



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on January 1, 2025

Dumb and Dumber: NJ Teachers No Longer Need to Pass Basic Reading, Writing, and Math

It holds the distinction of being our most densely populated state. Now people may wonder, though, is New Jersey also our most dense state? The question is relevant with news that the Garden State has tacitly confessed that it's no fertile garden of intellectualism. The issue? NJ is having trouble finding enough (qualified) teachers.

The "solution"?

Dumb down standards. To be precise, cease requiring teachers to pass basic reading, writing, and math for certification.

In fact, the legislation effecting this change, Act 1669, actually prohibits "education officials from requiring teaching candidates to complete basic skills tests," the *New Jersey Monitor* [told us](#) in May. The law was signed by Governor Phil Murphy in June and takes effect today, January 1.

New Year's Resolution: Stay Stupid, My friend?

The Daily Caller [reported](#) on the story Monday:

"We need more teachers," Democratic Sen. Jim Beach, who sponsored the bill, said according to the *New Jersey Monitor*. "This is the best way to get them."

New Jersey is especially in need of math and science teachers, according to an annual report from the state's education department.

Just months earlier, Murphy signed a similar bill into law that created an alternative pathway for teachers to sidestep the testing requirement. A powerful teachers union, the New Jersey Education Association, was a driving force behind the bill, calling the testing requirement "an unnecessary barrier to entering the profession." Teachers in the state are paid an average of \$81,102 annually.

Some may say this is not surprising coming from a state whose governor [confessed on TV](#) that the Bill of Rights — which he took an oath to uphold — is, as Murphy had put it, "above my pay grade." In fairness, though, New Jersey does have robust competition for the Densest State title. As the Caller also informs:

New Jersey followed the example of New York, which scrapped basic literacy requirements for teachers in 2017 in the name of "diversity."



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Other states such as California and Arizona also lower requirements for teacher certification by implementing fast-track options for substitute teachers to become full-time educators and eliminating exam requirements in order to make up for shortages in the field that were worsened by Covid.

And what's next? Affirmative-action pilots and air-traffic controllers?

([Oh, yeah](#), we already [have those!](#))

No Better Options?

Of course, teacher shortages caused by Covid *policy* (not by "Covid") may again illustrate a need for [Nuremberg 2.0](#). To the point here, however, aren't there options other than degrading standards? How about encouraging lacking teacher candidates to take courses in basic reading, writing, and math? Is developing *basic* competency really an insurmountable task?

Moreover, with today's access to the internet, what does it say about these candidates' mentality that they haven't developed *basic* competency? Apparently, the virtue of Diligence eludes them.

Then there's the following observation, in response to the Caller article, by an MSN [commenter](#) named Hiram Smith:

And yet, there would be lots of folks out there with no university education at all who could pass the teaching exam, but because of no degree [are] ineligible to teach.

This gets at an important matter. Many rightly complain today about how Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) schemes subordinate merit to frivolous or even destructive priorities. But less bemoaned is something else that has to a degree the same effect: credentialism.

This brings to mind a story about a man I know, who has no college degree but I believe a genius-level IQ. He related that while seeking a certain job, he and other applicants were not sorted based on credentials. Instead, they were all given a test that measured their competence *vis-à-vis* the skills actually necessary to perform the job. (A real shocker, huh? He qualified, by the way.) The fellow said of his experience that this is how employees *should* be chosen.

Getting It Backwards

With New Jersey teachers now, though, and in so many other endeavors and places, the opposite philosophy is applied. It's credentials over competence. Oh, don't misunderstand me, possession of a college degree does demonstrate *some* level of discipline and perseverance. But subordinating actual skills to sheepskin is style over substance.

The fact that *degreed* teacher candidates can't pass a *basic skills test* proves the point. Their "education" was a charade, delivered by a system characterized by sins of omission and malpractice.

The deeper issue, however, is that this just reflects our overall cultural decline. There was a time when having college graduates so lacking in the basics was unthinkable. Basics are called "basics" because, in fact, they're supposed to be taught in primary (and maybe secondary) school. Why, "primary" is a [synonym](#) for "basic."

So it's no wonder that, as a study I read about 20 to 25 years ago informed, a college degree even two decades ago was merely the equivalent of a 1947 high-school diploma. This is no surprise, for multiple



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reasons. For one, college has become big business, and you don't make money by turning customers away. Consequently, academia has a vested interest in lowering standards and enabling virtually everyone to attend and graduate from college.

A Racket

Thus are we creating college graduates [at a faster rate](#) than we're creating jobs requiring a college degree. (Based on [2013 data](#), though this likely hasn't changed.) Consider this, the already outlined academic malpractice, and [plagiarism and fraud scandals](#) at much-vaunted Harvard University. Consider, too, that Americans spend hundreds of billions of dollars yearly on "higher" education. Are we getting our money's worth?

Sure, teachers unions love the current system. So do the cultural devolutionaries, knowing that academia indoctrinates young people with their entropic pseudo-ideology. (This is why a certain major party is hell-bent on ensuring that "every child gets a college education." Most of the college-(mis)educated vote for its candidates.) But how is it working for the rest of us?

Obviously, people are no better off employment-wise when everyone has a college degree than when everyone has a high-school diploma because, in both cases, each person is educationally the same *relative to the competition*. Actual skills and ability are all that matter. Yet, now, a college degree is no longer even an indicator of basic-skills attainment.

It's long past time to defund higher ed.



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