



RHODE ISLAND

CERTIFICATION

According to its Title II report, Rhode Island offers Type A, Type B, and Type C certification. Provisional certificates are the entry-level certificates, and they are valid for three years.

Elementary Certification

In order to teach elementary students in grades 1–8, candidates must have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited or approved institution and have completed an approved program designed to prepare elementary teachers. Those who have not completed an approved program must present evidence of 6 hours of elementary student teaching and not less than 24 hours of course work (including social studies). No other course work specifications have been located.

Middle-Level Certification

Middle school endorsements are valid for grades 5–8 in middle schools and for grades 7–8 in junior high schools. Members of integrated instruction teams must be certified in the area to which they are assigned. Special subject teachers are permitted to teach in their specific area without a middle school endorsement. To qualify for a middle school endorsement a candidate must have a valid Rhode Island certificate in elementary, secondary, special subjects, elementary/middle special education, or middle/secondary special education. In addition to professional education courses pertaining to middle school education, candidates must have a college major, minor, or 21 semester hours in one of the following academic areas: mathematics, English, science, social studies, or foreign language. Content distribution within the 21 hours must include course work in U.S. history, Western history, non-Western history, and course work in at least three of the following areas: anthropology, economics, geography, political science, and sociology.

Secondary Certification

To be certified at the secondary level (grades 7–12) in Rhode Island, a candidate must have a bachelor’s degree from an accredited or approved institution and must have completed an approved program for the education of secondary teachers. If the approved program has not been completed, the candidate must present evidence of 6 hours of student teaching at the secondary level and not less than 18 hours of course work in each of the following areas: adolescent psychology, secondary methods, measurements and evaluation, identification of and service to special needs students, teaching of reading in the content area, and foundations of education. To be certified in history a candidate must have 30 hours of course work in history. These 30 hours may include up to 6 hours of social studies course work. To be certified in social studies requires 36 hours. Twenty-four hours in history are required (as for a history certificate). The social studies certificate is valid for teaching history, and candidates will be endorsed to teach in any academic area in which they have completed 6 hours. Areas include anthropology, economics, geography, political science, and sociology. Within the 30 credits for history, candidates must have course work in the history of Western civilization, United States history, European history, and non-Western history. The same course requirements for history apply for the social studies certificate.

STANDARDS

Standards for Teachers

The state has adopted the Rhode Island Beginning Teacher Standards. These standards are teaching standards, not content standards. They are modeled after the INTASC standards. Higher education institutions in the state are required to adopt national content standards to ensure that their teachers have content knowledge. If more than one set of national content standards are available, the institution must provide a rationale for the selection they made. The state does not appear to have written separate history/social studies standards for its teachers.

Standards for Students

The state of Rhode Island has a tradition of allowing local districts to have wide latitude in matters of curriculum. Therefore, for the Rhode Island Social Studies Standards, the state referred teachers to many sources concerning standards. These sources include

- ❖ all the national social studies content standards including those set forth by NCSS and those in history, geography, civics/government, economics, and psychology;
- ❖ two sets of social studies standards including the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and Southern Rhode Island Regional Collaborative (SORICO), developed in Rhode Island; and
- ❖ the national Board of Professional Teaching Standards in history/social studies.

The state chose to encourage teachers to use national standards rather than to develop standards within the state in order to enable local districts to choose the basis for their curriculum.

The state offers a Standards-Based Guide for Social Studies Programs in Rhode Island. The guide consists of three parts. Part I contains introductory remarks pertaining to social studies education, the aforementioned national standards in each of the social studies content areas, and sections on assessment, evaluation, and inclusion. An expanding environments model is suggested for scope and sequence in social studies. Part II contains sample units and lessons while Part III consists of a resource guide for teachers.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION/EXIT EXAM

The state provides guidelines for graduation, but local education agencies set the requirements. The guidelines have not yet been located.

Exit Exam

There is no exit exam.

ASSESSMENT

Students in Rhode Island take assessment tests that are linked closely with the established frameworks. Assessments take place at designated grade levels in English language arts, mathematics, and health. Rhode Island uses New Standards exams, but assessment does not occur in history/social studies.

