
4B

Action

Professional Services Committee

Update on Assessments for Expedited Route Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Candidates

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents an update on assessments for expedited route preliminary administrative services candidates, including activities that have occurred since the December 2013 Commission meeting, and requests Commission input and potential direction.

Policy Question: Do the options presented in this agenda item for implementing a content assessment and a performance assessment for expedited route preliminary administrative services credential candidates meet Commission purposes and/or expectations?

Recommended Action: Staff recommends that the Commission revise and update the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE) as follows:

- Move forward with the significant upgrade to the content portion of the CPACE as originally planned in December 2013.
- Authorize the development of a new content/scenario-based Performance Assessment as described in this item.
- Continue to make access to the expedited (examination) route available during the period of time when the two new assessments would be developed by extending the administration of the current examination through winter 2015.

Presenter: Phyllis Jacobson, Administrator, Professional Services Division

Strategic Plan Goal:

I. Educator Quality

- ◆ Develop, maintain, and promote high quality authentic, consistent educator assessments and examinations that support development and certification of educators who have demonstrated the capacity to be effective practitioners.

April 2014

Update on Assessments for Expedited Route Preliminary Administrative Services Credential Candidates

Introduction

This agenda item presents an update on assessments for expedited route preliminary administrative services candidates, including activities that have occurred since the December 2013 Commission meeting, and requests Commission direction on next steps.

Background

The Commission is in the process of updating the examinations and assessments used by individuals seeking to earn an administrative services credential by passing a Commission approved test rather than completing an accredited preliminary preparation program. The California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE) is the examination that has been in use since 2011 for this purpose. At the September 2013 meeting, the Commission reviewed options concerning implementing a performance assessment for all preliminary administrative services credential candidates. Staff was directed to continue to investigate potential administrator performance assessments, including the Connecticut Administrator Test (CAT), and to report back to the Commission at the December 2013 meeting with additional information.

At the December 2013 meeting, Commissioners discussed approaches to assessment for the expedited route as well as for candidates who complete an accredited program. With respect to the expedited route, the Commission took action to adopt an approach that included the development of a two-part assessment: one part that would be anchored in a revision of the current administrator examination item bank to focus on a more robust and in-depth assessment of each candidate's content knowledge, based on the Commission's adopted Content Expectations; and a second part that would focus on a performance assessment for these candidates consisting of adapting and adopting Connecticut's Administrator Test (the CAT) for use in California.

It was noted during the discussion that at the present time, the CAT is the only extant validated performance assessment for administrator initial licensure available in the nation (<http://www.eastconn.org/index.php/component/content/article/9-uncategorised/235-connecticut-administrator-test-cat-main>), and that one other state (Massachusetts) is working on developing a new administrator licensure performance assessment. The CAT has been used by the state of Connecticut for initial licensure for twelve years, and has been regularly updated during that time. The CAT candidate handbook was most recently updated in August 2013 (<http://www.eastconn.org/images/stories/TeachingandLearning/BulletinRevisedOct2013.pdf>).

With regard to development of an Administrator Performance Assessment (APA) for program completers, the Commission directed staff during the December 2013 meeting to continue meeting with stakeholders to discuss and identify approaches that will work well in the context

of a preparation program. Discussions are underway and updates will be brought forward at a future Commission meeting. At this time, staff is approaching development of performance assessments for the expedited route and for the program completer route as parallel but separate efforts.

Current Status of Implementation

Staff has had in-depth discussions with Connecticut officials representing both the Connecticut State Department of Education and EASTCONN, the regional educational services agency that develops, revises, administers, scores, and reports the result of the CAT on behalf of the state of Connecticut. These discussions have revolved around what it would take to adapt the CAT for use in California. Earlier this year, EASTCONN sent Commission staff a prospectus detailing activities and costs they deemed necessary to support use of the CAT in California. Unfortunately, the cost of doing these activities is significantly beyond what the Commission's budget can support. EASTCONN and the Connecticut Department of Education do not view the CAT as an "off the shelf" assessment, since the items are regularly reviewed, revised, and updated. The state of Connecticut was not willing to allow California to simply use the assessment as is without substantial modification due to concerns about the validity, reliability, and legal defensibility of doing so.

Thus, at the present time, the option of using the CAT as the administrator performance component for expedited route preliminary administrative services candidates is no longer a viable option within the array of examinations for these candidates.

Options for Moving Forward

The Commission already owns an extensive item bank, including content-based questions and performance tasks, for the current administrator examination. This examination could be significantly improved, made more rigorous and in-depth, and updated to serve the Commission's purpose for both a content assessment and a performance assessment for expedited (examination) route candidates. Below is a description of how this process could be accomplished in a timely manner.

