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Information/Action

Professional Services Committee

Recommended Passing Standards for the Teaching Foundations Examinations (TFE) in Multiple Subjects, English, and Mathematics

Executive Summary: This report describes the standard-setting study process, the results of the studies, and the optional passing standards for the Teaching Foundations Examinations in Multiple Subject, English, and Mathematics, which were first administered on August 7, 2004. It is a follow-up to the December 2004 agenda item.

Recommended Action: Staff is requesting that the Commission determine and adopt the passing standards for the three Teaching Foundations Examinations administered on August 7, 2004 and that the Commission allow future test forms to reflect passing standards that are as equivalent as possible to the August 2004 test forms.

Presenters: Amy Jackson, Administrator, Professional Services Division; Andrew Latham, Educational Testing Service.

Strategic Plan Goal(s):

Goal 1: Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators.

- ◆ Sustain high quality standards for the performance of credential candidates.

Recommended Passing Standards for the Teaching Foundations Examinations (TFE) in Multiple Subjects, English, and Mathematics

History of the Development of an Early Completion Intern Option

During the 2001 session, the legislature considered a series of appropriate ways to address and alleviate the teacher shortage faced by the state of California. Senate Bill 57 (Statutes 2001, Chapter 269) authored by Senator Scott, established the Early Completion Intern Option. This bill provided an accelerated method to obtain a credential and included protections to verify the competencies of a future teacher. The bill was approved by the Governor on September 8, 2001, effective January 1, 2002.

Protections Found in the Early Completion Intern Option

To protect the integrity of the California credentialing structure, safeguards were incorporated in the requirements for the Early Completion Intern Option. Thirteen requirements must be satisfied by a candidate under this option prior to qualifying for a preliminary Multiple Subjects or Single Subject Teaching Credential.

The candidate must meet the following requirements prior to enrollment in the Early Completion Intern Option program:

1. A baccalaureate degree
2. Passage of the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST)
3. *Passage of the Teaching Foundations Examination (TFE)*
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the U.S. Constitution
5. Demonstrate subject-matter competency (Multiple Subject: California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET). Single Subject: complete approved subject matter program or CSET)
6. *Offer of employment in an intern position*
7. Verification of professional fitness
8. *Enrollment in a District Intern Program or a college or university internship program*

In addition to 1-8 above, the following requirements must be met by a candidate in order to obtain a preliminary Multiple Subjects or Single Subject Teaching Credential:

9. *Passage of the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) on the first attempt*
10. *Passage of the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) (for Multiple Subject Credential candidates only)*
11. *Demonstrate knowledge of foundational computer technology*
12. *Any other instruction not covered by the TFE that the recommending institution deems necessary for the preparation of the candidate*
13. *Formal recommendation for a credential by their District Intern Program or a college or university internship program.*

The following further describes six of the above Early Completion Intern Option requirements that contribute to the safeguards found in SB 57.

3. *Passage of the Teaching Foundations Examination (TFE):*

The required passage of the TFE indicates that the Early Completion Option candidate has knowledge of the prescribed areas found in SB 57, which are supported by the *Content Standards for California Public Schools* and the *California Teaching Performance Expectations*. The multiple-choice portion of this paper-and-pencil exam contains 50 questions and comprises one-third of the total available points. It covers SB 57 required knowledge of human development, learning differences and special needs, instructing English learners, assessing student progress, classroom management techniques, and reading instruction. The remaining two-thirds of the available score points are based on a series of constructed-response questions regarding the SB 57 prescribed methods of teaching the subject fields, which ask the candidate to identify and describe appropriate teaching methods and instructional sequences for particular student learning goals at specific grade levels and to explain why the approaches are appropriate. The student learning goals given in these questions directly reflect the *Content Standards for California Public Schools*. Examinees are expected to be familiar with the standards and to demonstrate basic content knowledge in their descriptions of appropriate teaching strategies for helping various student populations achieve the learning goals.

6. *Offer of employment in an intern position:*

An offer of employment is required prior to admission into the intern program. As part of the employment selection, many employers seek individuals with prior quality experience in an instructional or teaching position and relevant college coursework. Then employers place the candidates through an extensive interview process, screening the candidates not only on their educational and practical experience, but also on their educational disposition which shows insight into their motivation, teaching style, and educational values.

