



## 2017 Licensure Content Assessment Review

### Context

Tennessee requires educators to take and pass specific assessments prior to both **receiving an initial license and to adding endorsements** for other content areas to their license. The Praxis test series is currently used for **content-specific knowledge**. A new performance assessment, edTPA, will also be required starting in 2019 and focuses on content-relevant pedagogy.

Board members expressed interest in determining if the Praxis tests that Tennessee currently uses are the **most aligned with state academic expectations** for teaching in the content areas. Two particular areas of interest are **elementary reading and secondary mathematics** given that student achievement has lagged in these areas and, particularly for secondary math, some districts have had difficulty finding enough teachers.

### 2017 Content Assessment Review

The State Board of Education (SBE) staff conducted educator-led reviews of the licensure content exams for **elementary reading and secondary math** in August 2017. The reviewer teams analyzed Tennessee’s current licensure exams in those areas as well as others available from additional vendors. Educator review teams included **district, higher education, and state department representatives**, and their goal was to identify the exams that best aligned with Tennessee standards and content expectations.

The reviewers used a state-created **rubric** to analyze each assessment’s alignment to the **student academic standards** in the relevant content area and grades. The rubrics also included indicators of alignment to the **EPP Literacy Standards** and, for math, the **NCTM standards**. Based on their analyses, the reviewers provided a set of policy recommendations to the SBE staff.

### Timeline

<b>August 2017</b>	Educator review teams meet to review the assessments and formulate recommendations.
<b>September</b>	The State Board’s Educator Licensure and Preparation subcommittee met via conference call for an update on the review process. They supported the SBE staff’s decision to solicit feedback from additional stakeholder groups.
<b>October</b>	SBE staff will work with state department colleagues to gather input from a variety of stakeholders on the reviewers’ recommendations.
<b>November</b>	SBE staff will present finalized recommendation to the Board’s subcommittee.
<b>January or April 2018</b>	Pending the subcommittee’s recommendations, bring policy revisions to the State Board for first reading. Additional time for public comment would follow the first reading.

### Opportunities for Stakeholder Feedback

To provide feedback on the proposed recommendations, please complete the form linked below by Nov. 3, 2017. The subcommittee’s November meeting will be available on livestreaming on the Board’s website [here](#); like all Board meetings, it is also free and open to the public.

URL: [https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/content\\_assessment\\_feedback](https://stateoftennessee.formstack.com/forms/content_assessment_feedback) [SURVEY NOW CLOSED]



## Tennessee Licensure Content Assessment Review: Elementary Reading

### Assessments Reviewed

ETS	Pearson
Praxis 5203: Teaching Reading Elementary Education	NES: Essential Components of Elementary Reading Instruction
Praxis 5204: Teaching Reading	Foundations of Reading

### Reviewer Recommendations

- The reviewers found that none of the assessments reviewed currently reflect the rigor and depth of Tennessee's standards, instructional shifts, and literacy expectations.

#### *Option 1:*

- The reviewers recommend that the State Board staff study the feasibility of a customized test.
  - An ideal assessment would be appropriate for general education teachers from pre-K through grade 8 as well as special education teachers and interventionists.
- The reviewers recommend pursuing customization with ETS for several reasons:
  - ETS is in the process of revising their assessment (Praxis 5203) already.
  - ETS expressed a willingness to consider a revised assessment prior to the roll-out of their new assessment in 2019.
  - The current Praxis assessment 5203 was the strongest of the assessments reviewed, making it a good starting place for customization.

#### *Option 2:*

- The reviewers also suggested that the State Board staff reach out to ETS to determine if Tennessee educators can be involved in their current assessment revision process to incorporate Tennessee-specific requirements in their national assessment.
  - This could supplant the need for a customized assessment depending on ETS's timeline and the extent to which Tennessee standards could be addressed.

### Summary of Reviewers' Analyses of Top Two Assessments

*Note: The reviewers did not believe that either the Praxis 5204 or NES: Essential Components of Elementary Reading Instruction were at all aligned with Tennessee standards and expectations. They therefore focused their more in-depth comments on the top two assessments, as shown in the table below.*

