American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE)



THE HISTORY, CURRENT USE, AND IMPACT OF ENTRANCE AND LICENSURE EXAMINATIONS CUT SCORES ON THE TEACHER-OF-COLOR PIPELINE: A STRUCTURAL RACISM ANALYSIS

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Consortium for Research-Based and Equitable Assessments

About AACTE

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) is a national coalition of educator preparation programs and partners dedicated to high-quality, evidence-based preparation that assures educators are profession-ready as they enter the classroom. AACTE represents 600 colleges and schools of education that include public and private colleges and universities in every state, the District of Columbia, the Virgin Islands and Guam. Through advocacy and capacity building, AACTE promotes innovation and effective practices that advances educator preparation.

About the Consortium for Research-Based and Equitable Assessments

The Consortium for Research-Based and Equitable Assessments (CREA), funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, is a partnership comprised of 14 state teams seeking to address assessment barriers that limit access to the teaching profession. Each state team includes representatives from teacher preparation programs, the state education agency (SEA), and a local education agency (LEA). Together, these stakeholders are evaluating the processes and considerations that states use to determine cut scores for entrance into teacher preparation programs to develop model state policies, and guidelines and criteria for setting equitable cut scores. The following states are members of the Consortium:

- California – Cal State University San Bernardino
- Delaware – Wilmington University
- South Carolina – Claflin University
- New Mexico – Western New Mexico University
- Rhode Island – University of Rhode Island
- Missouri – Lindenwood University
- Wisconsin – University of Wisconsin-Whitewater
- North Carolina – University of North Carolina-Charlotte
- Minnesota – University of St. Thomas
- Indiana – Indiana University-Bloomington
- Ohio – Ohio University
- Texas – Texas A&M International University/Texas A&M University System
- Kentucky – University of Louisville
- Tennessee – University of Tennessee-Knoxville

About the Author

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The position of minorities has not changed very much and will not change very much if we don't focus on racism.

– Carol Hobson Smith, National Alliance of Black School Educators at the 1987 AACTE Wingspread Conference on Minority Teacher Recruitment

Understanding that the composition of the teaching force is a case of institutional racism, rather than a problem of recruitment, is critical to formulating an effective response.

– Kitty Kelly Epstein, 2005, in The Whitening of the American Teaching Force

INTRODUCTION: THE PAST IS NEVER REALLY PAST

Indisputably, my positionality as a faculty member and former administrator (department chair, associate dean, dean) at two historically Black colleges/universities (HBCUs) for nearly 30 years informs the perspective shared in this framing paper. That said, I submit that the validity of this perspective is strengthened, rather than compromised, by my personal engagement in the question at hand. As one who has watched the teachers-of-color pipeline steadily diminish in recent years—even as increasing numbers of U.S. children are children of color—I cannot help but feel that changes to our nation's system of teacher entrance and licensure examinations are long overdue. But let me start at the beginning.

When I arrived in 1993 as a new faculty member at a well-known HBCU in Atlanta (GA), I remember the first-floor hallway of the School of Education, which housed the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

The hallway was so packed with teacher education students that it was difficult to traverse. Teacher education was a thriving major with successful graduates who passed the exit licensure examination (Praxis II) and had a teaching contract in hand when they walked across the commencement stage.

About five years into my professorship, the lively scene in that hallway had almost disappeared. Our teacher education department was struggling with enrollment, even though there was no decline in the number of undergraduate students desiring to major in teacher education. The single intervening factor—asserted by both students and faculty—was the new nationally mandated requirement to pass Praxis I, an entrance licensure examination that ostensibly tested prospective teacher education students' basic skills in reading, writing, and math. Across the HBCU community, faculty and administrators were sharing their angst and concern about what they were witnessing: Praxis I was wiping out the Black teacher pipeline. There was no lack of interest in education as a major and no lack of interest in teaching as a profession among Black college students. To the contrary, Black students, who are still disproportionately first-generation college students, generally viewed becoming a teacher as the quickest and surest step into a solid middle-class and into a profession with built-in opportunities to advance to principalships, central office directorships, and superintendencies.

