

---

# 7C

## Action

### *Professional Services Committee*

#### **Draft Report to the Legislature on the Implications of Modifying the California Single Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics**

---

**Executive Summary:** This agenda item presents the draft report to the Legislature regarding the requirement specified in SB 1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006) that the Commission hold a public study session to consider the implications of modifying the CSET: Single Subject (CSET: SS) examinations to assess basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

**Recommended Action:** Staff requests approval of the report for submission to the Legislature.

**Presenter:** Phyllis Jacobson, Ed.D., Administrator,  
Professional Services Division

#### **Strategic Plan Goal: 1**

**Promote educational excellence through the preparation and certification of professional educators.**

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

August 2007



---

---

## **Draft Report to the Legislature on the Implications of Modifying the California Single Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics**

---

---

### **Introduction**

This agenda item presents a draft of the report regarding the implications of modifying the CSET: Single Subject (CSET: SS) examinations to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. The report includes an analysis of these implications, including public comments and other public input received pursuant to the public study session held by the Commission at its June 2007 meeting. As required by SB 1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006), this report is due to the Legislature no later than October 1, 2007.

### **Background**

At the June 27-28, 2007 Commission meeting the Commission held a public study session during which the public was asked to comment on the feasibility and the implications of modifying the CSET: Single Subject examinations to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Senate Bill 1209 required the Commission to hold a public study session to seek input from a wide variety of stakeholders about this topic.

Prior to its June 2007 meeting, the Commission received one written response from stakeholders. The respondent indicated that he did not support the inclusion of the basic skills assessment within the CSET: Single Subject examinations. During the meeting, six individuals came forward to discuss this issue. All strongly did not support including an assessment of basic skills within the CSET: Single Subject examinations. Discussion at the Commission meeting centered around both the implications of combining the two examinations and potential ways of streamlining examinations for single subject preliminary credential candidates.

### **Recommended Action**

Staff requests approval of the enclosed report for submission to the Legislature.



COMMISSION ON  
TEACHER CREDENTIALING

*Ensuring Educator Excellence*

Report on the Implications of Modifying the  
California Single Subject Examinations for  
Teachers (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in  
Reading, Writing, and Mathematics

*A Report to the Legislature as Required by SB  
1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006)*

August 2007

This report was developed by Phyllis Jacobson of the Professional Services Division of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing. For more information about the content of this report, contact [pjacobson@ctc.ca.gov](mailto:pjacobson@ctc.ca.gov).

June 2007

This report, like other publications of the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, is not copyrighted. It may be reproduced in the public interest, but proper attribution is requested.

California Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
1900 Capitol Avenue  
Sacramento, California 95814  
(916) 445-7254  
(888) 921-2682 (toll free)  
(916) 327-3165 (Fax)

This report is available at  
<http://www.ctc.ca.gov>



# Commission on Teacher Credentialing



1900 Capitol Avenue  
Sacramento, CA 95814

(916) 445-0184

Dale Janssen  
Executive Director

Banker, Catherine	Public Representative	2007
Calderon, Josie	Public Representative	2009
Cheung, Caleb	Teacher Representative	2009
Cordeiro, Paula	Public Representative	2008
Gaston, Margaret	Public Representative	2009
Gomez, Guillermo	Teacher Representative	2008
Grant, Gloria	Teacher Representative	2007
Littman, Leslie	Designee, Superintendent of Public Instruction	Ongoing
Molina, Aida	Administrative Services Representative	2007
Pearson, P. David	Faculty Member	2009
Perry, Lillian	Teacher Representative	2009
Schwarze, Leslie P.	School Board Member	2008
Stordahl, Jon	Teacher Representative	2008
Whitson, Loretta	Non-Administrative Services Credential Representative	2008
Vacant	Teacher Representative	

## Ex-Officio Members

McGrath, Marilyn	California Postsecondary Education Commission
Symms Gallagher, Karen	Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities
Sloan, Tine	University of California
Young, Beverly	California State University

# **Implications of Modifying the California Single Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics**

## *A Report to the Legislature*

### **Table of Contents**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	1
<b>I. Study Session Purpose and Rationale</b> .....	4
<b>II. The June 2007 Study Session Agenda Item</b> .....	5
<b>III. The Public Study Session</b> .....	20
<b>IV. Summary of Findings</b> .....	20
 <b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix A: Content Specifications for the CBEST Examination.....	23
Appendix B: The Examinations Development Process Overview.....	26
Appendix C: Minutes of the Public Study Session Required by SB 1209 (Chapter 517, Statutes of 2006) on the Implications of Modifying the CSET: Single Subject Examinations to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing and Mathematics.....	27
Appendix D: Written Comments from the Public.....	36

# **Implications of Modifying the California Single Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics**

## ***A Report to the Legislature***

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A public study session was held by the Commission at its June 2007 meeting to solicit public input regarding the implications and feasibility of modifying the CSET: Single Subject (CSET: SS) examinations to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. The public study session and required report to the Legislature due by October 1, 2007 were initiated by SB 1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006), now found in subsection 44252.6(d) of the California Education Code.

Education Code §44252.6(d) requires the Commission to hold this study session as part of a broader initiative to streamline credential requirements. This law specifically requires that the public be offered an opportunity “to comment on the implications, costs, and validity of modifying these assessments.”

At the study session, Commission staff provided background information about the two examinations under consideration, the CSET: SS and the CBEST, and solicited public input about the implications, costs, and validity of modifying the CSET: Single Subject examinations to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Several options for potentially modifying the CSET: Single Subject examinations to include content and/or test items specifically relating to basic skills assessment within these examinations were presented for discussion.

One written communication was received by the Commission prior to the public study session and six individuals provided in-person comments at the study session. All commenter’s recommended that the CSET: Single Subject examinations not be modified to include an assessment of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. The major reasons stated as to why the public did not support including basic skills (i.e., CBEST) assessment within the CSET: Single Subjects examinations may be summarized as follows:

- The depth and breadth of the subject matter content as well as of the basic skills content assessed by these two examinations would be reduced if the two examinations were to be combined into one examination;
- The ability to accurately and validly measure a candidate’s knowledge, skills and abilities relative to both subject matter and basic skills would be compromised;

- The modification of the CSET: SS examinations to include basic skills content might not meet the intent or accomplish the goals of SB 1209, since SB 1209 requires that any modified CSET: SS examination must “assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics....at least as comprehensively and to the level that these skills are assessed by the state basic skills proficiency test.” Reducing the content of both examinations in order to combine the two into a single examination could result in not meeting this requirement;
- The two examinations have very different focuses and purposes and are based on a different set of content specifications;
- Modifications would potentially be needed for 31 different CSET: Single Subject examinations, which would be a costly and difficult process given the wide variety of content areas assessed by the subject matter examinations (including examinations given in a language other than English);
- Although the CSET: SS examinations contain some items requiring an original constructed response by candidates, these responses are short, are scored only for content and not for writing, and do not assess the same writing skills as required by the CBEST writing assessment in terms of demonstrating the candidate’s ability to organize and develop a coherent, structured essay response using appropriate rhetorical and grammatical structures; and
- The validity and reliability of both examinations could be compromised if they were to be combined, since each examination must be based on content specifications adopted by the Commission that have been developed and validated expressly for each examination separately.

Discussion at the meeting by the Commissioners covered a range of opinions concerning the inclusion of basic skills content within the current CSET: SS examinations. In general, Commissioners were receptive to the idea of streamlining the two assessments for candidates, but at the same time were cognizant of the practical difficulties and psychometric difficulties of accomplishing this intention, as well as of the practical effects on candidates who might need to prepare for a wide variety of test content on a single examination. The Commissioners recognized that both examinations (CSET: SS and CBEST) serve a distinct and necessary purpose, but at the same time were interested in continuing to look at whatever ways might potentially allow the CSET: Single Subjects examinations to include some or all of the basic skills assessments.

The Commissioners also recognized that while the process of allowing the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination to serve as a proxy for basic skills was feasible with the addition of a new CSET: Writing Skills test, this same process would not necessarily work for the CSET: SS examinations. The CSET: Multiple Subjects examination contains some questions that relate in general to the areas of basic skills reading and mathematics, but not to writing, whereas the CSET: Single Subject examinations do not include basic skills reading and mathematics-related test items (with the exception of the CSET: Single Subject Mathematics examination). In addition, like the CSET: Multiple Subjects

examination, the CSET: SS examinations do not include a writing skills assessment.

