

# MEMO



*Connecting People to Policy*

DATE: February 15, 2024

TO: Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education Members

FROM: Alex Drozdoff, Senior Policy Analyst; and Jen Sturm-Gahner, Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division

SUBJECT: **Follow-Up Responses to Questions by the Committee**

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At its February 5, 2024, meeting, the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Education (COE) heard testimony from various presenters, including Matthew Weyer, Ph.D., Policy Director, Education Commission of the States (ECS). This memorandum contains additional information given to staff after the meeting in response to questions posed by COE members concerning the content of the presentation provided by ECS.

## **FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS RAISED DURING THE FEBRUARY 5, 2024, MEETING**

1. In considering teacher compensation, do states delineate between traditional public school teachers and charter school teachers?
2. Is ECS aware of particular legislation or efforts in other states to increase the number of students in educator tracks, and what state-level data exists on "homegrown" teachers?
3. Are there states that are allowing teaching licensure attainment through a portfolio?
4. Have you seen states increasing the amount of time between teacher licensure renewals, beyond five years? If so, is there a correlation between the increased time and teacher retention?
5. Has ECS noted any particular bills in other states that are utilizing creative or innovative mechanisms for funding Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs?
6. Is ECS aware of recent legislation in other states specifically relating to increasing safety in higher education?
7. Can you share examples of how states are approaching artificial intelligence (AI)? What are the general trends? Are states acting to restrict or allow? Task forces, study committees, et cetera?
8. Can ECS provide resources relating to school construction funding?

The answers provided by ECS to each inquiry are outlined below.

### **TEACHER COMPENSATION**

In answer to the question concerning traditional public and charter school teacher compensation, ECS provided the following response:

A 2018 version of the [50-State Comparison: Charter School policies](#) includes a question on what sets teacher salaries. This [2007 paper](#) from the Center for American Progress is the most recent analysis of teacher compensation in charter and private schools we have found. We have observed that state policy outlines charter school flexibilities in two primary ways: (1) identifying what policies charter schools are exempt from; or (2) identifying what policies charter schools must comply with. While charter schools are typically exempt from collective bargaining, instructional program, and curriculum requirements, states may require compliance with other contractual or personnel policies such as [salary schedule requirements](#) or [teacher contract requirements](#).

## LEGISLATION, EFFORTS, AND STATEWIDE DATA ON EDUCATOR TRACKS AND “HOMEGROWN” TEACHERS

To respond to the questions on “homegrown” teachers, ECS provided a resource containing a [50-state comparison on teacher recruitment and retention](#), with the specific data point: [Does the state offer a pathway, program, or incentive through statute or regulation to recruit high school students into the teaching profession?](#)

Additionally, ECS provided an information request on “Grow-Your-Own” programs ([Public Information Request: Grow-Your-Own Programs and requirements for teacher apprenticeship programs](#)), which includes multiple examples of state-level programs, and a link to New America’s [50 State Scan of Grow-Your-Own Teacher Policies and Programs](#), which contains a chart detailing each state’s such policies.

## LICENSURE ATTAINMENT THROUGH A PORTFOLIO

To answer the question related to alternative licensure, ECS provided a document (attached) on recent state-level efforts exploring alternative pathways to teacher licensure.

## TEACHER LICENSURE RENEWAL TIMELINE

For this topic, ECS provided a link to a 2018 New America [publication](#) related to teacher licensure renewal policies. The publication includes state-level data as well as recommendations, beginning on page 27, to rethink renewal systems.

## CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE FUNDING FOR CTE

In regard to CTE funding, ECS provided a resource concerning [strategic funding alignment to support workforce education access](#), which contains a chart detailing different sources of funding.

Additionally, ECS provided a [50-state comparison of CTE funding](#), which includes delineations of different types of funding models used, such as student-based, resource-based, cost-based, and a hybrid model.

## SAFETY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Concerning safety in higher education, ECS provided a [50-state comparison](#) on this topic, which outlines central policies related to campus safety, including campus police forces, sexual misconduct response and prevention policies, and the presence of guns on campuses—ECS noted that these vary significantly between states.

## STATE APPROACHES TO AI

Additionally, ECS provided an [information request concerning AI technologies](#) in education, which includes details on federal and state actions, as well as executive orders, among other topics.

## SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING

Finally, in regard to school construction funding, ECS provided a [50-state comparison](#) on this topic to help the COE compare different funding mechanisms.

