

Alternate Minimum Content Assessment Options

1. PRAXIS II Bridge
2. SDE Test Waiver
3. Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Content Area
 - a. Per CPRL: STEM fields only
 - b. Per Raised Bill 1392: all content area degrees
4. Portfolio Option - Assessed by EPP
5. District attestation and TEAM
6. Two Waiver Option

Background

Number of Potential Candidates

In 2022 data from Ajit Gopalakrishnan, there were 77 PRAXIS II tests that were never passed. However, enrollment in an EPP is not a pre-requisite for taking PRAXIS II. These 77 tests may account for several prospective teachers who took tests repeatedly, who were never enrolled in an EPP program, or who never completed their EPP program. There are likely fewer than 77 candidates.

It also doesn't account for ACFTL, Foundations of Reading, Reading Specialist Test, Early Childhood Test, or [other required test](#) for minimum content knowledge assessment. There may be more candidates who would qualify, just under different tests.

Existing Pathways to Waive Testing Requirement

The State of Connecticut does already have several pathways to waive testing requirements for certain candidates with experience or certification from other states. Only the teacher residency program pathway is applicable for Connecticut teachers.

1. PA 18-34 allows the CSDE to accept equivalent certification exams taken in another state as a part of a teacher candidate's educator preparation program in lieu of CT certification exams.
2. The [Enhanced Reciprocity Agreement](#) waives all CT certification exams if the candidate holds a certification equivalent to CT's initial certificate in one of the 23 enhanced reciprocity states (see linked Cert Alert for more information).
3. For the remaining states, the NASDTEC interstate agreement allows the CSDE to waive CT testing for candidates certified in another state who document at least 30 full months (3 years) of successful service within the last 10 years under the certificate.
4. PA 18-51 allows the CSDE to defer testing for three years for candidates who completed an out-of-state educator preparation program, and they did not complete an equivalent certification exam(s). The certificate is issued as nonrenewable,

meaning the candidate must satisfy the certification exam(s) within three years, or they will not be able to renew or advance it. The certification exam(s) is listed as a deficiency on the certificate.

5. PA 23-167 Sec. 8(c) allows the CSDE to waive testing for **registered** teacher apprentices enrolled in a residency program. Upon successful completion of the residency program and with the superintendent's recommendation, the SBE will issue an initial educator certificate to the individual, exempting them from certification examination requirements stated in section 10-145f of the general statutes.

Other Requirement Waiver Process

Beyond testing waiver, the state does allow waiver of the other requirements through a process established by the Bureau of Certification and State Board of Education. The language in Public Act 24-41, Sec 6 (Effective July 1, 2024) allows the State Board of Education to waive any of the requirements for certification:

Section 6(b): Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the State Board of Education may waive any of the requirements of this section and issue an initial educator certificate to any person who presents a combination of education and experience that the state board determines is the equivalent of the education and experience required under this section.

The current process requires that the prospective teacher submit an application for educator certification in the CECS portal. After reviewing the application, the Bureau of Certification will send a credential letter to the candidate, requesting official documentation to determine their eligibility for CT educator certification. If the candidate does not meet existing requirements (e.g., incomplete testing or missing specific coursework), the Bureau of Certification will then determine whether the alternative pathway waiver for State Board of Education (SBE) approval is appropriate. If appropriate, the bureau will request additional documentation to create an internal document for CSDE approval.

If the file is approved internally by the CSDE, then the bureau will create a board report to present to the SBE for consideration. The current regulations include:

- Acceptance of 20 full months (2 years) of successful, appropriate, full-time teaching experience completed at a regionally accredited college, an approved nonpublic or independent school, or an out-of-state public school while holding a valid teaching certificate.
- This must be accompanied by a transcript evaluation that meets all the requirements for eligibility set out in the certification regulations, such as earning a bachelor's degree and passing any required coursework or tests.

If the SBE approves the waiver request, the candidate may be issued an initial educator certificate. Please note that if the candidate is currently teaching in a CT public school system while they are pursuing the waiver, the bureau suggests that the teacher serve under a durational shortage area permit (DSAP) to cover the assignment and allow for appropriate salary and benefits.

NOTE: Section 10-145d-412(a)(3) of the current Connecticut Regulations also allows for an initial certificate to be issued based on a combination of appropriate teaching experience and transcript review. The transcript review is based on specific coursework requirements mandated in the regulations. These candidates are also required to complete the appropriate certification exam(s) for the endorsement. This section of the regulations will be repealed on July 1, 2026.