8. *Enrollment in a District Intern Program or a college or university internship program:*

Because of the high level of responsibility all interns undertake when they enter the classroom, these programs thoroughly screen all applicants, whether the individual wishes to enter the traditional intern program or the Early Completion Intern Option. In addition to the statutory minimum requirements, many intern programs insist on verification of a significant amount of quality experience in an instructional or teaching position, recommendations from their school site administrators, experience of effective instruction in a linguistically and culturally diverse classroom, and other evidence that the individual has the ability to assume teaching responsibilities at an accelerated pace.

9. *Passage of the Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) on the first attempt:*

To continue in the Early Completion Intern Option program, individuals must pass their intern program's TPA during their initial attempt. If they do not pass it during the initial attempt, they may not continue in the Early Completion Intern Option but may follow the traditional intern route. Whether an intern program uses the Commission's teaching performance assessment, its own Commission-approved assessment, or an interim assessment, it must be a valid and reliable appraisal of the candidates' teaching performance. All of these TPA methods measure the candidate in relationship to California's Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) by assessing the following broad domains needed by entry-level teachers:

1. Making subject matter comprehensible to students,
2. Assessing student learning,
3. Engaging and supporting students in learning,
4. Planning instruction and designing learning experiences for students,
5. Creating and maintaining effective environments for student learning, and
6. Developing as a professional educator.

12. *Any other instruction not covered by the TFE that the recommending institution deems necessary for the preparation of the candidate:*

Under SB 57, an intern program may require the individual to complete additional educational coursework required within their intern program that is not assessed in the Teaching Foundations Examination.

13. *Formal recommendation by their District Intern Program or their college or university internship program:*

SB 57 requires that the individual be recommended by their intern program for the preliminary credential. This was specifically incorporated into the law to ensure that the Intern Program Directors, who have the best knowledge of the individual's performance, deem the individual qualified to perform the duties of an entry-level teacher. The Commission, as well as the prospective employers, expects the programs to use the same stringent standards in assessing these individuals as they do under any other program option.

Standard Setting Methodology for TFE

For all certification examinations offered by the Commission, panels of knowledgeable educators, recommended by relevant agencies, are asked, based on their professional judgment, to recommend passing scores for the Commission’s review. This score setting structure has been determined to be legally defensible by Educational Testing Service (ETS) and follows the national standards adopted by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the American Psychological Association (APA), and the National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME).

For the TFE standard setting panels, Commission staff requested Beginning Teacher Support and Assessment (BTSA) programs, college and university internship programs, and district intern programs to nominate knowledgeable individuals who would be an asset to the panels. CCTC staff also contacted individuals who had served well on related Commission panels including those familiar with standard setting practices. These recommendations were submitted to ETS for their review and approval. In addition to choosing individuals with a strong background in education, ETS also choose recommended educators who were familiar with current teacher education programs because they either were recent graduates, which one was, or assisted new teachers, interns, and/or student teachers. The following table displays their current educational positions, the type of assistance they are giving to new teachers and/or student teachers, and the number, approximately one-third, that are National Board Certified in their corresponding subject areas.

Demographic Information about the Standard Setting Panel Members for the Three Teaching Foundations Examinations

Background	Total	Multiple Subject	English	Mathematics
<i>total panel members</i>	37	14	10	13
public school educators	36	14	10	12
IHE educators	4	2	1	1
currently mentoring new/intern/student teachers	32	12	9	11
currently teaching new/intern/student teachers in a district/county program*	11	8	2	1
currently teaching in the field	24	5	8	11
National Board Certified*	12	3	4	5

* These were not specific questions on the biographical information form. The National Board Certification was either from information that they volunteered on the form or from the directory on the NBCT website. The information about teaching teachers in district or county program was inferred from their response to the employment address (e.g. LAUSD District Intern Program), current teaching assignment (e.g. Literacy K-12), or other information that the member listed on the form.

Appendix A, which was also included in the December 2004 agenda item, gives further background information about the panelists, including the gender and ethnicity composition.

Following the legally defensible guidelines established by ETS and the national associations, the individual panels reviewed the definition of sufficiently knowledgeable entry-level teachers, which is the population that might be expected to pass the TFE. They were then asked to review the content of the TFE test form used on August 7, 2004 to determine, based on their professional knowledge and judgment, the minimum score to be obtained by these teachers in the constructed-response portion of the test. Then they independently determined what percentage of sufficiently knowledgeable entry-level teachers would be able to answer each multiple-choice question correctly. Prior to making each determination, an ETS standard setting specialist led the panel members in discussions and practice evaluations that helped clarify the panel members' responsibilities.

