



Stakeholder Impact Analysis for Bill A1669 Sa (1R)

An act concerning teacher certification, supplementing chapter 26 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes, and repealing P.L.2023, c.180.

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Submitted on 26 June 2025

Submitted to
West Orange Public Schools
Hayden Moore, Superintendent
Brian Rock, President of School Board

Bill Reference Number: A5419S3884

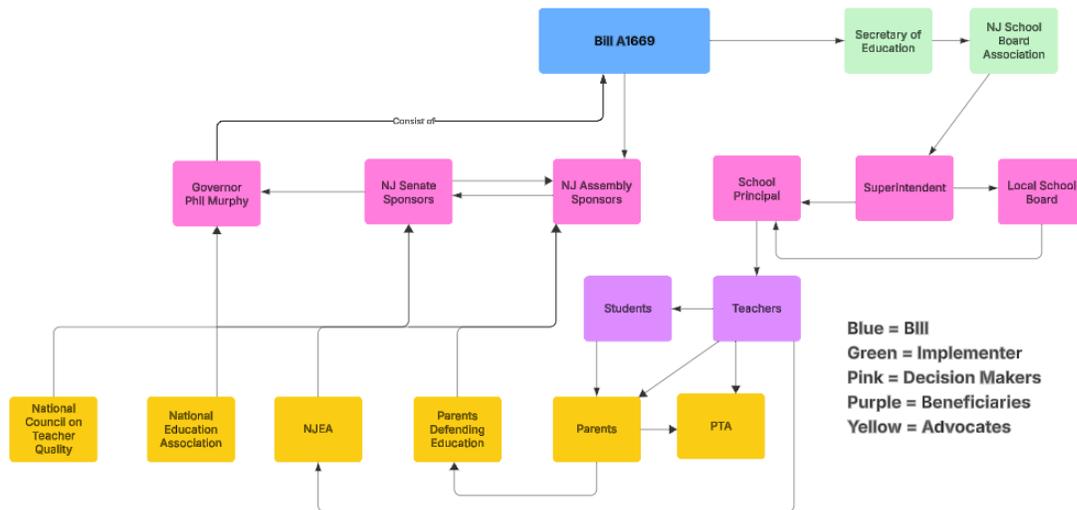
[Copy of Full Bill](#)

Overview of Bill

The bill repeals P.L. 2023, c. 180 and was introduced in response to the growing teacher shortage in New Jersey public schools and gets rid of the longstanding requirement that those seeking teacher certification in New Jersey must pass a basic skills test in reading, writing, and mathematics; this test is collectively known as the PRAXIS. It will affect those seeking a certificate of eligibility, a certificate of eligibility with advanced standing, a provisional certificate, or a standard instructional certificate.

The sponsors of the bill believe that this will remove costly and time-consuming barriers for those looking to become teachers. They also feel it helps make the teaching profession more accessible to those who have demonstrated the academic and preparation requirements (such as a degree, classroom observations, pedagogical courses, and student teaching) but who struggle with standardized tests.

Education Policy Ecosystem Flowchart



Stakeholder Identification & Categorization

STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS - RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Bill A1669: This bill removes the requirement for candidates seeking teacher certification to pass a basic skills test (like the Praxis).

| Stakeholder Name | Contact Person | Type of Influence | Impact Level | Stance (Likelihood to Oppose) | Risk Assessment (how likely to block based on impact) |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Governor | Phil Murphy | Decision Maker | 5 | 2 | 10 |
| Secretary Of Education | Brian Bridges | Implementer | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Bill Sponsors | Vin Gopal | Decision Maker | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| New Jersey School Board Association | Tammeisha Smith | Implementer | 4 | 1 | 4 |
| National Education Association | Rebecca Pringle | Advocate | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| NJEA Teachers Union | Sean M Spiller | Advocate | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Parents Defending Education | Oscar Guerrero | Advocate | 2 | 4 | 8 |
| National Council on Teacher Quality | Heather Peske | Advocate | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| Teachers | Marc Mansictoo | Beneficiaries | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Parents | Tezeta "Tez" Roro | Advocate | 1 | 5 | 5 |

Summary of State-Level Stakeholders

- **Governor Phil Murphy:** signed A.1669 into law. This move does demonstrate his promise to help expand the teacher pipeline and reduce credentialing barriers that keep many qualified candidates from being licensed teachers.
- **Department of Education:** the Department's focus, especially following the COVID-19 pandemic, has been one of trying to remedy teacher shortages and promote more equity in who is serving as teachers in the state. The DOE also acknowledges that standardized testing has been known to promote inequity and removing this barrier can help resolve that.
- **New Jersey School Board Association:** in favor of the bill after its passage in the Assembly and said they supported removing basic skills test requirements.
- **New Jersey Education Association:** President Sean Spiller was in favor of removing basic skills testing, noting that it would help with the recruitment of teachers from more diverse backgrounds, acknowledging that such tests have disproportionately affected candidates of color and those from low-income backgrounds.