The perception that Praxis I was wiping out the Black teacher pipeline was not unfounded. Beyond my own universities, I witnessed changes in the teachers-of-color pipeline across seven southeastern states during my tenures as a foundation program officer, program director, and principal investigator for three large-scale teachers-of-color pipeline programs funded by the Wallace Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the U.S. Department of Education. Everywhere I looked, I found that HBCUs —which produce 50% of the nation's Black teachers even though they comprise only 3% of the nation's higher-education institutions—were especially sensitive to the impact of Praxis I pass scores. Predominantly white institutions (PWIs) also noticed the same impact of Praxis I on their Black students seeking admission to teacher education programs: Black students had significantly lower passing rates than Whites, leading to fewer Black students enrolling in colleges of education and ultimately, becoming teachers in our nation's classrooms.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The decline in Black college students entering the teaching profession had been predicted by researchers as early as the 1980s. In 1987, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) convened prominent education experts for its "Wingspread" Conference to look into the issue. Conveners included representatives from the College Board, the Educational Testing Service (ETS), the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), the Council of Great City Schools, the American Council on Education (ACE), the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the Chief Counsel to the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Employment and Productivity, and *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. The conference opened with a statement by AACTE's immediate past president that the underrepresentation of Blacks in the teaching profession was a "crisis [that called for] immediate and decisive efforts by the government and private sector" (AACTE, 1988, p. 10). Attendees discussed how overreliance on standardized tests for entrance into the profession "adversely affected the numbers of new minority teachers" (AACTE, 1988, p. 17).

The Wingspread proceedings also noted that despite discouraging statistics, the number of states adopting mandatory standardized tests for admission into teacher education programs and for teacher licensure were increasing, not decreasing. Data about the crushing impact of teacher entrance examinations on the Black and Hispanic teacher pipeline showed the most egregious statistics in the states of Alabama, Florida, and Texas.

Figure 1. Entrance Licensure Examination Pass Rates for Whites, Blacks, Hispanics in Selected States, 1984-85

States	Pass rates, Whites	Pass rates, Blacks	Pass rates, Hispanic
Alabama	78%	15%	Missing data
Florida	92%	37%	Missing data
Texas	72%	23%	34%

Data extracted from AACTE's *Minority Teacher Recruitment & Retention: A Public Policy Issue*. Proceedings and Background Material of the Wingspread Conference, 1988.

These observers concluded that the mandatory tests "have taken their toll" on teacher education programs, especially those at HBCUs. According to AACTE (1988), in the southern states where most HBCUs are located, state approval of teacher education programs was tied to students' pass rates on certification exams. In order to protect their program approval and/or accreditation, "enrollments have been cut back and resources have been diverted to test-preparation courses" (p. 18). Garibaldi (1986) reported that Louisiana's HBCUs had been especially hard hit by the imposition of the tests, which "coincidentally coincided" with implementation of the *Brown* mandate to desegregate K-12 schools and colleges/universities—all of which had been racially segregated heretofore. As early as 1977, Garibaldi noted the fallout. Louisiana's five HBCUs—which comprised 25% of Louisiana's 21 teacher education programs—awarded 745 education degrees in 1977, a number representing 79% of all Black education graduates in Louisiana that year. By 1983, the state's five HBCUs graduated only 242 Black education majors—but this number was 69% of all the Black education graduates in the state (AACTE, 1988, p. 18).

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) formed a Task Force on Teacher Competency Issues. Though the organization made "no substantive or concerted efforts to increase the numbers of minority teachers in English" (p. 44), NCTE leaders issued a 1986 report that sounded an alarm about how newly created standardized tests were being used to weed out Black teachers:

> Unless the current patterns in teacher testing are re-evaluated, many potentially good teachers will be eliminated from the teaching force (p.13).

In its 1987 report about the impact of mandated statewide tests on prospective teachers, the American Council on Education (ACE) also found "a disproportionately high number of Black, Hispanic and Asian candidates are being screened from the teaching profession" (AACTE, 1988, p. 13). G. Pritchy Smith, among the earliest researchers to examine the demographic impact of teacher competency tests, conducted a 1988 study in 19 states that used the exams. The study, commissioned by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Education Association (NEA), concluded that the chief obstacle to diversifying the nation's teaching force was the use of standardized test scores to determine eligibility for teacher education. The study found that "disproportionate numbers of minority candidates have been and are being screened from the profession. This exclusionary trend is evident regardless of the state and regardless of the type of examination" (p. 13). The research indicated that the exams eliminated approximately 37,717 teacher education applicants who were persons of color.
(See Figure 2.)

