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Information

Fiscal Policy and Planning Committee of the Whole

Overview of the Commission's Teacher Credentialing Examination Development and Funding Processes

Executive Summary: Staff will present an overview of the Commission's teacher credentialing examination development and funding processes.

Recommended Action: None. This is an information item only.

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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.

Overview of the Commission’s Teacher Credentialing Examination Development and Funding Processes

Introduction

The Commission sponsors a variety of examinations that are required of teacher candidates for teacher licensure purposes. This agenda item reviews the processes for the development of Commission-owned examinations and the funding mechanisms for these examinations.

The examinations covered by this agenda item are the:

- CBEST (California Basic Educational Skills Test);
- RICA (Reading Instruction Competence Assessment);
- CSET (California Subject Examinations for Teachers);
- CLAD/BCLAD (Cross Cultural Language and Academic Development/Bilingual Cross Cultural Language and Academic Development); and
- CTEL (California Teacher of English Learners) examinations.

These Commission-sponsored examinations are used to determine the basic skills proficiency of candidates (CBEST), the subject matter competence of teacher candidates (CSET), and the pedagogical competence of teacher candidates in the areas of reading instruction (RICA) and English learners (CLAD/BCLAD/CTEL).

Background

The primary purpose of each of the Commission’s examinations is to ensure that teacher candidates ultimately have the required knowledge, skills and abilities to provide effective instruction for K-12 students in accordance with California’s student academic content standards. To that end, each stage of the development process for Commission-owned examinations includes input from K-16 California educators regarding what both teachers and students need to know to be successful. The inclusiveness of this process in involving California educators is a unique feature of Commission-owned examinations, and ensures that the examinations that are developed and implemented meet California’s needs and expectations.

How Commission-Owned Examinations are Developed

The process of developing and implementing a Commission-owned examination is complex, but follows a standardized, rigorous set of procedures in order to assure the validity, reliability and legal defensibility of the examination. The development process and associated activities are typically facilitated through the assistance of an external testing contractor who successfully bids on this work through a publicly-advertised Request for Proposals (RFP) process and who is awarded a contract for this purpose. Because of the highly detailed and complex nature of the work to be performed, the RFP is extremely detailed to ensure that the winning bidder’s work will comply with the needs and requirements of the Commission. All test items and related testing materials developed under the contract are owned by the Commission during and after the

development process. Additional information concerning the RFP process is provided in Agenda Item FPPC 3E.

There are four phases in the examination development process. The discussion below illustrates these phases through following the CSET development cycle as an example.

Phase One: Creating the Examination Program: Once a contractor has been selected to facilitate the development of a new examination, the Commission seeks out applications and nominations for experts in the particular content area of the examination. Applications are then received and reviewed blind (i.e., with names and other identifying information removed from the application) by staff and other appropriate individuals using a rating rubric to assure that only the most qualified applicants are considered for appointment to the panel. Applications are considered not only with respect to the applicant's experience and background, but also with respect to K-12 and IHE balance, geographic balance, ethnicity and gender, and other demographic factors to assure the broadest possible representation on the panel. The names of the most qualified individuals identified through this rigorous screening and evaluation process are forwarded to the Executive Director for review and appointment to the panel. In the example of the CSET, these panels were known as the SMAP (Subject Matter Advisory Panel) panels. In addition, the Commission's standing Bias Review Committee (BRC) is notified of the pending examination development and review process.

Phase Two: Defining the Content for the Examination. Once the panel is appointed by the Executive Director, the work of the panel begins with the identification and review of the most current K-12 standards, curriculum frameworks, advisories, literature and research in the field of the examination.

If there is already a Commission-sponsored examination that is being updated through this process, the content specifications of the current examination are reviewed through a validity study and compared to the most recent frameworks and other relevant materials identified by the panel. In some instances, a job analysis may also be performed at the start of the process if the examination to be developed is in a new content area where there has not previously been a Commission examination. In the job analysis activity, input from a wide range of practitioners K-16 is invited where the respondents rate specific knowledge, skills and abilities related to the test area(s) that would be expected of beginning teachers of that area. The information gained from the job analysis is then used to form the basis for the content specifications for the new examination.

From this initial panel work, new or revised test specifications are developed that identify the content domains to be addressed by the examination. In addition, a separate Alignment and Congruence Panel reviews the content specifications to assure their alignment with the K-12 student standards.

Panel activities are carried out by the appointed panel members. The contractor facilitates correspondence to the panel members, and handles meeting and travel arrangements. The contractor's staff facilitate the meetings and are available to respond to technical questions about testing issues that may be raised by the panel. For test security purposes, all panel members sign

confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements at the start of each meeting and again before looking at each draft and each final document they review, and panel members may not take the examination on which they work for credentialing purposes for a period of five years.

