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Information

Professional Services Committee

Update on Teacher Examination Study

Executive Summary: At the June 5, 2003 meeting of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, staff was directed to research issues related to how the Commission's current test specifications and structures that measure basic skills, content knowledge, and pedagogy might be streamlined. Staff returned to the Commission with four broad policy issues for consideration at the June 2004 meeting and was directed to develop an implementation plan detailing a public discussion process that would provide the opportunity for education stakeholders to provide feedback on these policy issues.

Recommended Action: None.

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Update on Teacher Examination Study

Introduction

At the June 5, 2003 meeting of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing, the Commission directed staff to research examination issues related to how the current California test specifications and test structures that measure basic skills, content knowledge, and pedagogy might be streamlined. Staff returned to the Commission with four broad policy issues for consideration at the June, 2004 meeting. The four exam issues presented for discussion at the meeting were:

- Basic skill exam requirements for teacher candidates,
- Overlapping content across current teacher licensure exams,
- Technology and the implementation of on-line, test center exams, and
- SB 2042 teaching performance assessment.

The Commission directed staff to develop an implementation plan detailing a public discussion process that would provide the opportunity for education stakeholders to discuss the four policy issues listed above.

Background

California law requires that candidates preparing for a preliminary California teaching credential meet certain minimal requirements prior to attaining a credential. Over time, specific examinations have been added to these requirements for the purpose of ensuring accountability for basic skill competence, subject matter knowledge, and pedagogy.

Education Code Section 44259(b)(5) requires the Commission to ensure that teacher preparation and examinations are fully aligned to the K-12 academic content standards for students. The Commission has been actively engaged in aligning program standards and subject matter examinations with the K-12 academic content standards since the passage of this requirement in 1998 (SB 2042). The Commission has also been engaged in the development and implementation of the California Teaching Performance Assessment (CA TPA), which enables programs to meet the requirement of Standard 19 and assess candidates on the teaching performance expectations (TPEs). However, in a letter sent in early 2003 from the then-Secretary for Education, Kerry Mazzoni and Senator Dede Alpert, the authors of Senate Bill 2042, cautioned the Commission about the magnitude of the state budget crisis. The Commission was asked to work with representatives of the higher education institutions to determine whether the model teaching performance assessment could be redesigned to lower costs. Accordingly, this requirement is suspended until further Commission discussion and action.

Proposed Implementation Plan for Public Discussion of Exam Issues

Commission staff proposes that at least four public meetings be held with educational stakeholders to discuss the four policy issues listed in the introduction of this item. Commission staff would invite stakeholders, develop an agenda, and facilitate the meetings. Each meeting will address one of the following policy questions.

- What is the appropriate way to assess basic skill competency?
- Is there overlapping content across the current teacher licensure exams?
- What are the implications of appropriate and secure on-line, test center exams?
- How should the SB 2042 teaching performance assessment requirement be maintained and implemented?

Staff proposes that meetings be held at the Commission in September, November, December, and January. Staff will synthesize the meeting discussions and provide exam update reports at appropriate Commission meetings. Staff proposes to bring an action item based on the public meetings to the Commission for its consideration at its April, 2005 meeting.

Expert Technical Advisory Team

In addition to the public meeting process with educational stakeholders, Commission staff proposes to convene an expert technical advisory team to advise staff and the Commission on the validity, feasibility, and utility of ideas and suggestions that are recommended by stakeholders. The team would be comprised of volunteers, consisting of test contractors currently working with the Commission (National Evaluation Systems and Educational Testing Service), measurement experts representing the UC, CSU, Independent Institutions and other National experts that have experience with large-scale examination programs.

Staff proposes that technical advisory meetings be conducted after each public stakeholder meeting. Staff proposes meetings in October, December, February, and March. Advice from the technical team would be included in monthly Commission reports, shared with stakeholders at the subsequent meetings, and inform the development of the April 2005 Commission item to be presented for action. Specific dates for all meetings would be posted on the Commission's website.

In addition to providing advice on technical issues related to exam development and large-scale implementation, the team would assist Commission staff in providing a cost-benefit analysis of all stakeholder recommendations.

Staff is seeking direction regarding how to proceed.