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AUTHOR Snow, Mary B.  
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ABSTRACT

This report is introduced by a history of the development and implementation of the Nevada Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel. The study examined the test taking histories of persons entering the Nevada educational system to determine how well the competency testing program was accomplishing its purpose of ensuring that new personnel can demonstrate minimal level of knowledge through the three types of tests required. Of the 3,103 study participants, 55 percent had testing provisions on their initial licenses. Analysis of the study data revealed that approximately 61 percent of those with testing provisions needed to take the basic skills tests (Praxis I; Pre-Professional Skills Tests); 55 percent had the Professional Knowledge Test listed as a provision; and 74 percent were required to take one or more Specialty Area Tests (Praxis II; Subject Assessments). Over one-half (55-62 percent) of all those with testing provisions removed these within one year; and an additional 26-28 percent had completed all testing requirements by the end of the second year; 3-8 percent failed to remove their competency testing provisions by the deadline. Data tables are included. The two appendices, which comprise approximately half the report, provide a frequency distribution of test scores and an information bulletin on the Nevada Competency Testing Program describing requirements, exceptions, and procedures. (ND)

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**THE NEVADA COMPETENCY TESTING PROGRAM  
FOR EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL**

**Mary B. Snow, PhD**



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**THE NEVADA COMPETENCY TESTING PROGRAM  
FOR EDUCATIONAL PERSONNEL**

**Mary B. Snow, PhD**

**February, 1995**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*After a number of years of planning and development involving the Legislature, the State Board of Education, the Commission on Professional Standards, and the Department of Education, the Nevada Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel went into effect in September, 1989. Since that date all persons seeking an initial license in Nevada have been required to take basic skills, professional knowledge, and specialty area tests unless certain exemptions applied. The first administrations were designated as no-fault; passing scores went into effect in January, 1991.*

*The purpose of the program is to protect the public by ensuring that new personnel coming into the Nevada Educational System can demonstrate minimal levels of knowledge through the three types of tests required. The tests used in the program were developed by Educational Testing Service, but their adoption and associated passing scores were determined in large part by the participation of hundreds of Nevada educators who reviewed the proposed tests. From their judgments, recommendations were developed and submitted to the Commission on Professional Standards for final action.*

*The purpose of this study was to obtain an understanding of how the Competency Testing Program is working. What have been the test taking experiences of new persons entering the Nevada Educational System? Is the program accomplishing its purpose? The cohort studied included all persons whose initial Nevada licenses were issued between September 1990 and September 1992 who became employed and are currently teaching or practicing in Nevada.*

*Highlights of the results of the study are:*

- *55% of the cohort studied had testing provisions on their initial licenses. The remaining 45% had no testing provisions meaning they had either taken the tests previously or had provided evidence for an exemption.*
- *Approximately 61% of those with testing provisions needed to take the basic skills tests (Pre-Professional Skills Tests); 55% had the Professional Knowledge test listed as a provision, and 74% were required to take one or more Specialty Area tests.*
- *The majority of those with testing provisions (from 85 to 93%) either took the test or tests one time or supplied evidence of qualification for an exemption after their licenses were issued. Only a small percentage took the same test multiple times.*
- *Over one-half (55-62%) of all those with testing provisions removed these within one year. An additional 26 to 28% had completed all testing requirements by the end of the second year.*
- *3.8% of the cohort studied failed to remove their competency testing provisions by the September 11, 1994 deadline. However, the Commission was prevented from enforcing the competency testing regulations by a court ordered injunction issued in Clark County.*

## HISTORY OF THE COMPETENCY TESTING PROGRAM

### Program and Policy Development

*The Nevada Legislature expressed interest in a competency testing program for teachers as early as 1983. There was concern about the qualifications of new persons coming to work in Nevada schools and the effects of these teachers on the achievement of their pupils. Resolutions were passed and a special committee was appointed to study the proposals for improving education contained in A Nation at Risk, a report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and to make recommendations to the Governor. This special committee, reporting to the 1985 Legislature, recommended that, in order to protect the public, "persons desiring to teach for the first time in Nevada be required to pass a nationally recognized basic skills test and subject matter test(s) in the area(s) in which they are seeking certification" (page 22 of the Legislative Commission). A bill was introduced which would have required prospective teachers to pass competency tests (Assembly Bill 138 of 1985.) This bill did not pass, but interest in such a program continued.*

*Also in the early 1980's, the Nevada State Board of Education directed the Commission on Professional Standards in Education, then an advisory body to the State Board, to study and develop a competency testing program for applicants for initial teaching certificates. In 1984 the State Board accepted the Commission's proposal which included 1) testing in the basic skills areas of mathematics, reading and writing; 2) testing in their subject-matter areas; and 3) the establishment of Professional Development Centers to provide special assistance to entry-level teachers. Although the 1985 Legislature did not fund Professional Development Centers, the State Board and the Department continued to pursue a competency testing program. The Board accepted a recommendation by the Department of Education that the Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST) be adopted as the basic skills tests to be used in Nevada. The Board further directed that a validation study of the PPST be conducted to determine its appropriateness for use in Nevada and to provide recommendations for passing scores. Panels of Nevada educators were convened to participate in this validation study in the spring of 1985. Based on the results of these studies, passing the PPST became a requirement for entrance into the teacher education programs in the state, beginning in the fall of 1986. The Universities agreed to stay in communication with the Department and report on their implementation of the program. This was viewed as an initial step in the establishment of the state's competency testing program. However the state decided not to require the PPST for initial licensure until the entire program was developed. (This did not occur until 1989.)*

*The Department moved ahead in 1986-87 to develop the subject matter component of the competency testing program. In considering this component, the Department was faced with three options:*

- 1) to develop its own teacher tests;
- 2) to use the tests developed by the Educational Testing Service (ETS); or
- 3) to contract with National Evaluation Systems (NES) for the development of the tests needed.

*It was quickly determined that the Department had neither the money nor the necessary personnel to develop its own tests for Nevada. Therefore, the remaining choice was between the two major teacher test developers. A Teacher Testing Review Panel was organized within the Department with representatives from most of the branch divisions within the organization. The main tasks of the panel were to:*

- 1) *review samples of tests from the two major teacher test developers in the country, Educational Testing Service and National Evaluation Systems; and*
- 2) *discuss and make recommendations regarding the many policy issues involved in the establishment of a competency testing program, for example: Should testing be required of all new candidates for certification? How many times should a candidate be allowed to retake a test? Do tests need to be provided for every type of endorsement offered by the state?*

*In December, 1986, based on the Department of Education's work, the State Board of Education approved plans for the Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel including a set of policy recommendations. The program, which would apply to applicants for initial licenses in Nevada, consisted of testing in the areas of:*

- 1) *basic skills;*
- 2) *professional knowledge (pedagogy); and*
- 3) *subject area(s).*

*To institute this competency testing program for teachers, administrators, and other certificated educational personnel applying for initial licenses in Nevada, the Department of Education requested and received an appropriation of \$70,850 from the 1987 Legislature to pay for the validation of 23 subject area examinations over a two-year period (1987-89).\**

*Also during the 1987 Legislature, Senate Bill 467 was passed which replaced the advisory Commission on Professional Standards in Education with a permanent autonomous commission. The new Commission had the authority to adopt regulations prescribing the qualifications for licensing teachers and other educational personnel and the procedures for issuing and renewing licenses. The composition of the Commission changed to nine members, of which four would be teachers. In Section 11 of the bill the Commission is required to develop and administer an examination for applicants for*

\* *Additional costs of the program are the in-kind resources provided by the Nevada Department of Education Planning, Research and Evaluation Branch, which are estimated at approximately \$359,675 for the period FY87 through FY95.*



*initial teacher licenses. The test must measure the applicant's ability to teach and his knowledge of each specific subject in addition to topics already tested under Nevada law. In testimony in favor of this bill, the Nevada State Education Association (NSEA) president said that "In order to provide our children with the best possible education, it is time to make educators responsible for setting standards for their own profession. She went on to say that the creation of an autonomous commission would "assure the maintenance of high standards for educators and keep unqualified individuals from entering the field." (Strand, 1987,p.1)".*

### Selection and Validation of Examinations

*In the summer of 1987, the Department of Education sent out a request for proposals for a contractor to provide the tests needed by the state and to be responsible for the administration and scoring of these tests as well as to provide information and general advice and assistance during implementation of the program. A review committee, composed of representatives of all the major state educational associations and organizations, studied and rated two proposals received from Educational Testing (ETS) and National Evaluation Systems (NES). They also requested that representatives of the two companies give oral presentations and answer questions. The Committee then recommended that Educational Testing Service be selected as the contractor to provide the tests for the Nevada Competency Testing Program.*

*In the fall of 1988, the Department and Educational Testing Service (ETS) convened panels of 276 Nevada public school and university educators to participate in validation studies of 22 Specialty Area tests for possible use in Nevada's Competency Testing Program. The panelists reviewed the tests item by item and made judgments regarding job relevance, content relevance, and appropriate passing scores. The results of these studies were analyzed by ETS and provided to the Department in a report. The results were studied by the Competency Testing Review Committee, a working advisory group to the Commission made up of representatives of the major state educational associations/organizations. Based on their review of the results, the Competency Testing Review Committee made recommendations to the Commission about the appropriateness of the various tests for use in Nevada.*

*The Nevada Competency testing Program then went into effect in the fall of 1989 on a no-fault basis. This meant that persons applying for an initial license were required to take the Pre-Professional Skills Tests, the Professional Knowledge Test and a Specialty Area test(s), unless certain exceptions\* applied, but were not required to meet a minimum passing score.*

- \* *Exceptions mean certain specified circumstances under which an individual may be exempt from a particular testing requirement. The exceptions are listed in detail in the Informational Bulletin produced by the Department (see Appendix B).*

**Reasons for a no-fault period were:**

- 1) **a need to communicate and educate all relevant parties about the program; and**
- 2) **a desire on the part of the Competency Testing Review Committee to see Nevada test score data before recommending passing scores to the Commission.**

**Applicants were granted a period of one year to remove testing provisions. However extensions could and were granted by the Director of Licensure or the Superintendent of Public Instruction.**