After the draft of the test specifications has been completed and reviewed by the panel and by the Bias Review Committee, a public input field survey is developed and implemented in order to assure that the test specifications reflect what practitioners and other experts in the field identify as relevant, necessary and current knowledge in the field that would be needed by a beginning teacher/practitioner. This process addresses the content validity of the examination for use with teacher credential candidates. In the example of the CSET, the statewide validity study assisted the panel to identify the Subject Matter Requirements (SMRs) on which the test content is based. The results of the field survey are reviewed by the panel, and any modifications needed to the test specifications are identified and made. This survey distribution is supervised by Commission staff and the responsibilities for implementation of the survey are shared by the Commission (through posting information on the Commission's website regarding the survey and encouraging site visitors to access and complete the survey) and the testing contractor (through hosting the survey on their website, widely distributing the survey to stakeholders across the state, and collecting and summarizing the survey data for review by the panel).

In the meanwhile, panel members work on establishing the recommended test structure (i.e., subtests if any, and the types of questions that would best match the particular content such as multiple choice and/or constructed response). Once the validity survey has been tabulated and the results reviewed by the panel, the test content and structure are finalized. In addition, the final test content and structure are reviewed by the BRC. At that point, the testing contractor begins to draft possible test questions, an agenda item is presented to the Commission by staff for review and approval of the test specifications.

Phase Three: Developing Test Items. Once the Commission has reviewed and approved the test specifications, the drafts of the test questions are reviewed by the BRC and the subject matter expert panel, and modifications are made as necessary. The test questions are then field tested, and the statistics on how each of the items has performed is shared with the expert panel. Modifications are then made as needed to the test items, and the expert panel recommends the initial weighting of the various test sections.

Parallel Activity Within Phase Three: Development of Program Standards. If the content area of the examination also has a program option, whereby candidates may complete an approved program in lieu of passing the examination (such as single subject candidates completing an approved single subject matter program in lieu of the CSET), simultaneous development of program standards takes place at the point at which the Commission approves the test specifications. The program standards, along with a transition plan for implementation of the new or revised standards, are subsequently presented to the Commission for review and approval.

Phase Four: Setting Passing Scores. After the first administration of the examination, a different panel of experts is appointed by the Executive Director through an open application, nomination and review process to serve as a standard-setting panel to set the recommended

passing scores and weighting for the examination. This panel will also include one or two liaison members from the original design team that worked on the development of the examination. The standard-setting panel's work includes taking the actual examination, reviewing the difficulty level of each examination question relative to what knowledge and skills should be expected of beginning teachers, and identifying for each section of the examination the recommended passing scores and question weighting. For test security purposes, all standard-setting panel members sign confidentiality and non-disclosure agreements at the start of each meeting and again before looking at each draft and each final document they review, and these panel members may not take the examination on which they work for credentialing purposes for a period of five years.

An agenda item with the recommended passing scores and weighting for the examination is presented by staff to the Commission for approval. After the passing scores are approved by the Commission, the candidates who took the initial administration are notified as to their status, and the passing scores are made public.

Once this entire process has been completed, the examination is then ready for ongoing use with teacher candidates. From beginning to end, the process of developing and implementing a new examination for general use takes approximately a year and a half to two and a half years, depending on the scope and complexity of the specific examination. Attachment A shows this process in outline format as it was applied in the development of the CSET subject matter examinations. In order for the Commission to maintain viable, legally defensible examinations, the content of these examinations must be periodically reviewed as part of a validity study that ensures that the examination reflects the most current K-12 standards, frameworks, and other relevant documents.

How Commission-Owned Examinations are Funded

In accordance with the Education Code, the development and implementation of Commission-owned examinations are funded by candidate fees. Education Code sections pertaining to each examination give the Commission the authority to charge candidate fees for each examination in order to support the development, oversight, and validity studies for these examinations. For example, EC 44253.8 requires the Commission to "charge examination fees that are sufficient to recover the costs of development and administering the examination, including the costs of periodic studies of the examinations, except to the extent that these costs are recovered by appropriation by another source of funds."

The examinations funding process works currently as follows. When contractors bid on RFPs for Commission examination development work, and/or for examination administration, they estimate the costs of the entire development and/or administration processes. The costs proposed by a successful bidder who is awarded a contract for examination development work and/or examination administration are recovered by the contractor subsequently through candidate fees as applicants register with the contractor for the various examinations.