By the late 1980s, in response to growing tensions about the issue, the Education Commission of the States (ECS) assembled representatives from 19 prominent organizations—AACTE, ACE, AFT, the Council of Chief State Schools Officers (CCSSO), National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE), NEA, National Governors Association (NGA), American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), and National Urban League—to create the Alliance of Leaders for Minority Teachers. The aim of the organization was to take a firm stance against narrowly conceived assessment/testing for entrance into teacher training and teacher licensure.

Figure 2. Number of Teacher Candidates Eliminated From Teaching Force

The research indicated that the exams eliminated approximately 37,717 teacher education applicants who were persons of color: 21,515 Black applicants, 10,142 Hispanic applicants, 1,626 Asian applicants, 716 Native American applicants, and 3,718 other minorities.



Data extracted from 1988 Study by The Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National Education Association

THE *BROWN* DECISION: A WATERSHED EFFECT ON CREDENTIALING

According to Fenwick (2022), the unfulfilled promise of the groundbreaking 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* decision outlawing segregated schools is that despite its mandate, the nation's 17 dual system states never integrated their teaching forces. Instead, Black teachers who had taught in segregated Black schools were summarily fired when the *Brown* decision came down, even though they were often better credentialed than their White peers. As early as 1926, Black teachers in segregated Black schools were more likely than White teachers in segregated White schools to hold a bachelor's degree and master's degree and possess advanced teacher licensure (Fenwick, 2022; National Academy of Education, 2011; Bonner, 2010; Manheim & Hellmuth, 2006). However, on the heels of the *Brown* decision, White school boards, superintendents, and legislators scrambled to create new barriers to prevent Black teachers from being placed in desegregating (formerly White) schools. Dual system states managed to retain racially segregated schools in operation well into the 1970s.

In the wake of *Brown*, newly created certification tests were one tool used in the concerted efforts to decimate the Black teacher and principal pipelines:

> Only one weapon was more powerful than the White principal's power to declare the Black teacher incompetent and that was the National Teacher Examination (NTE). During desegregation's heyday, about 40% of the test's use was in the southeastern states. (p. 12). The NEA and Black educators noticed the increased use of the test in southern states and concluded that it was being used as "a punitive measure to justify the racial imbalance in hiring practices" (Fultz, 2004, p. 26). For the first time, state-derived cutoff scores were linked to teacher certification and, in some cases, salary level. Richard Majestic, NTE program director for the Educational Testing Service, recognized that the NTE was being used to rid southern systems of Black teachers: "You can build the best test available," he said, "but if there's malice in somebody's heart, it can be used to eliminate Blacks" (Fenwick, 2022, p. 42).

Even Black teachers who had previously been certified and passed pre-*Brown* licensure requirements were required to take the newly imposed NTE in order to be considered for a teaching post in desegregating school districts. (Black teachers seeking employment in desegregating schools were treated as new employees, even though they had already been working—like white teachers—in segregated schools in their districts). Despite all of the test trickery, Florida dropped use of the NTE after the mid-1960s, when larger-than-expected

percentages of White teachers failed to reach the cutoff score (Fultz, 2004, p. 9), with Blacks exceeding Whites' performance on the test.

The negative impact of teacher entrance licensure examinations on Black and Hispanic prospective teachers has been known, documented and, some scholars have concluded, as intentional. Despite significant data, evidence, and outcry by national organizations for remedies to the issue, the proliferation of the tests continues, as does the use of cutoff scores that have a disproportionately negative impact on the Black and Hispanic teacher pipeline. This nearly 60-year battle to create and enforce equitable entrance requirements to the teaching profession has led some researchers to assert that the "various standardized test requirement [entrance and licensure examinations] essentially operate as a job reservation and segregation system for Whites" (Epstein, p. 95). Others have concluded that continuing the teacher testing regime will not help the nation meet the teacher diversity goals it espouses and that organized resistance is a necessary strategy in order to advance teacher diversity:

> Recruiting individual nonwhites to jump over the hurdles of the credentialing process cannot (Cartledge, 1995) provide enough teachers to end the massive urban school teacher shortage. We need organized resistance to the exclusionary credential laws. An effective national campaign would require a coalition of civil rights and education organizations to oppose credentialing regulations that disproportionately exclude nonwhite college graduates and to insist that such measures be countered institutionally to mitigate their impact (Epstein, p. 97).



STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

This white paper provides three key elements for understanding the impact of widely used standardized teacher examinations on future teachers of color:

1. a summary of the history of the use and impact of teacher licensure entrance examinations on teacher demographics, with a special focus on early judicial decisions related to the tests;
2. a synthesis of research findings about setting cutoff scores on teacher licensure examinations and the disparate impact of the cutoff scores on the pipeline of Black and Hispanic teachers; and
3. a landscape analysis of the teacher entrance licensure examination data, policies, and practices in the 15 states represented in CREA.

Ultimately, this framing paper is intended to help CREA participants, AACTE's membership, and the general public understand the often-overlooked issues related to teacher preparation program entrance and licensure examinations; assist with understanding, evaluating, and potentially changing their state's cutoff score process and outcomes; and develop recommendations and model state policies to support state efforts to advance equity and recruit more diverse teacher candidates into the profession.



TEACHER COMPETENCY TESTING: AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Most of the analyses about Black college students' underperformance on teacher licensure examinations implicates prior academic preparation, asserting that as a group, Black college students' basic skills competency is suppressed because of the poor quality of K-12 schools serving them. This (misguided) conclusion dominates analysis about Black college students' underperformance on the Praxis I exam.

However, the research literature and policy remedies exploring this subject almost never examine the documented history of intentional use of teacher licensure exams as instruments to stall placement of Black teachers in desegregating, formerly all-White PK-12 public schools. In the late 1960s, early 1970s, and even into the 1980s, Supreme Court decisions mandated that districts abide by the *Brown* decision and become unitary (ceasing to maintain racially segregated schools) and reach full compliance on student and faculty desegregation. Following *Green v. School Board of Kent County (1968)*, *Alexander v. Holmes County Board of Education (1969)*, *Singleton v. Jackson Municipal Separate School District (1981)* and numerous other legal decisions, school boards swiftly enacted the National Teacher Examination (created by Education Testing Service) as a requirement for teachers newly hired to the system—rather than act with deliberate speed to integrate faculty. Columbus (MS) Municipal Separate School District provides one example of the widespread practice of using newly created standardized tests to weed out Blacks from being hired as teachers. As summarized in the 1971 case, *Bettye Jo Baker et al. v. Columbus Municipal Separate School District of Lowndes County, Mississippi*:

> On January 12, 1970, the Board of Trustees adopted its rule requiring all teachers employed in the Columbus system for the first time for the 1969-1970 school year and all applicants for teaching positions to attain a combined score of 1000 on all the Common and Teaching Area Examination of the NTE in order to qualify for employment in the system for the 1970-71 school year and beyond.
>
> The NTE cutoff score requirement was invoked by defendants without investigating or studying the validity and reliability of the examination and the particular cutoff score as a means of selecting teachers for hiring …
>
> The Board of Trustees, in adopting the cutoff score on January 12, 1970, was aware of the racially disparate results worked by the NTE requirements … The superintendent also expected that the percentage of Black teachers or applicants who would not qualify would be greater than the percentage of whites (U. S. Senate Hearings on the Displacement and Current Status of Black Principals, 1971, p. 5019).

