



The State of Teacher Licensure and Mobility

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Foreword

Greetings!

CSG has always been committed to empowering state leaders. We were created by the states in 1933 as a trusted forum to foster relationships and collaborative learning. In 2018, we continued to build on that long tradition of empowerment by establishing our Center of Innovation, which includes occupational licensure as a key policy area.

Over the last 60 years, the number of jobs requiring an occupational license – or government approval to practice a profession – has grown from about one in 20 to nearly one in four. Perhaps no occupation has grown more in size and scope of its licensure than teaching.

My mother was a teacher, and I benefitted from a public-school education taught by great educators. Teachers impact our lives in lasting ways. Every state knows that quality teachers create quality educational opportunities, which in turn create a workforce each state needs to grow and succeed.

When properly implemented, rigorous licensure requirements for teachers protect the quality of education delivery and the safety of students, teachers, staff and administrators. However, differences in teacher licensing laws between states create barriers for those seeking to enter the teaching workforce and make it harder for teachers to relocate across state lines. Variations in licensure requirements also have disproportionate impacts for populations including military spouses and families, immigrants with work authorization and unemployed and dislocated workers.

This white paper – a product of an occupational licensing grant through the U.S. Department of Labor – describes the commonalities and differences in teacher licensure policies among states and examines how each state recognizes teaching licenses and teaching experience earned in another state. By offering a clearer look at areas of agreement and disagreement, CSG continues its work in building bridges and assembling broad coalitions among state leaders to develop solutions to national issues.

The states are uniquely equipped to tackle issues around occupational licensure and professional interstate mobility. This white paper is the latest in a long history of policy research supporting the outstanding work of CSG members in their states.

Sincerely,



David Adkins

David Adkins
Executive Director/CEO
The Council of State Governments

Overview

Teaching is the most heavily regulated profession in America, which creates terrific challenges for professional mobility across states. While the requirements for teacher licensure, as with most professions, vary from state to state, teachers consistently face the highest volume of requirements to both earn and maintain credentials. Along with this heavy regulation, licenses for teachers are highly segmented and specialized. Each teacher license finds itself somewhere in a matrix of “vertical” requirements (school age group) and “horizontal” requirements (content area), with a varying number of specializations available for licensing.

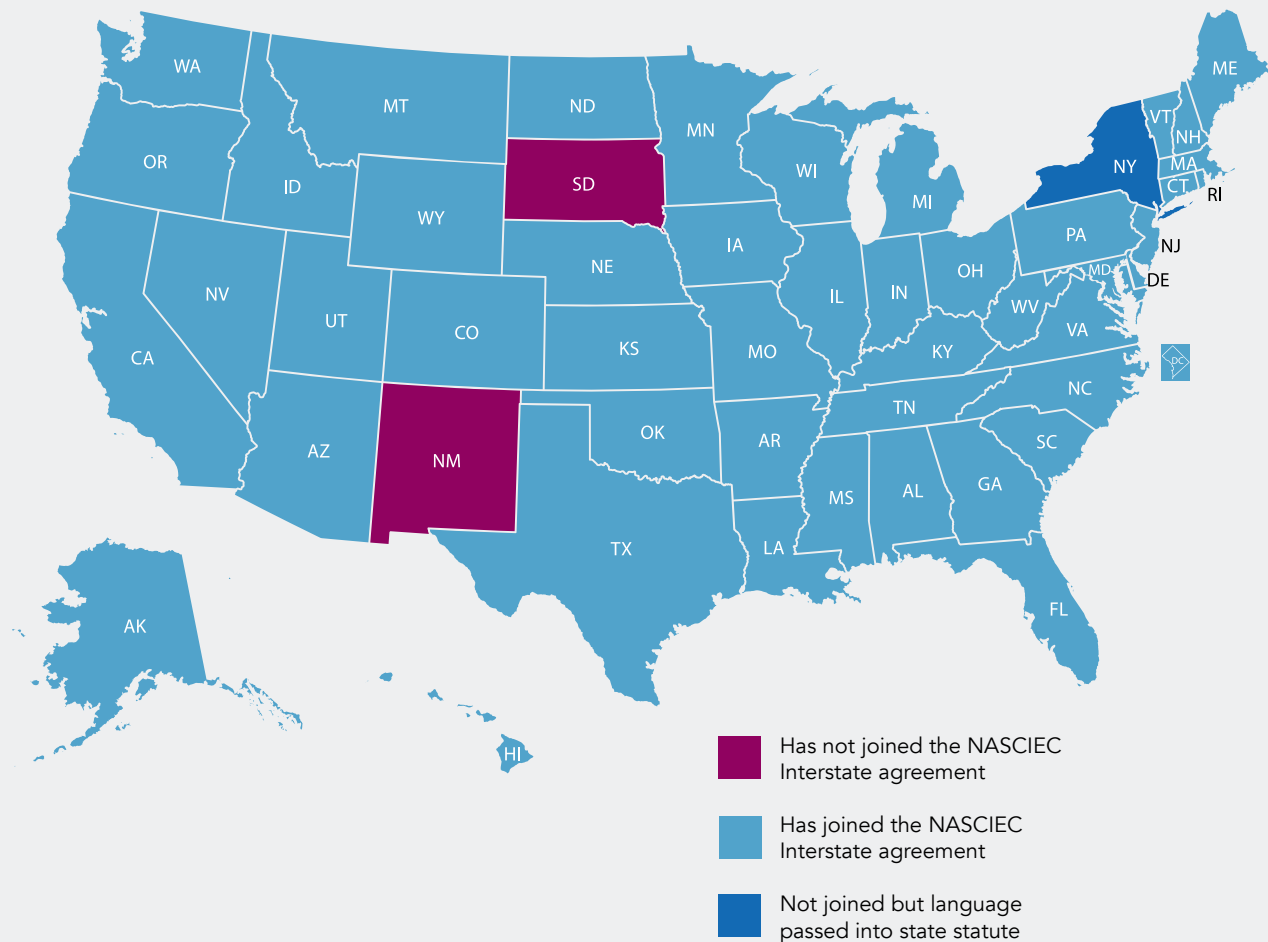
Interstate mobility for licensed professionals can be difficult, largely due to this 50-state patchwork of licensing requirements. For teachers, the complexity of both the licensing process and the licenses themselves can make interstate mobility extremely difficult, time-consuming, and costly.

To better capture the elements of the 51 separate sets of requirements for teacher licensure (the 50 states and the District of Columbia), and to develop a clearer picture of the various elements relevant to teacher mobility, The Council of State Governments (CSG), in the fall and winter of 2020, developed a database identifying the requirements each state has for teacher certification. Gathering this scattered data into a single database eliminates much of the confusion around differing state requirements and makes direct licensure comparisons among states and the District of Columbia – the state a licensed teacher moves from and the state they will move to, for example – much easier. During this time, CSG also conducted a national analysis of the processes involved in mobility and compiled data on whether and how each state recognizes certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

Commonalities in Licensing Requirements

Before discussing the contents of the database, there are two components of teacher licensure not included, but should be discussed. These are requirements toward becoming a licensed teacher that are consistent across all states: applicants must have 1) earned a bachelor’s degree, and 2) completed an approved teacher preparation program (TPP). Often, these paths are combined in colleges of education. These two requirements are part of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) Interstate Agreement. The NASDTEC Interstate Agreement stipulates the types and levels of licensure and establishes an expectation that out-of-state licenses are recognized, complemented by whatever caveats or additional requirements a particular state deems necessary. Forty-seven states have joined this interstate agreement. New Mexico and South Dakota have not joined; and while New York has not formally joined, the language is in state statute, effectively making New York a participant in the Agreement.

States in the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement



Differences Among States

As NASDETC Executive Director Phillip Rogers describes it, the Interstate Agreement is "...a handshake, not a mandate." There are no enforcement mechanisms in the Agreement, so states are not necessarily beholden to its contents. Any state requirements toward teacher licensure beyond earning a bachelor's degree and graduating from a TPP are known as "Jurisdiction-Specific Requirements" (JSR). JSR can vary greatly from state to state - the database (Appendix A) captures that information.

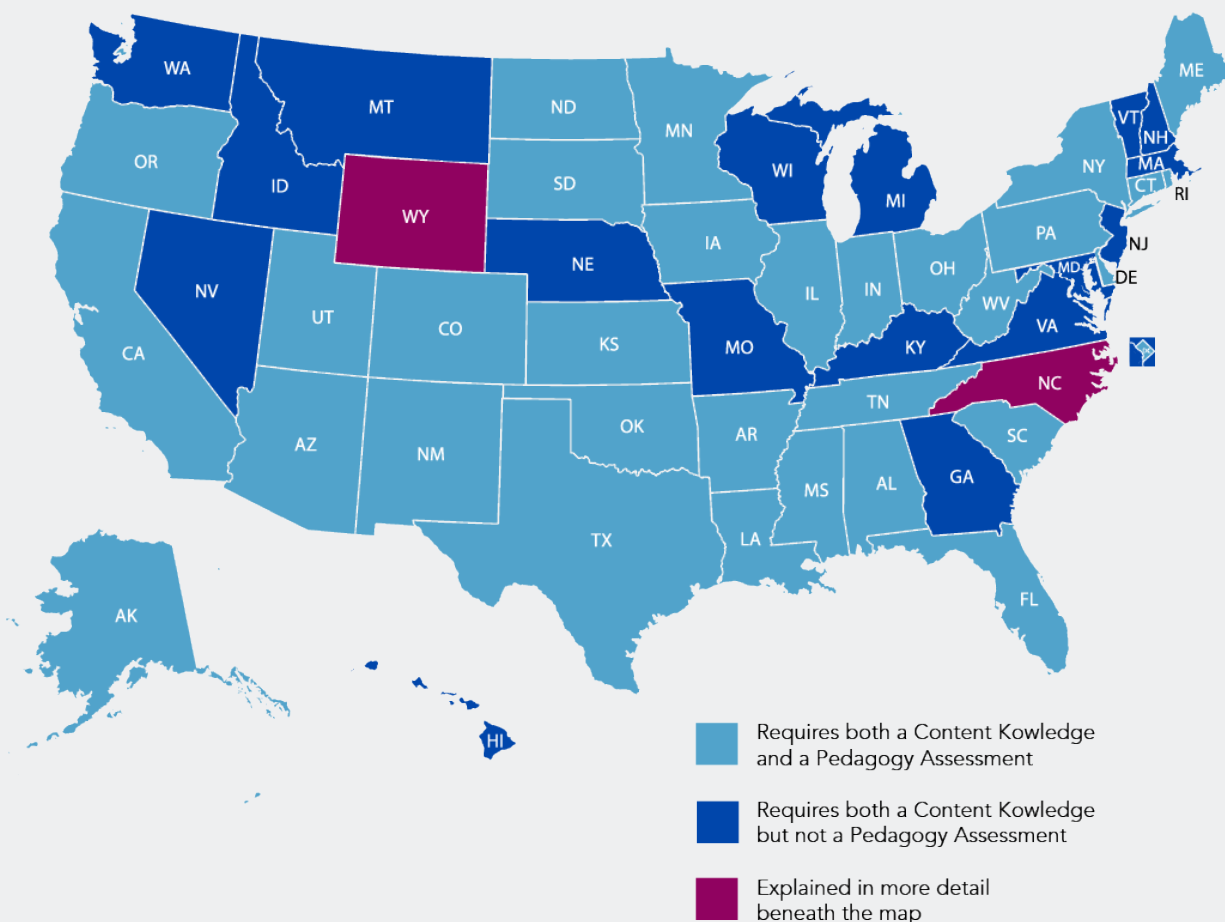
The most prevalent pathway for interstate teacher mobility is by states:

1. Examining the existing license (and its requisite requirements) of an out-of-state candidate;
2. Determining which, if any, of the state's JSRs have not completed; and
3. Identifying pathways for the out-of-state teacher to fill these gaps under a provisional license or before the issuance of a license.

This process is conducted on a case-by-case basis. Setting policies to expedite this process can be difficult, since states must theoretically prepare to process out-of-state licenses from 49 other states, five U.S. territories, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA).

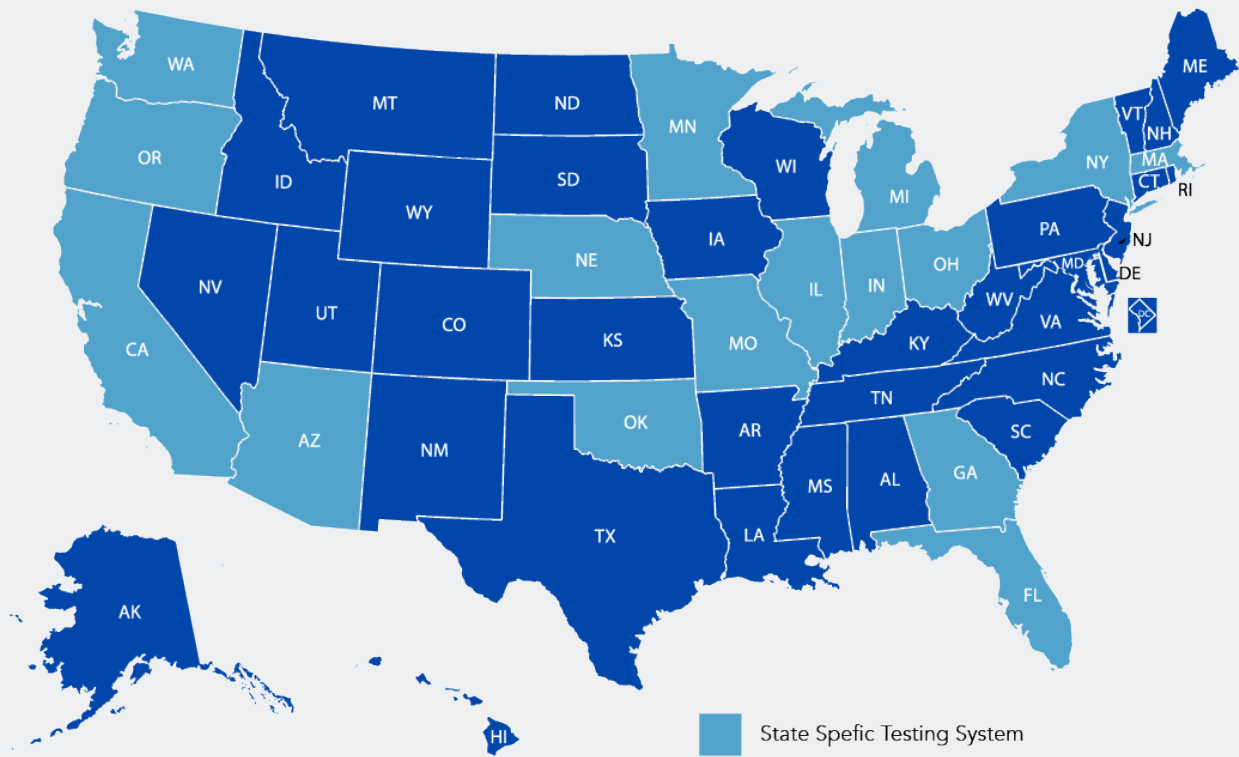
Competency Assessments

Every state except Wyoming requires licensed educators to pass a content knowledge exam, which measures a candidate's competence in a particular subject area. Another examination many states also require is a pedagogy exam, which measures understanding of best practices in teaching and learning (i.e. the effective transmission of content to a student audience).

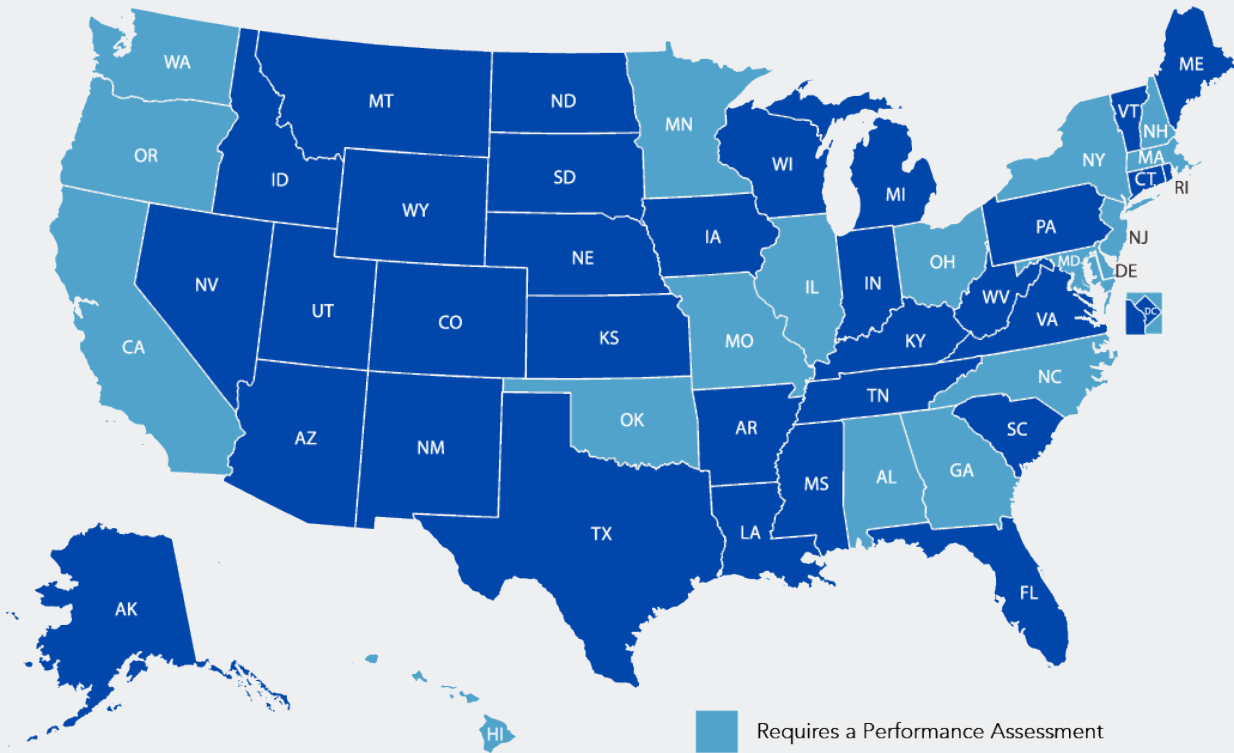


Wyoming only requires a pedagogy assessment for individuals seeking a subject-area endorsement in middle grades and for Elementary Education and Social Studies credentials. North Carolina requires a pedagogy assessment, but only requires a content knowledge assessment for secondary (high school-level) teachers. These two states' differing assessment requirements exemplify the complex matrix of teacher licensure and how it can be highly segmented by grade level and subject area.

For assessments, states often will use the Praxis exams, created by the Educational Testing Service (ETS). As noted in the database, 14 states have developed their own full or partial testing systems for the purpose of initial teacher licensure and renewal. For example, Virginia has the Virginia Communication and Literacy Assessment and New York requires applicants to pass the Educating All Students (EAS) examination.

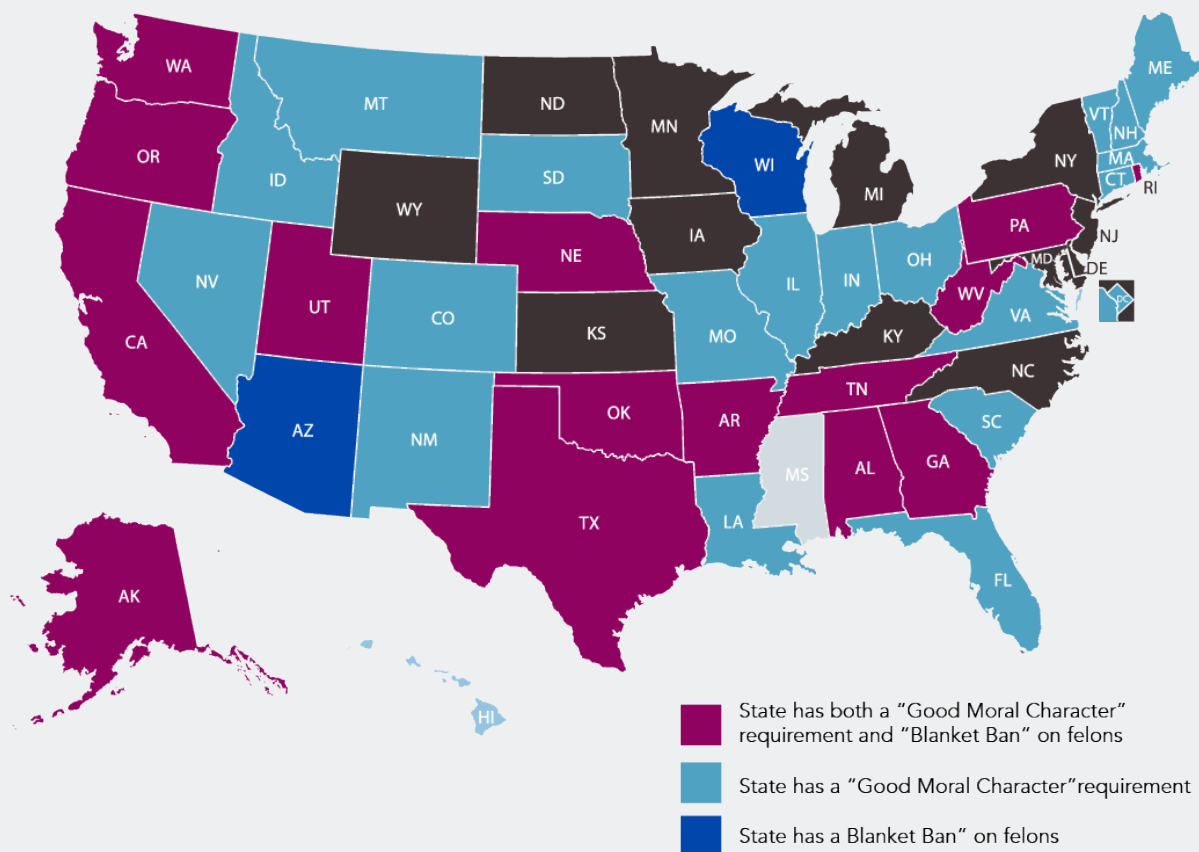


In terms of performance assessment, the most common tool is the educative Teacher Performance Assessment (edTPA), offered by Pearson. Nineteen states require a performance assessment for individuals seeking licensure, but trends suggest this type of assessment will expand to more states. Many states offer this assessment as part of a TPP.



Many states have taken additional steps toward protecting the health and safety of students. All but 15 states have a “good moral character” clause as part of their licensing statute. Such a clause allows licensing boards to deny or revoke licensure to a candidate who does not demonstrate good moral character as determined by the licensing board. Often, this quality is determined based on criminal history, including convictions for minor offenses and sometimes arrests that did not lead to a conviction. States that do not have “good character” provisions in their licensing laws may nonetheless have restrictions on the ability of licensing boards to reject a license application based largely on the criminal history of an applicant. Many states are moving to bring better definition to “good moral character,” linking the type of criminal history to the occupation in order to establish reasonable grounds for exclusion of a candidate; other states are choosing to eliminate “good moral character” clauses altogether.

Additionally, 18 states have a “blanket ban,” an automatic disqualification which prohibits a person with a felony conviction from obtaining a teaching certification. Some states narrow this to only felonies directly related to the safety of children.



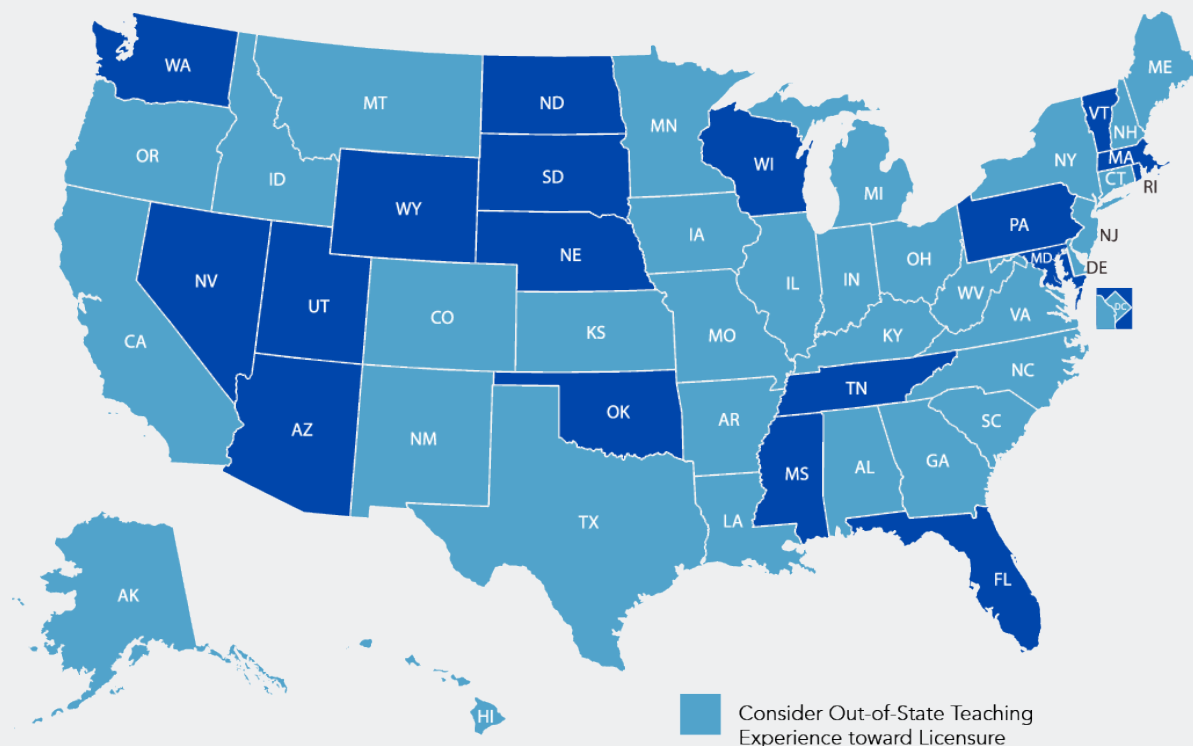
Initial Certification for Out-of-State Applicants

Requires Out-of-State Applicants to Already be Licensed

Recognition of Out-of-State Education and Experience

Teachers with substantial classroom experience might be concerned that their license status and their placement on a new salary schedule might not be comparable to what they earned in their previous state. States have an interest in balancing their need to attract experienced talent to their classrooms while maintaining a sense of fairness to current teachers in their state.

Thirty-three states offer licensure incentives for out-of-state teachers who have various levels of successful teaching experience. However, the intricacies of each state's statutes and policies require in-depth discussion.



- **Arkansas'** minimum salary schedule for classroom teachers is determined by the board of directors in each school district. The state allows teacher placement on the salary schedule to be determined by years of experience. In order to consider out-of-state teacher experience for placement on a salary schedule, the teacher must present a valid teaching license from the state where experience was obtained.
- **California's** salary schedules are determined by district. Generally, teachers are placed in higher salary lanes by gaining more education and years of experience. In many districts, teachers stop getting raises after a certain number of years (which varies from about 9-11 years) in the classroom but can still increase their salaries by obtaining more degrees. California has a two-tiered credential structure and will issue experienced out-of-state teachers with two or more years of teaching experience a credential. If the out-of-state teacher has less than two years of experience, they must meet additional requirements in order to receive a standard teacher certificate.
- **Colorado** grants a professional-level (five year) license to out-of-state teachers with three years of experience obtained within the previous seven years. If a candidate has less than three years of experience, they will be issued an initial-level (three year) license. Teacher salary schedules are determined by district. For example, teachers new to the Mesa County Valley District are initially placed based on their experience - up to 15 years of experience (within the last 20) is recognized, while in Denver only 10 years in the last 15 is recognized.
- **Connecticut** salary schedules are determined by district, but in almost all districts earning advanced degrees will increase teacher salaries. Out-of-state teachers seeking certification in Connecticut are eligible for a Provisional License if they have 30 months of teaching experience.
- **Delaware** has three main licensure levels: Initial, Continuing, and Advanced. Educators with over four years of experience, among other requirements, are eligible for a Continuing License. Teacher salary schedules are determined by the state with a cutoff of 15 years of experience. The state encourages districts to recognize related professional experience for teacher salary schedules. The state has a minimum teacher salary schedule based on years of teaching experience and degree level/credit accumulation.
- **The District of Columbia** grants license eligibility to out-of-state teachers with at least two years of experience within five years of application. The law makes no mention of salary requirements.
- **Florida** does not recognize years of experience as it pertains to licensure. Out-of-state applicants who can provide a valid teacher's license from another state are eligible for a Professional License. Teacher salary schedules are determined by district boards under a performance-based assessment.
- **Georgia** provides higher level licenses depending on years of teaching experience. Teachers with less than three years of experience are eligible for an Induction Certificate. Teachers with five years of experience may be exempt from some content testing requirements. Teacher salary schedules are determined by the state and based on years of teaching experience and degree level.

- **Hawaii** provides a Standard License to out-of-state teachers with three years of experience earned in the last five years. If the candidate cannot verify the necessary experience, they are given a Provisional License. Teacher salary schedules are determined by the state. Out-of-state teachers are initially placed on the first step of the salary schedule and only six years of teaching experience can be counted. The Hawaii Department of Education can provide a one-time award of \$2,000 for recruited out-of-state teachers. Additionally, Hawaii will recognize military experience with up to four years of salary credit.
- **Idaho** teacher salary schedules are determined by district, but the state determines the minimum salary of \$38,500 or \$42,500 with professional endorsement. Out-of-state teachers are issued an Interim Certificate and can apply only for a professional certificate after having taught in Idaho for at least one year.
- **Illinois** teacher salary schedules are determined by the state and based on years of experience and degree level. The educative Teacher Performance Assessment “edTPA” is waived for out-of-state candidates with at least one year of teaching experience in pursuit of a Professional Educator License.
- **Indiana** teacher salary schedules are determined by district. However, the state requires that schedules be based on experience, relevant degrees, leadership roles, evaluation marks, and student needs in the district. Out-of-state teachers with less than three years of experience can apply for an Initial Practitioner License. Candidates with more than three years of experience can apply for a Practitioner License.
- **Iowa** minimum teacher salary requirements are determined by the state. Out-of-state teachers with less than three years of experience can receive an Initial License while candidates with over three years of experience are eligible for a Standard License. Any teacher with five years of experience and a master’s degree or 10 years of experience does not have to complete additional coursework. Out-of-state teachers with three or more years of experience are exempt from some testing requirements.
- **Kansas** teacher salary schedules are determined by local school boards. Out-of-state teachers with at least one year of experience in the last six years can qualify for an Initial License and teachers with at least three years of experience in the last six years can qualify for a Professional License and can be exempt from assessment requirements. For out-of-state teachers who have three years of recent experience or five years of total experience, Kansas waives licensing tests.
- **Kentucky** teacher minimum salaries are determined by the state, but each district can determine its full salary schedule. Salary schedules are based on years of experience and the rank of licensure, recognizing up to 20 years of experience. Out-of-state candidates with at least two years of experience may be exempt from some PRAXIS testing requirements.
- **Louisiana** teacher salary schedules are determined by local school boards. However, the state requires that boards consider school need, degree level, experience, and effectiveness when determining pay. Teachers from other states with a valid license may be eligible for a Professional Level 1 License. In order to receive credit for having three or more years of experience, out-of-state teachers are evaluated. The state will waive licensing tests for candidates with three or more years of experience who have taught in Louisiana for at least one year.

- **Maine** teacher minimum salaries are determined by the state. Out-of-state teachers (from a state participating in NASDTEC) with three years of experience can receive a Professional Teacher Certificate. There still may be additional requirements regardless of experience, but candidates can teach under a Conditional License until the additional requirements are resolved.
- **Maryland** has a salary schedule determined by the local school system with maximums and minimums set at the state level. Maryland has four primary levels of teacher licensure in the form of a Professional Eligibility Certificate, Standard Professional Certificates I and 2, and the Advanced Professional Certificate. Out-of-state applicants from Pennsylvania and Oklahoma are eligible for a reciprocal license. Sending proof of licensing in home states and meeting other requirements (notably, exams and employment by a Maryland school) may qualify applicants for higher levels of licensure.
- **Massachusetts** allows teachers from out-of-state to apply for three levels of licensure. The primary route for out-of-state teachers is obtaining a Temporary License, which is valid for one year and is designed for teachers licensed in another state but who have not passed the required, Massachusetts-specific examinations [Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) and the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement]. Out-of-state teachers also can be eligible for a Provisional License (valid for five years) with the MTEL examinations but without the SEI Endorsement. The Provisional and Initial licenses are non-renewable. Out-of-state applicants can be eligible for a full Initial License with the passage of the MTEL examinations and an SEI Endorsement as long as the TPP was completed in a state that is party to the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement or at a college or university program approved by the Massachusetts State Commissioner. Teachers with an equivalent license from a NASDTEC state may be eligible for initial licensure if other requirements are met. Teachers applying from out-of-state cannot move to a Professional License immediately as that requires at least three years teaching under a Massachusetts Initial License.
- **Michigan** allows out-of-state applicants for licensure to apply directly to the second level of licensure (Professional) with three years of successful teaching experience and a standing certification in their home state. These applicants also are exempt from assessments if they have 18 hours toward a planned program since they were issued a teaching license and meet the Michigan reading credit requirement.
- **Minnesota** has four tiers of teacher licensure (with the first primarily designed for probationary teachers waiting to fulfill requirements). Applicants from out-of-state can apply for a Tier 2 License with either a master's degree in a subject area or a completed TPP and two years of teaching experience in a subject area. An out-of-state applicant also can apply for a Tier 3 License with a standing, professional level license in another state and two years of experience. It is not possible for a teacher to be eligible for a Tier 4 License until they have taught in Minnesota for at least three years. Minnesota grants teachers with National Board Certification a temporary license until they have completed any outstanding Minnesota examination requirements.
- **Mississippi** has a state-level salary schedule for each level of teaching license (Class A-AAAA). Out-of-state applicants can apply directly for an equivalent form of each license with the required degree (master's degree for AA; specialist's degree for AAA; doctoral for AAAA).

- **Missouri** statute dictates how out-of-state teachers are issued different levels of certification. Missouri allows teachers with experience moving into the state to gain a higher level of initial licensing. Missouri has two levels of teacher licensure: Initial Career Education Certificate (ICEC) and a Continuous Career Education Certificate (CCEC). Moving from an ICEC to a CCEC requires four years of experience, 90 hours of professional development, a performance review, and participation in a mentoring program. Missouri will consider out-of-state applicants who have 'commensurate experience' to be eligible directly for a CCEC, which is valid for 99 years.
- **Montana** salary schedules are determined at the district level. Montana has two primary levels of teacher licensure. A Class 2 License is a standard teaching license generally for recent graduates of TPP gaining their first Montana teaching license. A Class 1 (Professional) License requires a master's degree or NBPTS Certificate and three years of experience after a traditional TPP or five years of experience after a non-traditional TPP. An out-of-state applicant can apply directly to a Class 1 License by meeting those requirements as well as passing Montana Praxis requirements and completion of a free, online class (An Introduction to Indian Education for All in Montana).
- **Nebraska** determines at the state level where out-of-state teachers are placed on the career ladder. Applicants with valid credentials and teaching experience will be given a provisional license while working toward requirements for upper-level licenses. These extra requirements include courses on Human Relations and Special Education, however those requirements can be fulfilled through the submission of a narrative showing competency in those areas, earned through work experience. State statute dictates that out-of-state applicants may be eligible for upper-level licenses after moving, but each applicant is handled individually by a Certification Analyst.
- **Nevada** placement of out-of-state teachers is dictated by Nevada statute. Salary schedules are made at the district level. Applicants with a valid license in another state that is non-conditional and non-provisional will go through an individual review process. Submitting the license and a form showing teaching experience in the licensed state generally waives testing requirements for an initial license and instead the Nevada Department of Education staff will match the license and experience with the closest licensing level in Nevada.
- **New Hampshire** gives local districts discretion to create salary schedules, but state lawmakers have a funding formula for budgetary purposes. New Hampshire has two levels of teacher licensure. Teacher applicants from out-of-state potentially can be eligible for an Experienced Educator Certificate with a license in good standing from another state and three years of teaching experience at the elementary or secondary level.
- **New Jersey** has a state-mandated placement system for out-of-state applicants applying for their first New Jersey license. With only two forms of licensing (provisional and standard), an out-of-state applicant can be eligible for a standard license with a valid standard certificate issued by another state and demonstration of at least two years of effective teaching within three of the last four calendar years. Out-of-state applicants also can achieve a standard certification level with an NBPTS Certificate.
- **New Mexico** has a state-level salary schedule outlined in statute. This correlates with the three levels of licensure in New Mexico for which out-of-state applicants may be eligible.

An applicant with a bachelor's degree, an NBPTS Certificate, and at least three years of teaching experience can apply directly for a Level 2 License. An applicant with a master's degree, an NBPTS Certificate, and at least six years of teaching experience can apply directly for a Level 3 License.

- **New York** has two levels of licensure (initial and professional). The New York State Department of Education has created a pathway for teachers from another state with a valid license and three years of teaching experience to gain an initial license without otherwise required exams. There is no pathway for an out-of-state applicant to immediately gain a professional license, regardless of experience. Salary schedules are determined at the district level.
- **North Carolina** utilizes a state-level salary schedule for teachers and other school staff. Out-of-state applicants can apply directly for the higher level of licensure (Continuing Practice License) with at least three years of experience. Out-of-state years of experience count toward salary. Out-of-state applicants with a National Board Certification also can apply directly for a Continuing Practice License..
- **North Dakota** does not have a path to higher levels of licensure for out-of-state applicants.
- **Ohio** salary schedules are determined by the state. There are two pathways for out-of-state applicant teachers. If an applicant already is employed at an Ohio school and has not yet completed all licensure exams, they may apply for a one-year license. If an applicant has a valid standard or professional license from their home state and at least three years of teaching experience, they may apply directly for the highest level of licensure in Ohio: a five-year professional license.
- **Oklahoma** has a state-level minimum salary schedule. Oklahoma has one level of teacher licensure, for which an out-of-state applicant can apply.
- **Oregon** salary schedules are set at the district level and the steps are generally between years of experience and level of education. Education and years of experience in other states can be counted as long as a school leader from the past experience submits a form. The only path for an out-of-state licensed teacher to an Oregon license is by utilizing a one-year reciprocal license while working toward the requirements for either a Preliminary License or Professional Teaching License.
- **Pennsylvania** maintains two levels of teacher licensure. Out-of-state teachers are eligible for Pennsylvania's Level II License if the teacher holds the NBPTS Credential comparable to the Pennsylvania certificate type for which they apply. Out-of-state teachers who do not hold the NBPTS Certificate, regardless of education or experience, are eligible for a Level I License only. Pennsylvania has a minimum salary schedule for teachers that applies only to service within an individual school district. Teachers who transfer between districts in-state and out-of-state negotiate the placement on the salary schedule with the employing district.
- **Rhode Island** grants educators with an out-of-state license full reciprocity if their credentials include fulfillment of Rhode Island's educator testing requirements. Educators with an out-of-state license, but whose credentials do not include fulfillment of Rhode Island's educator testing requirements, can receive temporary certification. Rhode Island law

requires school districts to establish minimum salary schedules that recognize years of service, experience, and training for all certified personnel with no more than 12 annual steps. Out-of-state educators negotiate the placement on the salary schedule with the employing district.

- **South Carolina** grants out-of-state teachers applying for certification through reciprocity a lower level Initial Certificate, but applicants immediately are evaluated for the higher level Professional Certificate. Out-of-state teachers with at least three years of experience within the past seven years in the same state or territory can qualify for the Professional Certificate. South Carolina maintains a statewide salary schedule for teachers that is based on years of teaching experience and advanced degree and/or continuing education credit accumulation. Out-of-state teachers negotiate the placement on the salary schedule with the employing district.
- **South Dakota** has professional and advanced certifications for teachers. Out-of-state teachers may be eligible for Advanced Certification via reciprocity with a comparable NBPTS Certificate. Out-of-state educators are eligible for one-year provisional certification if they have not completed the South Dakota Indian Studies Course. South Dakota requires school districts to determine the compensation of personnel. Out-of-state educators negotiate placement on the employing district's salary schedule.
- **Tennessee** maintains a minimum state salary schedule for teachers that recognizes years of experience and attainment of advanced degrees. Local districts can submit salary schedules to the state Board of Education that increase compensation for teachers. As a result, out-of-state teachers negotiate placement on the salary schedule with the employing district.
- **Texas** teachers' minimum salary schedules are determined by the state and based on years of experience (up to 20). Out-of-state teachers who can verify one year of full-time teaching experience are exempt from some testing requirements. If a candidate has less than a year of experience, they are not exempt from any test and are eligible for a One-Year Certificate. Texas encourages districts to give financial incentives to teachers with related experience, including experience gained out-of-state.
- **Utah** has two tiers of teacher licensure: associate and professional. Utah does not have automatic reciprocity with other states, but will evaluate licensure applications from out-of-state teachers. If out-of-state teachers have the appropriate credentials and experience, they can be issued a professional license. Utah does not have a statewide minimum salary schedule. It directs districts to create a salary schedule that aligns with the district's annual evaluation system. Teachers advance in the salary schedule based on these evaluations. Out-of-state teachers negotiate placement on the salary schedule with the employing district. Out-of-state teachers with certification from the NBPTS are eligible for compensation bonuses.
- **Vermont** maintains reciprocity agreements for out-of-state teachers through the NASDTEC Interstate Agreement. Teacher licensure in Vermont has two levels. Out-of-state teachers with a license from a state participating in NASDTEC can be granted the lower level license.

- **Virginia** authorizes local boards to develop salary schedules. Candidates from out-of-state with at least three years of experience may be exempt from some testing requirements and are eligible to receive a higher level license (either a Collegiate Professional License or a Postgraduate Professional License).
- **Washington** allows teachers to move from a Residency License (initial) to a Professional License with two years of experience and either a ProTeach Portfolio or earning National Board Certification. Due to the rigor of these requirements, only teachers who also hold a National Board Certification or a Master Educator License from Wisconsin or Professional License from Ohio are eligible to apply straight to a Professional License in Washington. Teachers applying from any other state needs to apply for the first level of teacher license in Washington. Washington also allows for a conditional license for out-of-state teachers who are being directly sought by districts. This license can be reissued for two years.
- **West Virginia** recognizes out-of-state teaching experience at a number of levels. First, an applicant for West Virginia licensure can apply directly for the five-year professional license and be exempt from the educator internship requirement with five years of teaching experience in their home state. At the permanent professional level, applicants with an equivalent (permanent) license in their home state as well as five years of teaching experience in the endorsement area they are seeking and in a public school setting can apply directly for a permanent license.
- **Wisconsin** manages teaching licenses at Tier II, Tier III, and Tier IV. Out-of-state educators are eligible for a Tier II License and must work in Wisconsin to move to other tiers, as well as meet other requirements. Wisconsin teacher salary schedules are determined at the district level.
- **Wyoming** teacher salary schedules are determined at the district level. Wyoming only offers one level of teacher licensure and recognizes licenses obtained with supervised student teaching and required testing and added endorsements through similar methods as Wyoming's. Because Wyoming does not have a tiered licensing system and salary schedules are determined by years of experience and level of education, placement on salary schedules is at the discretion of the district.

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