In summary, the input received by the Commission from stakeholders and other public commenter's, as well as the comments made by Commissioners at the public study session, *supported maintaining the CSET: Single Subject examinations without modification to include an assessment of basic skills. However, Commissioners were also supportive of an alternative approach whereby rather than modifying the CSET: Single Subject examinations, the basic skills assessments in reading, writing and mathematics might instead be offered to candidates on the same dates and locations as the CSET: Single Subjects examinations.*

Within this approach, the three basic skills subtests of the current CBEST examination (reading, writing, and mathematics) could potentially become separate subtests within the array of the CSET: SS examinations. Candidates could register to take one or more of these subtests at any given CSET: SS testing session. This approach might allow candidates options for meeting both the subject matter competence and the basic skills requirements in a potentially more streamlined manner and timeframe. Implementing this approach, however, would require (a) potential changes to the Education Code; (b) changes to Title 5 regulations; (c) additional fiscal resources to the Commission for test item development to expand the current item bank for the basic skills assessments in order to accommodate the additional basic skills-focused testing sessions; and (d) potential amendments to existing examinations administration contracts. There might also be cost implications for candidates as additional resources would be needed to expand the number of test sites and scoring sessions for the basic skills assessment beyond those now being funded by the current CBEST fee.

## **I. STUDY SESSION PURPOSE AND RATIONALE**

Senate Bill 1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006) requires that the Commission “shall convene a public study session to consider the implications of modifying the single subject California Subject Examinations for Teacher (CSET) to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics...at least as comprehensively and to the level that these skills are assessed by the state basic skills proficiency test... The commission, no later than October 1, 2007, shall report to the legislature on the outcome of that session...”

A primary rationale for holding a study session of this nature is to consider the potential for reducing the number of the examinations required for teacher credentialing, if there is overlap or redundancy in what is measured across these examinations. In this regard, SB 1209 requires that three issues in particular be looked at in relation to the implication of modifying the CSET: SS to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics: the implications, costs, and validity of so modifying these CSET: Single Subject assessments.

The Commission fulfilled the study session requirement by holding a public study session on the implications of modifying the CSET: Single Subject examinations to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics at its June 2007 regularly-scheduled public meeting. Section II of this report provides the agenda item presented at the Commission meeting that served as background and context for the public comments and the discussions facilitated through this public study session. Section III of this report summarizes the discussion held during the public study session following the presentation of the agenda item, and Section IV of this report summarizes the outcomes of the discussion.

## II. AGENDA ITEM FROM THE JUNE 2007 COMMISSION MEETING

---

---

### **Public Study Session on the Implications of Modifying the CSET: Single Subject Examinations (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics**

---

---

#### **Introduction**

Senate Bill 1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006) requires that the Commission “shall convene a public study session to consider the implications of modifying the single subject California Subject Examinations for Teacher (CSET) to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics...at least as comprehensively and to the level that these skills are assessed by the state basic skills proficiency test... The commission, no later than October 1, 2007, shall report to the legislature on the outcome of that session...”

A primary rationale for holding a study session of this nature is to consider the potential for reducing the number of the examinations required for teacher credentialing, if there is overlap or redundancy in what is measured across these examinations. In this regard, SB 1209 requires that three issues in particular be looked at in relation to modifying these assessments: the implications, costs, and validity of modifying this set of assessments.

This agenda item addresses the Commission’s requirement to hold a public study session to consider these topics. The information provided in this agenda item is intended to serve as a background and as a context for the public comments and the discussions facilitated through this public study session.

#### **The CSET: Single Subject Examinations**

Education Code sections 44280 and 44281 state that the “adequacy of subject matter preparation and the basis for assignment of certified personnel shall be determined by the successful passage of a subject matter examination as certified by the commission...” and that “the commission shall select, administer, and interpret subject matter examinations, which shall be a prerequisite for assignment to assure minimum levels of subject matter knowledge by all certified personnel regardless of the pattern and place of preparation.” The CSET: Single Subject examinations were developed in response to the requirements of the Education Code specifically to measure the candidates’ **subject matter knowledge** across a wide range of single subject content areas.

As part of the development process, the CSET: SS examinations were aligned with the K-12 student academic content standards and frameworks, and a job analysis was performed

to ensure that the examination specifications reflected the subject matter knowledge needed by a beginning teacher.

There are currently 31 individual CSET: Single Subject examinations, as listed below:

- Agriculture
- Art
- Business
- English
- Foundational-Level Mathematics (Algebra, Number Theory, Geometry, Probability and Statistics)
- Health Science
- Home Economics
- Industrial and Technology Education
- Languages Other Than English (each language has its own individual CSET examination):
  - American Sign Language
  - Arabic
  - Armenian
  - Cantonese
  - Farsi
  - Filipino
  - French
  - German
  - Hmong
  - Japanese
  - Khmer
  - Korean
  - Mandarin
  - Punjabi
  - Russian
  - Spanish
  - Vietnamese
- Mathematics (through Calculus)
- Music
- Physical Education
- Science: Biology/Life Science, Chemistry, Physics, and Geosciences
- Science (Specialized): Biology/Life Science, Chemistry, Physics and Geosciences)
- Social Science

The following table shows the number of subtests, and the range of content, covered by each of these subject matter examinations:

<b>CSET Exam</b>	<b>Subtest I</b>	<b>Subtest II</b>	<b>Subtest III</b>	<b>Subtest IV</b>
Agriculture	Plant and Soil Science; Ornamental Horticulture	Animal Science; Environmental Science and Natural Resource Management	Agricultural Business and Economics; Agricultural Systems Technology	
Art	Artistic Perception; Historical and Cultural Context of Visual Arts; Aesthetic Valuing	Creative Expression; Connections, Relationships and Applications; History and Theories of Learning in Art		
Business	Business Management; Marketing	Accounting and Finance; Economics	Information Technology; Business Environment and Communication	
English	Literature and Textual Analysis; Composition and Rhetoric	Language, Linguistics and Literacy	Composition and Rhetoric; Literature and Textual Analysis	Communications: Speech, Media and Creative Performance
Foundational-Level Mathematics	Algebra; Number Theory	Geometry; Probability and Statistics		
Health Science	Foundations of Health Education; Human Growth and Development; Chronic and Communicable Diseases	Nutrition and Fitness; Mental and Emotional Health; Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drugs	Family Life and Interpersonal Relationships; Consumer and Community Health; Environmental Health	
Home Economics	Personal, Family and Child Development	Nutrition, Foods and Hospitality	Fashion and Textiles, Housing and Interior Design; Consumer Education	
Industrial and Technology Education	Nature of Technology	Power and Energy; Information and Communication; Project and Product Development		

<b>CSET Exam</b>	<b>Subtest I</b>	<b>Subtest II</b>	<b>Subtest III</b>	<b>Subtest IV</b>
Languages Other Than English: ASL	Literary and Cultural Texts and Traditions; Cultural Analysis and Comparisons	General Linguistics; Linguistics of American Sign Language (Language Structure, Contrastive Analysis)	Linguistics of American Sign Language (Error Analysis); Receptive Comprehension; Expressive Production	
Languages Other Than English (Cantonese, French, Spanish, German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Punjabi, Russian and Vietnamese)	General Linguistics; Linguistics of the Target Language	Literary and Cultural Texts and Traditions; Cultural Analysis and Comparisons	Language and Communication: Target Language Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	
Languages Other Than English (Arabic, Armenian, Farsi, Filipino, Hmong and Khmer)	General Linguistics; Linguistics of the Target Language; Literary and Cultural Texts and Traditions; Cultural Analysis and Comparisons	Language and Communication: Target Language Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing		
Mathematics (Foundational – Subtests I and II; Advanced – Subtest III)	Algebra; Number Theory	Geometry; Probability and Statistics	Calculus; History of Mathematics	
Music	Artistic Perception; Historical and Cultural Foundations; Aesthetic Valuing	Creative Expression; Connections: Relationships and Applications	Music Methodology and Repertoire	
Physical Education	Growth, Motor Development and Motor Learning; Science of Human Movement	Sociology and Psychology of Human Movement; Movement Concepts and Forms; Assessment and Evaluation Principles	Professional Foundations; Integration of Concepts	

<b>CSET Exam</b>	<b>Subtest I</b>	<b>Subtest II</b>	<b>Subtest III</b>	<b>Subtest IV</b>
Science (General – Subtests I and II; Specialized – Subtests III and IV)	General Science: Astronomy, Earth Processes, Earth Resources, Waves, Forces and Motion, Electricity and Magnetism	General Science: Ecology; Genetics and Evolution, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, Cell and Organism Biology, Heat Transfer and Thermodynamics, Structure and Properties of Matter	One of the following: Biology/Life Science Chemistry Earth and Planetary Science Physics	One of the following: Biology/Life Science Chemistry Earth and Planetary Science Physics
Social Science	World History; World Geography	U.S. History; U.S. Geography	Civics; Economics; California History	

The CSET: Single Subject examinations are designed to be administered in a single testing session of five hours in length. However, candidates have the option to either take all of the subtests of a particular CSET: Single Subject examination in a single testing session or to take only one or two subtests in a single testing session. Regardless of the number of subtests for which a candidate registers, the length of the testing session is a maximum of five hours. CSET: Single Subject examinations are primarily administered in the afternoon testing session, as the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination is administered during the morning session at the same testing locations. This arrangement maximizes the efficiency of the use of test sites and testing personnel, and results in lower overall costs to examinees.