In this case, the court found “clear and convincing evidence” that the school district had “purposely discriminated against Black teachers and Black applicants on account of their race” (U.S. Senate Hearings, 1971, p. 5019). The court concluded that the use of the cutoff score of 1000 for hiring and reemployment was racially discriminatory:

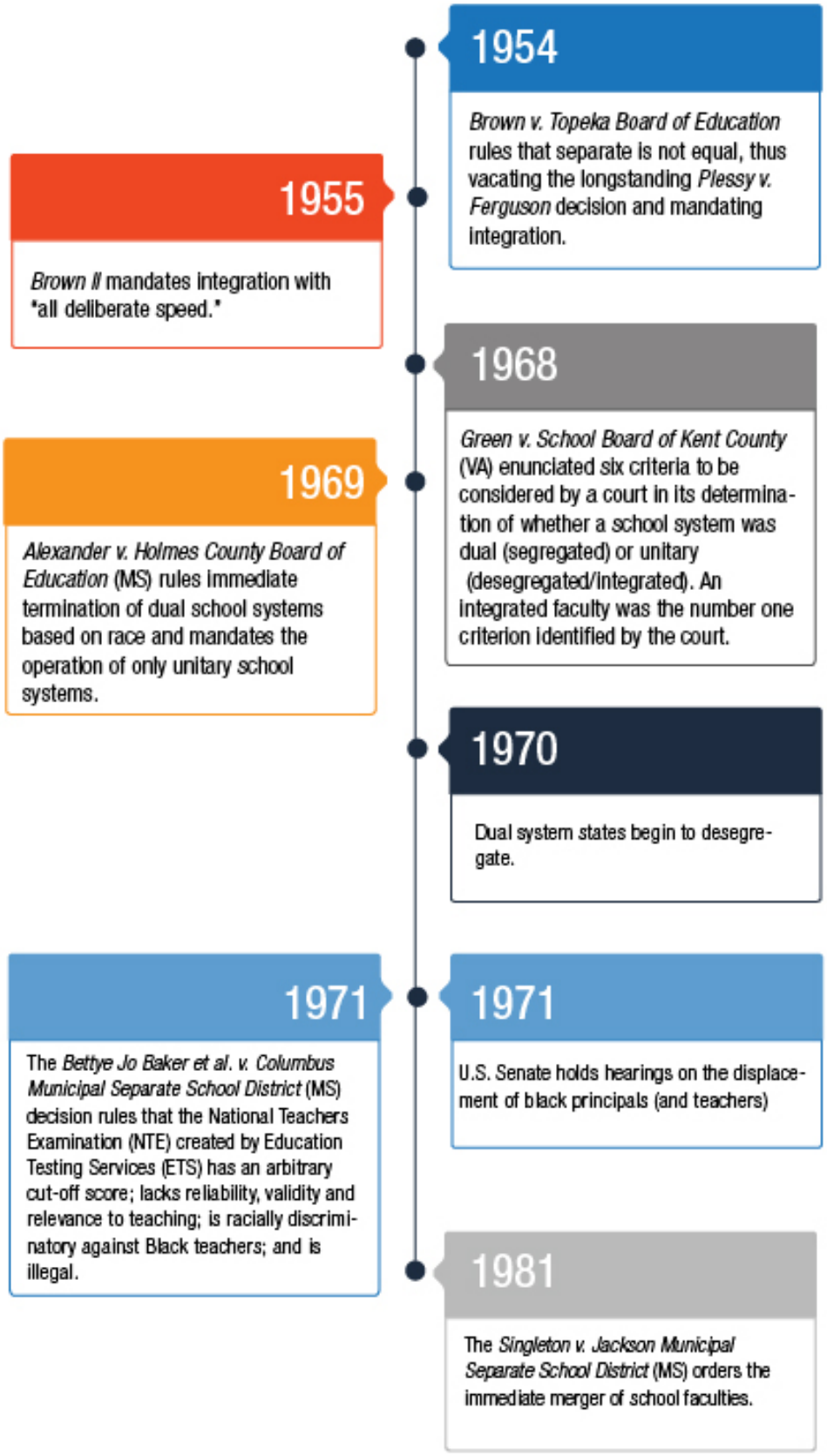
> The 1000 NTE cutoff score established by defendants creates a racial classification. Under this standard, 90% of the white graduates from Mississippi institutions of higher education are eligible to teach in Columbus school district and 89% of the Black graduates from Mississippi institutions are disqualified. This amounts to racial classification (p. 5019).