	<b>Praxis 5203: Teaching Reading Elementary Education</b>	<b>Foundations of Reading</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Candidates are familiar with this type of assessment</li> <li>• Good examples of student work to be analyzed</li> <li>• Measured foundational skills well</li> <li>• Aligned with the National Reading Panel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developmental format/grouping of questions</li> <li>• Questions were more application-based and incorporated several standards in one</li> <li>• Measured foundational skills well</li> <li>• Aligned with the National Reading Panel</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy on writing process and not on writing strategies</li> <li>• Little to nothing on selecting complex texts</li> <li>• Does not include questions on literacy-rich environment</li> <li>• Assesses few EPP literacy standards</li> <li>• Lack of attention to writing</li> <li>• Weak in the area of technology (i.e. digital literacies)</li> <li>• Professional learning/collaboration with peers and colleagues is lacking</li> <li>• Lacks questions on student motivation</li> <li>• Lack of attention to diversity as strength (EPP literacy standard 2.2)</li> <li>• Not enough depth to assess our instructional shifts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More items that were challengeable</li> <li>• Grammar questions/academic knowledge that are not taught in EPPs</li> <li>• Virtually nothing with writing</li> <li>• Little to nothing on selecting complex texts</li> <li>• Does not include questions on literacy-rich environment</li> <li>• Assesses few EPP literacy standards</li> <li>• Weak in the area of technology (i.e. digital literacies)</li> <li>• Professional learning/collaboration with peers and colleagues is lacking</li> <li>• Lacks questions on student motivation</li> <li>• Lack of attention to diversity as strength (EPP literacy standard 2.2)</li> <li>• Not enough depth to assess our instructional shifts</li> </ul>



## Tennessee Licensure Content Assessment Review: Secondary Math

### Assessments Reviewed

ETS	Pearson
Praxis 5169: Middle School Math	NES 203: Middle Grades Math
Praxis 5162: Algebra I	NES 105: Middle Grades and Early Secondary Math
Praxis 5161: Mathematics Content Knowledge (High School)	NES 304: Mathematics (High School)

### Reviewer Recommendations

- The reviewers recommended that the State adopt the Pearson NES Series Mathematics (304) exam as its licensure exam for Grades 6-12 Mathematics licensure.
- The reviewers recommended that the state adopt the Pearson NES Series Middle Grades and Early Secondary (105) exam as its licensure exam for Grades 6-8 Mathematics licensure.
  - Successful completion of this exam should allow the extension of the Grades 6-8 Mathematics licensure to include Algebra I/Integrated Math I within the scope of the license.
  - The requirement that the current Algebra I Praxis exam be successfully completed as a qualification to teach Algebra I/Integrated Math I should be removed for those candidates who successfully complete the Middle Grades and Early Secondary (105) exam.
- In the long term, the review committee recommended reviewing the licensing structure for mathematics courses (i.e., the grade bands and/or content areas included in a given endorsement area). This could mean modifying existing assessments or creating a customized, Tennessee-specific one.



**Summary of Reviewers' Analyses of ETS Assessments**

	<b>Praxis 5169: Middle School Math</b>	<b>Praxis 5162: Algebra I</b>	<b>Praxis 5161: Math Content Knowledge (High School)</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partially aligns with state middle school standards</li> <li>Includes problem solving items</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewers did not identify specific strengths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns with state high school standards fairly well</li> <li>Includes problem solving items</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lacks sufficient coverage of fraction, proportion content</li> <li>Test items did not reflect level of rigor or depth of understanding expected from TN teachers and grades 6-8 students</li> <li>Teachers interested in teaching Algebra I/Integrated Math I must become certified for those courses separately</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not rigorous enough to determine whether teachers can support depth of understanding expected from Algebra I/Integrated Math I students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Includes few conceptual items</li> <li>Includes no to very few reasoning and proof items</li> <li>Depends on implied understanding (“in order to do A, we assume someone can do B”)</li> <li>Does not include items that align to Applied Mathematical Concepts standards</li> <li>Does not fully align with geometry standards</li> </ul>

**Summary of Reviewers' Analyses of Pearson Assessments**

	<b>NES: Middle Grades (203)</b>	<b>NES: Middle Grades and Early Secondary (105)</b>	<b>NES: High School (304)</b>
<b>Strengths</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewers did not identify specific strengths</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns with state middle school and early high school standards fairly well</li> <li>Reflects higher rigor and trajectory needed to teach current state standards</li> <li>Includes problem solving items</li> <li>Includes conceptual items</li> <li>Includes reasoning and proof items</li> <li>Address mathematical practices</li> <li>Rigorous enough to allow 6-8 licensure to also include Algebra I/Integrated Math I without additional training or competency exam</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aligns with state high school standards fairly well</li> <li>Includes problem solving items</li> <li>Includes conceptual items</li> <li>Includes reasoning and proof items</li> <li>Address mathematical practices</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Did not align well with 6-8 licensure expectations</li> <li>Lacks trajectory of knowledge required for TN teachers</li> <li>Sporadically covered material well beyond expectations for 6-8 licensure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewers did not identify specific concerns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reviewers did not identify specific concerns</li> </ul>