
3B

Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Determination of Passing Scores for the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment Subtests

Executive Summary: This agenda item provides information for the Commission's consideration to determine the passing scores for the new Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) subtests.

Recommended Action: That the Commission determine the passing scores for the new RICA subtests.

Presenters: Cara Mendoza, Administrator, and David DeGuire, Director, Professional Services Division, and Heather Klesch, Vice President, Evaluation Systems group of Pearson

Strategic Plan Goal

I. Educator Quality

- b) 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.

Determination of Passing Scores for the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment Subtests

Introduction

At its April 2021 meeting, the Commission was informed about progress toward dividing the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA) written exams into three subtests to make the scheduling of exams more efficient and to minimize the costs associated with retaking the RICA in the event an examinee does not pass. This agenda item provides information for the Commission's consideration to determine the passing scores for each of the new subtests.

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging for candidates in educator preparation programs and especially for those who need to access required examinations for earning one's credential. In May 2020, the Governor issued Executive Order N-66-20 to suspend the RICA requirement as a condition for individuals to be recommended for a preliminary credential and instead required that RICA be passed prior to being recommended for the clear credential.

Throughout the last year, staff has worked closely with the Commission's contractor, the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson (ES), to monitor examination administration, test site availability, and the rates of examination administrations. Staff has heard the concerns of candidates and educator preparation programs about the inability to access examinations due to test site closures, and Commission staff provided updates for examinations at the April 2021 Commission meeting.

In response to Education Code sections [44283](#) and [44283.2](#) the Commission developed the Reading Instruction Competence Assessment (RICA). Current candidates have the option of taking and passing either the RICA Written Examination or the RICA Video Performance Assessment. The basic structure of the RICA has not been altered since it was revised in 2009. Other teacher licensure examinations have been organized around a sub-test structure; however, the RICA Written was organized as a single assessment that candidates were required to take and pass as a whole.

As outlined in statute, the Commission is expected to periodically analyze the validity and reliability of the content of the RICA, and the Commission discussed this at the April 2021 meeting. Commission staff worked with ES to reconfigure the RICA Written into three subtests that examinees can individually register for and pass. As a result, using the current content specifications the RICA Written has been reconfigured to provide a more flexible subtest option for examinees. Registration for and administration of the revised three written RICA subtests began in late July 2021, and online proctoring for RICA begins in mid-August. Table I outlines the reconfigured RICA Written test design effective July 26, 2021.

Table I RICA Written Test Design Effective July 26, 2021

Subtest	Content Specifications Domains	# of Competencies	Approximate Number of Multiple-Items	Number and Type of Constructed-Response Items	Testing Time
I	Word Analysis (Domain 2)	5	27	1 Focused Task: 150 to 300-word response	
I	Fluency (Domain 3)	2	8	1 Focused Task: 75 to 125-word response	
		Subtest Total	35	2	75 minutes
II	Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge (Domain 4)	2	19	1 Focused Task: 75 to 125-word response	
II	Comprehension (Domain 5)	4	16	1 Focused Task: 150 to 300-word response	
		Subtest Total	35	2	75 minutes
III	Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment (Domain 1)	2	25	1 Case Study: 300 to 600-word response assessing all domains	
		Subtest Total	25		90 minutes

Determining Passing Scores for RICA Subtests

Since the content of the RICA Written exam did not change when it was reconfigured to be three subtests, the examinee passing rates should be similar to previous examinee passing rates. Staff consulted with expert psychometricians at Evaluation Systems (ES) on options for setting new passing scores. The use of a data model based on previous examinee scores to determine a recommended passing standard was identified as a defensible approach. The nature and quantity of performance items (constructed response items or CRIs) was not revised in any way, but the number of multiple choice question within subtests have been modified to address reliability at the subtest level¹. Candidates will need to pass each of the 3 subtests independently to meet the RICA requirement.

Methodology

Examinee data from 2018 and 2019 administrations of the original version of the exam used to set the original cut score (form *CM*) was used to create a data modeling tool. Data includes all examinee attempts, which include both initial attempt and all retakes, in an effort to maximize the size of each subgroup to allow for more reliable comparisons to the current passing standard.

The data modeling depicts candidate pass rates for each individual subtest and disaggregates pass rates by ethnicity. The tool also models overall assessment pass rates across all three subtests. Please note that one factor the model was not able to take into account due to the nature of subtests was compensatory scoring. In the previous version of the examination, candidates who scored lower in one domain of knowledge and skill or type of question were able to still pass over all by scoring higher on other domains or types of questions. This is a feature of using a subtest model because each subtest focuses on one or two domains and provides a more accurate assessment of the domains.

