2012 State Teacher Policy Yearbook

Improving Teacher Preparation in Delaware



Acknowledgments

STATES

State education agencies remain our most important partners in this effort, and their continued cooperation has helped to ensure the factual accuracy of the final product. Although this year's edition did not require the extensive review that the comprehensive editions require, we still wanted to make sure that we captured all relevant policy changes and that states' perspectives were represented. Every state formally received a draft of the policy updates we identified in July 2012 for comment and correction; states also received a final draft of their reports a month prior to release. All but one state responded to our inquiries. We thank the states for their ongoing willingness to engage in dialogue with us.

FUNDERS

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Improving Teacher Preparation in Delaware

The 2012 State Teacher Policy Yearbook puts a spotlight on the critical issue of teacher preparation. The 2011 edition of the Yearbook provided a comprehensive review of all aspects of states' teacher policies, and although considerable progress was noted in areas related to teacher effectiveness, the same could not be said for teacher preparation. While many states have made advancements in teacher evaluation and tenure requirements, teacher preparation has yet to capture states' attention.

Good preparation does not guarantee that teachers will ultimately be effective, but there is much more that can be done to help ensure that new teachers are "classroom ready." This edition of the Yearbook offers states a roadmap of their teacher preparation policies, identifying priorities that need critical attention and also identifying low-hanging fruit, policy changes that states can implement in relatively short order.



Current Status of Delaware's Teacher Preparation Policy

Last year's State Teacher Policy Yearbook provided an in-depth analysis of each of the topics identified below. The 2012 score includes any policy changes identified in the last year. The n symbol indicates a score increase from 2011.

Yearbook Goal	Торіс	2012 Score
1-A	Admission into Preparation Programs	
1-B	Elementary Teacher Preparation	
1-C	Elementary Teacher Preparation in Reading Instruction	
1-D	Elementary Teacher Preparation in Mathematics	<u> </u>
1-E	Middle School Teacher Preparation	
1-F	Secondary Teacher Preparation	
1-G	Secondary Teacher Preparation in Science	
1-H	Secondary Teacher Preparation in Social Studies	
1-I	Special Education Teacher Preparation	
1-J	Assessing Professional Knowledge	0
1-K	Student Teaching	
1-L	Teacher Preparation Program Accountability	0



2012 Policy Update for Delaware

Based on a review of state legislation, rules and regulations, NCTQ has identified the following recent policy changes in Delaware:

Alternate Route to Certification

The state has a new alternate route to certification, the Delaware Transition to Teaching Partnership (DT3P), and it renewed Teach For America until 2015. In addition, the state now allows for a diversity of providers of its alternate routes, including "any individual, public or private educational association, corporation or institution" approved by the state to operate programs.

Delaware Response to Policy Update

States were asked to review NCTQ's identified updates and also to comment on policy changes related to teacher preparation that have occurred in the last year, pending changes or teacher preparation in the state more generally. States were also asked to review NCTQ's analysis of teacher preparation authority (See Figure 20).

Delaware was helpful in providing NCTQ with additional information about policy changes related to teacher preparation. Delaware noted that its Race to the Top grant outlines teacher preparation improvement efforts planned for 2013.

Delaware added that through Race to the Top and other federal and state grants, its Teacher & Leader Effectiveness Unit (TLEU) manages contracts with teacher preparation programs such as the University of Delaware's STEM Residency, Teach For America—DE and the DT3P program through the University of Delaware (under the ARTC umbrella program). Through funding, technical assistance and ongoing monitoring, these programs face strict accountability from the department of education. A similar program, Delaware Teaching Fellows, was discontinued last year after it did not meet core metrics.

Further, Delaware pointed out that it has become the first state agency to partner with Harvard's Strategic Data Project, with a statewide "Human Capital Diagnostic" due to be publicly reported in spring 2013, and the state indicated that it would "take this report under consideration when determining how best to apply the recommended strategies outlined by NCTQ."

Delaware was also helpful in providing NCTQ with further information about state authority for teacher preparation and licensing.

igure 1		/
Delivering well- prepared teachers	2012 Grade	2011 Grade
Alabama	В-	C
Alaska	F	F
Arizona	D-	D-
Arkansas	С	С
California	D	D
Colorado	D	D-
Connecticut	C+	C-
DELAWARE	D-	D-
District of Columbia	D	D
Florida	B-	B-
Georgia	С	С
Hawaii	D	D
Idaho	D	D
Illinois	D	D
Indiana	B-	C+
lowa	D	D
Kansas	D+	D+
Kentucky	C+	C-
Louisiana	C	C
Maine	D+	D
Maryland	D+	D+
Massachusetts	C+	C+
Michigan	D+	D+
Minnesota	C+	C
Mississippi	C	С
Missouri		
	D+	D+
Montana	F	F
Nebraska Nevada	D-	D-
	D-	D-
New Hampshire	C-	D D
New Jersey	C-	D+
New Mexico	D+ C-	D+
New York		D+
North Carolina	D-	D-
North Dakota	D	D
Ohio	C-	D+
Oklahoma	С	С
Oregon	D-	D-
Pennsylvania	С	С
Rhode Island	С	D+
South Carolina	C-	C-
South Dakota	D	D
Tennessee	B-	B-
Texas	C+	C+
Utah	D	D
Vermont	C-	D+
Virginia	C-	C-
Washington	D+	D+
West Virginia	C-	C-
Wisconsin	D+	D
Wyoming	F	F
Average State Grade	D+	D

COMING SOON

NCTQ Teacher Prep Review

Preparing teachers to be effective and successful in the classroom requires both the strong state policy framework described in the Yearbook and quality implementation by states' teacher preparation programs.

How are **Delaware's** programs doing? NCTQ will soon answer that question with our forthcoming review of the nation's higher education-based teacher preparation programs that produce 99 percent of traditionally-prepared teachers. The Review will find the programs that are doing the best job preparing tomorrow's educators, those that need to improve and those that need to be radically restructured.

The Review will be released in Spring 2013. Find out more at www.nctq.org/p/edschools.

For a sneak peek, see page 6.

