

AN ACT concerning education.

**Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,
represented in the General Assembly:**

Section 5. The School Code is amended by changing Section 21-1a as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/21-1a) (from Ch. 122, par. 21-1a)

Sec. 21-1a. Tests required for certification and teacher preparation.

(a) After July 1, 1988, in addition to all other requirements, early childhood, elementary, special, high school, school service personnel, or, except as provided in Section 34-6, administrative certificates shall be issued to persons who have satisfactorily passed a test of basic skills and subject matter knowledge. A person who holds a valid and comparable out-of-state certificate, however, is not required to take a test of basic skills and is not required to take a test of subject matter knowledge, provided that the person has successfully passed a test of subject matter knowledge in another state or territory of the United States that is directly related in content to the specific subject area of certification. The tests of basic skills and subject matter knowledge shall be the tests which from time to time are designated by the State Board of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board and may be tests prepared by an educational testing organization or tests designed by the State Board of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board. The areas to be covered by the test of basic skills shall include the basic skills of reading, writing, grammar and mathematics. The test of subject matter knowledge shall assess content knowledge in the specific subject field. The tests shall be designed to be racially neutral to assure that no person in taking the tests is thereby

discriminated against on the basis of race, color, national origin or other factors unrelated to the person's ability to perform as a certificated employee. The score required to pass the tests of basic skills and subject matter knowledge shall be fixed by the State Board of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board. The tests shall be held not fewer than 3 times a year at such time and place as may be designated by the State Board of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board.

(b) Except as provided in Section 34-6, the provisions of subsection (a) of this Section shall apply equally in any school district subject to Article 34, provided that the State Board of Education shall determine which certificates issued under Sections 34-8.1 and 34-83 prior to July 1, 1988 are comparable to any early childhood certificate, elementary school certificate, special certificate, high school certificate, school service personnel certificate or administrative certificate issued under this Article as of July 1, 1988.

(c) A person who holds an early childhood, elementary, special, high school or school service personnel certificate issued under this Article on or at any time before July 1, 1988, including a person who has been issued any such certificate pursuant to Section 21-11.1 or in exchange for a comparable certificate theretofore issued under Section 34-8.1 or Section 34-83, shall not be required to take or pass the tests in order to thereafter have such certificate renewed.

(d) The State Board of Education in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board shall conduct a pilot administration of the tests by administering the test to students completing teacher education programs in the 1986-87 school year for the purpose of determining the effect and impact of testing candidates for certification.

Beginning with the 2002-2003 academic year, a student may not enroll in a teacher preparation program at a recognized teacher training institution until he or she has passed the

basic skills test.

Beginning on the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 94th General Assembly, prior to completing an approved teacher preparation program, a preservice education candidate must satisfactorily pass the test of subject matter knowledge in the discipline in which he or she will be certified to teach. The teacher preparation program may require passage of the test of subject matter knowledge at any time during the program, including prior to student teaching. ~~Beginning with the 2004-2005 academic year, a preservice education teacher may not student teach until he or she has passed the subject matter test in the discipline in which he or she will student teach.~~

(e) The rules and regulations developed to implement the required test of basic skills and subject matter knowledge shall include the requirements of subsections (a), (b), and (c) and shall include specific regulations to govern test selection; test validation and determination of a passing score; administration of the tests; frequency of administration; applicant fees; frequency of applicants' taking the tests; the years for which a score is valid; and, waiving certain additional tests for additional certificates to individuals who have satisfactorily passed the test of basic skills and subject matter knowledge as required in subsection (a). The State Board of Education shall provide, by rule, specific policies that assure uniformity in the difficulty level of each form of the basic skills test and each subject matter knowledge test from test-to-test and year-to-year. The State Board of Education shall also set a passing score for the tests.

(f) The State Teacher Certification Board may issue a nonrenewable temporary certificate between July 1, 1988 and August 31, 1988 to individuals who have taken the tests of basic skills and subject matter knowledge prescribed by this Section but have not received such test scores by August 31, 1988. Such temporary certificates shall expire on December 31, 1988.

(g) Beginning February 15, 2000, the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board, shall implement and administer a new system of certification for teachers in the State of Illinois. The State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board, shall design and implement a system of examinations and various other criteria which shall be required prior to the issuance of Initial Teaching Certificates and Standard Teaching Certificates. These examinations and indicators shall be based on national and State professional teaching standards, as determined by the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Teacher Certification Board. The State Board of Education may adopt any and all regulations necessary to implement and administer this Section.

(h) The State Board of Education shall report to the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor with recommendations for further changes and improvements to the teacher certification system no later than July 1, 1999 and on an annual basis until July 1, 2001.

(Source: P.A. 92-734, eff. 7-25-02; 93-679, eff. 6-30-04.)

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.