

Changes to NYS Content Specialty Tests for Teacher Certification



Fact Sheet 26-07

February 2026

Overview

The New York State Education Department's Office of Teaching Initiatives (OTI) recently announced several changes to the Teacher Certification Content Specialty Tests (CSTs), which are the subject exams required for specific certifications. These updates are intended to aid applicants towards exam success. An overview of the changes is as follows:

NYSTCE Certification Waiver Process

At its February 2025 meeting, the Board of Regents adopted amendments to Section 80 of the Commissioner's regulations, establishing a waiver process for the content knowledge certification examination (CST) requirement. This applies to candidates seeking a certificate in the classroom teaching service, educational leadership service, school counseling, or an applicable extension under Section 80.

GPA and SEM Contingent Waiver Process

An applicant must first attempt a CST. If they do not pass one or more sections of their exam, they may be eligible for an exam waiver. Waiver eligibility is based on **both a verified GPA of 3.5 or higher AND a non-passing score that falls within the .05 standard error of measurement.**

Eligibility Determination:

- An active certification application on file in the TEACH system
- A non-passing score that falls within the 0.5 SEM for that particular exam range (see the chart at <https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/certexamwaiver.html>)
- An overall GPA that meets a 3.5 threshold or higher (Bachelor's and/or Master's)

Once you have determined you've met these requirements, you can apply for a waiver with this form: [Request for NYSTCE Exam Score Waiver](#)

Please monitor your TEACH account for the waiver evaluation. You will either be issued your certificate (if this was the last component left to resolve) or you will receive a Notice of Uncompleted Requirements that indicates deficiencies and how to resolve them to both your email on file and the Correspondence section of your TEACH account.

NYSTCE Flex Portfolio Assessment (Limited)

Beginning January 27, 2026, the NYSTCE Flex portfolio assessment will launch for **Part 2: Math of the Early Childhood Birth-Grade 2** and the **Childhood Grades 1-6** only. It is anticipated that the NYSTCE Flex portfolio assessment option will eventually be extended to other CSTs.

Information and registration for the Part 2 Flex Exams:

- 601 [NYSTCE Flex Multi-Subject: Teachers of Early Childhood \(Birth–Grade 2\) Part Two: Mathematics \(601\)](#)
- 602 [NYSTCE Flex Multi-Subject: Teachers of Childhood \(Grade 1–Grade 6\) Part Two: Mathematics \(602\)](#)

Pearson Education will handle the administration and scoring of this longer response exam and send the report to the candidate’s TEACH account.

Eligibility Determination:

- A non-passing score that falls within the 0.5 SEM for that particular exam’s Part 2 section (see the chart at <https://www.highered.nysed.gov/tcert/certificate/certexamwaiver.html>)
- You are **not required** to meet a certain GPA threshold to take the NYSTCE Flex

Please monitor your TEACH account for the assessment determination. You will either be issued your certificate (if this was the last component left to resolve) or you will receive a Notice of Uncompleted Requirements that indicates deficiencies and how to resolve them to both your email on file and the Correspondence section of your TEACH account.

Acceptance of Out of State Exams

In order to ease the certification process for out of state teachers relocating to New York State, at its February 2025 meeting, the Board of Regents adopted amendments to Section 80 of the Commissioner’s Regulations, establishing opportunities for exams other than the NYSTCE to be accepted to meet the content knowledge examination requirement. Only specific exams other than the NYSTCE which align with the New York State Learning Standards are acceptable.

Praxis (ETS) and Pearson National Evaluation Series (NES) exams are now accepted. For a list of eligible Praxis exams and the score threshold for New York certification, please see [ETS Praxis Exam.pdf](#)

If the exam was taken outside of New York, or your address on file with Praxis is not in New York, you will need to request that your scores be sent to NYSED as a score recipient with code **7737**. For a list of eligible NES exams and the score threshold for New York State certification, please see [Pearson NES Exam.pdf](#)

Pink highlighted exams indicating “Reciprocity Only” can only be accepted for applicants applying through the Comparable Program Pathway for certification.

Please ensure that your scores are reported directly to NYSED.

If a test is not listed, at this time it is not accepted in lieu of the NYSTCE exams. Currently, this excludes the tri-part Multi Subject exams for Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 2), Childhood (Grades 1-6), Middle Childhood (Grades 5-9) and Adolescent (Grades 7-12).

Teaching Assistant Exam

Beginning January 27, 2026, NYSTCE will begin offering the NES “Foundations of Classroom Support and Instruction” (Test 519) as it phases out the existing Assessment of Teaching Assistant Skills (ATAS) exam (Test 095). The ATAS will continue to be offered until July 2026. While the ATAS will then be discontinued, NYSED will continue to accept past ATAS exam score reports. Those who progress their TA certifications at a future date and who have a past ATAS score will not be required to take the new Foundations exam.

Detailed registration information about the new Foundations of Classroom Support and Instruction exam can be found here: [Foundations of Classroom Support and Instruction \(519\) \(First Test Admin 1/27/26\)](#)

Science CSTs

Also on January 27, 2026, NYSTCE will transition its existing Science content exams (Biology, Physics, Earth Science, and Chemistry) to the nationally administered NES exam. The Earth Science exam will then be known as the Earth and Space Science exam. The current NYSTCE specific science exams will also be offered through July 2026, and either exam type is accepted in these interim months. It is anticipated that past NYSTCE Science CSTs will be accepted for a specified amount of time into the future.

Science of Reading Path Forward Initiative integration into Multi Subject Exams

Following the NYS Path Forward Initiative, NYSED will embed Science of Reading concepts into a new section that will be part of the Multi Subject teacher certification examination. This new section will be titled “Multi Subject-Part Four—Evidence Based Reading Instruction.” Currently the Multi Subject exams are comprised of Part 1: Literacy and Language Arts; Part 2: Mathematics; and Part 3: Arts and Sciences. Part 1 and 2 are grand band specific and Part 3 is shared by all multisubject exams. NYSED will also then redevelop the following tests to reflect the Path Forward Science of Reading integration:

- Multi Subject Part 1 will now focus solely on English Language Arts (ELA)
- Early Childhood Birth-Grade 2 and Childhood 1-6 will share a combined Part 1
 - Middle Childhood 5-9 and Adolescent 7-12 will continue to have separate Part 1 sections
- Literacy CST will be redeveloped

These changes will take place over several years, and with the assistance of Test Development Committees. If interested in serving on a test development project, please visit [NYSTCE Test Development | New York State Education Department](#)

NYSTCE Free Retake Vouchers

Certification candidates are eligible for a Free Retake Voucher if they took a NYSTCE exam before December 31, 2025. Pearson will have sent the voucher by email within 24 hours of their test date. The voucher for a re-test does not expire but must be used for the same test as previously taken. Please check your Pearson correspondence to ensure receipt of this free voucher.

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