Teacher Preparation Policy Checklist for States

1.	Raise admission standards.	 Require teacher candidates to pass a test of academic proficiency that assesses reading, writing and mathematics skills as a criterion for admission into teacher preparation programs. Require preparation programs to use a common test normed to the general college-bound population.
2.	Align teacher preparation with Common Core State Standards.	 Ensure that coursework and subject-matter testing for elementary teacher candidates are well aligned with standards. Ensure that teacher preparation programs prepare elementary teaching candidates in the science of reading instruction and require a rigorous assessment of reading instruction. Require teacher preparation programs to provide mathematics content specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers.
3.	Improve clinical preparation.	 Ensure that cooperating teachers have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness as measured by student learning. Require summative clinical experience for all prospective teachers that includes at least 10 weeks of full-time student teaching.
4.	Raise licensing standards.	 ✓ Eliminate K-8 generalist licenses. ✓ Require subject-matter testing for middle school teacher candidates. ✓ Require subject-matter testing for secondary teacher candidates. ✓ Require middle school and secondary science and social studies teachers to pass a test of content knowledge that ensures sufficient knowledge of the subjects taught.
5.	Don't lower the bar for special education teachers.	 ✓ Do away with K-12 special education teacher licenses. ✓ Require special education teachers to pass a subject-matter test for licensure that is no less rigorous than what is required of general education candidates.
6.	Hold teacher preparation programs accountable.	 Collect data that connect student achievement gains to teacher preparation programs. Gather other meaningful data that reflect program performance. Establish the minimum standard of performance for each category of data. Produce and publish an annual report card for each teacher preparation program.

Critical Issues for State Teacher Preparation Policy

Critical Attention: Admission into Teacher Preparation Programs



Delaware does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records.

The demands of K-12 classrooms today require teachers with strong academic backgrounds who can positively affect student learning. To ensure that such strong candidates enter classrooms, it is important to set rigorous standards for entry into the teacher pipeline. This begins with teacher preparation program admissions.

Looking to international examples, such top-performing countries as Finland and South Korea admit prospective teacher candidates from the top 10 percent of the college-going population. While a bar that high is a long way from average standards in the United States, it seems reasonable and appropriate that states should limit access to teacher preparation programs to those who are in the top half of the college-going population in terms of academic achievement.

Most states limit their academic screening to basic skills tests, which generally assess only middle school-level skills and which are generally only normed to the prospective teacher population.

At present, Delaware does not require prospective teachers to pass a test of academic proficiency as a criterion for admission to teacher preparation programs. Rather, the basic skills assessment requirement is delayed until teacher candidates are ready to apply for licensure.

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, **DELAWARE**, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming Illinois

NEXT STEPS FOR DELAWARE:

Require that teacher preparation programs screen candidates for academic proficiency prior to admission.

Teacher preparation programs that do not screen candidates invest considerable resources in individuals who may not be able to successfully complete the program and pass licensing tests. Candidates in need of additional support should complete remediation before entering the program to avoid the possibility of an unsuccessful investment of significant public tax dollars. Delaware should require candidates to pass a test of academic proficiency that assesses reading, mathematics and writing prior to program admission. Importantly, candidates should be permitted to submit comparable scores on such rigorous tests as the SAT/ACT/GRE.

Require that programs use a common admissions test normed to the general college-bound population. Delaware should require programs to use an assessment that demonstrates that candidates are academically competitive with all peers, regardless of their intended profession. Requiring a common test normed to the general college population would allow for the selection of applicants in the top half of their class while also facilitating program comparison.

Consider requiring candidates to pass subject-matter tests as a condition of admission into teacher programs.

In addition to ensuring that programs require a measure of academic performance for admission, Delaware might also want to consider requiring content testing prior to program admission as opposed to at the point of program completion. Program candidates are likely to have completed coursework that covers related test content in the prerequisite classes required for program admission. Thus, it would be sensible to have candidates take content tests while this knowledge is fresh rather than wait two years to fulfill the requirement, and candidates lacking sufficient expertise would be able to remedy deficits prior to entering formal preparation.

SNEAK PEEK: Teacher Prep Review

Are Delaware's undergraduate teacher preparation programs in the *Review* sufficiently selective?

57% are not sufficiently selective.

The *Review* will be released in Spring 2013. Find out more at www.nctq.org/p/edschools.

1. New Hampshire is in the process of adopting a requirement that will make the test a condition of admission.

PESTNORMED TO COLLEGE.
ADMISSION TO PREP PROPERTO Figure 2 Do states appropriately test teacher candidates' academic proficiency? Alabama Alaska Arizona Arkansas California П П Colorado Connecticut П DELAWARE П П District of Columbia Г П П Florida П П Georgia П П П Hawaii Idaho Illinois П П П Indiana П П Iowa П П П Kansas Kentucky П П П Louisiana П Maine Maryland Massachusetts П Michigan Minnesota Mississippi Missouri Montana П П Nebraska Nevada П П New Hampshire П New Jersey П Г П New Mexico П New York П П П North Carolina North Dakota Ohio П П Oklahoma Oregon П П П Pennsylvania Rhode Island П П South Carolina П П South Dakota П Tennessee Texas П Utah Vermont Virginia Washington West Virginia П Wisconsin Wyoming П 1 23 18 9

Critical Attention: Elementary Teacher Preparation



Delaware does not ensure that new elementary teachers are ready to teach to the Common Core

To be effective, elementary teacher candidates need liberal arts coursework relevant to the K-6 classroom, and they should also be required to pass a rigorous content test that ensures appropriate subject-matter knowledge.

The Common Core State Standards, adopted by nearly all states including Delaware, represent an effort to significantly raise expectations for the knowledge and skills American students will need for college readiness and global competitiveness. And Delaware, like all states, must ensure that its teachers are prepared to teach to these high standards.

Although a "standards-based" approach grants greater flexibility to teacher preparation programs regarding program design, it is difficult to monitor or enforce absent a rigorous test. Further, alignment of preparation program instruction with student learning standards should be augmented with a broader and deeper content perspective than what will actually be taught in the elementary classroom.