To pass a CSET: Single Subject examination, candidates must earn a passing score on each of the examination’s required subtests. Each CSET subtest is scored separately. For each CSET subtest, an individual’s performance is evaluated against a CTC-adopted passing score standard. Passing status is determined on the basis of total subtest performance. The total subtest score is based on the number of raw score points earned on each section (multiple-choice section and/or constructed response section), the weighting of each section, and the scaling of that score. Candidates’ raw scores are converted to a scale of 100-300, with the scaled score of 220 representing the minimum passing score standard adopted by the Commission. Each subtest is scored and reported independently of the other subtests for a given single subject area. Candidate scores remain valid for a period of five years from the test date on which the scores were achieved and must be used for California certification within that time frame.

The CSET: Single Subject examinations are administered up to six times per year, every other month (September, November, January, March, May and July), as illustrated in the following schedule for the 2007-2008 testing year:

	<b>Sept 2007</b>	<b>Nov 2007</b>	<b>Jan 2008</b>	<b>Mar 2008</b>	<b>May 2008</b>	<b>Jul 2008</b>

	Sept 2007	Nov 2007	Jan 2008	Mar 2008	May 2008	Jul 2008
English Math Science Social Science	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Agriculture Art Business French Health Science Home Economics Industrial Tech Education Music Physical Education Spanish	✓		✓	✓	✓	
American Sign Language Arabic Armenian Cantonese Farsi Filipino German Hmong Japanese Khmer Korean Mandarin Punjabi Russian Vietnamese		✓			✓	

**The State Basic Skills Proficiency Test (i.e., CBEST)**

The California Education Code Section 44252 specifies that candidates must demonstrate proficiency in basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills, in English, by passing the state’s basic skills examination. Until the passage of SB 1209, the CBEST has been the only basic skills examination specified for meeting the basic skills requirement. The CBEST is not a test of specialized subject matter knowledge, but of basic skills in these three specified areas. The basic skills requirements became effective on February 1, 1983. Since that time, passage of the CBEST has been the only method by which to meet this requirement until the passage of SB 1209 in 2006, which provided additional options to meet the basic skill requirement.

The CBEST is designed to test basic reading, writing, and mathematics skills found through an extensive job analysis to be important for the job of an educator. The test consists of three sections: reading, writing, and mathematics. The questions in the reading section assess a candidate's ability to comprehend information presented in written passages, tables, and graphs. There are 50 multiple-choice questions from two major skill areas: critical analysis and evaluation, and comprehension and research skills. The mathematics section consists of 50 multiple-choice questions from three major skill areas: estimation, measurement, and statistical principles; computation and problem solving; and numerical and graphic relationships. The writing section includes two writing topics that assess an examinee's ability to write effectively in English. One topic asks candidates to analyze a given situation or statement and the other asks them to write about a specified personal experience. Examinees must respond to both topics. Specialized content knowledge is not required in the reading and writing sections.

The CBEST is designed to be administered in a test session of a maximum of four hours. Candidates may take one, two, or all three CBEST sections during a test session. The CBEST passing requirements are based on a compensatory scoring model. The scaled scores used for reporting CBEST results range from 20 to 80 for each of the three sections. The passing score on each CBEST section is a scaled score of 41. A total score (i.e., the sum of the Reading, Mathematics, and Writing scaled scores) of 123 is required for passing status. It is possible to pass the CBEST with a scaled score on one or two sections as low as 37, provided that the total score is 123 or higher. It is not possible, however, to pass the CBEST if any section score is below 37, regardless of how high the total score may be. Once the test has been passed, the scores remain permanently valid.

The CBEST is offered six times per year, on the opposite months from the CSET examinations (August, October, December, February, April and June). The content specifications for the CBEST are provided as Attachment A to this agenda item.

**Summary Comparison between the CSET: Single Subject Examinations and the State Basic Skills Assessment (i.e., the CBEST).** The following chart summarizes the major comparison points between the CSET: Single Subject and the CBEST examinations. (Note: pursuant to SB 1209, candidates will have other basic skills options besides the CBEST. This chart refers only to the CBEST.)

**Summary Comparison Between the CSET: Single Subject and the State Basic Skills  
(i.e., CBEST) Examinations\***

	<b>CSET: Single Subject</b>	<b>Basic Skills (CBEST)</b>
<b>Mandatory for Which California-Trained Candidates</b>	<b>Not Mandatory.</b> Voluntary for single subject credential candidates (candidates may meet subject matter requirements through an approved subject matter preparation program rather than the CSET: SS exam)	<b>Mandatory for:</b> Initial teaching and service credentials
<b>Format</b>	Ranges by subject area from two subtests to four subtests	Three sections (Reading, Writing, Mathematics)
<b>Main Applicable Education Codes</b>	§44280 and §44281	§44252 and SB 1209 (Chap. 517, Stats. 2006)
<b>Score Model</b>	Not compensatory. Candidates must achieve the minimum passing score on each individual subtest.	Compensatory (i.e., higher scores on one section can compensate for lower scores on another section, within a mandatory minimum score limit).
<b>Purpose and Content Covered</b>	Verifies candidates' knowledge of specialized subject matter content across thirty-one different subject areas, in alignment with state frameworks and K-12 student academic content standards.	Verifies candidates' basic skills in the three general knowledge areas of Reading, Writing and Mathematics (all in English).
<b>Type of Assessment</b>	Includes multiple choice items and constructed responses, depending on subtest.	Includes multiple choice items and constructed responses, depending on test area (Reading, Writing, or Mathematics).
<b>Language of Candidate Responses</b>	In English for all examinations except for ASL and all other Languages Other Than English. In these CSET examinations there are questions and responses in the target language, not in English.	All in English.
<b>Content Focus</b>	CSET: Single Subject focuses on in-depth specialized subject matter knowledge. Written responses are scored based on content knowledge and are not scored for mechanics and conventions of writing.	CBEST focuses on generalized knowledge of Reading, Mathematics and Writing. Writing is scored primarily on rhetorical characteristics (organization, support and development, rhetorical force) and conventions of writing (usage, structure, conventions, appropriateness) and not on the candidate's content knowledge.

\* For more detailed information visit the CCTC web site at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov>.

## **Potential Approaches to Modifying the CSET: Single Subject Examinations to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, and Implications of These Approaches**

### **Introduction**

One of the potential ways of streamlining credentialing requirements for candidates could be to consolidate some of those requirements where feasible. Since candidates have to pass several examinations as part of the requirements for a California credential, this is potentially an area where consolidation might be able to be accomplished. It is understandable that to the general public, it would seem a relatively simple matter to combine two examinations such as the CSET: Single Subjects and the CBEST. However, the area of teacher examinations is highly complex, and entails unique issues of examination validity and reliability, as well as legal defensibility, that must be addressed in order for these examinations to meet statutory requirements for content validity, scoring reliability, and other psychometric properties. The processes of examination development and validation are not readily visible to the public because of the need for maintaining test security. These factors make explaining the implications of combining two different assessments more complicated.

To help make examination processes more transparent, the steps that go into examination development and validation are briefly outlined in Attachment B to this agenda item. These steps align with accepted industry and professional standards in the field of testing and evaluation, and form the basis for the validity, reliability, and legal defensibility of state examinations in making decisions about candidates.

