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## Information

### *Professional Services Committee*

### **Update on the Potential Consolidation of Examinations for Languages Other Than English**

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**Executive Summary:** This report provides an update on stakeholder input concerning the potential consolidation of the examination structure for examinations in languages other than English.

**Recommended Action:** For information only.

**Presenter:** Phyllis Jacobson, 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.



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## **Update on the Potential Consolidation of Examinations for Languages Other Than English**

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### **Background**

At its meeting of July 31-August 1, 2006 the Commission discussed the potential for consolidating the examinations structure for languages other than English. Staff was directed to seek additional stakeholder input regarding this issue. This report summarizes stakeholder input obtained to date, presents a plan for obtaining additional stakeholder input, and presents a potential model for consolidating and simplifying the examinations structure for languages other than English.

### **Summary of the Stakeholder Meeting of August 17, 2006**

Commission staff met with several key stakeholders from the bilingual and the foreign language communities on August 17, 2006, to review the agenda item of July 31-August 1, 2006 and to discuss with the stakeholders the topics identified in that agenda item. Attendees at the meeting, in addition to staff, were:

- Claudia Lockwood (San Joaquin County Office of Education, BTTP Director and Bilingual Workgroup member)
- Duarte Silva (UCOP, Director, California Foreign Language Project)
- Lorraine D'Ambruoso (President, California Foreign Language Teachers Association)
- Gay Yuen (CSU Los Angeles, and Bilingual Workgroup Member)
- Ping Liu (CSU Long Beach, and Coordinator of Asian BCLAD Consortium)

The topics discussed at the meeting were:

- (1) the overlap between the range of Bilingual Crosscultural Language and Academic development (BCLAD) and California Subject Examinations for Teachers: Languages Other than English (CSET LOTE) examinations offered;
- (2) the most efficient use of resources;
- (3) the degree of content overlap between the subtests of the BCLAD and CSET LOTE examinations; and
- (4) the potential benefits of streamlining the examinations structure.

The stakeholders present agreed that the language examinations structure could and should be simplified through combining the current set of BCLAD and CSET LOTE examinations. The stakeholders also discussed and agreed on a potential new structure for

language examinations. This structure would combine the current BCLAD and CSET LOTE examinations in the following manner:

<b>Current Bilingual (BCLAD) Examinations Structure</b>	<b>Current CSET: LOTE Examinations Structure</b>	<b>New Combined CSET Language Examinations Structure</b>
	I: General linguistics and linguistics of the target language	I: General linguistics & linguistics of the target language
5. Culture of Emphasis	II: Literary and cultural texts and traditions; Cultural analysis and comparison	II: Literary and cultural texts and traditions; Cultural analysis and comparison
6. Language: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	III. Language: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing	III. Language: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing
4. Methodology (Bilingual)		IV. Methodology (Bilingual): Part A: Methodology; Part B: Interactions and experiences of the target cultural group within the U.S.

Within the potential new CSET language examinations structure, no current BCLAD test content, or current CSET:LOTE test content, would be eliminated. However, the current set of BCLAD examinations would cease to exist separately (after an appropriate transition period for candidates currently in process of obtaining the BCLAD certification), and only the CSET Language examinations would continue to be administered. The current CTEL examinations would not be affected by any of the proposed modifications.

The stakeholder group also discussed the potential for streamlining the requirements for language-related credentials based on streamlining of language examinations. Within this proposed approach, candidates for an initial bilingual authorization who choose the examinations route rather than the coursework route would take CSET Language subtests II, III, and IV. Candidates for an initial foreign language credential who choose the examinations route would take CSET Language subtests I, II and III. Candidates with a foreign language credential who also wanted a bilingual authorization would need to take only CSET Language subtest IV (Bilingual Methodology). Candidates with a bilingual authorization who also wanted a foreign language authorization would need to take only CSET Language subtest I (General Linguistics and Linguistics of the Target Language). The following charts illustrate the proposed new structure for a language-related credential:

Candidates for an Initial Language-Related Credential-Proposed Streamlined Structure

<b>Initial Credential Desired</b>	<b>Required CSET Language Subtests</b>
Bilingual authorization (BCLAD)	II, III, and IV
Foreign Language authorization (LOTE)	I, II, and III
Both Bilingual and Foreign Language	I, II, III and IV

Candidates with an Existing Credential-Proposed Streamlined Structure

<b>Additional Credential Desired</b>	<b>Required CSET Language Subtests</b>
Have a bilingual authorization, want to get a Foreign Language authorization	I
Have a Foreign Language (LOTE) authorization, want to get a bilingual authorization	IV

The stakeholder group recommended in addition that both the bilingual authorization and the Foreign Language authorization within this proposed new structure be valid for grades K-12. In all cases, however, the bilingual authorization would still be dependent on the candidate's basic credential authorization.