Additionally, the court declared that when the hiring practices of a public agency have the effect of producing a de facto pattern of racial discrimination (even if not deliberately intended to discriminate against minority groups), such discrimination does render the method of selection sufficiently suspect to make a case of unconstitutionality. In the end, the Court found “the requirement of a composite score of 1000 on the NTE to be unlawful …. that no test score will be required as a precondition for employment in Columbus Public Schools” (U.S. Senate Hearings on the Displacement of Black Principals, p. 5022).

The following timeline summarizes select landmark court cases that outlawed discrimination associated with black principals and teachers during desegregation.



Figure 3. Number of Teacher Candidates Eliminated Form Teaching Force



Unfortunately, much contemporary research literature and policy formulation largely fail to interrogate the history of resistance to the *Brown* decision, especially in the dual system states, and fail to recognize the impact of protracted opposition by White school and local government officials to having Black teachers in classrooms with White students. Although the barriers to Black educators' entrance and continuation in their profession were successfully contested in numerous court cases, Whites sustained opposition to Black educators made its way into national education policy. The damage to the Black teacher pipeline had been done.

Barbara Holmes, a representative from the Education Commission of the States (ECS), urged attendees at the 1988 AACTE Wingspread Conference to consider acknowledging the purposeful decimation of the Black teacher pipeline that occurred directly after *Brown* and was measurable and observable through the 1970s.

> "I think what [our] policy draft needs is a context. And I don't mean this as a criticism but as an observation. It needs a context that encapsulates some of the ideas and trends since 1954."
>
> *– Barbara Holmes, 1988, Education Commission of the States*

WHO SETS THE CUTOFF SCORE?

Perhaps more troubling than the tests themselves has been the opaque process surrounding how states set cutoff scores for Praxis I. The cutoff scores function as the enforcement (via teacher education program approval requirements, accreditation standards, and teacher licensure requirements) that results in the disparate impact on Black and Hispanic test takers. Pritchy Smith (1989) is the first and one of a very few researchers to speak specifically to how cutoff scores were set: "These scores, which are different from state to state, tend to fall below the mean test score for Hispanic and White examinees, but above the mean score for Black examinees" (p. 15).

Olson (1988), in an article titled "Tests Found Barring Thousands of Minority Teacher Candidates" in *Education Week*, references Pritchy Smith's work in

discussing the deleterious impact of cutoff scores:

> Almost without exception, state-determined cutoff scores on paper-and-pencil tests have been set at a level that eliminates a majority of the minority candidates either from teacher-education programs or from certification upon graduation but permits a majority of the White candidates to pass (p. 15-16).

Goertz (2000) elaborates on this point in an analysis explaining that merely moderating the cutoff score for licensure entrance examinations would allow for more Black and Hispanic teachers:

> Using the lowest qualifying score, 98% of the White, 69% of the Black, and 85% of the Hispanic examinees would qualify to become teachers. Using the medium qualifying score, nearly all White examinees qualify to become teachers (94%), but the passing rate drops to 48% for Black and 70% for Hispanics. The highest qualifying score eliminates 70% of Blacks, 45% of Hispanic but only 14% of White examinees (p. 30).

In its last publicly available report (2011) that disaggregated data on the Praxis I pass rates of Black and White test takers, the ETS presented the data in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Differences in Passing Rates on Praxis I Tests by Race, 2011

	Reading	Writing	Math
Percentage of first-time African American test takers who passed	40.7	44.2	36.8
Percentage of first-time White test takers who passed	81.5	79.5	78.2

Data extracted from Performance and Passing Rate Differences of African American and White Prospective Teachers on Praxis I Examinations.

Comparisons with similar figures from North Carolina and Kentucky in 2020-21 yield an inescapable conclusion: These data reflect a pattern that is more than 50 years old.