### **Focus of the Study Session**

This study session focuses on two types of examinations in particular that are taken by single subject candidates: the CBEST and the 31 different CSET: Single Subject examinations. The CBEST is used by single subject candidates to establish basic skills competence; the CSET: SS is used to establish subject matter competence. It is important to note, however, that while all Single Subject candidates need to pass a basic skills assessment, not all Single Subject candidates have to take a CSET: Single Subject examination. Single Subject candidates may complete a Commission-approved subject matter program in lieu of a CSET: SS examination. Approximately 44% of Single Subject candidates currently choose the subject matter program route to establishing their subject matter competence and 56% choose the CSET: Single Subject examinations route.

This study session is charged with considering implications of modifying the CSET: SS to assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. A starting point might be to ask **whether the CSET:SS examinations might already assess at least some of the basic skills** by virtue of the fact that, for example, candidates must be able to read in English in order to complete a given CSET: SS examination. In the case of basic skills in reading, for example, it is true that except for certain sections of the Languages Other Than English examinations, candidates are reading and responding to questions using English. A potential policy approach, therefore, might be to deem that candidates who

pass the CSET: SS English examination would also have met the basic skills requirement in reading and in writing. An extension of this potential policy approach could be to deem that candidates who pass the CSET: SS Mathematics examination would also have met the basic skills requirement in math. A third possible extension of this potential policy approach could be to deem that candidates who pass any of the CSET: SS examinations would also have met the basic skills requirement in reading. This policy approach could be considered similar to the policy established pursuant to SB 1209 which stipulated that multiple subject candidates who pass all sections of the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination plus pass an additional CSET: Writing Skills test would also have met the basic skills requirement.

There are three major implications of this potential policy approach, however, as it applies to single subject candidates that would need further consideration. The first of these implications is that the content of the questions on the CSET and the CBEST examinations differ in key ways. The questions to which the candidates are responding on the CSET: SS examinations ask about the candidates' specialized subject matter knowledge relating to the K-12 student academic content standards, whereas the questions on the CBEST examination ask about the candidates' basic general knowledge of reading, mathematics, and writing processes as these relate to the job requirements of being a teacher. As substantiated in the section on the process of examinations development provided in Attachment B, all examination questions must track back to specific approved content specifications in order to maintain the validity of the examination. The CSET: SS English examination, for example, does not ask about content such as "making predictions about the outcome of an event based on information from a reading selection," "challenge the statements and opinions presented in a reading selection," and "arrange the ideas in a reading selection into an outline or another form of graphic organization," to illustrate a few of the CBEST content specifications not covered by the CSET: English examination.

Given that there are differences in the content assessed by the CSET: SS in comparison to the content assessed by the CBEST, the second major implication of this potential policy approach could be that using the CSET:SS examinations for basic skills purposes might not meet the statutory requirement contained within SB 1209 that the examination "assess basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics....at least as comprehensively and to the level that these skills are assessed by the state basic skills proficiency test."

A third major implication of this approach would be that there would be no cost reduction to candidates since the candidates would still need to pass a basic skills assessment in the area(s) not covered by the particular CSET: SS. For example, a mathematics candidate would still need to meet the basic skills requirement in writing, an English candidate would still need to meet the basic skills requirement in mathematics, and all other single subject candidates would still need to meet the basic skills requirement in mathematics and writing in English.

Another question, then, that might be posed is **whether a different approach could be taken whereby the CSET: SS examinations could be modified to include questions**

**that specifically address the basic skills content specifications.** Within this approach, the original subject-matter content of the current examination could be modified (i.e., reduced) in favor of adding new content questions based on the content specifications adopted by the Commission relating to basic skills, as outlined in Attachment A of this agenda item. This approach has several implications. First, while this approach might appear on the surface to be practical, in actuality it would entail some complex and costly examination revalidation and possibly redevelopment work, since changing the questions within an existing examination that has already been validated for content coverage, bias considerations, difficulty level, and weighting of the various subsections would require a revalidation of the modified examination and the establishment of new passing scores for each of the two to four subtests in each of the 31 test fields. Second, if a revalidation process were to result in a determination that the modified examination were no longer valid for the intended purpose (i.e., in the case of the CSET, for determining subject matter competence and/or basic skills competence) that situation would be problematic to resolve.

A third implication to consider within this approach is that the content coverage of what was previously in the CSET: SS examinations would need to be reduced in order to add questions covering the new content in basic skills while still maintaining the current format and timeframe for administration of the examination. This situation might result in a potential issue with meeting the intent of the law requiring the basic skills assessment to be at least as comprehensive and to the level that these skills are assessed by the state basic skills proficiency test, since the basic skills content coverage would be significantly reduced by this approach to modifying the CSET: SS examinations.

A fourth implication to consider in this approach is that there might be a need to maintain two separate versions of the CSET: SS examinations, one that was modified to include basic skills content, and another that was not modified. This duplication might be necessary in order to meet the needs of candidates who did not need to meet the basic skills requirement via the CSET: SS examinations, such as (a) single subject candidates who chose the program route rather than the exams route to establishing subject matter competence; (b) out of state candidates who already met the basic skills requirement in another state; and (c) candidates for other teaching and service credentials. Having to maintain and score two different versions of the same examination could have a high potential for being confusing for candidates, complex for administration and scoring purposes, and difficult to track in candidate records.

If the approaches discussed thus far might not be sufficiently practicable, **what about the approach of adding one or more additional subtests to the CSET: SS examinations?** This approach would provide basic skills content coverage of the new material while still maintaining the validity of the current examination(s), but would also add significantly to the testing time and study requirements for candidates without reducing costs. An implication of this approach would be that it would also not represent an actual “modification” of the existing CSET: SS examination, but rather an addition to the existing examination. A second implication of this approach would be that the testing day could become very long for candidates, as the CSET examination and the CBEST

examination allow four to five hours each for the testing session.

Some additional considerations pertinent to all of the approaches outlined above are that:

- Whether or not the CSET: Single Subject series of examinations were modified to assess basic skills under any of the potential approaches, the CBEST examination would still need to continue to be available separately and to be administered separately from the CSET: Single Subject examinations in order to meet the needs of (a) single subject candidates who complete an approved program rather than the examination; (b) out of state candidates; and (c) candidates for other teaching and service credentials.
- There would not be a cost savings to the Commission or to these candidates for this reason if the CSET: SS examinations were to be modified under any of the approaches in order to assess basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and several of the approaches discussed that involve examination modification and/or revalidation and additional development, could result in higher costs.

The following chart summarizes these and other considerations relevant to the various approaches described above.

	<b>Deem the CSET:SS in English and/or Math and/or all subjects to assess some of the basic skills</b>	<b>Modify CSET:SS questions to add basic skills content</b>	<b>Add subtest(s) to CSET:SS examinations</b>
<b>Comprehensiveness and level of basic skills assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduced level of content coverage for basic skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduced level of content coverage for basic skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no reduction in level of content coverage for basic skills</li> </ul>
<b>Comprehensiveness and level of subject matter assessment: CSET</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no reduction in subject matter content assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reduced level of subject matter content assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no reduction in subject matter content assessment</li> </ul>
<b>Candidate Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>differential treatment of candidates (some candidates allowed to meet some basic skills via CSET, others not)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>candidates need to study both subject matter and basic skills content simultaneously and to draw on both sets of knowledge and skills within a single examination</li> <li>may be unfair to candidates in Languages Other Than English, since these candidates would need to switch into English for purposes of answering basic skills questions while they were taking an examination using another language than English for their responses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>candidates need to study both subject matter and basic skills content simultaneously</li> </ul>

	<b>Deem the CSET:SS in English and/or Math and/or all subjects to assess some of the basic skills</b>	<b>Modify CSET:SS questions to add basic skills content</b>	<b>Add subtest(s) to CSET:SS examinations</b>
<b>Validity Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potentially not valid for basic skills assessment purposes</li> <li>• may not meet statutory requirements for equal level of coverage of basic skills as in the CBEST</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• potentially not valid for basic skills and/or for subject matter competence assessment purposes</li> <li>• may not meet statutory requirements for equal level of coverage of basic skills as in the CBEST</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• validity not affected</li> </ul>
<b>Cost Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no cost reduction to candidates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• costly redevelopment and revalidation might be required</li> <li>• costs to candidates might increase to offset costs involved in administering and scoring two versions of the same examination (one version modified for single subject candidates who need to meet basic skills competence, the other not modified for other types of candidates)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• costs not affected</li> </ul>

	<b>Deem the CSET:SS in English and/or Math and/or all subjects to assess some of the basic skills</b>	<b>Modify CSET:SS questions to add basic skills content</b>	<b>Add subtest(s) to CSET:SS examinations</b>
<b>Other Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to address basic skills competence assessment in the areas not covered by the respective CSET: SS examinations</li> <li>• Complex explanations and directions for exam registration and scoring may be confusing to candidates and to credential analysts, and examination results may be complex also for record keeping and reporting purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a candidate did not pass the particular CSET:SS examination, prescriptive feedback would be difficult to provide as it would not be clear if the candidate did not pass the subject matter content or the basic skills content, or both</li> <li>• Complex explanations and directions for exam registration and scoring may be confusing to candidates and to credential analysts, and result may be complex also for record keeping and reporting purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• no modifications to the current CSET:SS would be made</li> </ul>

### **III. THE PUBLIC STUDY SESSION**

Following the presentation of the agenda item by staff, the Commission Chair announced that one written comment had been received prior to the meeting. The Chair invited public comment, and six individuals spoke regarding this agenda item. The individuals represented the following: Credential Counselors and Analysts of California; California Federation of Teachers; Association of California School Administrators; Ventura County Office of Education; St. Mary's College; and CSU San Marcos. All of the speakers supported not combining the two assessments, and suggested that doing so would result in not only all of the potentially negative consequences indicated within the agenda item, but also unintended consequences and impacts on other credential candidates such as substitutes.