1. PRAXIS II Bridge

Current practice from SDE, presented by Ajit

For prospective teachers who have taken the Praxis II but did not earn the minimum score needed for certification within one SEM

Benefits:

For Prospective Teachers

- Asynchronous
- Free
- ~45 minutes
- Focused review based on area of weakness
- Well-reviewed by participants in trial

For Districts

- No additional cost or resource requirements

For Implementation

- Currently PRAXIS II Bridge Program includes CORE Reading, Writing, Math
- In Summer 2025, additional tests will include Teaching Reading, PLT K-6, PLT 7-12, ELA Content Knowledge, Special Education: Foundational
- In Fall 2025, the Bridge will expand to Mathematics, Social Studies, Early Childhood, Middle School Mathematics, Middle School ELA, Middle School Science, Special Education: Severe to Profound, ParaPathways, and
- Elementary Education Redesign will be added in Spring 2026
- Overall goal: 90+ test currently but goal to cover the most high volume exams as possible

Drawbacks:

- Not currently available for tests outside of PRAXIS II series

2. SDE Test Waiver

Proposal from Kristen Basiaga

This pathway will be available for prospective educators who:

- Have met all other requirements for initial certification except passing the content knowledge assessment,
- Achieve a score within three standard error measurements (SEM) of the cut score

These prospective educators may apply for a waiver through the State Department of Education. The prospective teacher will submit evidence showing:

- having met all other requirements for initial certification,
- an attempt at passing the standardized, minimum content area assessment, achieving a score equal to or within three standard error measurements SEM of the cut score,
- 20 full months (2 years) of successful, appropriate, full-time teaching experience completed at a Connecticut public school while holding a temporary teaching certificate, and
- attestation from district superintendent or designee

Upon review of evidence, the SDE will consider the minimum content knowledge fulfilled and further testing will be waived.

3. Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Content Area

a. Per CPRL recommendation

From Demonstration of Educator Minimum Content Knowledge: Review of Status Quo and Alternative Approaches ([link](#))

A candidate who fails the first attempt could demonstrate minimum content knowledge by “Submitting evidence of possession of a relevant bachelor's or higher degree (the “Subject Degree Option”) where the certification area is grade 4-12 Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, Earth Science, General Science, or Physics” (pg 9)

CPRL notes that only these six degree areas were suggested for using the “Subject Degree Option” because studies showed positive correlation between a teacher's degree and student outcomes only within math and science fields. (pg 10)

“In terms of implementation, the Subject Degree Option is relatively easy to administer for two reasons. First, the pool of candidates who are eligible for this option is limited. The Subject Degree Option only applies to math and science certification areas; and only candidates who fail their first Praxis II attempt, choose not to retake the Praxis II, and possess the required subject degree would be able to proceed under this option. Second, for eligible candidates choosing this option, the CSDE would likely only need to conduct a straightforward review of evidence of earned degrees (that is, evidence in the form of degree certificates and transcripts).” (pg 11)

Benefits:

For Prospective Teachers

- Minimal effort - just submit transcript and degree certificates
- New path for secondary teachers, alleviate critical shortage area

For Districts

- No additional cost or resource requirements

For Implementation

- Ease of straightforward review of earned degrees

Drawbacks:

- Currency of degree is critical in making coursework relevant. This option does not account for currency.
- There is no provision for determining grade / GPA area in major.
- Only two states no longer require candidates to pass content area assessments as long as they have completed a state approved EPP (Minnesota and Iowa)

- CPRL recommended only for six degree areas.
- Creates hierarchy between STEM teachers and non-STEM teachers
- May not take standardized assessment (PRAXIS II, etc) as seriously
- Elementary teachers do not get a bachelor's degree in their content area and would not be eligible for this path.
- Some certification programs do not provide bachelor's degree or higher in subject area
- Some certification areas do not require a subject area degree so long as other criteria are met.
- There are significant variation from different programs, even when accounting for overall GPA.

4. Bachelor's Degree or Higher in Content Area

b. Per Raised Bill 1392

Minimum content knowledge in the subject area may be achieved by

(B) obtaining a bachelor's degree or higher in the subject area for which such person is seeking an endorsement from an institution of higher education accredited by the Board of Regents for Higher Education or Office of Higher Education or regionally accredited, ...”

Benefits:

For Prospective Teachers

- Minimal effort - just submit transcript and degree certificates

For Districts

- No additional cost or resource requirements

For Implementation

- Ease of straightforward review of earned degrees

Drawbacks:

- Currency of degree is critical in making coursework relevant. This option does not account for currency.
- Only two states no longer require candidates to pass content area assessments as long as they have completed a state approved EPP (Minnesota and Iowa)
- CPLR indicates that a degree only correlated with better educational outcomes than PRAXIS II for the six STEM fields. A degree in subject matter was only a better indicator of content knowledge in these six fields. In all other fields, CPRL considered the subject area degree an insufficient indicator.
- Some certification programs do not provide bachelor's degree or higher in subject area
- Some certification areas do not require a subject area degree so long as other criteria are met
- There are significant variation from different programs, overall GPA. Confirm knowledge base upon admission. Most graduate programs won't accept less than B-within area
- Insufficient for CAEP – even needed to request for Specialty Program Area (compare course description). Reliability, validity, triangulation – more than one source of data
- Unclear whether out-of-state candidates would be eligible

4. Portfolio Option

From CPRL, Demonstration of Educator Minimum Content Knowledge: Review of Status Quo and Alternative Approaches ([link](#))

A candidate who fails the first attempt could demonstrate minimum content knowledge by “Submitting a portfolio (the “Portfolio Option”) evidencing satisfaction of the content knowledge categories required for the relevant certification area”. (pg 9)