Subsequent to each administration of Commission-owned examinations, the Commission receives revenue from the testing contractor. This revenue, which consists of a management fee

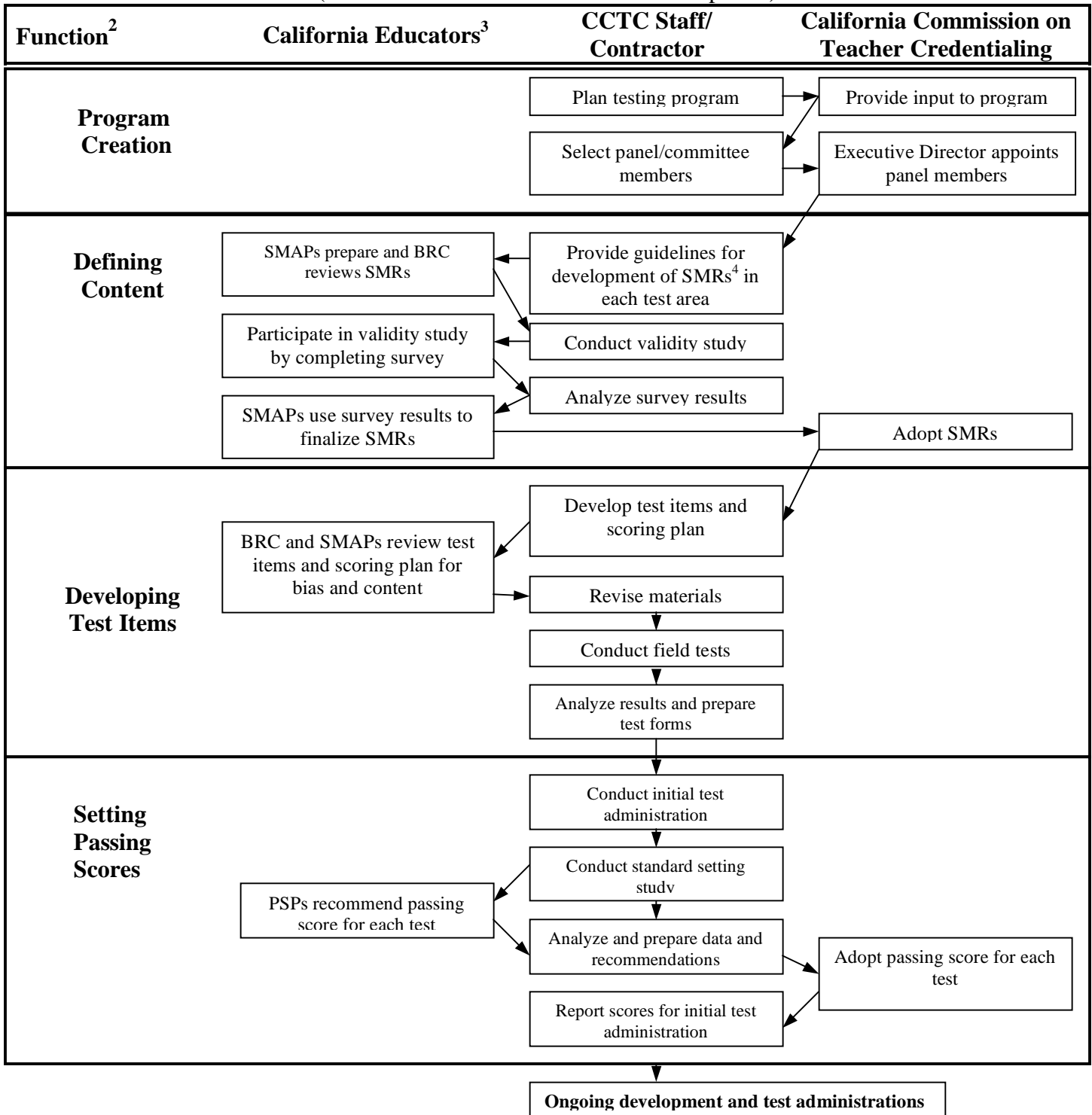
of approximately \$6 (CBEST) to \$37 (CLAD/BCLAD) per exam registration, is applied to the Test Development and Administration Account and may be used according to EC 44235.1 (c) for examinations-related purposes, including “the development, agency-support, maintenance, or administration of tests or other assessments established, required, or administered by the commission.”

The management fees for each exam are set by the Commission. Historically when fees have needed to be adjusted, Commission staff would bring forward an agenda item in the Spring for discussion and direction. Generally, the effective date of the proposed changes would be effective July 1 of the next fiscal year. Once approved, Commission staff would work with the contractor to update the test bulletins and their website with the approved changes. The most recent change in the management fees occurred at the May/June 2005 Commission meeting. The management fee was adjusted by \$6 for all exams except CBEST, because this exam program management fee is set in statute. Prior to the action the fees had not been adjusted since 2002-03.

Attachment A, which outlines the full test development process, is provided on the following page.

Criterion-Referenced Test Development Process¹

(as used for CSET Examinations Development)



- Notes:
1. The above flowchart is a schematic of some typical test development activities which may be changed and implemented at different times for different tests. These activities may involve multiple interactions between California educators, CCTC staff, and the contractor.
 2. Time estimates required for each function are as follows: defining content, 1-2 years; developing test items, 1 year; setting passing scores, 4 mos.
 3. There is a Subject Matter Advisory Panel (SMAP) and Passing Score Panel (PSP) for each test. There is a single Bias Review Committee (BRC).
 4. Subject Matter Requirements (SMRs) define the content for both teacher preparation programs and subject matter examinations.