**Additional funding of \$26,101 for the validation of additional competency tests was granted by the 1989 Legislature. This appropriation included a payback provision, meaning the money was to be returned to the general fund over a period of years. The payback of the appropriation and general administration funds for the program were to be obtained by a surcharge of \$5.00 on each test taken by examinees who ask that their scores be sent to Nevada. In the fall of 1989 eight additional validation studies were conducted. In all, 94 educators reviewed and made judgments about a test in their area of expertise. The process of moving toward implementation was the same as described earlier. A report of the results of the studies was produced by ETS. The Competency Testing Review Committee studied the results and made recommendations to the Commission.**

### Passing Scores

**In the fall of 1990, the Competency Testing Review Committee recommended passing scores for most of the tests in the program. Their recommendations were based on study and discussion of numerous factors:**

- 1) **judgments of the validation panelists as to how entry level candidates should be able to perform on the tests;**
- 2) **test reliability and standard error of measurement;**
- 3) **passing scores used for the same tests in other states;**
- 4) **scores attained by Nevada examinees during the no-fault period;**
- 5) **scores earned by examinees across the country who had taken a particular test, both as a total group and by subgroups such as ethnic background, education level etc.;**
- 6) **a policy of roughly equal ability or difficulty levels for each test; and**
- 7) **supply/demand considerations.**

*In January, 1991, passing scores went into effect for most tests. Six tests continued for another year on a no-fault basis mainly due to the fact that they were new tests nationally and insufficient data, normally used in the determination of cut-scores, was available (national and state test scores, percentiles, standard errors of measurement).*

*During 1991-92, the Department began the process of making the transition to new tests recently developed by Educational Testing Service, which were named the Praxis tests. The new subject area tests consist of modules from which states can choose. The modules have different formats. Some are multiple-choice, but others are essay or constructed response questions. Some involve the examinee listening to an audio-tape or viewing a video tape and responding to various questions. Eventually ETS will phase out the old tests. In the summer of 1993 small panels of Nevada educators were assembled to examine test specifications and test modules for six subject areas: Elementary, English, Mathematics, Physical education, Social Studies, and Spanish. In November 1993, larger panels of Nevada teachers examined the recommended modules for each subject area, item by item. These panelists made judgments about passing scores for each module and ranked the modules in terms of their importance in assessing new entry level teachers. The results of these Standard Setting Studies were made available to the Competency Testing Review Committee in the form of a report prepared by ETS. Using these data and taking into account other factors mentioned previously, the Committee made recommendations to the Commission about the specific modules and associated passing scores for each of the six subject areas to be used in Nevada. On February 4, 1994, the Commission approved the recommendations of the Committee with the understanding that these new tests in the six subject areas would go into effect as of the Fall, 1994 test administrations. Additional new Praxis tests are expected to be incorporated into the program in subsequent years.*

*On September 11, 1992, the Commission passed a proposal allowing a two year period for new educational personnel to meet the competency testing requirements. At that time, the Commission also decided that anyone in the pipeline, that is, anyone who had applied before September, 1992 and still had testing provisions, would be granted an additional two years until September, 1994, to meet those requirements. No extensions or waivers were to be expected.*

*The deadline for persons whose licenses were issued prior to September, 1992 to remove any testing provisions was well publicized. Letters, flyers and notices were sent out by the Department to each school district and each school in the state. In addition notices were distributed by Clark County School District and by Washoe County School District as well as by a number of the smaller districts.*

*There were many opportunities to take the tests. Test administration centers are located in Carson City, Elko, Las Vegas, Reno, and Tonopah. Over a two year period, there were six opportunities to take the Professional Knowledge test and six opportunities to take a Specialty Area test. The paper and pencil Pre-Professional Tests (PPST) were offered*

ten times. In addition there were virtually unlimited opportunities (since the fall of 1993) to take the computer-based PPST. Those individuals who had more than two years to remove their provisions obviously had even more testing opportunities.

At its June 8, 1994, meeting, the Commission requested that the Department make arrangements to hold a special test administration during the summer to accommodate those persons whose deadline was in September. Educational Testing Service agreed to this request and arranged a special administration of the PPST and the Professional Knowledge tests on August 6 to be offered in both Reno and Las Vegas. The total number of applicants for this test administration was 75.

In July, 1994, Educational Testing Service published Percentile Ranks and Summary Statistics 1993-1994. These statistics were based on the records of examinees who tested nationwide between October 1, 1990 and August 31, 1993. This publication revealed that, for most tests, scores had gone up since the previous calculations. This means that most of the passing scores used in Nevada are now at percentile ranks which are lower than the percentile ranks in 1991 when they were instituted.

As of August 1, data from the Education file indicated that 532 persons whose licenses were issued in 1991 and 1992 were still showing testing provisions. There was reason to believe this number was inflated due to various circumstances e.g. some persons may not have begun employment until some time after their licenses were issued, some teachers may have left the state (the teacher count is taken once a year, in the fall). Each district was asked to check the individuals on their list.

On September 11, 1994, the day of the deadline for persons whose licenses were issued on or before September 11, 1992, 64 personnel statewide had failed to remove their testing provisions. Forty-four of these persons were employed in Clark County, six in Washoe, eight in Elko, and one each in Carson City, Douglas, Pershing, and White Pine. These persons constituted 3.8% of the cohort who entered the Nevada educational system during the period September 1990 to September 1992 with competency testing provisions on their licenses.

#### **CURRENT STATUS OF THE COMPETENCY TESTING PROGRAM**

On September 9, 1994, a lawsuit was filed against the Clark County School District, the Interim State Superintendent of Public Instruction, the State Board of Education, and the Commission on Professional Standards in Education on behalf of certain named employees of the Clark County School District individually and as members of a Class of all Licensed Personnel of the Clark County School District Employed Since January 1, 1991. A Restraining Order was sought and obtained to prevent the firing of any teacher within the Clark County School District due to alleged failure in the competency tests. The lawyers for the Plaintiffs claimed that unless a Restraining Order was issued, 66 licensed personnel of the Clark County School District would have been terminated

by 3:00 p.m. on September 9, 1994. In fact, on that date 44 Clark County employees had not removed their testing provisions in the time allowed by regulation. By the time the case was heard in court on October 16, the number was down to 27, two of whom had never attempted to take the required tests. The Plaintiffs asked the Court to hold an evidentiary hearing to demonstrate what was called "the arbitrary and capricious use of the Pre-Professional Skills Tests by the defendants as a licensing requirement." There were also claims that the testing system used was arbitrary and capricious and that "the Defendants are violating the due process and equal protection rights of the Plaintiffs".

The judge's decision was issued to all parties on October 26, 1994. The decision stated that the state " has the right to test people who want a teaching license here in the State of Nevada," and "that the standardized tests (developed by Educational Testing Service) are a valid indicator of a teacher's knowledge in specific areas." The judge further found "that the State has properly validated the standardized test for use in teacher licensing and "that the minimum cut-off scores imposed by the Commission are fair. He went on to say "I would recommend that the Commission actually raise those cut-off scores." The Court also noted that "the teachers who have been unable to pass the tests are doing an outstanding job here in Clark County, and are competent educators." Thus, while it was the decision of the Court that the testing requirements by the State of Nevada be upheld, it was further ordered " that the teachers who have been unable to pass the tests attend University classes, approved by the Commission on Professional Standards, with grades set by the Commission on Professional Standards in the areas that they have been unable to pass in order to keep their licenses," (Morris et al vs. Peterson et al, 1994).

At the November 4, 1994, meeting of the Commission on Professional Standards, Robert Auer, Deputy Attorney General, gave an accounting of the Court Hearing and explained the decision and the options open to the Commission. The Commission voted to appeal the decision to the Nevada Supreme Court. However, in the meantime the Commission appointed a subcommittee of members to investigate the feasibility of allowing University courses to serve as alternatives to the testing requirements. The greatest concern of Commission members, voiced during the discussion, was the near impossibility of finding appropriate courses for the twenty-one specialty area tests that could be considered fair and equitable. A part of the motion included negotiating with the Clark County Teachers Association to limit course work alternatives for passing tests to the basic skills component of the program.

At this meeting the Commission also decided to suspend enforcement of the Competency Testing Program across the state until a decision was made on the Appeal. It was felt that it would be unfair to suspend enforcement of the Competency testing Program only in Clark County where the Judge had extended the Injunction until June 15 and at the same time continue to enforce the requirements of the program in the other districts. Although the numbers of teachers in the other districts who had not met the September 11, 1994 deadline were small, only 20 in all the other 16 districts, teachers



were removed from their classrooms and placed on substitute status for some weeks, until the requirements were met. Although enforcement was suspended, the districts were asked to advise their new teachers to continue to take the tests and remove their testing provisions, as the date for an Appeal decision was unknown.

The Deputy Attorney General, following the direction of the Commission, began to communicate with the lawyer for the Plaintiffs about a possible settlement. Tentative agreement was reached in January 1995. The proposed settlement was subsequently approved by all parties involved with final approval by the Commission on February 9, 1995. Under the terms of the settlement, Plaintiffs who fail any part of the basic skills requirement (the Pre-Professional Skills Tests) will have an alternative opportunity to take and pass a university class in order to satisfy the "basic skills" provision of NAC 391.036. This alternative will not be provided for the "professional knowledge" and "subject matter" testing requirements. Another item agreed to was that the Court would issue an injunction allowing all Plaintiffs to remain in the classroom receiving lawful pay until July 30, 1995. This would allow reasonable time to meet the requirements.\*

The net result of these actions is that the Competency Testing Program has and will be prohibited from accomplishing its purpose of setting standards for teachers and other educational personnel during the period September 9, 1994 through July 30, 1995.

#### PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The Department has planned to conduct a study of the Nevada Competency Testing Program for some time. Although Educational Testing Service has provided test score and demographic data every year, these reports include everyone in the country who has requested that their test results be sent to the Nevada Department of Education. Many of these examinees never actually came to Nevada to become part of the Nevada educational system. There has been an interest on the part of the Department, the Competency Testing Review Committee, and the Commission to learn more about the test taking histories of those persons who do come to teach or work in Nevada's schools.