Standard-Setting Panel Recommended Passing Standards

At the December Commission meeting, the following chart was submitted, indicating the number of scorable items for each examination by item type, the possible maximum raw score, the median recommendation from the standard-setting panel, and the panel recommended scaled score based on the August 7, 2004 test form. In December, the Commission staff recommended the same minimum passing scaled score be adopted.

**Panel-Recommended Passing Standards for Each TFE
(Reproduced from the December Agenda Item)**

Teaching Foundations Examination	Item Type	Scorable Items	Maximum Possible Weighted Raw Score Points	Median Panel Recommended Weighted Raw Score	Total Recommended Weighted Raw Score	Panel Recommended Scaled Score*
TFE: Multiple Subjects	MC	50	50	30	93	155
	CR	4	100	63		
TFE: English	MC	50	50	37	113	173
	CR	2	96	76		
TFE: Mathematics	MC	50	50	31	87	153
	CR	2	96	56		

MC = Multiple-Choice, CR = Constructed-Response *reflects technical -1 standard error of measurement adjustments

The panels' recommended scores, with a reporting scale-range from 100 to 200, reflects an adjustment of -1 standard error of measurement. It is possible to retain the legal defensibility of the standard setting process by using the panels' recommended minimum passing scores and adjusting them based on a set standard error of measurement.

Each time a student takes an exam, there is a random chance that the score will be slightly different. In order to assure that the score awarded represents the "true" knowledge of the student, the standard error of measurement can be applied. The

standard error of measurement on a test is a measure of the "spread" of scores that an individual student would receive if the student had been tested repeatedly and had not studied or contemplated the answers between tests. By applying this technical adjustment, a given student score is more representative of "true" knowledge because the error is taken into account.

The following chart gives the range of scores with various estimated standard errors of measurements (eSEM) based on the TFE panels' recommended scores. (Note: The December recommended score had an estimated standard error of measurement of -1.) It also indicates the percentage of examinees that will pass the August 7, 2004 administration using those scores as the minimums for passing.

**Panel Recommended Scaled Scores and the Resulting Passing Rates
for the August 7, 2004 Test Form
Using a Variety of Estimated Standard Errors of Measurement**

Results with a variety of estimated standard errors of measurement (eSEM)	TFE: Multiple Subjects	TFE: English	TFE: Mathematics
Panel recommended scaled score with a -2 eSEM	149	167	146
Passing rate for the August 7, 2004 test form with a -2 eSEM	75%	70%	64%
Panel recommended scaled score with a -1 eSEM	155	173	153
Passing rate for the August 7, 2004 test form with a -1 eSEM	61%	62%	44%
Panel recommended scaled score with a 0 eSEM	161	180	159
Passing rate for the August 7, 2004 test form with a 0 eSEM	44%	46%	36%

Commission staff requests that the Commission determine and adopt passing standards for the three Teaching Foundations Examinations administered on August 7, 2004 and that the Commission allow future test forms to reflect passing standards that are as equivalent as possible to the August 2004 test forms.

If passing scores are adopted, Commission staff will post the minimum passing scores on the websites of both the Commission and ETS. The candidates who completed the TFE, 178 in Multiple Subject, 69 in English, and 50 in Mathematics, will be notified as soon as possible by mail.

APPENDIX A

Composition of the Standard Setting Panels for the Teaching Foundations Examinations in Multiple Subjects, English, and Mathematics

	<i>Multiple Subjects</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Mathematics</i>
Total Number of Participants	14	10	13
Race and Ethnicity			
African American or Black	4	2	0
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0	1
Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander	1	2	0
Mexican or Mexican American	0	0	0
Other Hispanic, Latino, Latin American, or Puerto Rican	2	1	1
White	7	4	11
Other	0	1	0
Gender			
Female	11	8	4
Male	2	2	9
Region			
North	2	0	3
South	12	10	10
School District Type			
Urban	8	5	3
Suburban	4	5	3
Rural	0	0	1
Years of Experience			
0-7	2	2	4
8+	11	8	9
Mentoring Experience to			
Yes	12	9	11
No	2	1	0
Grades Taught			
K-4	9	0	0
5-8	4	4	1
9-12	2	8	9
Higher Education	2	2	2