## CONCLUSION

We hope this information is helpful to you. Please contact us if you would like additional details regarding the information contained in this memorandum.

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Att.

## Your Question:

You asked for more information on examples of other states completing a portfolio process or other option for a teacher licensure in place of a completing a standard examination.

## Our Response:

Teacher licensure is a topic consistently addressed by state policymakers across the country. When considering policies around licensure, policymakers balance the need to fill vacant positions with the need to maintain a highly qualified teacher workforce. Educators and policymakers have raised [concerns](#) that teacher licensure exams may not be an effective tool for measuring quality and that these exams may be unintentionally keeping talented teachers out of the classroom. There is some [evidence](#) these exams may be particularly costly for efforts to diversify the teacher workforce. It is important to note that research is [mixed](#) on the value of licensure exams, with some advocates promoting [improving exams](#) and the preparation of candidates rather than replacing licensure assessments.

Given these considerations, many states are considering alternatives to licensure exams, exemptions to exams, and support to candidates to take and pass the relevant state exams. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) published a [blog post](#) outlining some of the work states are doing to subsidize licensure testing for teachers. Some states have established [licensure exam exemptions](#) to remove a potential barrier for qualified individuals. Below you'll find examples of states implementing efforts that reduce barriers for aspiring educators such as providing alternative pathways instead of a traditional licensure exam.

## Recent State Examples for Alternative Pathways for a Teacher Licensure

- **California** [A.B. 130](#) (2021) exempts teacher candidates from the basic skills proficiency test requirement if they earn at least a letter grade of B in qualifying coursework. The bill also exempts an applicant who has demonstrated proficiency in the basic skills through a combination of qualifying coursework, passage of components of the state basic skills proficiency test and scores on certain tests. The bill also exempts candidates for certain credentials from the subject matter exam if they: 1) complete a subject matter program approved by the commission; 2) complete coursework that addresses each of the domains of the subject matter requirements or a professional program reviews transcripts and confirms that each domain has been addressed; or 3) addresses each of the domains of subject matter requirements through a combination of subtests and coursework.
- **Colorado**: [H.B. 22-1220](#) (2022) awards stipends to approved teacher preparation programs to cover the costs for eligible students for assessments required for licensure and endorsements, as well as additional costs incurred such as travel and lodging. In addition, the bill amended requirements for a [multiple measures](#) approach to teacher licensure. Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, candidates for initial licensure may demonstrate professional competencies through an approved assessment, approved coursework, or grades earned within relevant courses.
- **Delaware** [H.B. 207](#) (2021) removes the requirement that applicants for initial and continuing educator licenses obtain a passing score on an approved performance assessment. In place of the performance

assessment requirement, the bill requires an assessment of abilities to apply pedagogical skills to meet the needs of students and requires the department of education to establish a committee of stakeholders to gather input and make recommendations on how to assess the pedagogical skills of program participants.

- **Illinois:** [S.B. 2043](#) (2021) amends provisions for teacher certification, removing the requirement to demonstrate English language proficiency. Additionally, in 2019, the state passed [S.B. 1952](#), which permanently eliminated the test of basic skills as a requirement for educator licensure, including for out-of-state teachers.
- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is piloting alternatives to the [Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure](#) (MTEL), aiming “to create and evaluate increased flexibility in assessments for educator licensure.” The commissioner has approved three alternative assessments to pilot. In addition, Massachusetts also offers [MTEL-Flex](#), which is a flexible testing option for eligible teacher candidates that came very close to the passing score of the MTEL test.
- **New Jersey** [S 4074](#) (2022) eliminates the requirement to pass a basic skills test as a condition of eligibility for a standard instructional certificate in a CTE endorsement. In addition, for a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing in a CTE endorsement the candidate can demonstrate proficiency in the use of the English language and math through an alternate measure approved by the department of education.
- **Oklahoma** [H.B. 3658](#) (2022) removes the requirement that teacher candidates pass the general education portion of the competency examination. The bill redefines “competency examination” as “the assessment required in the Oklahoma Teacher Preparation Act for certification as a teacher and shall consist of tests over general education, professional education and subject areas as defined by the Commission for Educational Quality and Accountability.”
- **Washington:** [H.B. 1028](#) (2021) repeals requirements related to the educator performance assessment (edTPA). The bill also amends provisions regarding educator preparation program certification recommendations, specifying that candidates should demonstrate effectiveness through multiple measures and requires educator preparation programs to publish a list of program completion requirements.