

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SYNOPSIS AGENDA/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

CODE:	<u>EP02</u>
COMMITTEE:	<u>EP</u>
DATE:	<u>May 5, 2026</u>

SUBJECT/TITLE

South Carolina Certification Assessment Program: 2026-27 Changes

PURPOSE OF REPORT/REGULATION/ITEM

As established in S.C. Code Ann. § 59-26-30, the State Board of Education (SBE) is responsible for the adoption of certification assessments and related passing scores.

CRITICAL FACTS

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-26-30 authorizes the SBE to adopt educator certification assessments and set passing scores for each assessment. In November 1997, the SBE approved the Praxis series of assessments developed and administered by Educational Testing Service (ETS) for use in South Carolina. In 2017 and 2024, the SBE approved additional assessments developed and administered by Pearson Evaluation Systems for use in South Carolina. Through the Office of Educator Services, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) monitors the implementation of the state's certification assessment program, including test taker performance, and recommends test adoptions, qualifying scores, and other changes on an annual basis.

Additionally, the Read to Succeed Act, as amended by Act 114 of 2024, shifts the focus of literacy instruction in the state to scientific principles of reading instruction and foundational literacy skills. Effective September 1, 2026, the amended legislation requires candidates in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education fields to earn a passing score on a rigorous test of reading instruction for initial certification.

Beginning with the 2026-27 testing year, the SCDE recommends the following updates to the South Carolina Certification Assessment Program. These changes are listed below and detailed in the attached summary chart.

Literacy Assessment Adoptions for Initial Certification

For initial certification in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education fields, the SCDE recommends adoption of two options to meet the testing requirement in the amended Read to Succeed Act.

Option 1 for Initial Certification

Praxis 5205 Teaching Reading Elementary

Passing Score: 159

The recommended passing score is the value identified by a multistate standard-setting study and is consistent with adoptions in other states.

Option 2 for Initial Certification

Pearson 890 Foundations of Reading

Passing Score: 233

The recommended passing score of 233 for initial certification is also the required score in other NASDTEC Southern Region states using the exam: Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and North Carolina.

Literacy Assessment Adoptions for Read to Succeed Literacy Teacher Endorsement

The amended Read to Succeed Act requires that the reading tests used for initial certification must also be available as an option for in-service teachers to earn a required literacy endorsement. The act further authorizes the SBE to establish related passing scores. In October 2024, the SBE approved adoption of Praxis 5205 and Pearson 890 as options for an in-service teacher to earn the Read to Succeed Literacy Teacher endorsement. Other options for earning the endorsement include successful completion of LETRS professional development or approved coursework.

With the implementation of the required reading test for initial certification, the SCDE recommends the following updates to the South Carolina Certification Assessment Program for the literacy endorsement.

Option 1 for the Read to Succeed Literacy Teacher Endorsement

Praxis 5205 Teaching Reading Elementary

Adjusted Passing Score: 165

Note: The current cut score of 159 for endorsement is the recommended value of the multistate standard-setting study for initial certification and is aligned with the requirements for initial certification in other states. As a result, the SCDE recommends adjusting the passing score for earning the literacy endorsement to 165, one standard error of measure above. This adjusted score reflects a greater depth of knowledge expected of in-service teachers.

Option 2 for the Read to Succeed Literacy Teacher Endorsement

Pearson 890 Foundations of Reading

Passing Score: 240

The passing score of 240 for endorsement purposes was adopted by the SBE in October 2024. The SCDE recommends retaining this score for the endorsement.

Elementary Education Adoptions for Initial Certification

Currently, candidates seeking certification in Elementary Education Grades 2–6 must earn a passing score on subject area subtests in reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science. The State Board of Education has adopted the Praxis 5000 series, Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects, and the Praxis 7811 series, Elementary Education:

Content Knowledge for Teaching (CKT), as options for candidates seeking certification in Elementary Education. ETS is engaged in an ongoing test-regeneration process designed to review Praxis examinations on a consistent basis to keep content current, relevant, and aligned with updated subject area and preparation standards as well as expectations for beginning teachers. In March 2026, ETS launched the new Praxis 8000 series, Elementary Education Fundamentals. These new subtests in the Praxis 8000 series will replace subtests in the Praxis 5000 and 7811 series, both of which are slated to be discontinued by ETS no later than 2028.

Note: Beginning September 1, 2026, candidates must earn a passing score on a test of reading instruction for initial certification in Elementary Education. With the implementation of the reading assessment, previously required subtests in reading and language arts will be eliminated as a requirement.

The SCDE recommends the following changes to subject area assessments in Elementary Education to align with the statutory requirement of a reading assessment for initial certification and with changes in the Praxis exams for Elementary Education.

*Adopt the Praxis 8000 Series Elementary Education Fundamentals
Effective September 1, 2026*

- Praxis 8003 Elementary Education Fundamentals: Mathematics
Passing Score: 152
- Praxis 8004 Elementary Education Fundamentals: Social Studies
Passing Score: 147
- Praxis 8005 Elementary Education Fundamentals: Science
Passing Score: 143

Note: These subtests will be an option for candidates to meet the testing requirements in mathematics, social studies, and science during the 2026-27 testing year.

*Discontinue the Praxis 5000 Series Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects
Effective August 31, 2026*

- Eliminate Praxis 5002 Elementary Education: Reading and Language Arts

*Discontinue the Praxis 5000 Series Elementary Education: Multiple Subjects
Effective August 31, 2027*

- Praxis 5003 Elementary Education: Mathematics
- Praxis 5004 Elementary Education: Social Studies
- Praxis 5005 Elementary Education: Science

Note: These subtests will remain an option for candidates to meet the testing requirements in mathematics, social studies, and science during the 2026-27 testing year.

*Discontinue the Praxis 7811 Series Elementary Education: Content Knowledge for Teaching (CKT)
Effective August 31, 2026*

- Praxis 7812 Elementary Education: Reading and Language Arts CKT

- Praxis 7813 Elementary Education: Mathematics CKT
- Praxis 7814 Elementary Education: Science CKT
- Praxis 7815 Elementary Education: Social Studies CKT

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

2024-25 and 2025-26	The SCDE monitored implementation of the adopted reading assessments for in-service teachers seeking to earn a literacy endorsement through this option.
2025-26	The SCDE reviewed available performance data on Praxis 5205 and Pearson 890 as well as use of these assessments in other states for initial certification.
Spring 2026	The SCDE reviewed pending changes to ETS assessments in Elementary Education to finalize recommendations for 2026-27.
May 5, 2026	The Office of Educator Services presents recommendations and annual updates to the South Carolina Certification Assessment Program for SBE approval.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

COST: N/A
FUND/SOURCE: N/A

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments: ☒ yes ☐ no
(attachments must be submitted with synopsis)

Name of Attachments:

1. Summary Chart Certification Assessment Program Changes for 2026-27
2. Assessment Requirements in Designated Fields

RECOMMENDATION

The SCDE recommends SBE approval of the changes to the South Carolina Certification Assessment Program for 2025-26.

ACTION REQUEST

FOR APPROVAL: ☒ FOR INFORMATION ONLY: ☐