Following the public comments, the Commissioners engaged in a lengthy discussion about the topic. The Commissioners reviewed all of the implications of combining the two assessments, as outlined in the agenda item. One of the questions that arose during the discussion was the accuracy of the perception that credential candidates were required to take too many examinations to meet credential requirements.

### **IV. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

At the conclusion of the public study session, the Commissioners agreed on the following points:

- Although modifying the CSET: Multiple Subjects examinations by adding a basic skills writing assessment was workable for multiple subject candidates, the same is not the case for the CSET: Single Subject examinations because of (a) the wide range of the subject matter covered by these 31 different examinations; (b) the fact that the CSET: SS examinations do not include skills-related reading or mathematics questions (other than for the CSET: SS in Math); (c) the potential loss of examination validity and reliability if the two examinations were combined; (d) the reduction in content coverage for both subject matter assessment and basic skills assessment of candidate competence; and (e) the fact that the potential reduction in content coverage if the two examinations were combined might not meet the statutory requirements for assessing basic skills within a modified CSET examination “at least as comprehensively and to the level that these skills are assessed by the state basic skills proficiency test.”
- Rather than combining the CSET: SS and the CBEST examinations, there could potentially instead be a consideration of using one or more additional proxies for the basic skills examination by looking at the possibility of using the CAHSEE (high school exit examination) and/or the EAP (Early Assessment Program of the CSU system) to meet basic skills proficiency requirements.
- There could potentially be another approach to basic skills assessment by requiring college, university, and intern teacher preparation programs to determine that their candidates meet basic skills rather than requiring all candidates to take the CBEST.
- There might also be a value in offering single subject credential candidates the opportunity to take the basic skills subtests as part of the CSET:SS testing experience by making these subtests available on the same test dates and locations as the

CSET: SS examinations. The CBEST subtests could potentially be renamed the “CSET: Reading Skills Test” and “CSET: Mathematics Skills Test,” and could be offered along with the CSET: Writing Skills test on the regularly-scheduled CSET testing dates. If this option were to be pursued, however, it would require (a) potential changes to the Education Code; (b) changes to Title 5 regulations; (c) additional fiscal resources to the Commission for test item development to expand the current item bank for the basic skills assessments in order to accommodate the additional basic skills-focused testing sessions; and (d) potential amendments to existing examinations administration contracts. There might also be cost implications for candidates as additional resources would be needed to expand the number of test sites and scoring sessions for the basic skills assessment beyond those now being funded by the current CBEST fee.

**Additional Information**

Following the Commission meeting staff researched the question concerning the perception that candidates were required to take too many examinations. As the following chart and supporting information show, examinations have already been streamlined to the point that this perception is not accurate.

**Overview of Examinations Required for a Preliminary SB 2042 Multiple or Single Subject Credential**

<b>Credential</b>	<b>Basic Skills (CBEST)</b>	<b>Subject Matter (CSET)</b>	<b>Reading Instruction Competence (RICA)</b>
Multiple Subject	Optional-Can use CSET Multiple Subjects (CSET: MS) plus Writing Skills instead	Required	Required
Single Subject	Required	Optional-Can complete subject matter preparation program instead	N/A

As the chart shows, *examinations have recently been consolidated for efficiency:*

1. Multiple subject candidates can currently meet all the examination requirements for an SB 2042 preliminary credential by taking only two examinations: the CSET: Multiple Subjects plus CSET: Writing Skills and the RICA.
2. Single subject candidates who choose to establish subject matter competence by completing an approved subject matter program can currently meet all of the examination requirements for an SB 2042 preliminary credential by taking only a single examination, the CBEST.

3. Single subject candidates who choose to establish subject matter competence through examination can currently meet all examination requirements for an SB 2042 preliminary credential by taking only two examinations: the CBEST and the CSET: Single Subjects.

Further, as the following chart shows, *examination fees have recently been reduced for candidates:*

<b>Examination</b>	<b>06-07 Fee</b>	<b>07-08 Fee</b>
CBEST	\$41	\$37
CSET: Multiple Subjects (CSET: MS) and CSET: Single Subjects (CSET: SS)	\$74 per subtest	\$70 per subtest
CSET: Writing Skills Subtest	N/A	\$35
RICA Written Exam	\$140	\$70
RICA Video Exam	\$232	\$70

## APPENDIX A

# CALIFORNIA BASIC EDUCATIONAL SKILLS TEST™ (CBEST®) TEST SPECIFICATIONS

### TEST SPECIFICATIONS: READING

Skill Factor 1: Critical Analysis and Evaluation

Skill Factor 2: Comprehension and Research

#### CRITICAL ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

- Compare/contrast ideas or information presented in different sections of a reading selection\* or from different sources.
- Identify the reasons, examples, details, or facts in a reading selection that support the author's main idea.
- Make predictions about the outcome of an event based on information from a reading selection.
- Recognize the attitude, opinion, or viewpoint expressed by the author toward his or her subject.
- Determine whether facts or ideas are relevant to an argument in a reading selection.
- Recognize statements that strengthen or weaken arguments in a reading selection.
- Recognize the various persuasive techniques used by an author in a reading selection.
- Distinguish between facts and opinions in a reading selection.
- Identify logical assumptions upon which the author bases the argument of a reading selection.
- Challenge the statements and opinions presented in a reading selection.
- Identify inconsistencies or differences in points of view within one reading selection or between two or more selections.
- Recognize the audience that a reading selection addresses.
- Recognize language that creates an inappropriate or inconsistent tone, given the intended audience and purpose.

\*Throughout these specifications, "reading selection" is defined as an excerpt from a book, chapter, paragraph, article, or report.

#### COMPREHENSION AND RESEARCH SKILLS

##### A. Comprehension and Context

- Identify the relationships between general and specific ideas in a reading selection.
- Determine the sequence of events or steps in a process from a reading selection.
- Arrange the ideas in a reading selection into an outline or another form of graphic organization.
- Recognize the main idea or purpose of a reading selection.
- Identify accurate paraphrases or summaries of ideas in a reading selection.
- Identify facts and details presented in a reading selection.
- Draw conclusions or generalizations from material presented in a reading selection.
- Make inferences and recognize implications based on information from a reading selection.
- Recognize implied relationships between people, ideas, or events in a reading selection.

- Use context clues, syntax, and structural analysis (e.g., affixes, prefixes, roots) to determine the meaning of unknown words.
- Determine the meanings of figurative or colloquial language in a reading selection.
- Recognize and identify different interpretations that can be made of the same word, sentence, paragraph, or reading selection.
- Recognize how the meaning of a word, sentence, or paragraph is affected by the context in which it appears.
- Understand the function of key transition indicators in a reading selection (e.g., "however," "by contrast," "in conclusion").

#### **B. Research and Reference Skills**

- Use the table of contents, section headings, index, and similar sections of a book to locate information.
- Locate the place in a reading selection (e.g., book, chapter, paragraph, article, or report) where a specific kind of information can be found.
- Understand how a reading selection is organized.
- Identify logical conclusions, generalizations, or implied relationships that are supported by information in a table or graph.