Definite plans to conduct such a study were made in the spring of 1994. These were described to the Commission at the June 8, 1994, meeting. The purpose of the study was to determine how well the competency testing program is accomplishing its purpose of ensuring the minimal knowledge competency of new educational personnel.

\* A complete copy of the settlement may be obtained from the Nevada Department of Education.

*The study sought to answer the following questions:*

- 1) *How many new persons had competency testing provisions on their initial licenses? Which specific tests were required?*
- 2) *How many times was each test taken?*
- 3) *What period of time was taken to remove all testing provisions?*
- 4) *How many persons did not remove their testing provisions by the deadline?*
- 5) *Does successful test taking within the allotted time period vary by such factors as: experience versus inexperience, elementary versus secondary, urban versus rural, male versus female, minority versus majority status, or educational level?*
- 6) *What was the frequency distribution of scores earned for each test by Nevada personnel?*

*There have been and are a number of problems in conducting such a study.*

*1. Inconsistent Guidelines for Provisional Period. In order for the study to be meaningful, it is necessary for the rules to be consistent over a period of time. As described earlier the rules have changed. At first applicants were given one year with extensions to remove testing provisions. Then, effective September 11, 1992, they were given two years with very limited extensions (for medical or administrative conflict as interpreted and granted by the Superintendent of Public Instruction).*

*2. Inadequate Information System. The state of the Education file which contains information on all Licensed Personnel is not conducive to conducting research. It was not designed for such a purpose and is in many ways inadequate to handle the needs of the Office of Licensing. The Department and the Commission recognize that the recordkeeping system for Licensed Personnel needs to be completely overhauled and replaced by a new automated system. In regard to competency testing information alone, although ETS test score tapes are used throughout the year to update the file and remove provisions, much still depends upon inputting or removing provisions by hand (for example, evidence that an individual qualifies for an exemption for a particular test). Another limitation is that the current system allows easy access only to information for the current year. It is not possible to view an individual's record today and find out anything about his or her history in regard to competency testing e.g. how many testing provisions were on the initial license, how many have previously been removed, how many times were tests attempted.*

*In order to proceed, despite these weaknesses, two other data sources were used. Archived Education files for previous years were used, for example, to determine how long a period of time an applicant took to remove testing provisions. This allowed a comparison of the same individual's record in several succeeding years. However the results are still estimates, as there is no continuous updating of licensing information.*

For example, no record is kept of the date a particular competency testing provision is removed; it is simply removed from the license.

In addition, Educational Testing Service supplied test score tapes for all persons who asked that their scores be sent to Nevada since September, 1990. These include a history of each individual's test taking. Department files can be matched with theirs through the use of social security numbers which allow the determination of how many current Nevada teachers, whose licenses were issued within a certain period of time, took a particular test one time, two times, three times etc. There are still limitations, however, due to the fact that a match cannot be found for all social security numbers. Not all examinees provide their social security number on a test as requested and there are some errors in the Education file.

Thus the results of the present study, although informative, are based on data that is not complete. Specific limitations will be pointed out in the discussion and interpretation of the results.

## RESULTS OF THE STUDY

### Current Nevada Educational Personnel Whose Initial Licenses Were Issued Between September 1, 1990 and September 15, 1992: Status Regarding Testing Provisions

There are currently 3,103 persons employed in Nevada's educational system whose initial licenses were issued during the two year period, September 1, 1990, through September 15, 1992. Of these, 45% were issued licenses with no testing provisions; 55% had one or more testing provisions.

In Table 1, the two subgroups (with and without testing provisions) are examined by the following characteristics: major assignment\*, region in which employed, gender, ethnicity\*\*, educational level, where training was received and amount of experience. In general, the two subgroups are similar in a number of the background characteristics. However some differences are apparent in region of employment, where training was obtained (in-state or out-of-state) and in the amount of experience. The proportion of

\* The assignments are related to types of licenses; these include elementary, secondary, and special. Special licenses are all those that are not strictly elementary or secondary. Examples are: administrative, counselor, school psychologist, and special education, art, music and English as a second language teachers.

\*\* Both Educational Testing Service and the Department collect information on ethnicity. For purposes of this analysis, "white" is designated "majority" and all other ethnic categories are collapsed into a "minority" classification. Thus the term "minority" includes American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian or Pacific Islander, Hispanic, and Black.



Table 1

**Employees Whose Licenses Were Issued  
Between September 1, 1990 and September 15, 1992**

	<b>With Testing Provisions n=1703</b>	<b>Without Testing Provisions n=1400</b>	<b>Total n=3103</b>
<b>Major Assignment</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Elementary	49.6	53.9	51.5
Secondary	29.4	26.6	28.1
Special	21.1	19.5	20.4
<b>Region **</b>			
Clark County	61.3	71.3	65.8
Washoe County	14.1	15.2	14.6
Other Counties	24.6	13.5	19.6
<b>Gender *</b>			
Male	26.7	23.5	25.3
Female	73.3	76.5	74.7
<b>Ethnicity</b>			
Minority	14.0	14.4	14.1
Majority	86.0	85.6	85.9
<b>Educational Level</b>			
Bachelor's	77.3	77.6	77.4
Higher Degree	20.8	19.4	20.2
<b>Where Trained **</b>			
In-State	18.7	27.8	22.8
Out-of-State	79.4	69.1	74.8
<b>Experience **</b>			
No Experience	58.0	78.8	67.4
2-5 years	19.1	7.7	14.0
6-10 years	9.5	6.2	8.0
More than 10	13.4	7.3	10.6

\* $p < .05$     \*\* $p < .005$

*new employees with testing provisions was higher in the rural districts and lower in Clark County when compared with the proportions of those without testing provisions. In regard to where training was received, a somewhat higher proportion of those without testing provisions received their training in Nevada than was true of those with testing provisions. Also, although the majority of the study cohort came into the Nevada system with no experience (67.4%), those in the subgroup without testing provisions were more likely to have no experience (78.8%) than those in the subgroup with testing provisions (58%).*

**Frequency with which Different Types of Competency Tests were Listed as Provisions on Initial Licenses**

*For the 1,703 employees with testing provisions on their licenses, issued between September 1, 1990 and September 15, 1992, Table 2 shows the numbers of different types of testing provisions.*

**Table 2**

**Number and Types of Competency Tests Listed as Provisions**

<i>Pre-Professional Skills Test-Mathematics</i> .....	<i>1,038 (61.0)</i>
<i>Pre-Professional Skills Test-Reading</i> .....	<i>1,033 (60.7)</i>
<i>Pre-Professional Skills Test-Writing</i> .....	<i>1,035 (60.8)</i>
<i>Professional Knowledge</i> .....	<i>937 (55.0)</i>
<i>Specialty Area Test (one only)</i> .....	<i>1041 (61.1)</i>
<i>Specialty Area Tests (two or more)</i> .....	<i>214 (12.6)</i>

*Thus approximately 61% of this group with testing provisions needed to take the PPST Math test, the PPST Reading test, the PPST Writing test, and one Specialty Area test. Only 13% were required to take two or more Specialty Area tests (these persons applied for two or more endorsements). The Professional Knowledge test was a requirement for 55% of the group. Of course the actual testing provisions for any single individual could have varied from one test to five of those listed above depending upon the number of exemptions for which he or she was eligible.*

**Number of Times the Different Types of Tests Were Taken**

*This section of the analysis involved matching our files with ETS files. This was done by use of social security numbers. Unfortunately not all cases with provisions in the time period studied could be matched due to the fact that neither set of files have complete and accurate social security numbers. Much depends upon the individual applicant or examinee's willingness to provide this identification number and upon the accuracy and legibility of the numbers when they are provided. There are also chances for error when data is transferred by hand such as transposing numbers etc. The numbers of cases with different types of provisions which could not be matched are as follows:*

PPST - Math .....	141
PPST - Reading .....	141
PPST - Writing .....	141
Professional Knowledge .....	116
Specialty Area .....	193