A. The Content Test for Expedited (Examination) Route Candidates

As indicated above, the Commission took action in December 2013 to require candidates for the expedited (examination) route to the preliminary administrative services credential to pass two assessments: a content assessment and a performance assessment. The Commission also made clear its direction and expectation that the content assessment must be robust, in-depth, and focused on the two highest levels of the range of thinking skills for candidates. The "range of thinking skills" represents a conception of levels of skills evidenced by student or candidate work. Thus, for example, the lowest level skills (Level One) include recall of factual information; Level Two skills include understanding and using basic concepts such as measuring length or using punctuation marks correctly; Level Three skills include evidence of strategic thinking such as summarizing major events and developing logical arguments; and Level Four, or highest level, skills include extended thinking such as designing and conducting an experiment, analyzing its data and reporting results and conclusions. The "Range of Thinking Skills" is adapted from a graphic developed by the Wisconsin Center of Educational Research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2006 and used by the California Department of

Education as part of orientation to the concepts underlying the Common Core State Standards (Appendix A).

In updating the existing assessment for the expedited route, the Commission's testing contractor would work with a panel of California administrator preparation experts and practicing administrators appointed by the Executive Director to revise the current examination item bank for purposes of developing the Content Test in accordance with the Commission's direction and focusing on higher levels of thinking skills as described above.

B. The Performance Assessment for Expedited (Examination) Route Candidates

To achieve the objective of requiring a robust performance assessment as part of the expedited route to the administrative services credential, the Commission could also work with the current contractor to develop new performance items modeled on the Connecticut approach to performance assessment, repurposing performance-related items that are part of the current item bank as a basis from which to begin. This approach would involve the use of context-based, or "scenario-based" items that present the candidate with a significant amount of background material relating to a situation that would typically be faced by a school administrator (such as, for example, reviewing a teacher's lesson plan, video of the lesson, reflections by the teacher, student work samples, and a variety of supporting materials), and asking several reflective and in-depth questions about how the administrator candidate would analyze the instruction, conference with the teacher, and plan for further support of student learning as well as of the teacher's professional growth. It would be anticipated that the key areas of focus for the performance items would reflect the job role of the administrator as instructional leader and supporter of teacher growth and development as well as the job role of the administrator as a collaborative site leader working effectively with teachers, staff, parents, students, the community, and others to support school improvement efforts.

The context/scenario-based performance test items would be of at least comparable depth and rigor as the Connecticut items, and would measure the Commission's adopted CAPEs in the identified areas indicated above of the job role of the administrator as instructional leader and supporter of teacher growth and development as well as the job role of the administrator as a collaborative site leader working effectively with teachers, staff, parents, students, the community, and others to support school improvement efforts.

These items would form a performance assessment for expedited route preliminary administrative services credential candidates. In order to qualify via the expedited route, these candidates would have to take and pass a revised CPACE that incorporated both a rigorous and cognitively demanding content assessment and a performance assessment modeled after the Connecticut assessment. This approach would be consistent with the action taken by the Commission in December 2013 to require both a content assessment and a performance assessment for candidates for the expedited route to the preliminary administrative services credential.

Maintaining Access to the Expedited Route Option

Approximately 800+ candidates per year typically take advantage of the expedited route to the preliminary administrative services credential. Since these candidates are not enrolled in

programs and are located across the state, the major access point to information for these candidates and about these candidates has been the Commission's examinations website.

It is anticipated that development of the Content Assessment and the Performance Assessment for these candidates would begin immediately upon Commission action to proceed, and take approximately one year to fully develop. The Commission has indicated a commitment to maintaining an expedited (examination) route to the credential, as allowed by statute. In order to maintain access to this route for candidates during the new development time frame, the Commission could consider extending administration of the current examination for approximately two additional administrations (fall 2014 and winter 2015) while the new examinations are being developed and pilot tested.

Maintaining access to the expedited route to the credential would serve the purpose of supporting local control, as districts and employers would be able to continue to identify, encourage and support qualified local candidates for whom the examination route might be appropriate.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission revise and update the California Preliminary Administrative Credential Examination (CPACE) as follows:

- Move forward with the significant upgrade of the content portion of the CPACE as originally planned in December 2013.
- Authorize the development of a new content/scenario-based Performance Assessment that would replace the existing performance component of CPACE, as described in this item.
- Continue to make access to the expedited (examination) route available during the period of time when the two new assessments would be developed by extending the administration of the current examination through winter 2015.

Next Steps

Staff would move forward as directed by the Commission and as described in the agenda item concerning examinations development relating to expedited (examination) route preliminary administrative services credential candidates.