Unfortunately, Delaware's policies fail to ensure that elementary teacher candidates will have the subject-area knowledge necessary to teach to these stan-

dards. The state does not require a subject-matter test that reports subscores in all areas, and its coursework requirements lack the specificity to guarantee relevancy to the elementary classroom. In addition, Delaware does not ensure that teachers will be adequately prepared in the science of reading instruction, another key element of the Common Core State Standards.

NEXT STEPS FOR DELAWARE:

Require elementary teacher candidates to pass a subject-matter test designed to ensure sufficient content knowledge of all subjects.

Delaware should ensure that its elementary content test is appropriately aligned with the Common Core State Standards and require separate, meaningful passing scores for each area on the test. Use of a composite passing score offers no assurance of adequate knowledge in each subject area. A candidate may achieve a passing score and still be seriously deficient in a particular subject area.

Require teacher preparation programs to provide mathematics content specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers and require candidates to pass a rigorous math assessment.

Although national standards for teachers adopted by Delaware require some knowledge in key areas of mathematics, the state should require teacher preparation programs to provide mathematics content specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers. This includes specific coursework in foundations, algebra and geometry, with some statistics. Delaware should also require a rigorous assessment that reports a separate subscore for and evaluates mathematics knowledge beyond an elementary school level and challenges candidates' understanding of underlying mathematics concepts.

DELAWARE, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota,

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado,

Alabama, California, Connecticut, Indiana, Minnesota, New Hampshire

Wisconsin, Wyoming

Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia,

Massachusetts

■ Require teacher candidates to pass a rigorous assessment in the science of reading instruction.

Delaware should require a rigorous reading assessment to ensure that its elementary teacher candidates are adequately prepared in the science of reading instruction before entering the classroom. The assessment should clearly test knowledge and skills related to the science of reading, and if it is combined with an assessment that also tests general pedagogy or elementary content, it should report a subscore for the science of reading specifically.

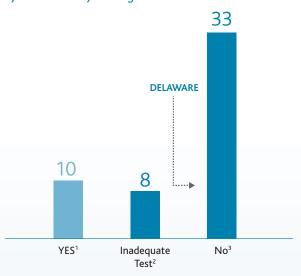
Ensure that teacher preparation programs deliver a comprehensive program of study in broad liberal arts coursework.

Delaware should either articulate a more specific set of standards or establish comprehensive coursework requirements for elementary teacher candidates that align with the Common Core Standards to ensure that candidates will complete coursework relevant to the common topics in elementary grades. An adequate curriculum is likely to require approximately 36 credit hours in the core subject areas of English, science, social studies and fine arts. Presently, Delaware does not specify any coursework requirements for general education or elementary teacher candidates, and the national standards for teachers adopted by the state fall far short of the mark by making no mention of important subject areas.

Require elementary teacher candidates to complete a content specialization in an academic subject area.

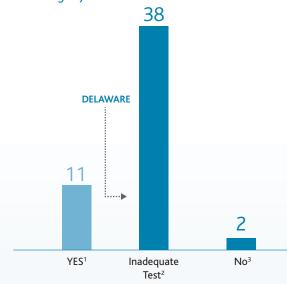
In addition to enhancing content knowledge, this requirement would ensure that prospective teachers in Delaware take higher-level academic coursework. This requirement also provides an important safeguard in the event that candidates are unable to successfully complete clinical practice requirements. With an academic concentration (or better still a major or minor), candidates who are not ready for the classroom and do not pass student teaching can still be on track to complete a degree.

Figure 3 Do states measure new teachers' knowledge of the science of reading?



- 1. Strong Practice: Alabama⁴, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Minnesota⁵, New Hampshire, New Mexico⁶, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Virginia, Wisconsin
- 2. California, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas
- 3. Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina⁷, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming
- 4. Alabama's reading test spans the K-12 spectrum.
- 5. Based on the limited information available about the test on Minnesota's website.
- 6. Test is under development and not yet available for review.
- 7. North Carolina has adopted a task force recommendation to require the Foundations of Reading test. Rules have yet to be promulgated, including whether the test will be required for initial licensure. Current rules require such tests for professional licensure only.

Figure 4 Do states measure new elementary teachers' knowledge of math?

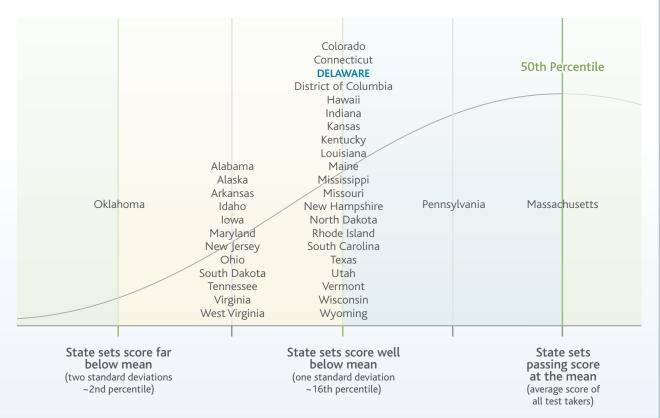


- 1. Strong Practice: Alabama, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont
- 2. Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Mexico, New York⁴, North Carolina⁵, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming
- 3. Montana, Nebraska
- 4. New York is in the process of developing a stand-alone math test.
- 5. North Carolina has adopted a task force recommendation to require the Massachusetts Test of General Curriculum, including the math subtest. Rules have yet to be promulgated, including whether the test will be required for initial licensure. Current rules require such tests for professional licensure only.
 - 1. Testing is not required for initial licensure.
 - 2. The required test is a questionable assessment of content knowledge, instead emphasizing methods and instructional strategies.
 - 3. Massachusetts requires a general curriculum test that does not report scores for each elementary subject. A separate score is reported for math (see Figure 4).
 - 4. North Carolina has adopted a task force recommendation to require the Massachusetts Test of General Curriculum. Rules have yet to be promulgated, including whether the test will be required for initial licensure. Current rules require such tests for professional licensure only.
 - 5. Oregon allows "alternative assessment" for candidates who fail twice.

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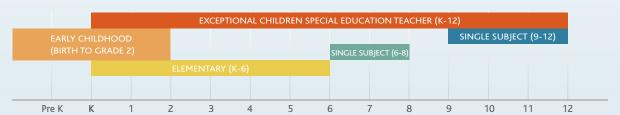
Figure 7
Where do states set the passing score on elementary content licensure tests¹?



¹ Based on the most recent technical data that could be obtained; data not available for Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon and Washington. Montana and Nebraska do not require a content test. Colorado score is for Praxis II, not PLACE. Alabama, Connecticut, Indiana, Kentucky, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Utah and Vermont now require the Multiple Subjects test and Maryland, Nevada and South Carolina now require the Instructional Practice and Applications test. Both are new Praxis tests for which technical data are not yet available; analysis is based on previously required test.

Figure 8

Teacher licensing structure in Delaware



Critical Attention: Middle School Teacher Preparation



Delaware is on track to ensure that new middle school teachers will be prepared to teach appropriate grade-level content.

The middle school years are critical to students' education, yet the preparation and licensure requirements for middle school teachers often do not ensure that they are sufficiently prepared to teach grade-level content.

Too many states fail to distinguish the knowledge and skills needed by middle school teachers from those needed by an elementary teacher. Whether teaching a single subject in a departmentalized setting or teaching multiple subjects in a self-contained classroom, middle school teachers must be able to teach significantly more advanced content than what elementary teachers are expected to teach.

Commendably, Delaware does not offer a K-8 generalist license, and all new middle school teachers are required to pass a Praxis II single-subject content test to attain licensure.

Alaska, Arizona, California, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wisconsin, Wyoming

Maryland, Massachusetts, New York

Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, **DELAWARE**, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia

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South Dakota				California offers a K-12 generalist license for self-contained classrooms.
Tennessee				Illinois has repealed its K-9 license and is in
Texas				the process of revising middle school certifi-
Utah				cation requirements.
Vermont				3. With the exception of mathematics.
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Virginia					pass new assessment with three subtests.
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Utah					6. For nondepartmentalized classrooms, gene
Texas					than 50 percent of the teaching assignme within the elementary education grades.
South Dakota Tennessee					in departmentalized middle schools if not
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					testing requirements for middle school candidates.
Pennsylvania Rhode Island					4. It is unclear how new legislation will affect
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o middle school teachers					

Critical Attention: Secondary Teacher Preparation



Delaware could do more to ensure that new secondary teachers will be prepared to teach appropriate grade-level content.

Secondary teachers must be experts in the subject matter they teach, and only a rigorous test ensures that teacher candidates are sufficiently and appropriately knowledgeable in their content area. Coursework is generally only indicative of background in a subject area; even a major offers no certainty of what content has been covered.

Yet not all states ensure that secondary teachers have sufficient content knowledge in the subjects they are licensed to teach. And nearly all states—even those that do generally require content testing for secondary teachers—allow some science and/or social studies teachers to teach with broad licenses that have significant loopholes.

Most high school science courses are specialized, and the teachers of these subjects are not interchangeable. Nonetheless, most states allow teachers to obtain general science or combination licenses across multiple science disciplines, and, in most cases, these teachers need only pass a general knowledge science exam that does not ensure subject-specific content knowledge. This means that a teacher with a background in biology could be fully certified to teach advanced chemistry or

physics having passed only a general science test—and perhaps answering most of the chemistry or physics questions incorrectly.

Just as with broad field science, most states offer a general social studies license at the secondary level. For this certification, teachers can have a background in a wide variety of fields, ranging from history and political science to anthropology and psychology. Under such a license a teacher who majored in psychology could teach history to high school students having passed only a general knowledge test and answering most—and perhaps all—history questions incorrectly.

Commendably, Delaware requires that its secondary teacher candidates pass a Praxis II content test to teach any core secondary subjects. However, the state offers secondary certification in integrated science, as well as physical science, which combines both chemistry and physics. Delaware also only offers secondary certification in general social studies. Teachers with these licenses are not required to pass individual content tests for each discipline they are permitted to teach.

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Iowa, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Oregon, Washington, Wyoming

Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, **DELAWARE**, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina. South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin

Indiana, Minnesota, Tennessee

NEXT STEPS FOR DELAWARE:

Require secondary science teachers to pass a content test for each discipline they are licensed to teach.

By allowing a general science certification—and only requiring a general knowledge science exam—Delaware is not ensuring that these secondary teachers possess adequate subject-specific content knowledge. The state's required assessment combines all subject areas (e.g., biology, chemistry, physics) and does not report separate scores for each subject area. Delaware's required assessment for its physical science license also combines subject areas without reporting individual subscores.

Require secondary social studies teachers to pass a content test for each discipline they are licensed to teach.

By allowing a general social studies certification—and only requiring a general knowledge social studies exam—Delaware is not ensuring that its secondary teachers possess adequate subject-specific content knowledge. The state's required assessment combines all subject areas (e.g., history, geography, economics) and does not report separate scores for each subject area.

It is unclear at this point how new legislation will affect content test requirements for secondary teachers.

Figure 11 Do all secondary teachers have to pass a content test in every subject area they are licensed to teach? Alabama							
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Critical Attention: Special Education Teacher Preparation



Delaware does not ensure that new special education teachers will know the subject matter that they will be required to teach.

Across the country, states are raising performance expectations to ensure that students who graduate from high school are college and career ready. These more rigorous standards apply to special education students just as they do to other students.

The challenge of ensuring that teachers are prepared to teach to the new Common Core State Standards is even more pronounced for special education teachers, who typically have had to meet an even lower bar for content preparation than general educators. And certification rules for special education teachers that do not differentiate between teaching at the elementary and secondary levels only exacerbate the problem.

Allowing a generic K-12 special education certification makes it virtually impossible and certainly impractical for states to ensure that these teachers know all the subject matter they are expected to teach; this issue is just as valid in terms of pedagogical knowledge.

While a K-12 special education license may be appropriate for low-incidence special education students, such as those with severe cognitive disabilities, it is deeply problematic for the overwhelming majority of high-incidence special education students who are expected to learn gradelevel content.

Regrettably, Delaware only offers a generic K-12 special education certification.

NEXT STEPS FOR DELAWARE:

■ Eliminate licenses for special education that do not differentiate between the preparation of elementary teachers and that of secondary teachers.

Delaware's current model does little to protect some of its most vulnerable students. Failure to ensure that special education teachers are well trained in specific content areas deprives their students of the opportunity to reach their academic potential. Delaware should limit high-incidence special education certifications to elementary or secondary grades.

Provide a broad liberal arts program of study to elementary special education candidates and require that they pass the same content test as general education teachers.

Delaware should ensure that special education teacher candidates who will teach elementary grades possess knowledge of the subject matter at hand. Not only should the state require core-subject coursework relevant to the elementary classroom, but it should also require that these candidates pass the same subject-matter test required of all elementary teachers.

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, **DELAWARE**, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina. South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming

Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin

Ensure that secondary special education teachers possess adequate content knowledge.

Secondary special education teachers are frequently generalists who teach many core subject areas. While it may be unreasonable to expect secondary special education teachers to meet the same requirements for each subject they teach as other teachers who teach only one subject, Delaware's current policy of requiring no subject-matter testing is unacceptable and will not help special education students to meet rigorous learning standards. To provide a middle ground, Delaware should consider a customized HOUSSE route for new secondary special education teachers and look to the flexibility offered by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which allows for a combination of testing and coursework to demonstrate requisite content knowledge in the classroom.

Although the state does issue a K-12 certificate, candidates must meet discrete elementary and/or secondary requirements.

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Figure 13 Which states require subject-matter testing for special education teachers?

Elementary Subject-Matter	Test
Required for an elementary special education license	Alabama, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New York, Oregon ¹ , Pennsylvania ² , Rhode Island, Texas, West Virginia ³ , Wisconsin
Required for a K-12 special education license	Colorado, Idaho
Secondary Subject-Matter T	est(s)
Tests in all core subjects required for secondary special education license	None
Test in at least one subject required for secondary special education license	Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York ⁴ , Oregon ¹ , Pennsylvania ² , Rhode Island, West Virginia ³
Required for a K-12 special education license	None

- 1. Although Oregon requires testing, the state allows an "alternative assessment" option for candidates who fail twice.
- 2. In Pennsylvania, a candidate who opts for dual certification in elementary or secondary special education and as a reading specialist does not have to take a content test.
- West Virginia also allows elementary special education candidates to earn dual certification in early childhood, which would not require a content test. Secondary special education candidates earning dual certification as a reading specialist are similarly exempted from the content test.
- 4. New York requires a multi-subject content test specifically geared to secondary special education candidates. It is divided into three subtests.

Critical Attention: Student Teaching



Delaware does not ensure that teacher preparation programs will provide teacher candidates with a high-quality summative clinical experience.

The importance of clinical practice in teacher preparation has become a major area of focus. Student teaching is the final clinical experience of teacher preparation, and teacher candidates have only one chance to experience the best possible placement. Student teaching will shape candidates' own performance as teachers and help determine the type of school in which they will choose to teach. A mediocre student teaching experience, let alone a disastrous one, can never be undone.

Central to the quality of the student teaching experience is the classroom teacher who serves as the teacher candidate's mentor, or cooperating teacher. Only strong teachers with evidence of their effectiveness, as assessed by objective measures of student learning and the teachers' principals, should be able to serve as cooperating teachers. Yet placement is much more likely to be the luck of the draw. NCTQ's recent study *Student Teaching in the United States* found that three out of four teacher preparation programs fail to require that cooperating teachers must be effective instructors.

Delaware fails to articulate any requirements for cooperating teachers, and the state's definition of a student teaching program only requires "one year of teaching experience within the last year consisting of a minimum of 91 days of long term teaching experience

Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, **DELAWARE**, District of Columbia, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

Florida, Indiana, Tennessee

at one assignment during which regular evaluations were conducted, evidencing at least satisfactory performance."

NEXT STEPS FOR DELAWARE:

■ Ensure that cooperating teachers have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness as measured by student learning.

In addition to the ability to mentor an adult, cooperating teachers in Delaware should also be carefully screened for their capacity to further student achievement. Research indicates that the only aspect of a student teaching arrangement that has been shown to have an impact on student achievement is the positive effect of selection of the cooperating teacher by the preparation program, rather than by the student teacher or school district staff.

■ Make the state's teacher evaluation system the basis for selecting cooperating teachers.

Delaware requires objective measures of student growth to be the preponderant criterion of its teacher evaluations. The state should therefore utilize its evaluation results, which provide evidence of effectiveness in the classroom, in the selection of effective cooperating teachers.

Require teacher candidates to spend at least 10 weeks student teaching.

Delaware should require a summative clinical experience for all prospective teachers. The state's current requirement of 91 days within the last year could allow the days to be filled sporadically rather than consecutively. Student teaching should be a full-time commitment, as requiring coursework and student teaching simultaneously does a disservice to both. Alignment with a school calendar for at least 10 weeks ensures both adequate classroom experience and exposure to a variety of ancillary professional activities.

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Critical Attention: Teacher Preparation Program Accountability



Delaware does not hold its teacher preparation programs accountable for the effectiveness of the teachers they produce.

Teacher preparation programs operate by virtue of state approval. As such, it is up to states to connect that approval to accountability measures that ensure that all approved programs meet minimum performance standards. Such an accountability system informs the public—including prospective teachers seeking a program as well as districts hiring graduates—by shining a light on high performers as well as identifying those programs performing poorly.

Further, as more states begin to raise expectations for teachers by way of evaluations focused on effectiveness, there is an even greater need to hold teacher preparation programs accountable for the effectiveness of the teachers they produce. Although the quality of both the subject-matter preparation and professional sequence is crucial, there are also additional measures that can provide the state and the public with meaningful, readily understandable indicators of how well programs are doing when it comes to preparing teachers to be successful in the classroom.

Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, **DELAWARE**, District of Columbia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming

Alabama, Colorado, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas

Florida, Louisiana

Although it does not connect student achievement gains to teacher preparation programs, Delaware does collect and report some data on the aggregate performance of its alternate route programs, including candidates' five-year retention rates and first- and second-year ratings from principal evaluations, as well as some important nonperformance data, including the percentage of alternate route teachers teaching in shortage areas. Unfortunately, the data are not disaggregated to the level of the individual program providing the preparation. Delaware does not collect comparable data on its traditional preparation programs, nor has it established minimum standards for its teacher preparation programs that can be used for accountability purposes.

Delaware has also indicated in its Race to the Top proposal that it will be linking teacher preparation to student achievement and growth and will publicly report effectiveness data for all programs beginning in the fall of 2012. However, there is no evidence to date of specific policy to support and sustain these plans.

NEXT STEPS FOR DELAWARE:

Collect data that connect student achievement gains to teacher preparation programs.

As one way to measure whether programs are producing effective classroom teachers, Delaware should consider the academic achievement gains of students taught by programs' graduates, averaged over the first three years of teaching. Data that are aggregated to the institution (e.g., combining elementary and secondary programs) rather than disaggregated to the specific preparation program are not useful for accountability purposes. Such aggregation can mask significant differences in performance among programs. While Delaware has outlined its intentions to collect and publish this data in its RttT application, the state should codify these requirements and specify that they apply to alternate route programs as well as to traditional teacher preparation programs.

Collect other meaningful, program-level data that reflect program performance.

Although measures of student growth are an important indicator of program effectiveness, they cannot be the sole measure of program quality for several reasons, including the fact that many programs may have graduates whose students do not take standardized tests. The accountability system must therefore include other objective measures that show how well all programs are preparing teachers for the classroom, such as:

- Evaluation results from the first and/or second year of teaching;
- Satisfaction ratings by school principals and teacher supervisors of programs' student teachers, using a standardized form to permit program comparison;
- Average raw scores of teacher candidates on licensing tests, including basic skills, subject matter and professional knowledge tests;
- Number of times, on average, it takes teacher candidates to pass licensing tests;
- Five-year retention rates of graduates in the teaching profession.

Establish minimum standards of performance.

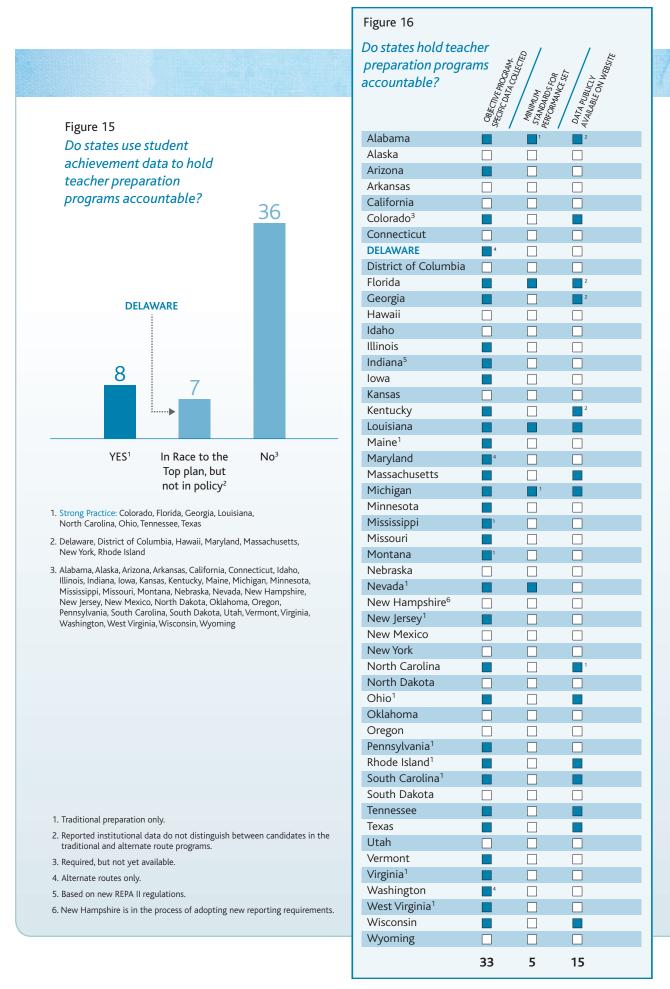
Merely collecting the types of data described above is insufficient for accountability purposes. The next and perhaps more critical step is for the state to establish precise minimum standards for teacher preparation program performance for each category of data. Programs should then be held accountable for meeting these standards, and there should be consequences for failing to do so, including loss of program approval.

Publish an annual report card on the state's website.

Delaware should codify its plans to produce an annual report card that shows all the data the state collects on individual teacher preparation programs and should publish the report card on its website at the program level for the sake of public transparency. Data should be presented in a manner that clearly conveys whether programs have met performance standards.

Maintain full authority over teacher preparation program approval.

Delaware has blurred the line between the public process of state program approval and the private process of national accreditation by requiring accreditation for program approval. Delaware should not cede its authority and must ensure that it is the state that considers the evidence of program performance and makes the decision about whether programs should continue to be authorized to prepare teachers.



TEACHER PRODUCTION IN DELAWARE

States have long established requirements for teacher preparation and licensure and have lately turned their attention toward accountability systems for preparation programs. But one topic that has received little attention from states is the issue of teacher production. From the number of teachers who graduate from preparation programs each year, only a subset are certified and only some of those certified are actually hired in the state; the relationship between these numbers has important implications for related policymaking.

States are rightly focused on areas of chronic teacher shortages, such as secondary mathematics and science, but little consideration is given to areas of consistent oversupply, particularly the overproduction in most states of elementary teachers. While it is certainly desirable to produce a big enough pool to give districts choice in hiring, the substantial oversupply in some teaching areas is not good for the profession. Limited resources are squandered on individuals who will not go on to teach, most critically the scarce supply of student teaching placements with effective cooperating teachers. Admissions criteria, licensure requirements and program accountability standards may be unnecessarily depressed if the dots are not connected from graduation to certification to actual employment in a district.