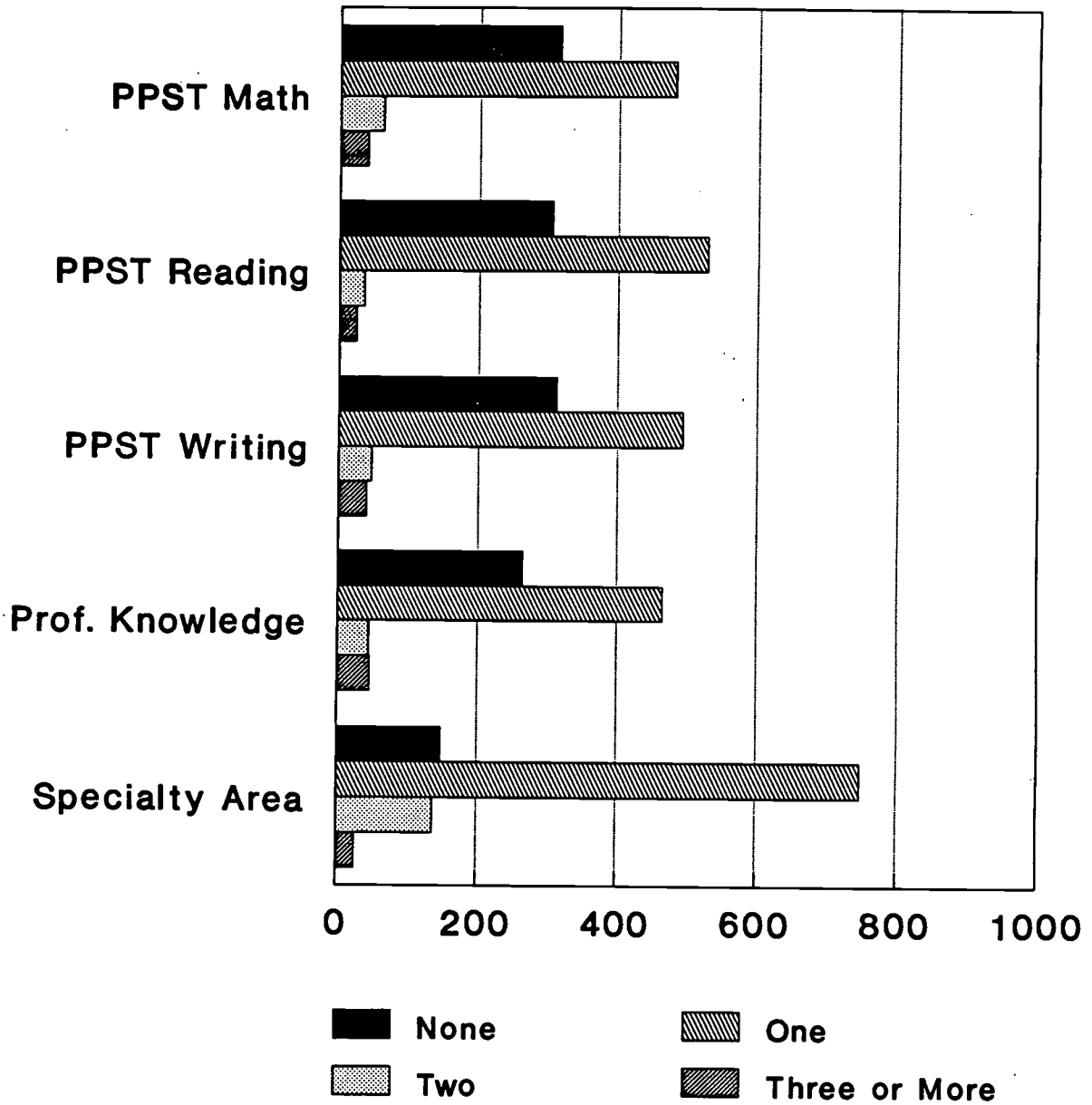
*Figure 1 presents information about those persons who were found on the ETS files. Over one-half of those with PPST Math, PPST Writing, and Professional Knowledge provisions took these tests only one time. Of those with PPST Reading provisions, almost 60% took the test only once; 71% with Specialty Area provisions took their particular tests once. The next most frequent occurrence was that the applicants provided evidence qualifying them for exemptions from a test or tests. For the three PPST tests and the Professional Knowledge Test this percentage ranged from 32.3% to 35.1%. However, only 14% of those with Specialty Area provisions fell into this category. Only very small percentages of persons took the same test multiple times. From 3.9% to 6.9% took any of the PPST tests or the Professional Knowledge test two times. Thirteen percent are shown as taking a Specialty Area test two times; however this includes those who were required to take more than one Specialty Area test as well as those who took the same Specialty Area test more than once. Even smaller numbers took any particular test three or more times (from 2.7% to 5.6%).*

*Tables 3 and 4 show the background characteristics of persons who took a particular test one time compared to the characteristics of those who took a test two or more times. The tests examined are the PPST Math test, the PPST Reading Test, the PPST Writing test, the Professional Knowledge test, and the Elementary Education Specialty Area test.*

*Table 3 shows that in many ways the one time test takers and the multiple time test takers of the PPST tests are similar. However for all three tests, PPST Math, PPST Reading, and PPST Writing, the proportions of minority personnel were higher among the multiple test takers than among the single test takers. Other significant differences were found for the relationship between Region and the number of times the PPST Reading test was taken and the relationship between Gender and the number of times the PPST Writing test was taken.*

**Figure 1** Number of Times Tests Taken  
Licenses Issued 9/1/90--9/15/92

**Type of Test**



None reflects exemption in most cases

Table 3

## Number of Times PPST Tests Taken by Background Characteristics

	PPST MATH		PPST READING		PPST WRITING	
	One	Two/More	One	Two/More	One	Two/More
<b>Major Assignment</b>						
Elementary	226 (47.6)	55 (55.0)	249 (47.6)	35 (60.3)	236 (48.1)	44 (52.4)
Secondary	158 (33.4)	27 (27.0)	175 (33.6)	14 (24.1)	159 (32.5)	27 (32.1)
Special	90 (19.0)	19 (18.0)	99 (18.8)	9 (15.5)	95 (19.4)	14 (15.5)
<b>Region</b>			*			
Clark County	293 (61.7)	65 (65.0)	314 (60.1)	44 (75.9)	293 (59.7)	60 (71.4)
Washoe County	60 (12.7)	7 (6.0)	65 (12.3)	2 (3.4)	63 (12.9)	4 (3.6)
Other Counties	121 (25.6)	29 (29.0)	144 (27.6)	12 (20.7)	134 (27.4)	21 (25.0)
<b>Gender</b>					**	
Male	129 (27.3)	26 (26.0)	142 (27.3)	18 (31.0)	124 (25.4)	33 (39.3)
Female	345 (72.7)	75 (74.0)	381 (72.7)	40 (69.0)	366 (74.6)	52 (60.7)
<b>Ethnicity</b>	***		***		***	
Minority	56 (11.8)	31 (31.0)	66 (12.7)	21 (36.2)	59 (12.1)	23 (27.4)
Majority	418 (88.2)	70 (69.0)	457 (87.3)	37 (63.8)	431 (87.9)	62 (72.6)
<b>Educational Level</b>						
Bachelor's	386 (81.6)	8 (88.0)	434 (83.1)	52 (89.7)	405 (82.8)	73 (85.7)
Higher Degree	81 (17.1)	12 (12.0)	84 (16.1)	5 (8.6)	81 (16.6)	10 (11.9)
No Record	7(1.3)		5 (7.7)	1 (1.7)	4 (0.6)	2 (2.4)
<b>Where Trained</b>						
In-State	61 (12.9)	15 (14.0)	71 (13.4)	6 (10.3)	64 (13.1)	14 (15.5)
Out-of-State	406 (85.8)	86 (86.0)	447 (85.8)	51 (87.9)	422 (86.3)	69 (82.1)
No Record	7 (1.5)		5 (1.0)	1 (1.7)	4 (0.8)	2 (2.4)
<b>Experience</b>						
No Experience	335 (70.6)	68 (67.0)	369 (70.4)	42 (72.4)	340 (69.3)	66 (77.4)
1-5 years	80 (16.9)	19 (19.0)	91 (18.6)	11 (19.0)	90 (18.4)	9 (10.7)
6-10 years	34 (7.2)	8 (8.0)	36 (6.9)	1 (1.7)	36 (7.4)	5 (6.0)
More than 10	25 (5.3)	6 (6.0)	27 (5.2)	4 (6.9)	24 (4.9)	5 (6.0)

\* $p < .05$  \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .005$

Table 4

## Number of Times Tests Taken by Background Characteristics

	Professional Knowledge		Elementary Education	
	One	Two/More	One	Two/More
<b>Major Assignment</b>				
Elementary	256 (54.7)	46 (51.1)	443 (82.2)	18 (90.0)
Secondary	144 (31.0)	30 (33.3)	36 (6.7)	2 (10.0)
Special	66 (14.2)	14 (15.6)	60 (11.2)	0 (0.0)
<b>Region</b>				
Clark	301 (64.9)	63 (70.0)	354 (65.8)	15 (75.0)
Washoe	50 (10.8)	7 (7.8)	53 (9.9)	2 (10.0)
Other Counties	115 (24.4)	20 (22.2)	132 (24.3)	3 (15.0)
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	* 111 (23.9)	33 (36.7)	94 (17.5)	3 (15.0)
Female	355 (76.1)	57 (63.3)	445 (82.5)	17 (85.0)
<b>Ethnicity</b>				
Minority	** 43 (9.3)	20 (22.2)	** 65 (12.1)	8 (40.0)
Majority	423 (90.7)	70 (77.8)	474 (87.9)	12 (60.0)
<b>Educational Level</b>				
Bachelor's	393 (84.3)	81 (90.0)	447 (82.9)	14 (70.0)
Higher Degree	73 (15.7)	9 (10.0)	92 (17.1)	6 (30.0)
<b>Where Trained</b>				
In-State	68 (14.7)	14 (15.6)	35 (6.5)	1 (5.0)
Out-of-State	398 (85.3)	76 (84.4)	504 (93.5)	19 (95.0)
<b>Experience</b>				
No Experience	301 (64.9)	64 (71.1)	270 (50.2)	7 (35.0)
1-5 years	112 (23.7)	13 (14.4)	116 (21.4)	4 (20.0)
6-10 years	33 (7.1)	6 (6.7)	65 (12.1)	5 (25.0)
More than 10	20 (4.3)	7 (7.8)	88 (16.4)	4 (20.0)

\* $p < .025$     \*\* $p < .005$



*Table 4 also shows that for a number of characteristics the single test takers and the multiple test takers are similar. However, for the Professional Knowledge test, males and minorities were more highly represented among those who took the test two or more times than was true for those who took the test once. For the Elementary Education Specialty Area test, although very few persons took this test more than once, minority personnel made up a greater proportion of this group than was true of the single test takers.*

### *Length of Time to Remove Competency Testing Provisions*

*Figure 2 shows how long a period of time candidates took to remove PPST provisions. The great majority of persons (641 to 649 or approximately 62%) completed these provisions within one year of the time their licenses were issued. In the second year 268 to 277 or approximately 26% removed the various testing provisions. In the third year, 77 (7.4%) each removed PPST Reading and PPST Writing provisions, and 82 (7.9%) removed PPST Math provisions. Figure 3 provides similar information for the Professional Knowledge and Specialty Area tests. For the Professional Knowledge test, 566 persons (60.4%) removed this provision within one year; 259 (27.6%), within two years; and 64 (6.8%) within three years. Of those with Specialty Area provisions, 685 (54.6%) removed these within one year, 336 (26.8%) within two years, and 76 (6.1%) within three years.*