Furthermore, the approach recognizes that EPPs possess valuable information and contextual knowledge about their candidates—their classroom and clinical experiences, their performances in different kinds of assessments, and their preferences and personal circumstances and therefore recommends that EPPs work with candidates to collaboratively determine the option most suitable for each candidate. (pg 11)

As for the Portfolio Option, whilst it might be burdensome to administer in theory (considering too that it applies to all certification areas), in practice only candidates who (i) fail their first Praxis II attempt; (ii) choose not to retake Praxis II; (iii) are not looking to certify in Elementary Education when failing within one SEM (that is, not looking to utilize the ETS Alternate Passing Option); and (iv) are not looking to certify in math and sciences when in possession of the relevant subject degree will proceed under this option—resulting once again in a limited candidate pool. (pg 12)

Benefits:

For Prospective Teachers

For Districts

- No additional cost or resource requirements

For Implementation

- EPPs to determine teacher competency, knowing contextual information about classroom and clinical experiences as well as personal circumstances
- EPPs could work together to make rubrics for portfolio

Drawbacks:

- CPLR indicates that method “might be burdensome in theory”
- Development of portfolio, rubric, training, and assessment will be placed on EPPs
- Cost to EPP instead of state
- Prospective teacher may be asked to complete portfolio while working as new teacher under DSAP or Nonrenewable Interim Educator Certificate.
- Prospective teachers may not have any connection with their EPP
- Does not apply for candidates who attended EPPs outside of CT

5. District Attestation w/ TEAM

Proposal from Cynthia Ritchie

If a candidate does not pass PRAXIS, can a district still hire them as a “teacher” and then work to be sure their professional goals for two years, aligned to the SDE required professional evaluation plan, are focused on the content areas they need to prove? In addition, I would recommend that there be an added module to TEAM, for added instruction/readings/research/etc. in the area that the new teacher needs to show content mastery.

This plan would allow the colleges to maintain responsibility for the passing of college coursework and one attempt at PRAXIS. From there the new teacher’s success would be the responsibility of the supervisor (administrator) and their TEAM mentor. Each new teacher would be given two years to demonstrate the content mastery needed.

The benefits of this plan are real-time application in the classroom, support from two professionals, and time to continue learning and demonstrating growth. It also streamlines a need for “something else” as these two actions (eval and TEAM) remain required.

For Prospective Teachers

- Prospective teachers who graduated from EPPs outside of CT would be eligible for this route.
- Prospective teachers will be able to get hired and into the classroom immediately, allowing them to get experience and feedback needed to grow.
- While this teaching experience does not count towards tenure under DSAP, it **does** count towards TRB.
- Depending on the teacher’s contract, this time may count towards step movement.
- Teachers could still choose to prepare and retake minimum content knowledge assessments but also concentrate on becoming a competent teacher.
- Most teachers would have three years in order to retake minimum content area assessments or pass the joint attestation-observation.
- For teachers already participating in TEAM, this would not add an additional portfolio system on top of existing TEAM requirements.

For Districts

- This route relies on the district’s existing Teacher Evaluation Plan and TEAM resources.
- This route would incur minimal additional cost to the district.

For Implementation

- This provides an alternative minimum content knowledge assessment grounded in actual ability to instruct a classroom.
- It is suggested that an additional TEAM module, based on content knowledge, could be developed during 2026 revamp of TEAM by SDE.

6. Two Waiver Option

Proposal from Rebecca Good

All candidates will take the current state approved content knowledge exams (ie. Praxis II, Foundations of Reading, Praxis Early Childhood Education test)

Group 1: Candidates who pass the exams on the first time have fulfilled the minimum content knowledge expectation

Group 2: Candidates who do not pass 1 or more exams but come within range to be eligible for the Praxis II bridge will complete the bridge which fulfills the minimum content knowledge expectation

Group 3: Candidates who do not pass 1 or more and do not come within range to be eligible for the Praxis II and have completed all EPP requirements can select between the following two waiver options:

Waiver Option 1: EPP Approved Waiver - Candidate completes extra course/support determined by EPP and EPP submits waiver as part of the recommendation for certification to the state.

Waiver Option 2: District Approved Waiver - Candidate works as the teacher of record under temporary license for a minimum of 10 months and participates in district approved observations, the district superintendent or designee submits waiver.

Waivers are submitted to SDE and no further review is needed; the waiver meets the fulfillment of minimum content knowledge.

| | OUT OF STATE EPP | PRAXIS II - ELEMENTARY | PRAXIS II - STEM | ALL OTHER TESTS | DOES NOT REQUIRE BEING HIRED |
|------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. PRAXIS II BRIDGE | ✓ | ✓ | | | ✓ |
| 2. SDE TEST WAIVER | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 3A. DEGREE – STEM ONLY | ? | | ✓ | | ✓ |
| 3B. DEGREE – ALL | ? | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 4B. PORTFOLIO – EPP | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 5. DISTRICT ATTESTATION W/ TEAM | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| 6. TWO WAIVER | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |