

**RESPONSE TO NATIONAL COUNCIL ON TEACHER QUALITY
IMPROVING TEACHER PREPARATION IN LOUISIANA 2012 REPORT**

ONE PAGE OVERVIEW

Of the 20 items recommended by the National Council on Teacher Quality for Louisiana as Critical Issues for State Teacher Preparation Policy, the following is a breakdown:

- **8 items have already been addressed by LDOE, BESE & BOR**
 - **Universities provide mathematics content specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers; the content is now being aligned with the Common Core State Standards (Coursework approved by LDOE, BESE, & BOR)**
 - **Universities provide reading, science, and social studies content specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers; the content is now being aligned with Common Core State Standards (Coursework approved by LDOE, BESE, & BOR)**
 - **BESE requires a Praxis Teaching Reading assessment for elementary teachers who completed alternate programs that required less than 9 credit hours of reading**
 - **Universities provide broad liberal arts program of study for elementary special education candidates (BESE policy)**
 - **Universities provide adequate content knowledge for secondary special education teachers (BESE policy)**
 - **Universities provide 10 or more weeks of student teaching**
 - **BOR and BESE have authority to remove approval of NCATE/TEAC accredited programs (BESE & BOR policy)**
 - **Alternate program coursework was created by LDOE, BESE, & BOR to be manageable and target the immediate needs of new teachers and later reexamined through a study with a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York**

- **1 item is in the process of being addressed by LDOE, BESE & BOR (i.e., Teacher Preparation Accountability System)**

- **2 items would have to be addressed by the legislature with a change in law regarding university use of identifiable Compass teacher evaluation results**

- **9 items would have to be addressed by LDOE and BESE with changes in existing BESE policies.**
 - **7 items pertain to changes in Praxis assessments**
 - **1 item pertains to changing GPA for private providers**
 - **1 item pertains to requiring elementary teachers to have a minor (30 credit hours) or major (60 credit hours) in a specific content area instead of what BESE now requires which is to have 2 focus areas in English/reading/ language arts (24 credit hours) and Mathematics (21 credit hours)**

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CRITICAL ISSUES FOR STATE TEACHER PREPARATION POLICY

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A. ADMISSION INTO TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS

NCTQ Conclusion: Louisiana does not ensure that teacher preparation programs admit candidates with strong academic records.

NCTQ Next Steps for Louisiana:

1. Require that programs use a common admissions test normed to the general college-bound population.

BOR Response: This is a change that would have to be made by LDOE/BESE. State law requires candidates to pass a test to be admitted to a teacher preparation program. BESE policy identifies the test that must be passed. University teacher preparation programs must follow BESE policy.

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

BOR Response: BESE policy already requires passage of subject matter tests for admission to alternate teacher preparation programs.

This is a change that would have to be made by LDOE/BESE if required for undergraduate programs. There is a potential problem for secondary and K-12 programs. Secondary and K-12 candidates must complete a major in a specific content area and are still taking content courses during their junior year. Candidates are usually admitted to teacher preparation programs during the end of their sophomore year so that they can start participating in field-based clinical experiences while completing pedagogy courses (e.g., classroom management, diverse learners, etc.) prior to actual student teaching. A requirement of passage of Praxis content assessments prior to admission to teacher preparation programs would limit the amount of K-12 and secondary clinical experiences prior to student teaching.

B. ELEMENTARY TEACHER PREPARATION

NCTQ Conclusion: Louisiana does not ensure that new elementary teachers are ready to teach to the Common Core Standards.

NCTQ Next Steps for Louisiana:

1. Require elementary teacher candidates to pass a subject-matter test designed to ensure sufficient content knowledge of all subjects. (The tests should be aligned with Common Core State Standards and a separate passing score should be required for each area on the test.)

BOR Response: This is a change that would have to be made by LDOE/BESE. BESE identifies the Praxis examination that teacher candidates must pass for teacher certification. University teacher preparation programs must follow BESE policy.

2. 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.

BOR Response: In regards to the curriculum, teacher preparation programs in Louisiana are currently providing coursework in mathematics content that is specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers in Louisiana. All university teacher preparation programs underwent redesign of their teacher preparation programs from 2001-2010 and pre-redesign programs were terminated. All redesigned programs were required to provide courses that addressed Louisiana and national content standards for students in the area of mathematics. All elementary teachers were required to take 12 credit hours of content specific mathematics courses and an additional 9 credit hours of content and/or teaching methodology mathematics courses for a total of 21 mathematics related courses. When national experts evaluated the redesigned elementary teacher preparation programs, they closely examined the coursework to ensure that courses pertaining to Algebra, Geometry/Measurement, Statistics/Probability, and Number Structure were included since they were needed by teachers responsible for teaching the state mathematics content standards. Teacher preparation programs were not approved by BESE or BOR unless they addressed these expectations. Official plans within the LDOE & BOR or an examination of university catalogs for teacher preparation will verify that this has occurred.

Please see B(4) for a description of the work that is now occurring within universities to integrate the Common Core Standards into the teacher preparation curriculum.

Again, in regards to a mathematics assessment, this is a change that would have to be made by LDOE/BESE. BESE identifies the content tests that must be passed for teacher certification. University teacher preparation programs must follow BESE policy.

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

BOR Response: BESE policy already requires passage of the Praxis Teaching Reading (#0204) assessment for elementary education candidates who are participating in alternate teacher preparation programs that do not require 9 credit hours of reading courses. Since a rigorous process was conducted by the LDOE to review all reading courses at all universities, a decision was made by BESE to not have programs with 9 credit hours of reading be required to take the Praxis Teaching Reading Assessment (#0204).

BESE policy would be needed if a decision was made to require undergraduate and alternate candidates who have taken 9 credit hours of reading to also pass the Praxis Teaching Reading (#0204) assessment.

BESE currently requires all undergraduate elementary teacher preparation program candidates to offer programs in which candidates must complete 12 credit hours of English composition and literature and an additional 12 credit hours in reading/language arts (i.e., 9 of the 12 reading/language arts credit hours must be in reading).

As noted above, reading instruction within all teacher preparation programs has already been closely examined by the LDOE and BESE. National experts were first hired by the State to examine all reading courses during the redesign of undergraduate and alternate teacher preparation programs to ensure that they were aligned with the recommendations of the National Reading Panel. Reading/language competencies (e.g., Phonemic Awareness and Letter Knowledge, Phonics and Word Recognition, Fluent – Automatic Reading of Text, Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Spelling/Writing) aligned with the National Reading Panel recommendations were next adopted by BESE (Bulletin 113 – Louisiana’s Reading and Language Competencies for New Teachers) and all teacher preparation programs were required to submit a more comprehensive set of reading course syllabi and supplemental documents to the LDOE for a review conducted by national reading experts identified by the LDOE. Final approval of redesigned teacher preparation programs did not occur until reading expectations of the national experts, LDOE, and BESE were addressed. Universities have been implementing the redesigned reading courses that were approved by the national experts, LDOE, and BESE.

Please see B(4) for a description of the work that is now occurring within universities to integrate the Common Core Standards into the teacher preparation curriculum.

4. Ensure that teacher preparation programs deliver a comprehensive program of study in broad liberal arts coursework. (Ensure that it is aligned with the specific topics that teachers will encounter in the elementary classroom.)

BOR Response: This is already being addressed in Louisiana. Redesigned teacher preparation programs in Louisiana are currently providing 55 credit hours of broad liberal arts coursework in English, mathematics, science, social

studies, and the arts that is specifically geared to the needs of elementary teachers in Louisiana.

All redesigned programs were required to provide courses that addressed Louisiana and national content standards for students. All redesigned programs were evaluated by national experts and not approved by the BOR or BESE until they had addressed all state expectations. The following requirements had to be addressed for courses to demonstrate that they were addressing state content standards for students. Documentation of these courses can be found in Official Plans submitted to the LDOE/BOR and in university catalogs. New Official Plan forms will be submitted by universities to the LDOE/BOR for approval if changes are made to the teacher preparation curriculum based upon the integration of the Common Core State Standards into the curriculum.

Mathematics: Please see B(2) for a listing of the 12 credit hours of mathematics content courses and 9 additional credit hours of content and/or teaching methodology courses in mathematics that redesigned teacher preparation programs are currently offering.

English/Language Arts/Reading: Please see B(3) for a listing of the 12 credit hours of English (composition and literature) content courses and 12 credit hours of reading/language arts content and/or teaching methodology courses that redesigned teacher preparation programs are currently offering.

Science: All elementary education programs had to demonstrate that their redesigned teacher preparation programs required candidates to complete 15 credit hours of courses that addressed biology, earth science, chemistry, and physics. Campuses were allowed to offer physical science courses that addressed both chemistry and physics but had to demonstrate to the national experts, LDOE, and BOR that the courses addressed all of Louisiana's science content standards for grades 1-5.

Social Studies: All elementary education programs had to demonstrate that their redesigned teacher preparation programs required candidates to complete 12 credit hours of courses that addressed history, government, geography, and economics. These four areas addressed social studies content standards for Louisiana and addressed federal requirements for No Child Left Behind.

Fine Arts: All elementary education programs had to demonstrate that their redesigned teacher preparation programs required candidates to complete 3 credit hours of fine arts course(s).

All teacher preparation programs in Louisiana are now integrating the Common Core State Standards into the curriculum for their teacher preparation programs. This process began during August 2011 when the BOR and LDOE met with university chancellors/presidents and their key leadership teams to discuss the Common Core State Standards and new PARCC assessment. PARCC Campus Leadership Teams have been created at all universities and are being led by the

College of Education Deans. During 2011-12, the PARCC Campus Leadership Teams participated in a statewide webinar and attended two PARCC Campus Leadership Team meetings where they have acquired a deeper understanding of the Common Core State Standards and PARCC assessments. The teams have developed PARCC Project Management Plans that identify how they are communicating information about the Common Core State Standards and PARCC to faculty on their campuses and how they are integrating the Common Core State Standards and PARCC expectations into their teacher preparation programs. The BOR has obtained a Core to College grant from the Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors and a small amount of funding is being disseminated to the PARCC Campus Leadership Teams to convene faculty to address this work. All universities have sent faculty to participate in training during fall 2012 conducted by the LDOE pertaining to the math and English/language arts Common Core State Standards. All universities have also sent faculty during fall 2012 to be trained to administer the new Compass teacher and leader evaluation tools. Thus, all campuses are actively engaged in integrating the Common Core State Standards and Compass into their teacher preparation curriculum.

5. Require elementary teacher candidates to complete a content specialization in an academic subject area. (major or minor)

BOR Response: BESE would have to change the existing certification structure for this to occur. When changing the previous certification structure in 2001, BESE made a decision to require elementary education candidates to complete two focus areas (i.e., Reading/Language Arts; Mathematics) instead of a major or minor. These were considered to be two critical areas for all elementary education teachers. The Mathematics focus area includes 12 credit hours of Mathematics content courses plus 9 credit hours in additional content and/or mathematics teaching methodology for a total of 21 credit hours. The Reading/Language Arts focus area includes 12 credit hours of English content courses in composition and literature, 9 credit hours in reading, and 3 credit hours in language arts for a total of 24 credit hours. A minor would be 30 -59 credit hours.

BESE would need to eliminate the Mathematics focus area to create a minor in English/Reading/Language arts, or it would need to use a portion of the 19 flexible hours to create a minor or major in a content area. Many of the 19 flexible credit hours are needed to address other areas that are important for teachers and national accreditation.

C. MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER PREPARATION

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

D. SECONDARY TEACHER PREPARATION

NCTQ Conclusion: Louisiana could do more to ensure that new secondary teachers will be prepared to teach appropriate grade-level content

NCTQ Next Steps for Louisiana:

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

BOR Response: BESE would need to make a decision to eliminate the General Science certification to address this NCTQ recommendation.

BESE already requires teachers to pass a specific content test in each of the following science areas:

Biology Teacher: Praxis Biology Assessment (#0235)

Chemistry Teacher: Praxis Chemistry Assessment (#0245)

Physics Teacher: Praxis Physics Assessment (#0265)

BESE also offers certification in the area of “General Science” and one of the following Praxis assessments may be taken for certification:

Praxis Biology and General Science (#0030)

Praxis Chemistry/Physics General Science (#0181)

Praxis General Science: Content Knowledge (#0435)

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

BOR Response: BESE would need to change existing policy to address this step. When the Social Studies certification was initially developed for approval by BESE, the United States Department of Education (USDE) informed Louisiana that it would have to develop a social studies curriculum that addressed all of the following areas to fully address requirements for No Child Left Behind: history, government, geography, and economics. Louisiana was told by the USDE that it could not have candidates major in one content area (e.g., history) and become certified to teach social studies. As a result, the decision was made to create a certification in social studies that addressed all four areas and require candidates to take one Praxis assessment that assessed all four areas.

If BESE addresses the NCTQ recommendation, it needs to determine if a definition for social studies still exists for the USDE. If teacher candidates are required to take a separate Praxis content assessment for History, Geography, Government, and Economics to teach social studies, they will need to possess a deeper content knowledge in each area to pass the assessment and will need to

pay for a total of 9 Praxis examinations as compared to the 5 Praxis assessments taken by most candidates.

E. SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER PREPARATION

NCTQ Conclusion: Louisiana could do more to ensure that new special education teachers will know the subject matter they will be required to teach.

NCTQ Next Steps for Louisiana:

1. Provide a broad liberal arts program of study to elementary special education candidates.

BOR Response: LDOE/BESE has already addressed this step. BESE currently requires all elementary special education candidates to complete the same 55 credit hours of liberal arts content courses as elementary education teachers. Teacher candidates exit the redesigned integrated to merged special education program certified as a special education teacher and certified as a regular elementary education teacher. Please see section B(4).

2. Ensure that secondary special education teachers possess adequate content knowledge.

BOR Response: BESE has already addressed this step. BESE currently requires all secondary special education candidates to complete a major in a specific content area. Teacher candidates exit the redesigned integrated to merged special education program certified as a special education teacher and certified as a regular secondary education teacher in a specific content area. When Louisiana developed the integrated to merged program, it was the state's understanding that secondary special education teachers had to have a major in a specific content areas to be highly qualified for No Child Left Behind. It was the state's understanding that a secondary special education teacher could no longer be a generalist and teach all content areas.

F. STUDENT TEACHING

NCTQ Conclusion: Louisiana does not ensure that teacher preparation programs will provide teacher candidates with a high quality summative clinical experience.

NCTQ Next Steps for Louisiana:

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

BOR Response: State law will have to be changed for universities to be provided this data. State law prohibits universities from being provided identifiable Compass evaluation data about teacher effectiveness as measured by student learning.

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

BOR Response: State law will have to be changed for universities to be provided this data. State law prohibits universities from being provided identifiable Compass evaluation data about teacher effectiveness as measured by student learning.

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

BOR Response: Universities in Louisiana are already addressing this step. Teacher candidates complete their student teaching throughout a full academic semester and are in schools for 10 or more weeks. All universities must submit a report to the USDE each year that identifies the number of student teaching hours that are completed by their candidates each semester. This information is available to the public on the USDE web site (<https://title2.ed.gov/Title2STRC/Pages/StateHome.aspx>). Fifteen of the nineteen public and private universities in Louisiana report that they require more than the 270 hours required by BESE with 10 of the 19 universities reporting that they require from 450 to 600 hours of student teaching.

Clinical experiences at Louisiana's universities do not start at the point of student teaching. Within all of the redesigned programs, clinical experiences start early in the teacher candidates' programs and the number of clinical experiences prior to student teaching range from 180 hours to 273 hours at universities across the state. This information is also available on the USDE web site. As a result of BESE policy, teacher candidates in Louisiana have more hours of clinical experiences prior to student teaching than teacher candidates in many other states. These early clinical experiences combined with the actual hours of clinical experiences during student teaching have resulted in new teachers being better prepared for real life experiences as they exit their programs.

G. TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAM ACCOUNTABILITY

NCTQ Conclusion: Louisiana is on track to hold its teacher preparation programs accountable for the effectiveness of the teachers they produce.

NCTQ Next Steps for Louisiana:

1. Ensure that criteria for program approval results in greater accountability.

BOR Response: Louisiana is already in the process of addressing this step. Louisiana's Teacher Preparation Accountability System is currently being revised to integrate teacher preparation value-added results into the system. It will provide a process to identify poorly performing teacher preparation programs and will result in loss of program approval if improvement is not demonstrated.

The new system will go before the BOR and BESE for approval and implementation during 2013.

2. Maintain full authority over teacher preparation program approval.

BOR Response: BESE and BOR policies already exist that allow the BOR and BESE to remove approval of teacher preparation programs even though the programs are NCATE or TEAC accredited. BESE's Programmatic Intervention policy allows them to remove approval of NCATE/TEAC accredited programs if they do not demonstrate improvement in their value-added performance. BOR can terminate NCATE/TEAC accredited programs through low completer reviews and other policies. The Teacher Preparation Accountability System has in the past and will in the future allow the two boards to remove approval of NCATE/TEAC accredited programs if indicators demonstrate low performance.

H. ALTERNATE ROUTES TO CERTIFICATION

NCTQ Next Steps for Louisiana:

1. Increase academic requirements for admission. GPA for private providers should not be lower than universities.

BOR Response: LDOE/BESE would need to address this step. BESE makes decisions about GPA academic requirements for private providers.

2. Ensure that preparation coursework is manageable and targets the immediate needs of new teachers.

BOR Response: This was examined when the alternate certification programs were developed and again examined when a study was conducted in Louisiana through a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. BESE policy determines the structure of alternate pathways. The three pathways that currently exist were initially developed for teacher candidates who indicated that they had differing time restraints and differing needs. All pathways address the same teacher and content standards but the delivery differs. The Practitioner Teacher Program was developed for individuals who could devote large amounts of time for a highly intensive program that could be completed over a summer, fall, and spring. The Certification-Only Program was developed for individuals who could not complete an intensive program due to other time commitments (e.g., job, family, children, etc.) and who could not earn a sufficient GRE score to be admitted to a graduate program for a MAT. The MAT was created for individuals who wanted to pursue a graduate degree while receiving their alternate certification and could obtain the necessary GRE score to be admitted to a graduate program. Previous data collected for Louisiana's Carnegie study indicated that all three of these pathways could produce teachers who obtained high value-added scores. It was the quality of the instruction within a pathway and not the pathway itself that impacted the effectiveness of the new teachers.