

Lower admissions selectivity and high pass rates

Case study: Western Connecticut State University

Western Connecticut State University illustrates that institutions don't have to be among the elite to achieve excellence.

A strong partnership with the local school districts led **Western Connecticut State University (WCSU)** to create a rigorous interdisciplinary major focused on literacy, math, and science for its elementary teacher candidates. The program is specifically designed to incorporate the content knowledge needed to teach state content standards. As a result, according to Dr. Catherine O'Callaghan, Chair of the Education & Educational Psychology Department at Western Connecticut State University, “our students are in huge demand because they have strong background knowledge.”

WCSU's education programs have a longstanding partnership with local school districts. When the Danbury Public Schools and Bethel Public Schools expressed the idea that incoming teachers should have stronger STEM preparation, WCSU listened. The school's education department collaborated with the math department and the two school districts in 2010 to create a curriculum that addresses content areas identified as priorities by the school districts. The collaboration continues to this day, as school district content experts, including the math coordinator for one of the districts, teach in the program, and elementary ed students hold events such as an annual math night for parents of the districts' students. Partnership with districts “allows candidates in our program to see the connection with what they are learning in our coursework and what they will be teaching,” says Dr. O'Callaghan.

To support teacher candidates in completing the rigorous program, WCSU assists in a variety of ways. Course instructors can alert the department chair that a student is struggling, in which case the student academic review committee meets and creates a mandatory plan of remediation that can include writing or math support, as well as preparation for licensure exams. Program staff examine student data twice a year to look for areas where support is needed. As a result, the educator preparation program created study modules for licensure exams five years ago and is now planning to add a math bootcamp that will be available to entering freshmen. In addition, the minimum GPA for admission to teacher education was raised to 3.0 to ensure that students are prepared for the program. All of these forms of

support are especially important because most initial certification students come from low-income families and need to pay their own way. If students fail their licensure exams they may not be able to afford a second try, so it is especially important that WCSU sets them up for success the first time.

While infusing WCSU's elementary teacher preparation program with more content knowledge has made it more challenging for some future teachers, the payoff is clear. Dr. O'Callaghan says that "students come in saying that they hate math and science but leave loving it" because of their deep understanding of STEM and its importance for elementary teachers. WCSU graduates also love how eager school districts are to hire them.

Western Connecticut State University's district partnerships and attention to student needs have led to clear success. **Unlike many other institutions that have lower admissions standards (as measured by both the admissions criteria for the preparation programs and the institution), the institution sees a first-attempt pass rate on the Praxis Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) exam of 58%, noticeably higher than the state's average of 40%.**

Western Connecticut State University is an urban, public institution with approximately 5,000 students.

Institutions that have lower admissions selectivity and exceed the state's average pass rate

The following 122 institutions across 31 states dispel the myth that only selective institutions can achieve high pass rates. These institutions have lower admissions selectivity, meaning that they earned a C, D, or F on NCTQ's Teacher Prep Review Admissions standard¹ – which considers both the selectivity of the institution and, in this case, the undergraduate elementary program – and their test takers earned a pass rate on the licensure test² that exceeds the state average.