- ***NJ Senate and Assembly Sponsors:*** states that it would get rid of “redundant, expensive, and over-burdensome” testing and said it would help expand the number of available teachers to help with staffing and student achievement
- ***National Education Association:*** said that basic skills tests were “an unnecessary barrier” for candidates who had already shown they were qualified.
- ***Parents Defending Education:*** opposes the bill and said that the NEA was only interested in it because it would increase the number of dues-paying members. Also said removing basic skills testing could result in poorer student performance outcomes. Erika Sanzi, former director and teacher, noted that the historically high fail rate on the PRAXIS was a warning sign that many teachers would likely not possess the basic skills needed to be effective educators.
- ***National Council on Teacher Quality:*** President Heather Peske said that "lowering the bar for becoming a teacher is detrimental to the profession and students."

Summary of Local Stakeholder Concerns and Comments

From sources gathered online, below are some of the concerns and comments being raise by community stakeholders.

Teachers

- “Beyond a college degree a basic skills test is an immense waste of time and resources.”
- “This test is just a profit center for Pearson and a way to give the appearance of rigor.”
- “This will probably help with the teacher shortage by lowering the barriers to becoming a teacher.”
- “When I started teaching, these tests were not required... The other tests teachers have to take do enough to prove a future teacher’s mastery and ability to teach.”
- “The teacher shortage is... about pay and responsibility... Making it easier to get in will not solve the shortage.”

Parents

- “No one gave us a piece of paper and said this is going to happen... we parents were just completely excluded from the process.”
- So teachers don’t need to know how to read in New Jersey? Seems like that would make it challenging to teach kids how to read.”
- “It is a major red flag that so many aspiring teachers fail that test ... eliminating the test...does not bode well for students
“The test...has long served as a basic screening mechanism to ensure that these aspiring teachers have basic literacy skills and basic numeracy skills.”

Implications for West Orange Public Schools

Alignment with Education Philosophy

In recent years, West Orange has shifted away from midterms, finals, and standardized proficiency tests and has instead adopted a Project Based Assessment (PBA) model. This approach was adopted to help address inequity among student graduation and high school proficiency rates. A1669 complements this approach by removing the same barrier on the teacher side.

This bill, much like the philosophy of West Orange Public Schools, places significance on holistic evaluation over a single standardized test of knowledge to gauge proficiency and readiness.

Teacher Recruitment that Reflects Student Population

Standardized testing has long shown in numerous research studies racial and cultural bias. This is one reason West Orange moved away from such assessments.

The large majority of teachers in West Orange Schools are white, although a report from 2022 did show a 5.4% increase in Hispanic/Latino hires and a 1.4% increase in Black hires.

This still does not reflect the student population, which is:

- 40.6% Black
- 28% Hispanic
- 22.3% White
- 6.7% Asian
- 2.3% Multiethnic

The district does attract “well-credentialed” teachers, but testing barriers when it comes to PRAXIS assessments is leading to the exclusion of more diverse and equally qualified teacher candidates.

According to an ETS report cited by Diverse Education:

African American test takers for the PRAXIS failed at rates 41.4% higher than White counterparts and Hispanic test takers failed at rates 21% higher. Asian test takers also showed failure rates 7% higher than White test takers.

This is a significant pool of potential educators who have been blocked from teaching because they have not been able to pass a historically racial and culturally biased standardized basic skills test. Removing this basic skills barrier will allow more teachers to be certified and West Orange High School to build a teaching staff that better reflects the population of the student body.

Suggested Next Steps

Parents are the most concerned about the removal of basic skills testing. To help alleviate and address these concerns in a proactive manner, the following is suggested for the Board to consider:

1. Organize a **round table** with district teachers, parents, and students where they can openly share their concerns and suggestions and where parents can be given information about hiring practices, teacher credentials, and instructional design strategies
2. Put out a **joint statement** from the Superintendent and School Board that reminds all concerned stakeholders that teachers must still complete education preparation programs and hold a qualifying degree, that licensure in New Jersey still requires passing subject specific tests (PRAXIS II), and that you will continue to provide robust evaluation and mentoring systems for new teachers to ensure that students continue to perform at or above state standards.
3. Consider creating a **district-level basic skills rubric** for teacher candidates that interviewers can fill out and submit to the Superintendent and Board for consideration. Rather than a traditional written test, it could include evaluation of sample lesson plans, mathematical demonstrations in mock lessons, and interview questions that assess core skills and competencies.

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