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## Information/Action

*Fiscal Policy and Planning Committee of the Whole*

### **Proposed Amendments to the Contract for the Administration of the Bilingual Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Examinations**

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**Executive Summary:** The purpose of this agenda item is to consider an extension of the contract for the administration of the Bilingual Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Examinations. Under the current contract, the last administration of these examinations will be held in June of 2006.

**Staff Direction:** Commission staff is seeking direction from the Commission in order to secure a contract to continue administration of the BCLAD Examinations beyond June, 2006.

**Presenters:** Crista Hill, Division Director, Fiscal and Business Services Section, and Amy Jackson, Administrator, Professional Services Division

**Strategic Plan Goal:**

**Continue effective and appropriate involvement of the Commission with policymakers on key education issues.**

- ◆ Respond to policymakers information inquiries.
- ◆ Collaborate with and advise appropriate agencies.



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# **Proposed Amendments to the Contract for the Administration of the Bilingual Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Examinations**

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## **Introduction**

This report describes options for the continued administration of the Bilingual Crosscultural Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Examinations. The current contract provides for administration of these examinations through the scheduled June 24, 2006 test date.

The Commission on Teacher Credentialing (Commission) is currently conducting discussions with stakeholders to develop options for updating bilingual certification. Options will be presented to the Commission for consideration at a future meeting. If the Commission chooses to offer new certification programs and/or examinations for teachers to earn bilingual certification, it is anticipated that development and implementation of program standards and/or examinations would take one-and-a-half to two years.

Extending the current contract to provide for administration of the BCLAD Examinations for an additional two years would allow time for this work to take place and would provide a reasonable number of opportunities for candidates to pass the BCLAD Examinations and earn the BCLAD Certificate under the current certification options.

Costs for the work required under these contracts would be recovered through examinee fees, as required by Education Code Section 44298.

## **Background**

California Education Code Section 44253.5 requires the Commission to develop and administer examinations on which a teacher can demonstrate competence for teaching students in a bilingual classroom. Currently, those examinations are the Bilingual Crosscultural, Language and Academic Development (BCLAD) Examinations. The BCLAD Examinations are taken by teachers who are pursuing a BCLAD Certificate that authorizes teaching English learners in their native language. The examinations are offered for ten (10) languages and require candidates to demonstrate competence in methodology for primary-language instruction (Test 4), knowledge of the culture of emphasis (Test 5), and proficiency in the language of emphasis (Test 6: Listening, Reading, Speaking, and Writing). BCLAD Tests 4 and 5, and Test 6 for Spanish are offered twice each year and BCLAD Test 6s for all other languages is offered once each year.

The BCLAD Examinations have been administered by National Evaluation Systems, Inc., (NES) since 1995 under contracts awarded by the Commission through the competitive bidding process

conducted in 1994, 2000 and 2004. The current contract covers test administrations through June of 2006.

At the direction of the Commission and with the participation of Commissioners, staff is working with English learner educators and other stakeholders to develop options for routes to bilingual teacher certification. An update on the progress of this work will be presented to the Commission under Agenda Item 7F, of this agenda. If at the time the Commission directs staff to pursue development of new examinations for bilingual certification, it will be necessary to conduct a competitive bidding process for a contractor to conduct a job analysis, validity study, test development, and test administration activities. It is anticipated that these contracting and test development processes will take one-and-a-half to two years.

Since the development of new examinations for the BCLAD Examinations will extend beyond June 2006, the Commission may wish to consider extending the current contract for administration of the BCLAD Examinations for two years to (1) provide time for this work to be completed, and (2) allow a reasonable period for teachers to pass the BCLAD Examinations and earn certification under the current structure prior to the potential transition to a new examination.

The proposed amendment would require the contractor to administer the BCLAD Examinations according to the schedule described above (i.e., twice per year for tests 4, 5, and test 6 for Spanish; once per year for Test 6s for all other languages) through June, 2008. Administration of the BCLAD Examinations involves the following types of contractor responsibilities:

- assuring the security of the testing process and materials;
- producing all program communications and materials;
- producing annual registration bulletins;
- identifying and securing testing sites;
- registering candidates;
- hiring and training test administrators;
- administering the test at multiple sites;
- providing alternative testing arrangements to candidates with verified disabilities;
- hiring and training scorers;
- scoring and reporting scores to candidates, colleges, universities, and the Commission;
- and
- producing reports.

### **Options to Consider for the BCLAD Examinations Contract**

If the Commission approves seeking an amendment to the contract for administration of the BCLAD Examinations, staff will contact the contractor to discuss the contract extension. The contract developed as a result of this amendment would extend to October 31, 2008 covering test administrations from July 2006 through June 2008. Issuing the contract through October, 2008 allows for final test administration reporting from the contractor. Amendment of this contract will require final approval by the Department of General Services.

If the Commission chooses not to seek an extension of the BCLAD Examinations contract, staff asks that the Commission approve releasing a Request for Proposal (RFP) for administration of the BCLAD Examinations for two years with the possibility of two one-year extensions. This request is being made because releasing an RFP at a later date would jeopardize the ability to conduct a competitive bidding and contracting process leaving the Commission without a contractor to administer the BCLAD Examinations or the established testing schedule for 2006-07.

### **Recommendation**

Commission staff is seeking direction from the Commission in order to secure a contract to continue administration of the BCLAD Examinations beyond June, 2006.

Staff is available to answer any questions that Members of the Commission may have.