Figure 5. State Comparison of Praxis I Performance of Black, Hispanic and White Test Takers, 2020-21

Praxis I Sections	Praxis 1 Cutoff Score	Median Score Black Test Takers	Median Score (1) Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano (2) Other Hispanic, Latino, or Latin American Test Takers	Median Score White Test Takers
North Carolina				
Mathematics				
5733	150	153.96	(1) 168.38 2) 151.19	165.28
Reading				
5713	156	160.13	(1) 166.21 (2) 163.00	169.77
Writing				
5723	162	148.55	(1) 156.06 (2) 152.92	157.30
Kentucky				
Mathematics				
5733	150	153.96	(1) 154 (n=17) (2) 153 (n=14)	172 (n=2279)
Reading				
5713	156	160.13	(1) 154 (n=17) (2)153 (n=14)	178 (n=2106)
Writing				
5723	162	148.55	(1) 158 (n=19) (2) 160 (n=17)	166 (n=2386)

Data extracted from ETS Understanding Your Praxis Scores 2020-21
https://www.ets.org/s/praxis/pdf/understanding_your_scores_20_21.pdf

INITIAL SURVEY FINDINGS: LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OF 15 STATES' USE OF CUTOFF SCORES

In March 2021, AACTE surveyed the 14 CREA members about their states' teacher licensure entrance examination policies and practices. The survey yielded a 100% response rate and revealed the following findings that point to, at the very least, an information and knowledge gap among CREA's university stakeholders about the licensure exam cutoff setting processes and statewide educator workforce diversity policies. The AACTE survey showed the following findings:

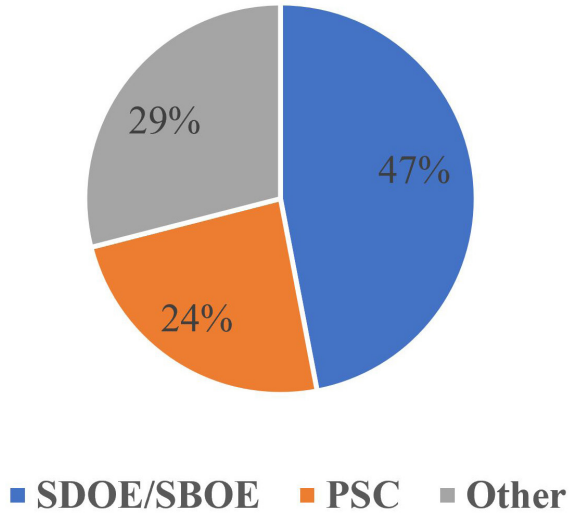
1. **Use of an entrance licensure examination for admission to teacher preparation programs in CREA states.** As shown in Figure 6, of the 15 CREA members' states, six use Praxis I as a teacher preparation program entrance requirement; two use a state-based test; five use the SAT/ACT along with other requirements; and six use another form of assessment. Only one state, Texas, uses a single criterion—a minimum GPA. (Note that the total does not equal 15, as most states use a combination of program admission requirements).

Figure 6. Use of Praxis I, State-based Tests, and Other Requirements for Entrance into Teacher Preparation Programs

State	Praxis I	State-Based	SAT and/or ACT	Minimum GPA	Other
CA		•		•	•
DE				•	•
IN					•
KY	•				
NC	•		•	•	
NM	•			•	
MO		•	•	•	
MN					•
OH					•
RI	•		•		
SC	•		•		
TN	•		•		
TX				•	
WI				•	•

2. **State or other agency setting cutoff score for entrance licensure examination.** Almost half (49%) of the CREA survey participants reported that the State Education Agency/State Department of Education/State Board of Education sets the cutoff score. Almost one-quarter (24%) have cutoff scores set by the state's Professional Standards Commission. And 29% of the CREA respondents reported not knowing what agency sets the cutoff score.

Figure 7. State Agency Setting Teacher Entrance Examination Cutoff Score



3. **Frequency with which state evaluates cutoff scores for teacher entrance examinations.** The overwhelming majority of CREA participants indicated that they did not know how often their state reviewed or evaluated teacher entrance licensure examination cutoff scores: 59% responded "I don't know." Another 18% responded "annually," 6% responded "every 5 years," and 18% responded "other."

4. **State has a teacher diversity taskforce or state-wide stakeholder group on improving teacher diversity.** The majority of CREA participants indicated that their state did have a state-wide teacher diversity taskforce; however, nearly a quarter of participants did not know if their state had a taskforce: 64% responded "Yes," 12% responded "No," and 24% responded, "I don't know."