Maryland's "Teacher Staffing Report" provides a model for other states. Published biennially, the report has been tracking staffing trends in the state for almost three decades. While its primary purpose is to determine teacher shortage areas, it also identifies areas of surplus. By collecting hiring data from districts, Maryland has a rich set of data that can inform policy decisions.

The latest edition of the "Teacher Staffing Report" can be found at: http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/divisions/certification/progapproval/mtsr.

Delaware teacher production data: NCTQ was unable to find any published data on teacher production in Delaware that connects program completion, certification and hiring statistics.

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There are some areas where a small adjustment would result in significantly stronger policy. Here are some issues that represent low-hanging fruit, policies that can be addressed in relatively short order.

- To ensure adequate subject-area knowledge, Delaware should require secondary teachers who obtain certification in general science/combination science or general social studies to pass individual content tests (or a composite test that reports individual subscores) for each discipline they will be licensed to teach, as noted in the secondary critical attention section.
- As a first step toward using an assessment for admission to a teacher preparation program that compares candidates to the general college-going population, Delaware should allow teacher candidates to submit ACT/ SAT/GRE scores that demonstrate academic proficiency.



^{1.} National accreditation can be substituted for state approval.

Alternate Routes to Certification

The policies discussed in the "Critical Attention" section of this report primarily focus on traditional teacher preparation programs because such programs presently train the vast majority of new teachers. Of course, there are some teachers that attain licensure outside of these traditional programs. Alternate routes to certification were developed based on the idea that there should be pathways into the teaching profession for nontraditional candidates who are able to demonstrate strong subject-area knowledge and an above-average academic background.

Unfortunately, most states have considerable work to do to make their alternate routes viable pathways into the teaching profession. Considerable variation remains in both the quality of states' routes and how much of an alternative to traditional preparation such routes actually provide.

A high-quality, genuinely alternative licensure pathway should be rigorous yet flexible in admissions, focused and deliberate in preparation, and open to broad usage across subjects and grades.

State policy for alternate routes to teacher licensure should ensure that:

- Strong academic performance and subject-matter-knowledge testing are prerequisites for program admission.
- Subject-area majors are not required or candidates have the option to test out of any subject-area coursework requirements.
- Coursework is streamlined and not overly burdensome, and it meets the immediate needs of new teachers.
- Program length is reasonable (no more than two years).Practice teaching and/or intensive mentoring is required.
- Limits are not placed on the subjects and/or grades an alternate route teacher can teach, and alternate route providers are not restricted to colleges and universities; districts and nonprofits should be permitted to offer programs as well.

Delaware has four alternate routes: Alternative Route for Licensure and Certification; the Masters Plus Certification Program; Teach For America; and the new Delaware Transition to Teaching Partnership, which is designed to allow candidates with a background in math, science, English or technology and engineering to become a teacher in a high-need school in grades 6-12. High-quality, alternative licensure pathways should be rigorous yet flexible in admissions, focused and deliberate in preparation, and open to broad usage across subjects and grades. While the state's programs all are of reasonable length, and each of the programs has strengths on some of these fronts, Delaware's programs have room for significant improvement (see Figure 19).

NEXT STEPS FOR DELAWARE:

■ Set high standards for all alternate routes and provide flexibility to all candidates for meeting them.

Delaware should set a rigorous GPA requirement of 2.75 or higher as a first step toward ensuring that candidates for any alternate route are of good academic standing. Alternatively, the state could require one of the standardized tests of academic proficiency commonly used in higher education for graduate admissions, such as the GRE. While Delaware does require a minimum GPA of 3.0 for its Masters Plus

Certification Program and a 2.75 GPA for the Delaware Transition to Teaching Partnership, the state does not likewise require its Alternative Route for Licensure and Certification applicants to show evidence of past academic performance for admission.

In addition, Delaware should require all alternate route candidates to pass a subject-matter test as a condition of program admission. The state should allow this test as sufficient evidence of subject-matter knowledge without also requiring a content area major. The state's degree major requirements for the Alternative Route for Licensure and Certification and the Transition to Teaching Partnership programs could dissuade talented individuals who already have the requisite knowledge and skills from pursuing a career in teaching.

Delaware should also eliminate its basic skills test requirement, which is impractical and ineffective for candidates already holding a college degree. Basic skills tests measure minimum competency—essentially those skills that a person should have acquired in middle school—and are inappropriate for candidates who have already earned a bachelor's degree. Passage of a basic skills test provides no assurance that the candidate has the appropriate subject-matter knowledge needed for the classroom.

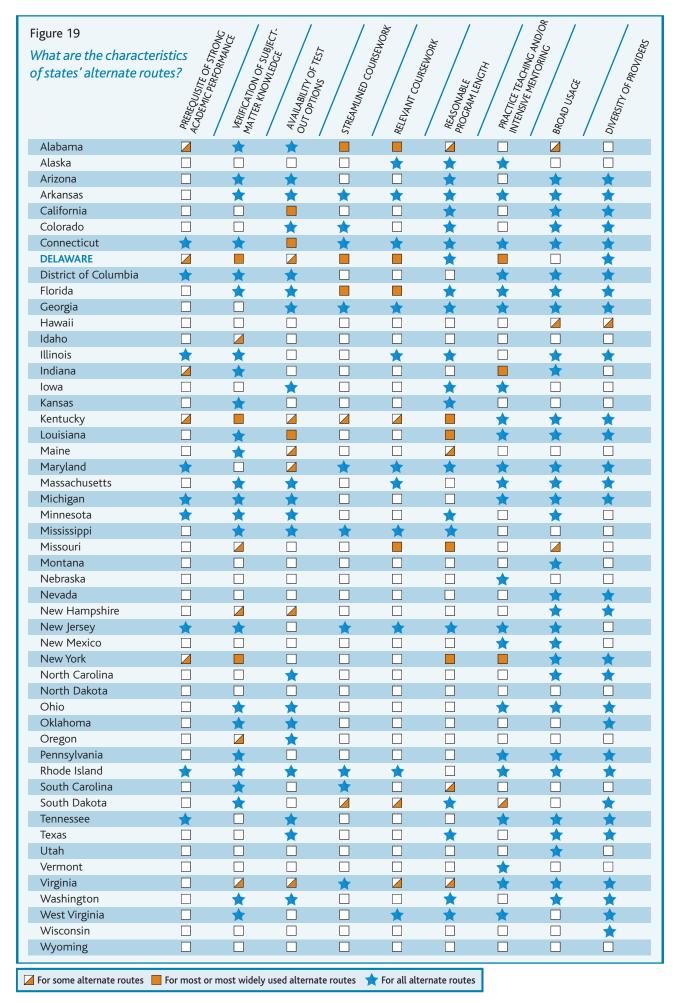
■ Ensure that preparation targets the immediate needs of new teachers.

Delaware provides Alternative Route for Licensure and Certification candidates a chance to hone classroom skills. Prior to taking responsibility for a classroom, all candidates must complete a seminar/practicum of no fewer than 120 clock hours. This includes professional development and introduction of basic teaching skills through a supervised teaching experience. Delaware should ensure that its other alternate route candidates have an opportunity to practice teach in a summer training program or have access to an intensive mentoring experience, beginning with a trained mentor assigned full time to the new teacher for the first critical weeks of school and then gradually reduced.

■ Eliminate restrictions on alternate route usage.

While Teach For America is authorized to provide teachers for all grades and subjects, TFA candidates are limited to certain schools and districts. Delaware currently limits its Alternative Routes for Licensure and Certification to secondary subjects and K-12 music and art, and the Transition to Teaching Partnership is limited to certain subjects in high-need schools. Alternate routes can help expand the teacher pipeline throughout the state, and excessive subject and grade-level limits are counterproductive to this goal.

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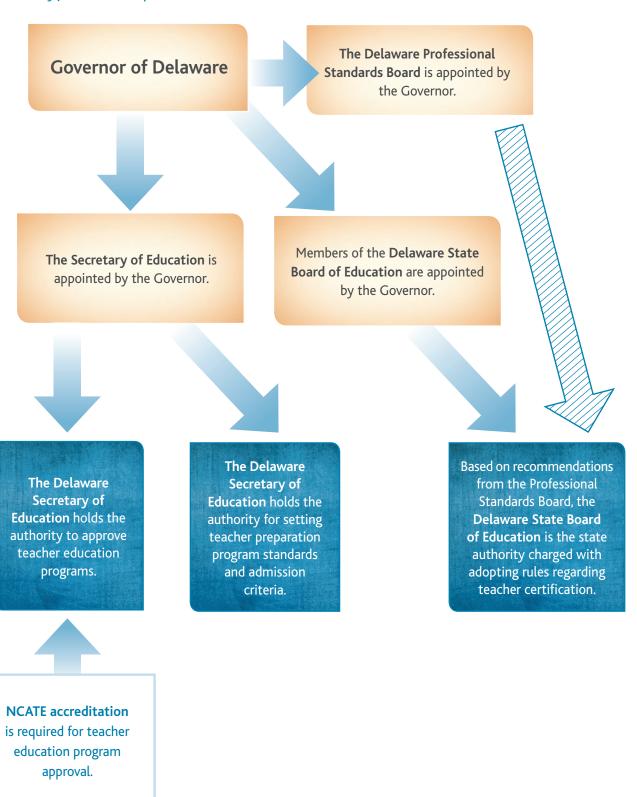


30 : NCTQ STATE TEACHER POLICY YEARBOOK 2012 DELAWARE

Alternate Route Policy Checklist for States

	nate Route Folicy Check	
1.	Set high standards and provide flexibility for meeting them.	 Screen candidates based on academic ability. Set a higher standard for entry than is set for traditional teacher preparation. Require candidates to pass the state's subject-matter licensing test. Don't require a major in the intended subject area; instead, allow candidates to demonstrate subject-matter knowledge on a rigorous test.
2.	Provide streamlined preparation.	 Limit coursework (ideally to no more than 12 credits a year). Require that the alternate route is an accelerated course of study. Ensure that all coursework requirements target the immediate needs of the new teacher Offer candidates an opportunity to practice teach in a summer training program. Provide intensive mentoring.
3.	Remove regulatory obstacles.	 ✓ Allow for a diversity of alternate route providers. ✓ Don't limit the use of alternate routes to shortage areas or to certain grades or subjects.

Figure 20
Authority for Teacher Preparation in Delaware



Critical Attention Summary for **Delaware**



Red

		AUTHORITY
ADMISSION INTO PREPARATION PROGRAMS	Require that preparation programs screen candidates prior to admission by using a common test normed to the general college-bound population and limit acceptance to those candidates demonstrating academic ability in the top 50th percentile.	Secretary of Education
ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREPARATION	 Require all elementary teacher candidates to pass a rigorous content test that assesses knowledge of all subjects. Require preparation programs to provide mathematics content specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers, and require candidates to pass a rigorous math assessment. Require a rigorous assessment in the science of reading instruction. Require a content specialization in an academic subject area. 	State Board of Education
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION	 Eliminate the K-12 special education certificate, and require licenses that differentiate between preparation of elementary and secondary teacher candidates. Require that elementary special education candidates pass the same content test as general elementary teachers. Ensure that secondary special education teachers possess adequate content knowledge. 	State Board of Education
STUDENT TEACHING	 Ensure that cooperating teachers have demonstrated evidence of effectiveness as measured by student learning. Require at least 10 weeks of full-time student teaching. 	Secretary of Education
TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY	 Collect performance data to monitor programs. Set minimum standards for program performance with consequences for failure to meet those standards. Publicly report performance data. 	Secretary of Education



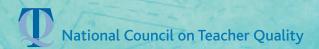
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SECONDARY TEACHER PREPARATION	 Require secondary science and social studies teachers to pass a content test for each discipline they are licensed to teach. 	State Board of Education



Green

MIDDLE SCHOOL	
TEACHER	State Board of Education
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NCTQ is available to work with individual states to improve teacher policies.

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