Standout institutions in states included in the initial July 2021 data release

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
AK	Alaska Pacific University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Moderately selective*	75%	100%
AK	University of Alaska Southeast	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Less selective*	75%	81%
AR	Central Baptist College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective*	39%	91%
AZ	Pima Community College (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	63%	79%
AZ	Pima Community College (online) (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	63%	79%
AZ	Rio Salado College (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	63%	84%
AZ	Rio Salado College (online) (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	63%	82%
AZ	Scottsdale Community College (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	63%	81%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
CO	Colorado Mesa University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective	46%	48%
CO	University of Colorado Denver - ASPIRE (ALT) - Alt-cert	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective	46%	48%
CT	University of Bridgeport	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Not selective*	40%	41%
CT	Western Connecticut State University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective	40%	58%
DC	Moreland University (formerly TEACH-NOW) - Alt-cert	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Not selective	59%	71%
FL	Chipola College	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	38%
FL	Daytona State College	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Moderately selective	34%	47%
FL	Eastern Florida State College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	100%
FL	Florida SouthWestern State College	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	35%
FL	Florida State College at Jacksonville (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	60%
FL	Gulf Coast State College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	48%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
FL	Indian River State College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	35%
FL	Jacksonville University	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Less selective*	34%	50%
FL	Miami Dade College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	40%
FL	Northwest Florida State College	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	39%
FL	Santa Fe College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	60%
FL	South Florida State College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	34%
FL	Southeastern University	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Moderately selective	34%	40%
FL	St. Johns River State College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	38%
FL	St. Petersburg College	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	43%
FL	State College of Florida, Manatee-Sarasota (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	46%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
FL	The Baptist College of Florida	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective*	34%	50%
FL	Valencia College (CC)	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	37%
FL	Warner University	Composite - Florida Teacher Certification Examination (FTCE) Elementary Education (060) Test	Not selective	34%	63%
IA	Mount Mercy University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Moderately selective	81%	91%
IA	Waldorf University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Not selective	81%	84%
IL	Western Illinois University	Subtest - Subtest 1: Language and Literacy (197): 60 multiple-choice questions	Moderately selective	70%	74%
KS	Bethel College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Less selective*	90%	94%
KS	Fort Hays State University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Moderately selective	90%	91%
KS	Haskell Indian Nations University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Not selective*	90%	94%
KS	Kansas State University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Moderately selective	90%	93%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
KS	Washburn University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Moderately selective	90%	95%
KY	Kentucky Christian University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective	46%	46%
KY	Lindsey Wilson College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Less selective	46%	54%
LA	Louisiana Resource Center for Educators - Alt-cert	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Not selective	45%	50%
MA	Assumption College	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Moderately selective	50%	53%
MA	Bay Path University	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Moderately selective	50%	53%
MA	Eastern Nazarene College	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Moderately selective	50%	58%
MA	Lasell University (formerly Lasell College)	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Moderately selective*	50%	68%
MA	Merrimack College	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Moderately selective	50%	62%
MA	Salem State University	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Not selective*	50%	58%
MA	University of Massachusetts Boston	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Moderately selective*	50%	72%
MA	Wheaton College	Subtest - Mathematics subtest	Moderately selective*	50%	67%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
MD	Frostburg State University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Instructional Practice and Applications (5019) test	Not selective	90%	93%
MD	Goucher College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Instructional Practice and Applications (5019) test	Moderately selective*	90%	94%
MO	Culver-Stockton College	Subtest - 010 Elementary Education: Social Studies Subtest	Moderately selective*	70%	74%
MO	Park University	Subtest - 010 Elementary Education: Social Studies Subtest	Less selective	70%	71%
MO	St. Charles Community College (CC)	Subtest - 010 Elementary Education: Social Studies Subtest	Not selective	70%	74%
ND	Valley City State University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Moderately selective	87%	89%
NE	York College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Less selective*	90%	100%
NH	Rivier University (formerly Rivier College)	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Not selective	43%	54%
NJ	Centenary University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective	34%	40%
NJ	Drew University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective*	34%	52%
NJ	Rutgers University-Camden	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective*	34%	35%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
NM	Central New Mexico Community College (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	66%	71%
NM	San Juan College (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	66%	83%
NM	Santa Fe Community College (CC)	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Not selective	66%	76%
NV	Great Basin College (CC)	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Instructional Practice and Applications (5019) test	Moderately selective	86%	90%
NY	Cazenovia College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Less selective*	73%	73%
NY	Hartwick College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Less selective*	73%	88%
NY	Ithaca College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Moderately selective*	73%	86%
NY	Keuka College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Moderately selective	73%	81%
NY	Marist College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Moderately selective	73%	81%
NY	Nazareth College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Less selective	73%	85%
NY	SUNY Buffalo State College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Moderately selective	73%	74%
NY	SUNY College at Potsdam	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Moderately selective	73%	75%
NY	Utica College	Subtest - Part Two: Mathematics Subtest (222)	Moderately selective	73%	80%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
OH	Bluffton University	Subtest - Subtest 2 (Social studies, math, science and health, fitness and the arts) (019)	Moderately selective	72%	78%
OH	Cincinnati Christian University	Subtest - Subtest 2 (Social studies, math, science and health, fitness and the arts) (019)	Moderately selective*	72%	77%
OH	Lake Erie College	Subtest - Subtest 2 (Social studies, math, science and health, fitness and the arts) (019)	Moderately selective	72%	79%
OR	Bushnell University	Subtest - Subtest II 103 (Mathematics; Science; & the arts, health, and fitness)	Moderately selective*	80%	81%
PA	Clarion University of Pennsylvania	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Less selective	62%	64%
PA	Indiana University of Pennsylvania	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Moderately selective	62%	75%
PA	Kutztown University of Pennsylvania	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Moderately selective	62%	64%
PA	Lock Haven University	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Moderately selective	62%	65%
PA	Marywood University	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Moderately selective	62%	66%
PA	Reading Area Community College (CC)	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Not selective	62%	67%
PA	Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Moderately selective	62%	65%
PA	Thiel College	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Less selective	62%	65%
PA	Washington & Jefferson College	Subtest - Module 3 (Math, science and health)	Moderately selective	62%	68%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
SC	Coker University (formerly Coker College)	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Less selective*	52%	65%
SC	Newberry College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Less selective*	52%	64%
TN	King University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Less selective*	67%	72%
TN	Martin Methodist College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (5017) test	Less selective	93%	100%
TN	Martin Methodist College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Less selective	67%	86%
TN	Tusculum University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Moderately selective	67%	68%
TX	Alamo Colleges District (CC) - Alt-cert	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Not selective	71%	89%
TX	Dallas College Mountain View Campus (formerly Mountain View College) (CC)	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Not selective	71%	75%
TX	East Texas Baptist University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Less selective	71%	95%
TX	Howard Payne University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	82%
TX	McLennan Community College (CC)	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Not selective	71%	75%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
TX	Midwestern State University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	71%
TX	Region 10 Education Service Center - Alt-cert	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	88%
TX	Region 20 Education Service Center - Alt-cert	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	78%
TX	Sam Houston State University	Subtest - aSocial Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	74%
TX	Southwestern Adventist University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Not selective*	71%	79%
TX	Tarleton State University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	74%
TX	Texas A&M International University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Less selective	71%	72%
TX	Texas Lutheran University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	75%
TX	Texas Wesleyan University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	81%
TX	University of North Texas at Dallas	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Not selective*	71%	73%
TX	Wayland Baptist University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Not selective	71%	81%
TX	West Texas A&M University	Subtest - Social Studies Subtest (803)	Moderately selective	71%	71%
VT	Goddard College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective*	56%	64%
VT	Green Mountain College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Not selective*	56%	67%
VT	Saint Michael's College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective*	56%	61%

