



First-Time Pass Rates on Content Assessments by Educator Preparation Provider (EPP)

Purpose of this Report

In its 2021-22 Master Plan, the State Board of Education set forth a plan to publish data on the rate at which prospective educators pass required content area licensure assessments on their first attempt. Historically, the State Board has published annual data on the pass rate within two attempts; however, retaking licensure assessments is costly in terms of both time and money, and some candidates who do not pass on their first attempt may decide not to try again. There have also been recent calls from national organizations for more transparency around candidates' pass rates on their first attempt.¹

This report represents the first time Tennessee has published first-time pass rate data on content area licensure assessments and provides new insights into the work of Tennessee's Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs). The State Board intends to update this report annually to track progress and trends over time.

About This Report

Who is included in this report?

This report includes data on three cohorts of teacher candidates:

Cohort	Student Teaching or Internship Pathway	Job-Embedded Pathway
2018	Completed preparation between September 1, 2017 and August 31, 2018	Enrolled in a job-embedded preparation program between September 1, 2017 and August 31, 2018
2019	Completed preparation between September 1, 2018 and August 31, 2019	Enrolled in a job-embedded preparation program between September 1, 2018 and August 31, 2019
2020	Completed preparation between September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020	Enrolled in a job-embedded preparation program between September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020

Candidates who earned an occupational teacher license or school services personnel license are not included in this report. Candidates who attended a preparation program to earn an additional endorsement are also not included.

Which assessments are included in this report?

This report includes content assessments required for teacher licensure in Tennessee. It does not include pedagogical assessments (edTPA or Praxis Principles of Learning and Teaching) or EPP admissions assessments (ACT, SAT, or Praxis Core).

¹ National Council on Teacher Quality. (2021). *Driven by data: Using licensure tests to build a strong, diverse teacher workforce*. <https://www.nctq.org/publications/Driven-by-Data:-Using-Licensure-Tests-to-Build-a-Strong,-Diverse-Teacher-Workforce>

Only a candidate's first attempt at an assessment is included in this report. Thus, the pass rates reported here are different from those reported in the [Tennessee Educator Preparation Report Card](#), which reports the percentage of candidates who passed within two attempts. Assessments not related to a candidate's endorsement area(s) are not included.

What is the source of the assessment data?

The Tennessee Department of Education receives Praxis scores through a data-sharing agreement with ETS. It receives National Evaluation Series (NES) scores through a data-sharing agreement with Pearson. The Department shares these scores with the State Board for use in the Educator Preparation Report Card and supplemental reports. Assessment records are matched to candidates who enrolled in or completed a Tennessee teacher preparation program during the cohort windows described above. We do not use test-takers' self-reported institution to match test records to EPPs.

Why are job-embedded candidates listed separately from other candidates?

Job-embedded teacher preparation programs are designed to impart teaching skills rather than content knowledge. Because job-embedded candidates serve as teacher of record while they are enrolled in their preparation program, these candidates must demonstrate appropriate content knowledge prior to program enrollment. Candidates may do this by either having a degree with a major in the content area they will be teaching or by passing the relevant content assessment. Due to this requirement, many job-embedded candidates take content assessments prior to enrolling in an EPP. Their pass rate on these assessments therefore reflects preparation they received from prior education or work experience rather than from their EPP. The recruitment process for job-embedded candidates is also different than for other candidates. In some cases, job-embedded candidates are recruited by a school district or public charter school in order to fill a teaching vacancy. These candidates then enroll in an EPP to obtain a teaching license after they have been hired by a school district or public charter school.

What is a typical pass rate on teacher licensure assessments?

The data presented in this report include assessments in more than 40 content areas. Typical pass rates vary depending on the content area. In Tennessee, average first-time pass rates for specific content area exams range from around 50 percent to nearly 100 percent. Thus, average pass rates at the EPP level are affected by which content areas are most popular at each EPP. The U.S. Department of Education cautions against comparing pass rates across states since each state sets its own teacher licensure requirements and passing scores for licensure exams.²

² U.S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education. (2021). *Preparing and credentialing the nation's teachers: The Secretary's 11th report on the teacher workforce*. https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Title_II_Secretary's_Report_508.pdf

Pass Rates for Candidates Completing Student Teaching or Internship Clinical Practice

EPP Name	Unique Test Takers	Tests Taken ³	Pass Rate
Aquinas College	29	65	96.9%
Austin Peay State University	307	716	81.8%
Belmont University	113	205	89.3%
Bethel University	13	37	83.8%
Bryan College	37	107	84.1%
Carson-Newman University	159	374	84.2%
Christian Brothers University	17	40	87.5%
Cumberland University	64	158	82.9%
East Tennessee State University	440	1,052	82.4%
Freed-Hardeman University	93	252	84.9%
Johnson University	82	224	92.4%
King University	65	186	90.3%
Lee University	341	734	90.1%
Lincoln Memorial University	155	413	78.0%
Lipscomb University	176	482	87.1%
Maryville College	49	100	89.0%
Memphis Teacher Residency/Union University ⁴	59	106	98.1%
Middle Tennessee State University	546	1,255	82.6%
Milligan University	62	151	91.4%
Nashville Teacher Residency	66	79	55.7%
Rhodes College	15	45	93.3%
South College	37	137	83.9%
Southern Adventist University	77	180	96.1%
Tennessee State University	63	184	81.5%
Tennessee Technological University	658	1,600	85.1%
Tennessee Wesleyan University	66	152	77.6%
Trevecca Nazarene University	67	165	89.7%
Tusculum University	149	367	80.1%

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³ Some endorsement areas (e.g., Elementary Education) require multiple content assessments. Additionally, many teachers are endorsed in more than one content area. This is why the number of tests taken is substantially larger than the number of unique test takers.