### **TEST SPECIFICATIONS: MATHEMATICS**

Skill Factor 1: Estimation, Measurement, & Statistical Principles

Skill Factor 2: Computation & Problem Solving

Skill Factor 3: Numerical & Graphic Relationships

#### **ESTIMATION, MEASUREMENT, & STATISTICAL PRINCIPLES**

##### **A. Estimation and Measurement**

- Understand and use standard units of length, temperature, weight, and capacity in the U.S. measurement system.
- Measure length and perimeter.
- Understand and use estimates of time to plan and achieve work-related objectives.
- Estimate the results of problems involving addition, subtraction, multiplication and division prior to computation.

##### **B. Statistical Principles**

- Perform arithmetic operations with basic statistical data related to test scores (e.g., averages, ratios, proportions, and percentile scores).
- Understand basic principles of probability and predict likely outcomes based on data provided (e.g., estimate the likelihood that an event will occur).
- Interpret the meaning of standardized test scores (e.g., stamina scores, percentiles) to determine how individuals performed relative to other students.

#### **COMPUTATION & PROBLEM SOLVING**

- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide with whole numbers.
- Add and subtract with positive and negative numbers.
- Add, subtract, multiply, and divide with fractions, decimals, and percentages.
- Determine and perform necessary arithmetic operations to solve a practical mathematics problem (e.g., determine the total invoice cost for ordered supplies by multiplying quantity by unit price, summing all items).

- Solve simple algebraic problems (e.g., equations with one unknown).
- Determine whether enough information is given to solve a problem; identify the facts given in a problem.
- Recognize alternative mathematical methods of solving a problem.

### **NUMERICAL & GRAPHIC RELATIONSHIPS**

- Recognize relationships in numerical data (e.g., compute a percentage change from one year to the next).
- Recognize the position of numbers in relation to each other (e.g.,  $1/3$  is between  $1/4$  and  $1/2$ ;  $-7 < -4$ ).
- Use the relations less than, greater than, or equal to, and their associated symbols to express a numerical relationship.
- Identify numbers, formulas, and mathematical expressions that are mathematically equivalent (e.g.,  $2/4 = 1/2$ ,  $1/4 = 25\%$ ).
- Understand and use rounding rules when solving problems.
- Understand and apply the meaning of logical connectives (e.g., and, or, if-then) and quantifiers (e.g., some, all, none).
- Identify or specify a missing entry from a table of data (e.g., subtotal).
- Use numerical information contained in tables, spreadsheets, and various kinds of graphs (e.g., bar, line, circle) to solve mathematics problems.

### **TEST SPECIFICATIONS: WRITING**

The Writing Test is a one-hour test consisting of two essay questions. One of the essay questions asks examinees to write about a remembered experience. The other question is designed to elicit expository prose that will permit writers to demonstrate their analytic skills.

### **ABILITIES SPECIFICATIONS**

The questions in the Writing Test will elicit a writing sample that will show the examinees ability to:

1. write with clarity (i.e., the reader can comprehend immediately what is meant),
2. keep the writing focused (i.e., the reader is kept on the track),
3. develop the ideas in the writing through support or illustration,
4. use the conventions of standard written English, and
5. maintain a line of thought essentially free of non sequiturs, internal contradictions, unwarranted conclusions and confusion of fact and opinion.

### **TOPIC SPECIFICATIONS**

Topics should be of the following two types:

#### **TYPE I (one question per examination):**

Topics should elicit a sample of expressive writing about a remembered experience (expressive aim).

#### **TYPE II (one question per examination):**

Topics should elicit a sample of expository writing that will permit the examinees to demonstrate their analytic skills (referential aim).

Topics should NOT: ask examinees to write personal letters or notes, though letters to the editor are acceptable, or ask examinees to write out of imaginary or speculative experiences.

## APPENDIX B

### EXAMINATION DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

1. **Define and validate content.** For each subject area, a separate content advisory group of experts made up of California educators from both the public schools and institutions of higher education is appointed by the Commission to work with the Commission's external examinations contractor. This panel assists in developing the content specifications on which the examination will be based, using the K-12 student academic content standards and frameworks as a reference and starting point. A separate panel of California educators comprises a Bias Review Committee that examines materials to ensure that they are free from bias. After the content specifications have been drafted, an extensive field review of the content specifications is conducted throughout the state in order to ensure that the content aligns with the K-12 student academic content standards and frameworks, and that the content is also relevant to the job of an entry-level teacher of that discipline.
2. **Define and validate test questions.** Once the content specifications have been revised based on the field review and are subsequently approved by the Commission, examination questions are developed. Each question must track back to one or more of the specific content specifications. The draft questions are reviewed by the Commission's standing Bias Review Committee to ensure that the questions are free from any source of potential bias, and then are also reviewed by the content advisory panel. The advisory panel also recommends the subtest structure and the relative weighting of the various sections of the examination. The contractor uses this information to develop one or more forms of the examination.
3. **Set Passing Scores.** The examination is then ready for its first administration. Following the initial administration of the examination, a new panel of content experts is used to set a recommended passing score which is then considered for adoption by the Commission. Once the passing score standard has been adopted by the Commission, candidates who took the first administration are notified of their scores and the examination is then available for future administration.

The entire process described above typically takes a minimum of one year to complete.

## APPENDIX C

### **Minutes of the Public Study Session on the Implications of Modifying the CSET: Single Subject Examinations (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics, as Required by SB 1209 (Chapter 517, Statutes of 2006).**

---

---

## Commission on Teacher Credentialing

### **Excerpt from the Minutes of the June 2007 Meeting**

---

---

#### **Commission Members Attending**

P. David Pearson, Faculty Member, Chair

Paula Cordeiro, Public Representative

Karen Symms Gallagher, Ex-Officio, Association of Independent California Colleges and Universities (6/27 only)

Margaret Gaston, Public Representative

Guillermo Gomez, Teacher Representative

Leslie Littman, Designee, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Marilyn McGrath, Ex-Officio, California Postsecondary Education Commission

Lillian Perry, Teacher Representative

Leslie Peterson Schwarze, School Board Member

Jon Stordahl, Teacher Representative

Loretta Whitson, Non-Administrative Services Credential Representative

Beverly Young, Ex-Officio, California State University

#### **State Board Liaison**

Alan Berlin, Member, State Board of Education

#### **Commission Members Absent**

Catherine Banker, Public Representative

Josie Calderon, Public Representative

Caleb Cheung, Teacher Representative

Gloria Grant, Teacher Representative

Aida Molina, Administrative Services Representative

Tine Sloan, Ex-Officio, University of California

## **2H: Public Study Session on the Implications of Modifying the CSET: Single Subject Examinations (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills in Reading, Writing, and Mathematics**

Chair Pearson stated that this is the second of the public study sessions required by SB 1209, and staff would take the comments provided at this meeting and develop a report that would be submitted to the Legislature.

Phyllis Jacobson, Administrator, Professional Services Division presented this item. She stated that this study session is mandated to look at the implications of modifying the series of CSET: SS examinations to also include an assessment of basic skill in reading, writing, and mathematics.

Dr. Jacobson said the CSET was developed to meet the requirements of the Education Code for subject matter examination that would determine the candidates' subject matter competence, and the CSET: SS series covers 31 different content areas. As the part of the development process for the CSET: SS examinations, a very close alignment was assured between the examination content specifications and the K-12 student academic content standards; and in addition a job analysis was performed in order to assure that these examination specifications did reflect the subject matter knowledge needed by a beginning teacher in the profession. The chart from pages 2H-2 to 2H-4 indicated the range of the subtests and contents covered by each of the individual examinations. The CSET: SS examinations were designed to be administered in a single testing session that lasted up to five hours, and candidates could take all of the subsections during that time period or they could chose to take one or more subtests during the time period. Dr. Jacobson also said that in order to pass the CSET: SS examination the candidate must pass each of the required subtests with a passing score. The Commission has adopted a passing score standard of 220 on a scale score of 100-300. The examinations are administered up to six times per year depending on the single subject area, and they are typically offered every other month.

Dr. Jacobson stated the CBEST examination serves a different purpose, which is to assess the basic skills of the candidates and not their specialized subject matter knowledge. The content specifications for the CBEST are lengthy, and are related to the job of a beginning teacher. These examinations are scored based on a compensatory scoring model and candidates must earn a total score of 150 or higher, with no subtest score lower than 37. The CBEST is also offered six times per year, on the opposite months from the CSET examinations.