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
WV	Alderson Broaddus University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective*	39%	44%
WV	Appalachian Bible College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Not selective*	39%	44%
WV	Fairmont State University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective	39%	44%
WV	Ohio Valley University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Less selective*	39%	40%
WV	West Liberty University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects (5001) test	Moderately selective	39%	44%

Standout institutions in states that submitted data after July 2021

State	Institution	Test or subtest used for comparison	Admissions selectivity	Test or subtest used for comparison	Test or subtest used for comparison
WI	Alverno College	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Not selective*	76%	77%
WI	Cardinal Stritch University	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Moderately selective	76%	77%
WI	University of Wisconsin-Superior	Composite - Praxis II Elementary Education: Content Knowledge (5018) test	Moderately selective	76%	90%

ENDNOTES

1. Institutions where the undergraduate elementary program earned a C are identified as “Moderately selective,” those earning a D are identified as “Less selective” and those earning an F are identified as “Not selective.” For more on the methodology of the Admissions standard, visit <https://www.nctq.org/review/standard/Admissions#methodology>
2. When the state provided composite pass rate data, composite pass rates were used to identify strong institutions. When composite data was not available, analysis focused on the subtest that had the lowest state average pass rate, as this presumably is the test on which test takers face the greatest challenges.
3. In the absence of a selectivity rating on the Teacher Prep Review, an equivalent score (identified in the graph hover-over by an asterisk) was determined using institutional median SAT/ACT scores or Barron’s selectivity ratings
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