⁴ Memphis Teacher Residency and Union University have a preparation partnership in which they share responsibility for preparation of teacher candidates.

EPP Name	Unique Test Takers	Tests Taken ³	Pass Rate
Union University ⁵	216	76	88.9%
University of Memphis	242	674	84.9%
University of Tennessee – Chattanooga	312	1,023	88.9%
University of Tennessee – Knoxville	419	965	92.8%
University of Tennessee – Martin	351	825	79.8%
University of Tennessee – Southern	31	83	77.1%
Vanderbilt University	285	682	99.1%
Welch College	42	45	93.3%
Western Governors University	330	955	85.1%

Pass Rates for Candidates Completing Job-Embedded Clinical Practice

Note: Many job-embedded candidates take content assessments prior to enrolling in an EPP. Pass rates for these candidates therefore reflect preparation they received from prior education or work experience rather than from their EPP.

EPP Name	Unique Test Takers	Tests Taken ⁶	Pass Rate
Austin Peay State University	93	153	75.8%
Belmont University	16	30	83.3%
Bethel University	42	57	59.6%
Carson-Newman University	67	89	85.4%
Christian Brothers University	21	36	88.9%
Cumberland University	51	65	70.8%
East Tennessee State University	14	15	80.0%
Freed-Hardeman University	28	35	71.4%
LeMoyne-Owen College	10	17	17.6%
Lee University	57	72	84.7%
Lipscomb University ⁷	202	321	82.2%
Middle Tennessee State University	156	180	79.4%
Relay Graduate School of Education – Memphis	90	173	52.6%

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⁵ The pass rate listed here is for candidates prepared solely by Union University. The pass rate for candidates prepared through the partnership between Union University and Memphis Teacher Residency is listed next to “Memphis Teacher Residency/Union University.”

⁶ Some endorsement areas (e.g., Elementary Education) require multiple content assessments. Additionally, many teachers are endorsed in multiple content areas. This is why the number of tests taken is substantially larger than the number of unique test takers.

⁷ The pass rate listed here is for candidates prepared solely by Lipscomb University. The pass rate for candidates prepared through the partnership between Lipscomb University and Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga is listed next to “Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga/Lipscomb University.”

EPP Name	Unique Test Takers	Tests Taken ⁶	Pass Rate
Relay Graduate School of Education – Nashville ⁸	80	124	77.4%
Teach for America – Memphis	305	613	87.8%
Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga /Lipscomb University ⁹	119	172	91.3%
Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga /Relay Graduate School of Education – Nashville ¹⁰	62	108	95.4%
Tennessee State University	15	19	68.4%
Tennessee Technological University	87	109	68.8%
Trevecca Nazarene University	33	39	84.6%
Tusculum University	39	41	58.5%
Union University	75	91	71.4%
University of Memphis	146	184	65.8%
University of Tennessee – Chattanooga	30	30	90.0%
University of Tennessee – Knoxville	52	57	89.5%
University of Tennessee – Martin	142	216	74.5%
Welch College	11	19	73.7%

⁸ The pass rate listed here is for candidates prepared solely by Relay Graduate School of Education – Nashville. The pass rate for candidates prepared through the partnership between Relay Graduate School of Education – Nashville and Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga is listed next to “Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga/Relay Graduate School of Education – Nashville.”

⁹ Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga and Lipscomb University have a preparation partnership in which they share responsibility for preparation of teacher candidates.

¹⁰ Teach for America – Nashville-Chattanooga and Relay Graduate School of Education – Nashville have a preparation partnership in which they share responsibility for preparation of teacher candidates.

Key Terms

Term	Definition
<i>Clinical Practice</i>	<p>Clinical practice refers to intensive field-based responsibilities, assignments, tasks, activities, and assessments. These experiences help students to develop and demonstrate their preparedness to be effective educators in the classroom. There are three types of clinical practice: student teaching, internship, and job embedded.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Teaching – In this type of clinical practice, a candidate gains classroom experience while earning course credit toward a degree or certification. Student teaching involves a planned semester of at least 15 weeks that includes full-day teaching and observation activities. 2. Internship – Internships involve a full year of clinical practice during which the intern engages in direct teaching activities for at least 100 school days. Activities related to this experience may include classroom teaching, observation, coursework, seminars, and planning. 3. Job Embedded – Job-embedded candidates receive a license and are able to serve as a teacher of record while they are enrolled in and still completing their preparation program.
<i>Content Assessment</i>	<p>Content assessments measure prospective teachers’ knowledge of the subject(s) they will be teaching (e.g., math, biology, history). Content assessments are different from pedagogical assessments, which measure teaching skills such as planning lessons and assessing student learning. The content assessments required for teacher licensure in Tennessee are listed in Section III of State Board Policy 5.105 Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educators.</p>
<i>Educator Preparation Provider (EPP)</i>	<p>Educator preparation providers (EPPs) are the universities, colleges, and education-related organizations that prepare Tennessee educators.</p>
<i>Endorsement Area</i>	<p>Endorsement areas indicate the subject(s) and/or grade level(s) for which a licensed educator is prepared to provide instruction, leadership, or services in schools or districts. When applying for licensure, each teacher candidate must meet requirements in at least one area of endorsement, though many are endorsed in multiple areas.</p>