Dr. Jacobson said regarding to the possibility of modifying CSET to also include an assessment of basic skills, that it is a very complex subject because of considerations of examination validity, reliability, and other psychometric properties. It is important to note the different purposes and different audiences for the two examinations. All candidates are required to pass the CBSET examination but not all single subject candidates need to pass the CSET examinations. Single subject candidates also have the option to establish their subject matter competence through completing a Commission-approved single subject matter preparation program. At the present time approximately 56% choose the CSET examination route and the remainder chooses the program route.

One starting point might be to ask whether the CSET: SS examinations might already assess some of the basic skills. Considering that the candidate has to be able to read and write in English to pass the examinations of the CSET, with the exception of the examinations in languages other than English, a possible policy approach could be to say that candidates who pass the CSET: SS English examination would also have met the basic skills requirement in reading and writing. An extension of this possible policy approach could be to deem that candidates who pass the CSET: SS Mathematics examination would also have met the basic skills requirement in math. A third possible extension of this potential policy approach could be to deem that candidates who pass any of the CSET: SS examinations would also have met the basic skills requirement in reading.

Any of these policy approaches would have some further implications; one of these would be that the content of the questions to which the candidates are responding do not necessarily match the two statutory purposes, namely, establishing a candidate's subject matter competence and basic skills competence. In establishing the validity of the examination all of the questions must track back to one or more specifications adopted by the Commission. The CSET examination in English tracks back to the content specifications adopted for English, and it does not track back to the content specifications adopted for basic skills. It is possible deeming that a candidate who took the English examination also meet the basic skills in reading might not meet the statutory requirement of SB 1209 that the examination modified must assess the basic skills at least as comprehensively and to the level that these skills are assessed in the basic skills examinations itself. The final implication of the policy approach would be that would not necessarily be a cost reduction to the candidates since they still need to pass the basic skills exam in those areas not covered under CSET.

Another possible approach might be posed as to whether the CSET: SS examinations could be modified to include questions that specifically address the basic skills content specifications. With this approach, there would be a modification of the questions themselves in that some of the subject matter-related questions would be removed in favor of adding some questions that would related specifically to the content for basic skills. However, this approach would entail some complex and potentially costly examination redevelopment and revalidation work, and the weighting of the different sections of the examination as well as the difficulty levels within the examination would also need to be reviewed. If a revalidation process were to result in a determination that the modified examination were no longer valid for the intended purpose, that would be a problematic situation to resolve.

A third implication is there would be a necessary reduction in content in order for the examination to still be finished by candidates within the allotted time, as some subject matter questions would have to be removed in order to replace them with basic skills questions. This approach might not meet the requirement in law that the modified examination assess to the basic skills to the same degree as comprehensively as is presently done in the state basic skills test.

A fourth implication is that there might be a need to maintain two versions of the CSET: SS examinations since not all candidates who take the CSET: SS examinations would need to also take the CBSET. Some of the candidates might have already met the basic skills requirement and some might be from out of state and already have satisfied the basic skills requirements. Both of these types of candidates would not need to take the modified examination for purposes of meeting basic skills.

One more possible approach would be to add one or more additional subtests to the CSET: SS examination. In that way, both examinations could maintain their content validity and it would not be more costly; however, it would need to be taken into consideration that candidates would have a very long testing session and would have to study two different sets of examination content.

Lastly, regardless of what potential modification approach that one might wish to adopt there still would be the consideration that the basic skills (i.e., CBEST) examination would still need to be available separately because of the needs of other candidates who are not necessarily single subject candidates, such as candidates for other service credentials who do not need to establish subject matter competence. There would unlikely to be any cost saving either to the candidates or to the Commission with any of these modification routes, given that the each one entails some other implications for additional work and/or cost to candidates.

Commission Stordahl stated he liked the first proposal because the idea of being able to remove redundancy. He also questioned whether the writing within the CSET: SS was comparable to or even beyond that assessed within the basic skills examination. If so, Commissioner Stordahl thought it might meet a portion of the CBEST, along with the candidate's ability to demonstrate competency in the mathematics area within the CSET: Math examination. Dr. Jacobson said the difficulty with that proposition would be that there are differences in the kind of writing asked of candidates on the single subject exams and on the CBEST. She further noted the answers on the single subject examinations are short answer constructed responses and not essays that are well thought out and fully developed. Since on the CBEST candidates are writing fully developed essays on two different topics, the CSET: SS is not really accessing the same rhetorical and composition skills even both candidates are providing written answers.

Commissioner Schwarze raised a question as to the chart on page 2H-2 regarding the description of the different subtests in English in which subtest I and subtest II appeared to be identical. Dr. Jacobson said that staff would double check that.

Commissioner Whitson said the reason that her daughter went to get a teaching credential from Washington D.C. was that she thought the California testing was too difficult and the combination of required tests was burdensome.

Chair Pearson said the reason that all these issues of testing were before the Commission was because of SB 1209, and that there was a perception on the part of the Legislature that the required credential testing was too much of a financial and professional burden.

As the Commission evaluates those issues, it is nonetheless hard to make a single test stretch to meet more than one purpose.

Commissioner Gaston said another issue was the bureaucratization of the teaching profession. If the Commission were to keep everything the same it would be difficult to address the bureaucratization of teaching and substitute that notion for one of the excellence, but that she was not sure if this area is under Commission's purview. For all the reasons that were cited in the agenda item, Commission Gaston indicated that if it was going to be impossible to overcome the difficulties in eliminating a particular test or of substituting one for another, then something still needs to be done to address that situation.

Commissioner Cordeiro asked how long it took to take the CBEST test. Dr. Jacobson said the candidates could take up to four hours. Commissioner Cordeiro then asked about the length of other professional exams. Dr. Jacobson said our examination structure responds to the requirements in the Education Code which mandate the Commission to have certain examinations but that she did not have information on other professions.

Commissioner Perry asked whether there is a Federal model that under the No Child Left Behind legislation which could give us a guide to how we can incorporate all these concerns and ensure that the children are getting a quality teacher who is able to provide effective reading and writing instruction across the curriculum in these various single subjects.

Chair Pearson thought that the purpose of the CBEST is guarantee that a candidate is minimally competent in reading, writing and mathematics, and does not guarantee anything about the quality of teaching. He questioned whether or not the California High School Exit Examination might serve the same function as the CBEST. Dr. Jacobson said the purpose of the CBEST is to establish the candidates can read, write and compute in English appropriately to the job of a teacher, and that the Commission's teacher preparation program standards do assure that both multiple subject and single subject candidates are instructed in the skills of reading and teaching reading across the content areas. Thus, if these topics are not covered specifically by a particular examination they are nonetheless covered by the approved teacher preparation program that is required by the Commission's standards to address these areas. Dr. Jacobson also said that in terms of the High School Exit Examination that could certainly be one of the alternatives to be look at in terms of CBEST proxies.

Chair Pearson asked that why we take basic skills and put that as a test for everyone to take rather than to put the responsibility on the universities to demonstrate with evidence that they are producing candidates who actually possess these kinds of basic skills and make it a program standard as part of the accreditation process for which they might provide evidence such as the High School Exit Exams or perhaps other exams as well.

Commission Gomez said the CBEST exam is at the minimum level of reading and mathematics demands that we should have as a measure of competency. He stated that

the Commission should look at not just the possibility of consolidating but also making sure that the examinations mirror those conditions that we are asking our students to address.

Commissioner Young said there are two general areas in most examinations for teacher competence, which include subject matter to assess whether you know what you are teaching in a content area of significant depth, and also whether you know the pedagogy of how to teach. In California it is necessary for our teachers to demonstrate the basic skills, not knowledge of what they are teaching and not how they are teaching, but just the basic high school level of reading and writing and it is very insulting. She said that when we talk about consolidating with the existing exams we need to recognize that the two exams are measuring something very different that is not really dealing with teaching, and that probably the more reasonable way to streamline testing would be to return to the requirements of SB 1209 to ask the Superintendent of Public Instruction's office to do as the legislation required concerning other examination options, and that that is a more viable option than combining the CBEST with the CSET.

Chair Pearson questioned whether the exams that exist within the universities such as those used to get into certain courses presupposes the level of literacy in English.

Commissioner Young said that her presentation about the CSU placement examination would present another good proxy.

Commissioner Littman said it would be sad if the only thing to come out of the SB 1209 legislation is just dropping the 150 hour requirement for professional growth, and that the Commission might need to think about adding a subtest that addressed the basic skills to a CSET examination and drop or offer the regular CSET on those off months, which would split the time over a two month period for a candidate to take all the tests. She also thought might be appropriate to give up the CBEST test as requirement for the credential because something has to be done to reduce the amount of test taking which is an unfair burden to the candidates financially and preventing people from entering this profession.