Commission staff and ES reviewed six different models that tested different cut-scores for both multiple choice questions and constructed response questions, as well as the weighting of each section of questions. The model whose pass rate across all three subtests best approximates the first-time pass rates presented at the Commission's June meeting has the following characteristics:

- Cut scores
 - Subtest 1: Word Analysis (Domain 2) and Fluency (Domain 3)
 - Multiple Choice: 18
 - Constructed Response: 6
 - Subtest 2: Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge (Domain 4) and Comprehension (Domain 5)
 - Multiple Choice: 18
 - Constructed Response: 6

¹ Subtest 3 has been lengthened to provide a more robust set of multiple-choice questions from Domain 1. There is an underlying assumption in this modeling that candidates will perform in a comparable manner on Domain 1 when the test length is twice as long (from 8 scorable items to 20 scorable items)

- Subtest 3: Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment (Domain 1)
 - Multiple Choice: 14
 - Constructed Response: 5
- Section weighting in all subtests
 - Multiple Choice: 80%
 - Constructed Response: 20%

Using these cut-scores and weightings, the table below provides modeled pass rates for the 2018-19 candidates if they had taken the RICA as three subtests rather than a single test version (Modeled % Passed). For comparison, the actual five-year pass rates for each group are shown in the column on the right. With the exception of two groups, Asian American/Asian and No ethnicity response, pass rates for the three modeled subtests are higher than the first-time pass rates 2015-20.

Table 1: Modeled Passing Rates Compared to First-time Pass Rates from 2015-20 by Candidate-Reported Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Modeled N	Modeled % Passed	2015-20 First-time % Passed
All Candidates	2,374	63	62.2
African American/Black	102	55	49.7
Asian American/Asian	116	60	70.6
Southeast Asian American	94	66	59.8
Pacific Island American	13	62	47.7
Latino, Latin American, Puerto Rican, Hispanic	773	53	53.7
Native American, American Indian	16	63	55.9
White, non-Hispanic	1,024	72	68.2
Other	135	59	57.2
No ethnicity response	101	60	67.1

The modeled pass rates for individual subtests can be found in [Appendix A](#). The modeled data in Appendix A show that for all subgroups, Domain 1 – Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment – was the area where most candidates were challenged. This may indicate an area for preparation programs to review curriculum and candidate assessments in order to enhance learning opportunities and provide additional support for candidates. The data also show that the groups of 2018-19 candidates who reported their ethnicity as Asian American/Asian or did not report an ethnicity were able to compensate for lower scores on Domain 1 (Subtest 3) items with higher scores on Domains 2-5 (Subtests 1 and 2) items, allowing them to achieve an overall passing score.

Candidates who take the new, reorganized subtest version of the RICA will be able to see on their score reports their specific strengths in reading instruction and areas for improvement. Moreover, they will only have to retake subtests they do not pass and can focus their efforts on

the domain(s) covered by that subtest. Preparation programs will be better able to address candidate supports with the new RICA subtest data.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the following passing standards for the newly structured RICA subtests with a weighting of 80% on multiple choice items and 20% on constructed response items within each subtest:

- Subtest 1 - Word Analysis (Domain 2) and Fluency (Domain 3): 24
- Subtest 2 - Vocabulary, Academic Language, and Background Knowledge (Domain 4) and Comprehension (Domain 5): 24
- Subtest 3 - Planning, Organizing, and Managing Reading Instruction Based on Ongoing Assessment (Domain 1): 17

Next Steps

If the Commission adopts the recommended passing standards, staff will work with the vendor to implement them and to inform the teacher preparation programs and candidates.

Separately, with the inclusion of \$2 million in the 2021-22 state budget for a complete review and revision of the RICA, staff will develop a statement of work for a new contract to begin that work in fall 2021.

Appendix A: Modeled Pass Rates for Individual Subtests

Table 2: Modeled Passing Rates for Subtest 1 by Candidate-Reported Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Modeled N	Modeled % Passed
All Candidates	2,374	84
African American/Black	102	80
Asian American/Asian	116	85
Southeast Asian American	94	82
Pacific Island American	13	85
Latino, Latin American, Puerto Rican, Hispanic	773	80
Native American, American Indian	16	94
White, non-Hispanic	1,024	88
Other	135	84
No ethnicity response	101	85

Table 3: Modeled Passing Rates for Subtest 2 by Candidate-Reported Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Modeled N	Modeled % Passed
All Candidates	2,374	86
African American/Black	102	84
Asian American/Asian	116	90
Southeast Asian American	94	85
Pacific Island American	13	69
Latino, Latin American, Puerto Rican, Hispanic	773	82
Native American, American Indian	16	81
White, non-Hispanic	1,024	91
Other	135	84
No ethnicity response	101	87

Table 4: Modeled Passing Rates for Subtest 3 by Candidate-Reported Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Modeled N	Modeled % Passed
All Candidates	2,374	75
African American/Black	102	72
Asian American/Asian	116	72
Southeast Asian American	94	73
Pacific Island American	13	77
Latino, Latin American, Puerto Rican, Hispanic	773	68
Native American, American Indian	16	69
White, non-Hispanic	1,024	82
Other	135	71
No ethnicity response	101	76