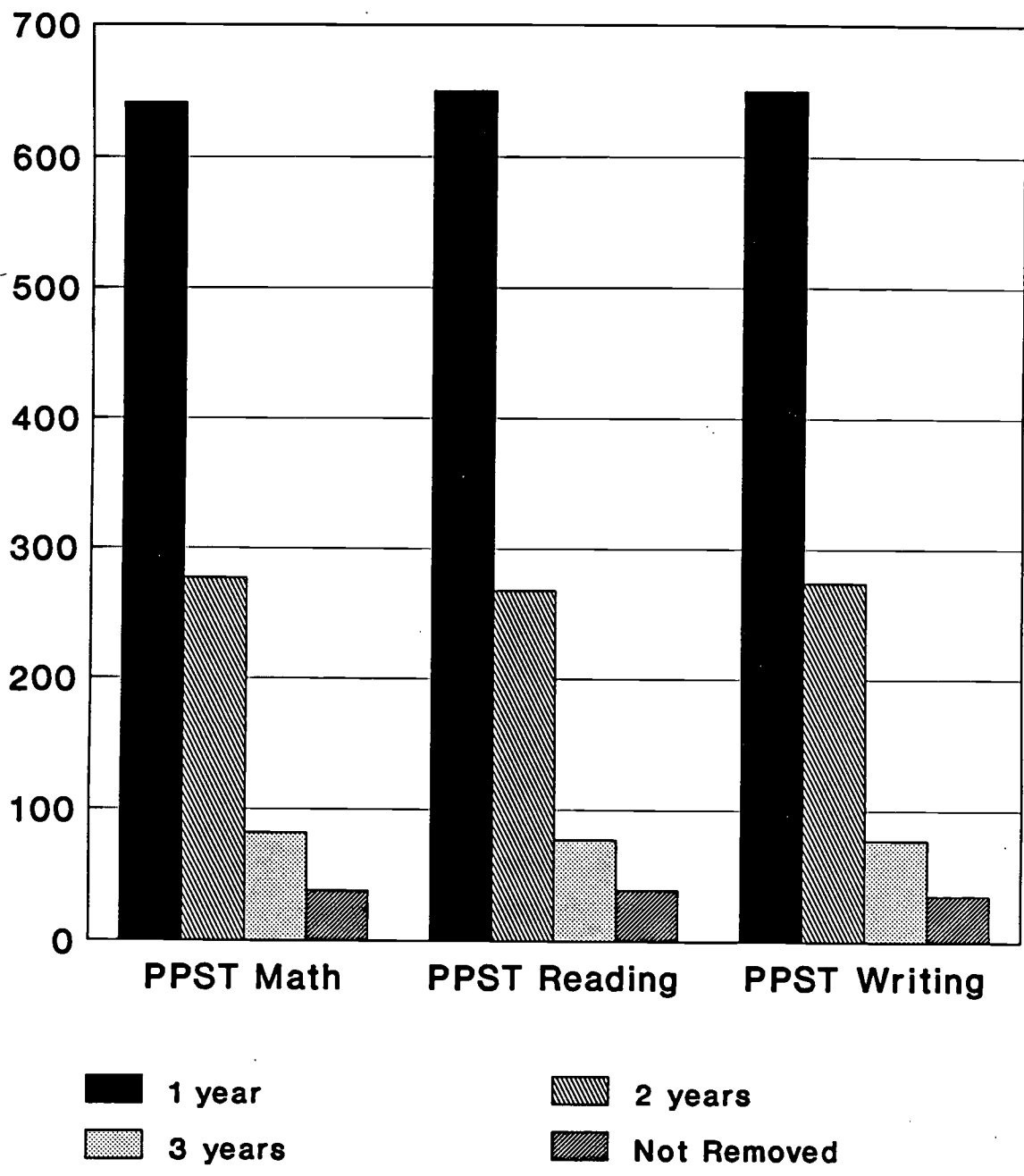
*These numbers were obtained by looking for the persons included in this study in succeeding years of archived Education files. No historical test taking data is retained on the current file. Therefore, the results presented in this section are estimates, rather than exact figures.*

*The bars showing that the provision has not been removed include teachers who have received extensions, persons who have chosen to allow one or more Specialty Area provisions to become invalid and persons whose exemptions may not have been recorded. In order to know exactly why more persons are shown on the file as not having removed testing provisions than we know to be the case through checking with individual districts, it would be necessary to check each person's paper file individually.*

### *SUMMARY OF RESULTS*

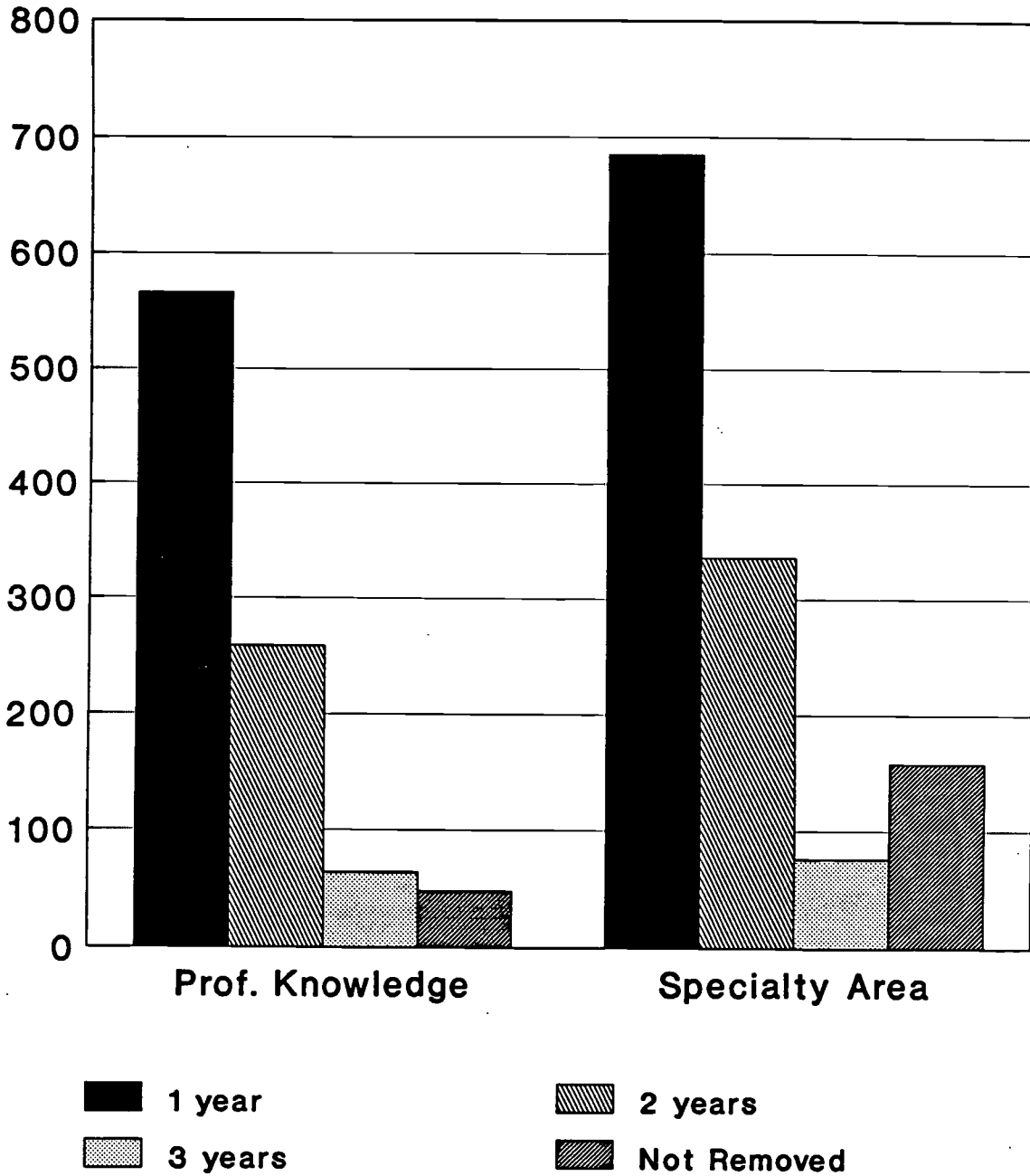
*Proposals and plans for a Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel in Nevada began in the early 1980's, both in the Legislature and the State Board of Education. During the 1987 Legislature, a permanent Commission on Professional Standards in Education with authority to adopt regulations prescribing the qualifications for licensing teachers was established. At the same time the Commission was charged with developing and administering an examination for applicants for initial teacher licenses. The Department developed a plan and policies for such a program. Educational Testing Service became the contractor after a process of open bidding which involved review and recommendations of a committee representing all the major educational associations/organizations in the state.*

**Figure 2 Time Used to Remove Provisions**  
**Licenses Issued 9/1/90--9/15/92**





**Figure 3** Time Used To Remove Provisions  
Licenses Issued 9/1/90--9/15/92



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**The Nevada Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel went into effect in the fall of 1989 on a no-fault basis. Since January 1991, meeting designated passing scores has been required. At present the program includes basic skills tests in reading, writing, and math; a professional knowledge (pedagogy) test; and tests in twenty-one subject areas. Clearly defined exemptions are allowed; therefore everyone applying for an initial license may not be required to take all three types of tests. All tests included in the program were validated through a process of review and standard setting by panels of Nevada educators with expertise in the areas covered by the tests. Their judgments were studied by the Competency Testing Review Committee, a working advisory group to the Commission, who then recommended the use of particular tests and passing scores to the Commission.**

**Originally the time allowed to remove competency testing provisions was one year from the date the license was issued, although extensions could be granted. In September, 1992, the Commission voted to allow a two year period to take and pass the required tests. Anyone who had applied before September, 1992 and still had testing provisions would be granted an additional two years. For these reasons, an unusually large number of educational personnel had a September 11, 1994 deadline for removing their testing provisions. There was an effort by the Department and most school districts to send reminders about the deadline. And, although a minimum of six opportunities to take each type of test had been available, the Commission requested that a special administration be set up in the summer of 1994, to accommodate those who still needed to remove testing provisions to prevent their licenses becoming invalid. Districts were asked to check with their employees affected by the deadline.**

**On September 11, 1994, 64 personnel statewide had failed to remove their testing provisions. These persons made up 3.8% of the cohort whose initial licenses were issued on or before September, 1992.**

**Educational personnel whose licenses became invalid were taken out of the classroom in sixteen local school districts. In most cases, these persons were either able to go on substitute status or, if lacking the basic skills ( Pre-Professional Skills) tests, were able to take the computerized version at a Sylvan Center and become reinstated. However, in Clark County a law suit was filed on behalf of certain named employees of the Clark County School District, individually and as members of a class of all licensed personnel of the Clark County School District employed since January, 1991. An injunction was obtained to prevent the removal from the classroom of those teachers who had failed to remove their competency testing provisions. The judge's decision, following the court hearing in October, found that the state had a right to test persons applying for initial licenses and that the procedures used were valid. However, he did not want the competency testing regulation to be enforced in Clark County. He extended the injunction to June 15, 1994 and told the Commission to accept course work as meeting the requirement for those who had not been able to pass a test or tests. At their November 4, 1994, meeting, the Commission on Professional Standards voted to appeal the decision to the Nevada Supreme Court. At the same time they moved toward complying with the Judge's order to allow courses as alternatives to testing**

requirements. The Commission also directed the Deputy Attorney General to seek a settlement with the Clark County Teachers Association. A settlement was subsequently agreed to by all parties involved with the last action being approval by the Commission on Professional Standards on February 9, 1995. Under the terms of the settlement, course alternatives are offered to persons who take and fail any of the parts of the Pre-Professional Skills Tests; however this alternative is not available to persons who fail the Professional Knowledge or Specialty Area tests. The Court Injunction for Clark County teachers expires on July 30, 1995.

