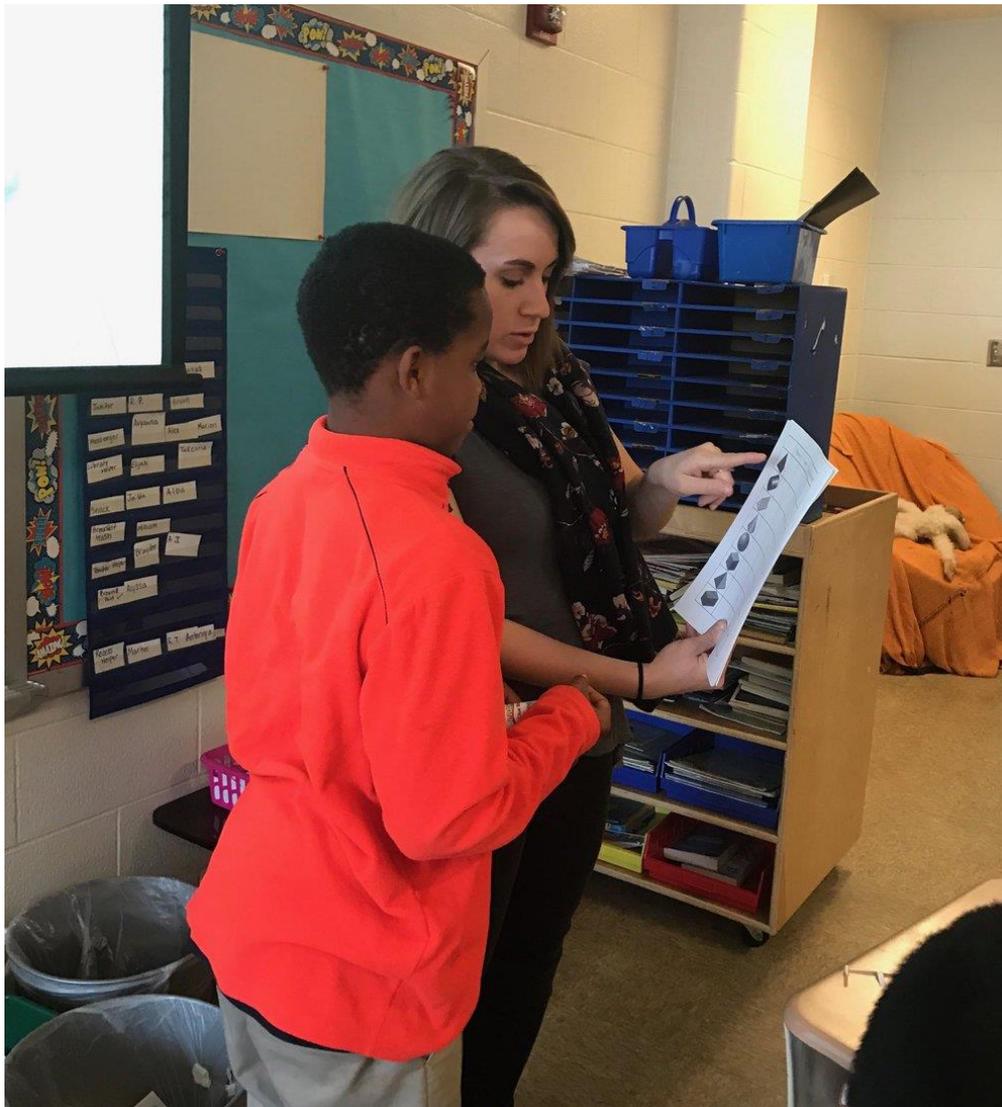


Aspiring Indiana Teachers Cannot Pass Licensure Exams

By Shawnta S. Barnes - March 17, 2017



Last month, WTHR Channel 13 in their report, “Crisis in the classroom: New Indiana teachers repeatedly failing state exams” highlighted that aspiring teachers

are failing the CORE teacher assessments administered by Pearson Education, not once but multiple times and the pass rate for some subject areas is extremely low. According to their report,

During the 2015-2016 academic year, only 36% of prospective English teachers passed the CORE middle school English language arts exam.

A dismal 32% of would-be Indiana math teachers passed the CORE middle school math test.

And only 18% of aspiring science teachers passed the CORE middle school science exam.

Other CORE exams – including history, social studies, reading, economics and geography – all show first-time pass rates of less than 50%, according to state testing data obtained by WTHR.

Action must be taken because the implications of this data ultimately affects the education of students in Indiana.

Parents

It can be concerning to parents to discover their child might have a teacher with an emergency teaching permit because the teacher could not pass his or her licensure exams. Even though the teacher might be a great educator, the fact that the teacher has not passed the exam makes parents question if the teacher is truly competent in the content.

Aspiring Educators

Hearing the low passing rate may deter aspiring educators from completing their education courses. Aspiring teachers have invested at least four years of their life to pursue a degree in education and the dream of becoming a teacher could be dashed because of failure to pass the licensure exams. If these teachers have borrowed money to earn their degree, some may choose to switch their major because not obtaining a license ultimately means you will not be able secure a teaching job to pay back loans.

Professors

As an adjunct instructor for IUPUI School of Education, it is heartbreaking to hear when my students, who are mostly juniors and seniors, share how many times they have failed to pass the licensure exam. Although my time with my undergraduate students is limited, I believe many of them have the potential to become great educators and it is disappointing that some of them quit or are considering quitting before they could even get started.

Students

Many districts across the state have classes that are being taught by substitutes because of the teacher shortage. Aspiring teachers not passing licensure exams adds to the teacher shortage problem. This means more children in Indiana will not have an educator teaching them the skills they need to become productive citizens.

Pearson Education

Every time an aspiring teacher fails an exam and has to retake it, there is more money going into Pearson Education's pocket. Every time an aspiring teacher pays for a practice exam to prepare for the real exam, more money goes into Pearson's pocket. It is concerning that Pearson Education states educators gave them feedback on the exams, but they could not recall the feedback educators shared about the exams.

As shared in WTHR's report, "The superintendent's office tells 13 Investigates the state board's Technical Advisory Committee is once again reviewing the Pearson CORE assessments, and will hopefully provide recommendations to the full board in March." I'm interested in what these recommendations will be because our students cannot afford to have the number of teachers in the pipeline decrease even more because they cannot pass teacher licensure exams. Just as students are more than a test score, so are teachers.