Commissioner Gallagher said regarding the Chair's comment about accountability whether the Commission gets back knowledge of what the candidates do well on the exams. Dr. Jacobson said after each administration of the CSET examination series, the Commission gets a complete report back that indicates item statistics and candidates performance, and staff would be able to look at which items perform in certain ways with different characteristics. Dr. Jacobson asked about the purpose for which Commissioner Gallagher would like to use the information.

Commissioner Gallagher then asked whether the institution could get the information on which areas the candidates did not pass but still met the cut score. Dr. Jacobson replied that the candidates cannot pass without meeting the cut score. Commissioner Gallagher then asked whether we know what the candidates know within that subject area by institution. Dr. Jacobson said there is a detailed report that goes back to each institution

indicated by the candidates when they sign up for the exam, but she is not familiar with exactly what the report covers.

Commissioner Stordahl asked whether the CSET testing occurs the same way as the CBEST. Dr. Jacobson replied yes. Commissioner Stordahl then said he agreed Commissioner Littman's suggestion to add the other subtest which meets basic skill as an option. Dr. Jacobson said one of the major implications would be that if we put both examinations on the same testing date, we do not want to reduce the amount of time available for the subject matter competency exam, and it makes the testing day extremely long for the candidates by adding another subtest. Commissioner Stordahl asked whether the test could be separated over a multiple day period. Dr. Jacobson said one could do that now since the candidate could take the subject matter examination one month and basic skills examination the next month.

Mr. Bersin said the CBEST is perceived by outsiders as being the teacher qualification test and not a basic skills test, which does enormous damage to our profession by suggesting that the certification test is actually geared to high school exit exam standards. He urged that all the technical difficulties need to be seriously examined without sacrificing the content of the CBEST.

**Franell Prather, Credential Counselors and Analysts of California**, said she supported the SB 1209 reforms pertaining to streamlining and reducing the number of the examinations required for the credential candidates, and the result of the CSET: MS adding the writing was positive for students who have not already taken the CBEST. She further said the time and cost associated with developing basic skills assessments to be incorporated into the CEST: SS exams would not be consistent with SB 1209, and CCAC does not support trying to combine these exams.

**Susan Westbrook, California Federation of Teachers**, echoed the concerns of her colleagues with the validity, liability and possible addition of cost to combine these tests.

**Sharon Robison, Association of California School Administration**, raised her concern on modification and consolidation of the CBEST and CSET: SS exams which assess two totally different purposes.

**David Simmons, Ventura County Office of Education**, said it would not save the money and time to create addition subtests under the CSET: SS.

**Mel Hunt, Credential Counselors and Analysts of California**, also raised his concern on combining the exams, using the example of combining the MSAT with the CBEST.

Chair Pearson asked for clarification on the MSAT [i.e., CSET: MS] option. Dr. Jacobson said that was a policy decision that was incorporated within SB 1209 that adopted the position that candidates who successfully pass the CSET: Multiple Subjects examination would be deemed by virtue of having passed to have also met basic skills in the areas of reading and math, but one major difference is that the CSET: MS

examination does specifically address some mathematics and reading content. She further noted concerning the question of the writing assessment with the CSET: MS examinations that the writing aspect was not comparable to the CBEST exam, and therefore the CBEST writing section was added to comply with SB 1209 as an additional subtest to the CSET: MS examination. The case of CSET: SS is quite different because of the nature of the in-depth subject matter content and focus of those examinations.

**Nancy Proclivo, California State University of San Marcos**, said it would be very difficult and complicated to incorporate the CBEST into the CSET: SS.

Commissioner Gaston asked for clarification for the cut scores that were to be set by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and whether the Commission could get a short summary on that from the CDE. Director Janssen said the letter from Superintendent Jack O'Connell will be attached in the Friday Weekly Update to commissioners.

Chair Pearson said the main problem would be that we don't have any validity data to be able to translate the score on any of those tests into what score a person would get if they took the CBEST, and it's the matter of both psychometric work and cost of doing the validity study. Dr. Jacobson said also access to the student data on these other examinations was an issue.

Commissioner Young said she wanted to know whether the recommendation would be for the staff to write up the report, and the report does need to include what the Commission thinks about alternatives to CBEST in the way of streamlining.

Commissioner Schwarze said it would be costly for the Superintendent of Public Instruction to set the cut scores as required by SB 1209 because of the short time line, but she thought there is a way to do that.

Commissioner Gaston said she understands there is a time limit that CDE is facing, but is it possible to through the clean up route to make modifications to that? Dr. Jacobson said possibly the author of the legislation could be contacted by the CDE.

David Pearson suggested that the proxy route required by SB 1209 could be done, but with some considerations. Dr. Jacobson also pointed out another consideration raised by Superintendent O'Connell's letter was some statements by the owners of the examinations regarding the appropriate and inappropriate uses of their test and that area needed to be addressed also.

Commissioner Littman said it would not be the Commission's responsibility to address the improper use of the test. She further said whether the subtest option is provided we need to look at more opportunities to take all of the subtests.

Dr. Jacobson then asked for clarification as to whether the Commission advocated the idea of taking the CBEST examination in the morning and taking the subject matter examination in the afternoon as an option on all of the testing dates. Commissioner

Littman replied yes, and she also said we should not give up the idea of dropping the CBEST test. Dr. Jacobson asked whether Commissioner Littman endorsed the idea of incorporating the CBEST subtests within the CSET array. Commissioner Littman said that could be one of the options, but she still suggested throwing out the CBEST exam.

Commissioner McGrath asked for data about if it made a difference when in the preparation sequence the CBEST is taken, and how and if that affects the pass rate. Dr. Jacobson said she is not aware of any studies of that question and that people chose to take CBEST at many points in time and for many different purposes.

Chair Pearson suggested that another way to solve this problem is put the burden on the teacher preparation institutions to demonstrate the basic competency of their candidates to enter the teaching profession as one of the standards, and he questioned if other states have the same type of basic skills exam. Dr. Jacobson said most states have a basic skills examination.

Commissioner Stordahl said the CBEST is an entrance exam and it is another indicator of a statement of quality to the public and should not be given up.

Commissioner Perry agreed with Commissioner Stordahl and thought the Commission should take more consideration on giving up the CBEST.

Dr. Jacobson said staff would craft some language representing the tenor of the Commission's discussion for the draft report and bring back this item at next meeting.

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Written Comments Received Prior to the Public Study Session**

June 22, 2007

Commission on Teacher Credentialing  
Attn: Ms. Cheryl Hickey

Dear Commission Members:

From the brief email I recently regarding “Implications of Modifying the CSET: Single Subject Examinations (CSET: SS) to Assess Basic Skills In Reading, Writing, and Mathematics”, I would strongly oppose this motion to address these additional skills.

I know first hand the trials and tribulations that many future science teachers face in either selecting K-12 science teaching as a career or electing to make a career switch into the teaching profession. In my advising sessions, I have had the pleasure of counseling many fine candidates about the SJSU single subject program. Each year I share with these potential teachers an extensive laundry list of requirements, which appears to grow annually. The list by my estimate includes 12-14 key components including the traditional CBEST exam (a measure of their English and Math proficiency = a duplicate of the proposed motion), a 30 minute prompted writing sample graded by SJSU staff using a rubric, a 3-4 hour technology exam, 30 hours of pre-professional experience (probably the most beneficial of the requirements), 2 district applications to the University and to the program, letters of recommendation, a resume, transcripts, fingerprints, knowledge of our constitution and US History, and finally Subject Matter Competent either through course work or the CSET exams series (a marvelous amalgamation of scientific scatology dealing with all sciences but not really measuring the individual’s ability to communicate this information to youngsters).

Is it any wonder that we will be facing a shortage of teachers, science in particular, in the coming years? The CCTC needs to address this impending issue and be more realistic in establishing the fundamental standards necessary to begin this journey into public service. In today’s world, if you have not noticed, teaching is not a very desirable occupation in terms of its financial compensation or its stature in the public mind. It certainly has undergone a revolution since I started teaching in 1966 and I am sad to say not for the better. CCTC cannot address this degradation but it certainly can be more supportive of making the process of becoming a certificated teacher more streamlined and less fraught with potholes of failure.

Please be very careful before adding another pothole to the process.

Thank you for time and attention to my concerns.

Michael Du Bois  
San Jose State University  
Science Education Program  
Single Subject Credential Advisor