The present study is a first attempt to understand how the Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel is working. The cohort of interest includes all those whose initial Nevada licenses were issued between September, 1990, and September, 1992, who became and are currently teaching or practicing in Nevada. All of these persons, if they had testing provisions on their initial licenses, would have faced the September 11, 1994, deadline. We were interested in investigating the following questions: How many new persons had competency testing provisions on their initial licenses? Which specific tests were required? How many times was each test taken? How long a period of time was used by candidates to remove provisions? and How many of this cohort did not remove their testing provisions by September, 1994?

Data used in this study came from the current Nevada Education file, archived copies of past years' Education files, and from test score tapes provided by Educational Testing Service. Limitations in the present Education file reduce the possibilities for study. In spite of this fact, it is believed that the present analysis is informative and useful.

How many new persons had competency testing provisions on their initial licenses?

The results of the study show that only 55% (1,703) of current Nevada Educational Personnel whose initial licenses were issued between September 1, 1990 and September 15, 1992 had one or more testing provisions; 45% (1,400) were issued with no provisions, meaning that they qualified for exemptions or had taken the tests previously. When those with provisions and those without were compared by background characteristics, some differences were observed by region of employment, where training had been obtained (in-state versus out-of-state) and amount of teaching experience.

Which types of competency tests were listed as provisions? Approximately 61% of the 1,703 persons with testing provisions needed to take each of the three sections of the Pre-Professional Skills Tests (Math, Reading, and Writing). Approximately 55% needed to take the Professional Knowledge test and 74% were required to take one or more Specialty Area tests.

**How many times were the different types of tests taken?** The majority of those with testing provisions took the required tests only one time (between 54% and 71%, depending upon the particular test). Approximately one third of those with PPST and Professional Knowledge provisions supplied evidence of qualification for an exemption after their licenses were issued; this was true for approximately 14% of those with Specialty Area provisions. Only a very small percentage took a test or tests multiple times. From 3.9% to 6.9% took the same test two times; from 2.7% to 5.6% took a test or tests three or more times. Some differences by ethnicity, gender and region were found between those who took tests only once and those who took the tests multiple times.

**What length of time was required to remove testing provisions?** The majority of new persons with testing provisions (55%-62%, depending upon the particular test) took and passed these tests within one year of the date their licenses were issued. An additional 26% to 28% completed all testing requirements by the end of the second year. During the third year, 6.1%-7.9% more had removed their testing provisions.

**How many persons in the cohort studied did not remove their testing provisions by the deadline?** The evidence of the study is that the competency testing requirements were not a problem for the majority of persons who obtained an initial license and become employed in the Nevada educational system. Only 55% had any competency testing provisions on their initial licenses. Over one-half of those with provisions took the tests only one time and removed all testing provisions within one year. Only 64 or 3.8% of the cohort studied failed to remove their competency testing provisions by the September 11, 1994, deadline.

Thus in spite of the fact that the program was not actually enforced until September, 1994, and such enforcement occurred in reality only in 16 districts due to a court injunction in Clark County, the majority of new persons have complied with the competency testing regulations.

The program now appears to be at a crossroads. It has been carefully developed using the knowledge and expertise of hundreds of Nevada teachers. The process generally proceeds smoothly. It has the potential to be a meaningful program, setting standards for new personnel entering the system and protecting the public by screening out those few who cannot meet the standards. **At the present time, it is not possible to claim that the Nevada Competency Testing Program has accomplished its purpose of protecting children and parents.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Conduct a comprehensive review of the Competency Testing Program. As the program has been in effect with passing scores for slightly over four years but has yet to be enforced due to the reasons previously described and as the present study tells us that the vast majority of new educational personnel have been able to meet the requirements in a timely fashion, it is now recommended that an evaluation of all aspects of the program be conducted. The purpose would be to determine in what ways the program can be improved so that its purpose can be realized in the future. Some questions which could be investigated are:**
  - a. **Are the number and types of tests required and the exceptions allowed sufficient to protect the children in Nevada?**
  - b. **Are the standards or passing scores sufficiently high to protect children in classrooms? What are meaningful standards?**
  - c. **Are the passing scores equitable, that is, is a reasonably similar standard required of all new educational personnel? Should Nevada's passing scores be reviewed in the light of new national percentiles published last summer by Educational Testing Service?**
  - d. **Is the implementation of the program satisfactory or could it be improved/simplified? In what ways?**
  - e. **Should diagnostic information and remedial opportunities be available to examinees? If so, who should be responsible for these components? What could be done?**
  - f. **Is information about the program communicated in an effective manner? Which parties should receive this information? Which parties should take responsibility for communication about the program?**
  - g. **What steps can be taken to ensure consistent enforcement of the program in the future? Which parties can contribute to the ability to strictly adhere to the policy as set in regulation?**
  
2. **If feasible, obtain the services of an outside independent evaluator to conduct the comprehensive evaluation of all aspects of the program. If this is not possible, ask the Competency Testing Review Committee to do this work.**
  - a. **Provide specific questions.**
  - b. **Expect a set of recommendations no later than December 1995.**

3. **Postpone any changes in the program as presently conceived until the review is completed (with the exception of consideration of the new tests which have recently been reviewed by panels of Nevada educators).**
4. **Actively pursue the funding and implementation of an automated recordkeeping system for the Licensing Office. This is essential, not only for the evaluation of the Competency Testing Program, but for the day to day operations of licensing. For example, currently there is no way to call up an individual's test history on the computer and there is no way to send reminders or other information to a targeted group such as teachers with math provisions.**
5. **Find ways to encourage, if not require, potential applicants for licensure to complete competency testing requirements before a license is issued. This study shows that 45% of new people in the system are already doing this. What recruitment activities could be modified in order to make this happen? Clarify the roles of licensure versus recruitment in this effort.**

#### REFERENCES

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***Legislative Commission. (1984, August). Study of Education in Nevada (Bulletin 85-89). Carson City, NV: Legislative Counsel Bureau.***

***Strand, S. (1987, May). NSEA Testimony in Support of S.B. 467 to Establish the Commission on Professional Standards for Education. (Exhibit C of May 13, 1987, minutes of the Senate Committee on Human Resources and Facilities). Carson City, NV: Legislative Counsel Bureau.***

**APPENDIX A**

**Frequency Distributions of Scores Earned by Nevada Employees for each Competency Test During the Period September 1990 through August 1994**



COMPTENCY TEST SCORES FROM SEPTEMBER 1990 THRU AUGUST 1994

TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

TEST: PPST/READING  
 PASSING SCORE - 172  
 Percentile Rank - 12

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
190	1	172	69
189	1	171	47
188	16	170	34
187	77	169	41
186	128	168	44
185	180	167	33
184	182	166	25
183	180	165	12
182	176	164	18
181	143	163	12
180	130	162	9
179	128	161	7
178	98	160	8
177	105	159	7
176	85	158	4
175	90	157	2
174	81	156	1
173	71		

NUMBER TESTED = 2245  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 190  
 LOWEST SCORE = 156  
 MEAN = 178.75



## TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

TEST: PPST/WRITING  
 PASSING SCORE: 172  
 Percentile Rank - 14

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
187	5	172	128
186	17	171	105
185	16	170	117
184	34	169	56
183	60	168	48
182	126	167	36
181	96	166	21
180	125	165	9
179	142	164	9
178	246	163	4
177	194	162	4
176	208	161	6
175	195	160	3
174	273	159	1
173	149		

NUMBER TESTED = 2433  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 187  
 LOWEST SCORE = 159  
 MEAN = 175.67

## TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

TEST: PPST/MATH  
 PASSING SCORE - 170  
 Percentile Rank - 11

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
190	71	171	75
189	64	170	79
188	75	169	64
187	94	168	70
186	103	167	69
185	103	166	58
184	123	165	45
183	135	164	41
182	104	163	34
181	119	162	28
180	123	161	15
179	101	160	12
178	71	159	7
177	70	158	4
176	118	157	8
175	95	156	5
174	97	155	5
173	93	154	4
172	101	153	1

NUMBER TESTED = 2484  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 190  
 LOWEST SCORE = 153  
 MEAN = 177.19

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: PPST/READING - COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PROGRAM**

**PASSING SCORE - 319**

**Percentile Rank - Not Available**

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
335	1
334	4
333	3
332	2
331	3
330	2
329	1
328	5
327	6
326	5
325	1
323	1
322	3
321	4
320	2
319	1
317	2
316	1
315	1
314	2
313	2
312	1

**NUMBER TESTED = 53**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 335**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 312**  
**MEAN = 325.21**

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: PPST/WRITING - COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PROGRAM**

**PASSING SCORE: 318**

**Percentile Rank - Not Available**

SCORE	FREQUENCY
335	1
332	2
331	1
329	2
328	5
327	6
326	3
325	1
324	1
323	6
322	6
321	5
320	11
319	4
318	5
317	10
316	8
315	2
314	1
313	3
307	1

**NUMBER TESTED**     =     84  
**HIGHEST SCORE**    =     335  
**LOWEST SCORE**     =     307  
**MEAN**                =     321.02

### TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

TEST: PPST/MATH - COMPUTER-BASED TESTING PROGRAM

PASSING SCORE - 315

Percentile Rank - Not Available

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
335	1	319	5
334	1	318	2
333	3	317	7
332	2	316	5
331	2	315	5
329	2	314	9
328	4	313	3
327	3	312	3
326	3	311	4
325	3	310	3
324	2	309	4
323	3	308	2
322	1	307	1
321	2	306	1

NUMBER TESTED = 88  
HIGHEST SCORE = 335  
LOWEST SCORE = 306  
MEAN = 318.91

## TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

TEST: PPST - PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

PASSING SCORE - 651

Percentile Rank - 17

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
684	2	661	81	638	8
683	1	660	77	637	3
682	5	659	61	636	6
681	11	658	69	635	1
680	19	657	62	634	3
679	29	656	47	633	3
678	56	655	32	632	2
677	68	654	66	631	5
676	73	653	41	630	4
675	63	652	48	628	4
674	105	651	31	627	1
673	105	650	28	626	1
672	110	649	20	625	2
671	90	648	34	624	1
670	104	647	25	623	2
669	138	646	30	622	1
668	88	645	12		
667	92	644	17		
666	106	643	15		
665	114	642	15		
664	74	641	13		
663	75	640	7		
662	72	639	6		

NUMBER TESTED = 2484  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 684  
 LOWEST SCORE = 622  
 MEAN = 663.95

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: BIOLOGY AND GEN. SCIENCE**  
**PASSING SCORE - 580**  
**Percentile Rank - 15**

**TEST: BUSINESS EDUCATION**  
**PASSING SCORE - 560**  
**Percentile Rank 10**

SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY
820	1		770	1
790	1		750	2
770	3		740	2
760	2		730	4
750	2		720	2
740	5		710	9
730	2		690	4
720	3		680	5
710	4		670	3
700	6		660	2
690	1		650	4
680	3		640	3
670	2		630	5
660	2		620	3
650	4		610	2
640	3		600	3
630	2		580	1
620	4		560	1
610	3		530	3
600	6		510	1
590	3			
580	2			
570	3			
560	1			
540	2			
490	1			
440	1			

**NUMBER TESTED = 72**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 820**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 440**  
**MEAN = 660.97**

**NUMBER TESTED = 60**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 770**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 510**  
**MEAN = 663.00**

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: CHEM., PHYS., & GEN. SCIENCE**  
**PASSING SCORE - 540**  
**Percentile Rank - 22**

**TEST: EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**  
**PASSING SCORE - 570**  
**Percentile Rank 15**

SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
760	2		840	1	440	1
720	1		810	2		
680	1		800	3		
670	1		790	3		
650	1		780	6		
640	1		770	1		
630	1		760	6		
620	2		750	2		
610	5		740	5		
600	1		730	9		
590	4		720	5		
580	1		710	4		
570	3		700	2		
560	2		690	2		
550	5		680	3		
540	3		670	2		
530	4		660	2		
510	3		650	2		
500	2		640	3		
490	1		630	2		
480	1		620	3		
470	1		610	2		
460	1		600	1		
420	2		590	1		
			580	2		
			570	1		
			560	2		
			520	2		
			510	1		

NUMBER TESTED = 49  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 760  
 LOWEST SCORE = 420  
 MEAN = 570.00

NUMBER TESTED = 81  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 840  
 LOWEST SCORE = 440  
 MEAN = 697.78



## TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

**TEST: EDUCATION IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**PASSING SCORE - 560**

**Percentile Rank - 9**

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
780	1	560	36
770	3	550	24
760	5	540	18
750	19	530	16
740	40	520	16
730	72	510	5
720	76	500	8
710	119	490	7
700	130	480	8
690	150	470	3
680	132	460	3
670	134	450	2
660	116	440	1
650	189	430	3
640	129	420	1
630	115	410	1
620	78	400	1
610	77	380	1
600	50		
590	58		
580	38		
570	42		

**NUMBER TESTED = 1927**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 780**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 380**  
**MEAN = 652.43**

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE**

**PASSING SCORE - 530**

**Percentile Rank - 13**

<b>SCORE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>SCORE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>
760	1	560	11
750	4	550	6
740	2	540	3
730	4	530	3
720	1	520	9
710	3	510	6
700	2	500	5
690	13	490	4
680	2	480	1
670	8	450	1
660	14	440	2
650	12	420	2
640	8	410	2
630	15	400	1
620	12	360	1
610	8	350	2
600	12		
590	10		
580	8		
570	10		

**NUMBER TESTED = 208**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 760**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 350**  
**MEAN = 602.26**

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: FRENCH**  
**PASSING SCORE - 540**  
**Percentile Rank - 15**

**TEST: GENERAL SCIENCE**  
**PASSING SCORE - 530**  
**Percentile Rank - 18**

SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
760	1		830	1	590	1
730	2		820	2	580	5
720	1		810	1	570	1
690	2		800	1	560	3
680	1		790	1	530	3
650	2		780	2	510	2
640	1		760	2	500	2
630	1		740	1	490	1
620	1		730	3	470	1
580	1		720	1	450	1
560	1		710	1	440	3
540	1		700	2	420	2
510	1		680	1	400	1
450	1		670	1	380	2
			660	3	340	1
			640	1		
			630	1		
			620	1		
			610	1		

**NUMBER TESTED = 17**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 760**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 450**  
**MEAN = 637.06**

**NUMBER TESTED = 56**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 830**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 340**  
**MEAN = 606.43**

## TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

TEST: HEALTH EDUCATION  
 PASSING SCORE - 570  
 Percentile Rank - 6

TEST: HOME ECONOMICS  
 PASSING SCORE - 580  
 Percentile Rank - 13

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY
860	1	610	3		770	1
820	1	600	1		750	2
810	2	590	1		740	1
800	2	580	1		730	2
790	2	530	1		720	2
780	1	380	1		710	1
770	3				700	1
760	2				690	1
750	2				680	4
740	3				660	1
730	2				650	2
710	7				610	2
700	2				580	1
690	2				460	1
680	2					
650	1					
640	3					
630	1					
620	2					

NUMBER TESTED = 49  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 860  
 LOWEST SCORE = 380  
 MEAN = 700.61

NUMBER TESTED = 22  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 770  
 LOWEST SCORE = 460  
 MEAN = 679.55

## TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

**TEST: INTRO TO TEACHING READING**  
**PASSING SCORE - 560**  
**Percentile Rank - 9**

**TEST: MATHEMATICS**  
**PASSING SCORE - 540**  
**Percentile Rank - 19**

SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
770	1		820	1	570	9
760	1		810	1	560	5
750	1		790	1	550	4
740	3		770	1	540	4
720	1		760	2	530	5
710	1		750	1	520	4
700	1		740	1	510	10
690	2		730	4	500	7
680	2		720	3	490	4
670	1		710	6	480	4
660	1		700	1	470	1
650	1		690	6	460	2
640	1		680	9	440	1
630	1		670	3	430	1
620	1		660	5	420	1
610	2		650	9		
590	1		640	5		
580	3		630	5		
540	1		620	1		
510	1		610	10		
			600	5		
			590	13		
			580	4		

**NUMBER TESTED = 27**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 770**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 510**  
**MEAN = 660.74**

**NUMBER TESTED = 159**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 820**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 420**  
**MEAN = 603.14**

## TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE

TEST: PSYCHOLOGY  
 PASSING SCORE - 550  
 Percentile Rank - 13

TEST: SCHOOL GUIDANCE & COUNSELING  
 PASSING SCORE - 570  
 Percentile Rank - 13

SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
850	1		800	1	550	1
800	1		770	1	540	1
760	1		760	1	530	3
730	1		750	2	510	1
720	1		740	3	500	1
710	1		730	5	480	1
690	1		720	7	470	1
660	1		710	5		
650	1		700	6		
610	1		690	3		
600	1		680	9		
580	1		670	1		
500	1		660	8		
			650	6		
			640	3		
			630	1		
			620	3		
			610	2		
			600	5		
			590	1		
			580	1		
			570	2		
			560	1		

NUMBER TESTED = 13  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 850  
 LOWEST SCORE = 500  
 MEAN = 681.54

NUMBER TESTED = 86  
 HIGHEST SCORE = 800  
 LOWEST SCORE = 470  
 MEAN = 658.95

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: SOCIAL STUDIES**  
**PASSING SCORE - 540**  
**Percentile Rank - 12**

**TEST: SPANISH**  
**PASSING SCORE - 520**  
**Percentile Rank - 15**

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY
780	1	470	2		770	1
750	3	440	1		760	1
740	3	430	2		740	1
730	1	400	1		730	4
720	3				710	2
710	3				700	6
700	4				690	4
690	4				670	3
680	7				660	3
670	6				650	2
660	8				640	3
650	6				630	3
640	6				620	3
630	7				610	1
620	9				590	1
610	4				580	1
600	5				560	1
590	6				550	2
580	3				510	1
570	4				470	2
560	5				440	1
550	5					
540	1					
510	1					
500	2					
490	1					

**NUMBER TESTED = 114**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 780**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 400**  
**MEAN = 625.88**

**NUMBER TESTED = 46**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 770**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 440**  
**MEAN = 649.13**



**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: SPEECH COMMUNICATION**  
**PASSING SCORE - 580**  
**Percentile Rank - 12**

**TEST: SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY**  
**PASSING SCORE - 590**  
**Percentile Rank - 12**

SCORE	FREQUENCY		SCORE	FREQUENCY
750	1		750	1
720	1		730	1
710	2		720	1
700	1		660	1
690	1		650	3
680	1		640	1
670	1		630	2
660	2		620	1
640	1		610	3
570	1		600	3
			590	2
			570	1
			560	3
			550	1
			530	2
			520	2
			510	2
			500	1
			470	1
			460	1
			420	1

**NUMBER TESTED = 12**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 750**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 570**  
**MEAN = 680.00**

**NUMBER TESTED = 34**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 750**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 420**  
**MEAN = 585.59**