Finally, in keeping with the recommendations of the Bilingual Workgroup, the stakeholders recommended that the new structure include the option for the candidates to satisfy one or more portions of the requirements through either a test or coursework. For example, a candidate might take CSET Language subtest IV (Bilingual Methodology), but satisfy the target language requirement (listening, speaking, reading, writing) through advanced coursework. It was felt that the most efficient way to implement this option would be through the local approved preparation programs that recommend candidates.

**Advantages of the Proposed Streamlined Examinations Structure**

Stakeholders identified the following advantages of the proposed streamlined structure:

- a. Candidates would need to take only a single set of language-related examinations.
- b. Having a single combined set of language-related examinations would be a more efficient use of limited Commission resources.
- c. There would be a potential reduction in costs for candidates who wanted both authorizations (bilingual and Foreign Language).
- d. There would be reduced barriers for candidates, and increased linkages, between the bilingual and the Foreign Language authorizations.
- e. Credential candidates would have increased choice options for meeting credential requirements.
- f. There would be an acknowledgment that there is a common interest, and there are some shared content and approaches, across all spectrums of the language community who use a language other than English for instructional purposes.

## **Related Issues for Further Discussion with Stakeholders**

Although the stakeholder group was in support of the proposed consolidation and streamlining as described above, there are some areas in which the group felt additional discussion, input, and resolution would still be needed even if the larger stakeholder community were also in support of this concept. The group identified a key overarching question: Do bilingual teachers and foreign language teachers need similar levels of knowledge, skills and ability in both content and language?

The group felt that since the authorization would cover grades K-12 for both a bilingual and a Foreign Language teacher, and since both the bilingual teacher and the foreign language teacher would be the teacher of record for K-12 students, that both groups needed similar levels of knowledge, skills and abilities to help all students achieve the state's student academic content standards. This question has the additional ramification of looking at the relative content coverage, and the relative difficulty levels, of the current BCLAD and CSET examinations, particularly the comparison between the current BCLAD Test 6 (Language) and CSET Test III (Language), and between the content covered in current CSET Test II in terms of literary texts and traditions. This content is presently not part of the BCLAD examinations although the stakeholder group felt that it potentially should be included.

A second key question was whether the proposed new examinations structure should apply to all language examinations, or only to certain ones. Stakeholders attending the August 17, 2006 meeting felt that the new structure should apply to all language examinations, including current BCLAD languages, current CSET languages, and any new language examinations under development now and in the future. An advantage to this process would be opening up additional areas for BCLAD authorizations that are not now available (e.g., for Japanese, German, French, and Russian).

## **Plan for Obtaining Additional Stakeholder Input**

With assistance from the attendees at the meeting, staff developed the following plan for obtaining additional stakeholder input. First, staff would develop a one-page concept description of the proposed streamlined system and its benefits for use with the field. The stakeholders in attendance at the meeting wanted to have this material to refer to when speaking with their representative teachers, faculty, and administrators.

Second, staff would be available at the next Bilingual Coordinators Network Meeting on September 15, 2006 in Sacramento to present and discuss the proposed streamlined examinations system with the larger group of bilingual stakeholders represented by this group. Similarly, presentations would be made by the stakeholders who attended the August 17, 2006 meeting with their own local constituencies in the foreign language and bilingual communities. As part of that larger discussion, a web-based survey would be developed and made available on the Commission website so that stakeholders could refer constituents to the survey in order to provide input to the Commission in a timely and cost-efficient manner. The web-based survey would be available during late August

and September, 2006. Information obtained through both direct stakeholder contact and the web-based survey would then be summarized for an agenda item on the November 30-December 1, 2006 Commission meeting.

### **Timeline for Examinations Consolidation Development**

If the stakeholder input continues to support the consolidation concept, staff would present an action item to the Commission at the November 30-December 1, 2006 meeting. That agenda item would contain an action plan for the actual work of examinations consolidation, and a proposed transition plan for candidates. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the Commission's current contract with National Evaluation Systems (NES), the Commission's external contractor for both the CSET and the BCLAD examinations, is in force for one more year, 2006-07, and expires on October 31, 2007. Since the current CSET contract includes development activities related to language examinations, it would be important to complete the language examinations consolidation work by the ending date of the contract. Staff estimates that this work could be accomplished within the specified time frame.