1989	(?)

More on next page

Teacher Tests/ #8

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States that have enacted testing programs for initially certifying teachers: Fall 1987—Continued

State	Enacted	Effective	Test Used <sup>1</sup>
Nevada	1984	1989	PPST and State
New Hampshire	1984	1985	PPST and NTE
New Jersey	1984	1985	NTE
New Mexico	1984	1983	NTE
New York	1980	1984	NTE
North Carolina	1964	1964	NTE
North Dakota	1986	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
Ohio	1986	1987	NTE
Oklahoma	1980	1982	State
Oregon	1984	1985	CBEST
Pennsylvania	1985	1987	State
Rhode Island	1985	1986	NTE
South Carolina	1979	1982	NTE and State
South Dakota	1985	1986	NTE
Tennessee	1980	1981	NTE
Texas	1981	1986	State
Virginia	1979	1980	NTE
Washington	1984	( <sup>2</sup> )	( <sup>2</sup> )
West Virginia	1982	1985	State
Wisconsin	1986	1990	( <sup>2</sup> )

<sup>1</sup>Tests:

CAT = California Achievement Test;  
 CBEST = California Basic Skills Test,  
 NTE = National Teacher Examination;  
 PPST = Pre-Professional Skills Test;  
 State = State-developed test.

<sup>2</sup>To be determined.

SOURCES. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Research, *What's Happening in Teacher Testing—1987*, August 1987. Education Commission of the States; personal communication with the author

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Teacher Tests/ #8