**TEST SCORE DISTRIBUTION BY TEST TYPE**

**TEST: SPECIAL EDUCATION**  
**PASSING SCORE - 540**  
**Percentile Rank - 13**

**TEST: WORLD & U.S. HISTORY**  
**PASSING SCORE - 470**  
**Percentile Rank - 20**

SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY	SCORE	FREQUENCY
790	1	580	12	750	1	410	1
780	4	570	6	740	1	400	1
770	1	560	9	720	3	360	1
760	7	550	6	700	1	340	1
750	6	540	12	680	1		
740	13	530	4	650	1		
730	11	520	4	630	1		
720	24	510	5	620	1		
710	16	500	1	610	1		
700	13	490	3	600	2		
690	11	480	1	590	2		
680	23	470	3	580	2		
670	20	460	1	550	1		
660	18	450	1	540	2		
650	13	440	1	530	2		
640	17	430	4	510	3		
630	17	420	3	500	2		
620	18	410	2	490	1		
610	20	390	1	480	2		
600	11	340	1	460	1		
590	15			440	3		

**NUMBER TESTED = 359**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 790**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 340**  
**MEAN = 637.72**

**NUMBER TESTED = 38**  
**HIGHEST SCORE = 750**  
**LOWEST SCORE = 340**  
**MEAN = 553.68**

**APPENDIX B**

**Informational Bulletin: Nevada Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel  
1994-95**

# INFORMATIONAL BULLETIN

## Nevada Competency Testing Program for Educational Personnel 1993-94

### REQUIREMENTS

All applicants for initial licensing in Nevada are required to take the following competency tests unless certain exceptions, as described below, apply:

1. Praxis I; Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST)\*
2. NTE Professional Knowledge Test (part of the NTE Core Battery)
3. NTE Specialty Area Test(s) or Praxis II; Subject Assessments\*\*

Individuals applying for initial licensure, on or after January 1, 1991, must successfully complete these tests by attaining the passing scores set by Nevada except in the case of a test designated by the Commission on Professional Standards to be in a no-fault category.

### EXCEPTIONS

All applicants for initial licenses must take the required competency tests within two years of the issuance of a license, unless the following exceptions apply:

#### Pre-Professional Skills Tests

1. Applicants who provide official documentation of previously having taken and passed the Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST) or the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST). See Attachment A.
2. Out-of-state applicants with a license in another state and 3 years of full-time experience within the past 5 years in the subject area(s) for which they are receiving a Nevada license. See Attachment B.
3. Applicants who have earned a master's or higher degree from a regionally accredited college or university which requires passing a GRE or its equivalent.
4. Applicants who 1) have taken the Graduate Record Examination for the field of education receiving the following minimums scores a) GRE Verbal: 420, b) GRE Quantitative: 460 and c) GRE Analytical: 430 and 2) have completed their undergraduate degree with a Grade Point Average of not less than 3.0.
5. Applicants not employed in the public or private schools of Nevada at the time of licensure who are granted two years after the beginning date of such employment to meet this requirement. In this case, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide verification of the date of employment to the Licensure Office.

\*Applicants for substitute teacher licenses are required to take only the PPST (basic skills test).

\*\*See the attached list of Specialty Area/Subject Assessments Tests currently in use in Nevada (Pages 5-6). The number of Specialty Area tests required depends upon the number of endorsements applied for on the initial license and the tests currently in use in Nevada.

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### Professional Knowledge Test

1. Applicants who provide official documentation of having previously taken and passed the Professional Knowledge Test. See Attachment A.
2. Out-of-state applicants with a license in another state and 3 years of full-time experience within the past 5 years in the subject area(s) for which they are receiving a Nevada license. See Attachment B.
3. Applicants for initial licenses with endorsements in areas for which training in the principles and methods of teaching is not required (i.e. counselors, school psychologists, nurses, social workers, speech therapists).
4. Applicants for the Elementary (K-8) endorsement who take the Curriculum Instruction and Assessment (10011) and the Content Area Exercises (20012) tests.
5. Applicants not employed in the public or private schools of Nevada at the time of licensure who are granted two years after the beginning date of such employment to meet this requirement. In this case, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide verification of the date of employment to the Licensure Office.

### Specialty Area/Subject Assessment Tests

1. Applicants who provide official documentation of having previously taken and passed the appropriate Specialty Area test(s). See Attachment A.
2. Applicants for initial licenses with endorsement(s) in areas for which no tests have yet been validated and approved.
3. Applicants for the Speech and Language Handicapped endorsement who provide official documentation of having received the Certificate of Clinical Competence issued by the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association.
4. Applicants for the Home Economics endorsement who provide official documentation of satisfactory completion of the Certified Home Economist Examination (C.H.E. Examination) issued by the Council for Certification of the American Home Economics Association.
5. Applicants not employed in the public or private schools of Nevada at the time of licensure who are granted two years after the beginning date of such employment to meet this requirement. In this case, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide verification of the date of employment to the Licensure Office.

## PROCEDURES

- All tests will be administered under the Praxis Series. All registration information for the PPST, the Core Battery (Professional Knowledge only) and the NTE Specialty Area or Praxis II Subject Assessment tests will be found in the PRAXIS 1994-95 Registration Bulletin published by Educational Testing Service. These Bulletins will be available in and after August, 1994 from the school district offices, from the Colleges of Education at the University of Nevada, Reno and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas and from the Licensure Office of the Nevada Department of Education. The Tests at a Glance booklets which describe the content of each test are also available at the same locations.
- Please note that information regarding other types of tests, not required in Nevada, are also included in this Bulletin. To check on the specific tests required by Nevada, see The Praxis Series Users Chart.
- The dates of test administrations and closing registration dates are listed on the back cover of the Bulletin. Please note that on some dates more than one type of test may be taken. The test names that apply in Nevada are:  
  
Core Battery (Professional Knowledge)  
PPST  
Specialty Area/Subject Assessments.
- Detailed information about the testing procedure and a registration form and envelope are also provided in the Bulletin. Registration is through the Princeton Office of Educational Testing Service no matter where you plan to take the test(s).
- When filling out the registration form for a particular test date, you must indicate your choice(s) of test center(s). See the Test Center List in the Registration Bulletin.
- When indicating which tests you are applying to take, it is suggested that you match the test codes provided at the end of this document with those on the 1994-95 test list in the Registration Bulletin.
- If you need more information about the tests or the testing process, please read the PRAXIS Registration Bulletin. If you need further clarification regarding your testing requirements for a Nevada license, contact the Licensing Office in Las Vegas (702-486-6546 or 702-486-6548 from 1:00 to 5:00) or in Carson City (702-687-3115 from 1:00 to 5:00).
- Please be aware that you are ultimately responsible for determining which tests you must take and for registering for these tests at the appropriate times. Please take into account the time required for ETS to score the tests and distribute the test score reports. See Scores and Score Reports in the Registration Bulletin.
- There will be no extension of time granted to meet the competency testing requirements. In the event that test score reports are not received by the Office of Teacher Licensing within two years of the date your license is issued or the date you begin employment, whichever is later, your license will become invalid.

## REGISTRATION EXCEPTIONS

There is one exception to test registration through the Princeton office of Educational Testing Service.

As an alternative to the scheduled Pre-Professional Skills Tests (PPST), the basic skills requirement can be met by taking the Computer-Based Academic Skills Assessments. These tests are offered by appointment through a national network of Sylvan Technology Centers. In Nevada, the Sylvan Centers are located in Las Vegas (702-876-4090) and in Reno (702-829-2700). For more detailed information regarding this option see Praxis I Academic Skills Assessments; Computer-Based Academic Skills Assessments, in the Registration Bulletin.

## COMPETENCY TESTS CURRENTLY REQUIRED FOR INITIAL LICENSING IN NEVADA

### The Pre-Professional Skills Tests

<u>Tests and Codes</u>	<u>Passing Score</u>	<u>Computer-Based Passing Score</u>
PPST Reading (10710)	172	319
PPST Mathematics (10730)	170	315
PPST Writing (20720)	172	318

### NTE Core Battery

<u>Test and Code</u>	<u>Passing Score</u>
Professional Knowledge (30520)	651



## NTE Specialty Area Tests/PRAXIS II Subject Assessment Tests

<u>License/Endorsement Area</u>	<u>NTE Tests and Codes</u>	<u>PassingScore*</u>
Administrative	Educational Leadership: Administration and Supervision (10410)	570
Biological Science	Biology and General Science 910030)	580
Business	Business Education (10100)	560
Counselor	School Guidance and Counseling (20420)	570
Elementary (K-8)	Elementary Education: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment (10011)	158
	Elementary Education: Content Area Exercises (20012)	135
English	English Language, Literature and Composition: Content Area Performance Assessment (Essays) (20042)	155
	English Language, Literature and Composition; Pedagogy (30043)	155
French	French (10170)	540
Generalist, Resource Room	Special Education (10350)	540
General Science	General Science (10430)	530
Health	Health Education (10550)	570
History	World/U.S. History (10940)	470
Home Economics	Home Economics Education (10120)	580

\*Please note that scaled scores are derived independently for each test and cannot be compared across tests.

Mathematics without Calculus	Mathematics; Content Knowledge (10061)	133
	Mathematics; Pedagogy (20065)	135
Mathematics with Calculus	Mathematics; Content Knowledge (10061)	144
	Mathematics; Pedagogy (20065)	135
	Mathematics; Proofs, Models, and Problems Level 1 (20063)	152
Physical Education	Physical Education: Content Knowledge (10091)	no-fault*
	Physical Education Movement Forms-Analysis and Design (30092)	no-fault
Psychology	Psychology (10390)	550
Reading	Introduction to the Teaching of Reading (10200)	560
Social Studies	Social Studies: Content Knowledge (10081)	152
	Social Studies: Analytical Essays (20082)	150
Spanish	Spanish: Content Knowledge (10191)	160
	Spanish: Productive Language Skills (20192)	156
Speech and Language Handicapped	Speech-Language Pathology (10330)	590
Speech-Drama	Speech Communication (10220)	580

\* Passing scores for the Physical Education tests will go into effect as of the fall 1995 administration. However, persons applying on or after September 1, 1994 for a license with a physical education endorsement must take the tests listed above.



**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**  
*Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)*  
*Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)*



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