   For those who indicated that their state did have a teacher diversity taskforce, 91% indicated that colleges/universities comprised the membership of this taskforce. In terms of how many colleges/universities comprised membership, 20% indicated at least 2 colleges/universities, 30% indicated at least 4 colleges/universities, and another 20% indicated that all colleges/universities in the state had representation on the taskforce. Remarkably, 30% indicated that they did not know how many colleges/universities comprised their state's taskforce, if one existed.

5. **State policy related to diversity of the educator workforce.** Nearly half (47%) of CREA participants indicated that their states had no state-wide policy related to educator workforce diversity. In contrast, 29% indicated that their state did have such a policy, and 24% responded that they did not know.

6. **State entity that sets the minimum assessment score for admission into teacher preparation programs.** The governing body responsible for cutoff scores varies by state. Among the CREA respondents, nine indicated that their state board of education set cutoff scores. The remainder indicated the following entities set the cutoff scores: 8 State Departments of Education – 8 states; Professional Standards Commissions – 3 states; Colleges/ Schools – 1; and Other – 1.

7. **CREA involvement in setting the minimum score for assessment(s) that their state requires for admission to teacher preparation programs.** Two-thirds (66%) of the CREA respondents in the AACTE survey indicated that neither they nor any colleague affiliated with their teacher preparation program participates in cutoff score setting for their state's required assessments. Almost one-third (32%) indicated that they or a colleague participated, and 2% said they do not know if a colleague affiliated with their teacher preparation program participates in cutoff score setting.

Figure 8. Governing Body Responsible for Setting Teacher Entrance and Licensure Examination Cutoff Scores

State	Praxis I	State-Based	SAT and/or ACT	Minimum GPA	Other
CA	•	•			
DE			•		
IN	•	•			
KY			•		
NC	•	•			
NM	•	•			
MO					•
MN			•		
OH				•	
RI	•	•			
SC	•	•			
TN	•	•			
TX		•			
WI	•	•			



Teacher diversity is a goal that most Americans report supporting (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, something new must be done.

CONCLUSION

The history of the use of teacher entrance licensure examinations remains pertinent; the shortcomings of this 50-year-old system are still with us. The relationship between performance on teacher preparation program entrance examinations and licensure examinations and the ability to be a successful teacher has been challenged repeatedly, both in scholarly research and in courts. Nonetheless, use of these tests has proliferated and, by some estimates, has eliminated hundreds of thousands of prospective Black, Hispanic, and other teachers of color from our nation's classrooms. The data show that for Praxis I, in particular, more often than not, what stands between admission into or exclusion from teacher preparation programs is a mere 1- to 3-point difference between the score achieved and the cutoff score. In her article about the impact of teacher testing on African American teacher education students, Albers (2002) interviewed students who did not pass Praxis II; Albers captured the painful psychological impact of failing the test. Here, she shares her interview with Charles, an otherwise high-performing teacher education student, discussing his Praxis results:

> I opened it up and I saw the "yes's" and I started saying, "Yes, I passed!"

> Of course, I turned the page and I saw these two letters that said, "not passed" right there. And it just crushed me. And then when I saw (my score of 167 there … [and saw] "points needed, 168." That was like a crushing blow. It's just the fact that you have the feeling that you're not good enough" (p. 116).

More than 40 years of research exists about the impact Black and Hispanic teachers have on Black and Hispanic students' academic achievement and education attainment. This research does not advocate race-matching of students. However, it does elucidate the academic and social benefits that accrue to Black and Hispanic students who are in desegregated schools with higher percentages of Black and Hispanic teachers and/or assigned to Black and Hispanic teachers. In these settings, Black and Hispanic students are

- More likely to graduate from high school
- More likely to be tested for and placed in gifted and talented programs
- Less likely to be misplaced in special education classes
- More likely to be described as "intellectually capable"
- More likely to engage in positive school behaviors such as completing homework, attending school regularly, and serving in leadership roles in the classroom
- Less likely to be suspended or expelled (Fenwick & Akua, 2013; Irvine & Fenwick, 2011; Dilworth & Brown, 2007; Clewell et al., 2005; Klopfenstein, 2005; Dee, 2004; Fenwick, 2001)
- More likely to apply to and enroll in college (Gershenson et al., 2020)

Teacher diversity is a goal that most Americans report supporting (Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). In order to achieve this goal, something new must be done.

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