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Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Proposed Adoption of a Revised Passing Score Standard for the Special Education Version of the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers Performance Assessment

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents for review and potential adoption a revised passing score standard for the Special Education version of the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST) performance assessment.

Recommended Action: That the Commission adopt the recommended passing standard of 2 for each task in both the Site Visitation Project and the Teaching Sample Project for the FAST: Education Specialist-Mild to Moderate Support needs and FAST: Education Specialist-Extensive Support Needs.

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Proposed Adoption of a Revised Passing Score Standard for the Special Education Version of the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers Performance Assessment

Introduction

This agenda item presents for review and potential adoption a revised passing score standard for the Special Education version of the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST) performance assessment. The item also provides information about the standard setting process used to determine the recommendation.

Background

Based on the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers 2.0 (FAST 2.0) for Multiple Subject and Single Subject candidates, both the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers: Education Specialist-Mild-to-Moderate (FAST: ES-MM) and the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers: Education Specialist-Extensive Support Needs (FAST: ES-ESN) include a Site Visitation Project (SVP), to be completed in the second semester of the three-semester program, and a Teaching Sample Project (TSP), to be completed in the final semester of the program.

Within the FAST: ES SVP and TSP, candidates are expected to complete the same tasks as candidates completing the FAST 2.0. Because Fresno State currently offers a combined Education Specialist credential program that allows candidates to earn both Mild-to-Moderate Support Needs and Extensive Support Needs credentials, most candidates complete the SVP in an Extensive Support Needs context and the TSP in a Mild-to-Moderate context. They complete the version of the task that aligns with the context in which they are placed for their clinical practice.

At its [August 2022](#) meeting, the Commission heard an update on the development of the FAST: ES-MM and FAST: ES-ESN, as well as separate analyses regarding content reviews and reviews for compliance with the [Commission's Assessment Design Standards](#). The Commission approved both assessments as having met the content requirements and the Performance Assessment Design Standards and directed California State University, Fresno to conduct standard setting studies.

Plan for Conducting Standard Setting Study

Like the FAST 2.0, for both versions of the FAST ES, a minimum score of 2 on each rubric (three task rubrics for the SVP and five task rubrics for the TSP) is required for candidates to successfully complete each of the FAST: ES components. Therefore, the standards that needed to be set were the descriptions of performance for the level 2 for each rubric on both the SVP and TSP. The level 2 should reflect a reasonable level of proficiency for an entry-level Education Specialist teacher.

Standard Setting Session 1 • December 2022: MM SVP & ESN SVP

In fall 2022, the FAST Coordinator and the Assistant Director of Teacher Education brought together a focus group consisting of 11 university faculty members, coaches, and district support providers of new teachers—all of whom had experience working in Special Education contexts and who supported Education Specialist candidates—to review two student-submitted Site Visitation Projects: one completed in a Mild-to-Moderate context and one completed in an Extensive-Support Needs context. Many individuals within the group had experience with FAST 2.0. The goal for the group was to review the sample projects and their alignment with the SVP task-specific rubrics (Planning, Implementation, and Reflection). In particular, the focus group was responsible for ensuring that the level 2 for each SVP rubric reflects a reasonable level of proficiency for an entry-level Education Specialist teacher.

During the session, group members were first provided a review of the components of the Site Visitation Project and what candidates were being asked to do in each context. Each individual then scored each project independently, using the appropriate context and SVP task-specific rubrics (Planning, Implementation, and Reflection). Afterward, group members first discussed the project holistically and then shared their scores and talked through each rubric.

For both projects, focus group members were within one score point of one another in each area. All members agreed that both projects passed, with no scores of 1 on any of the rubrics.

At the end of the session, group members provided overall feedback for improvements to the tasks. In particular, group members noted that it would be helpful if the lesson plan identified which students were being placed in the small group.

Standard Setting Session 2 • June 2023: ESN SVP & ESN TSP

In June 2023, a similar process was followed, though with a smaller group. Again, led by the Assistant Director of Teacher Education, this group consisted of two faculty members from Special Education, a university coach, two district support providers who work in Special Education, and the outgoing and incoming FAST coordinators. Because of the shift in the credential program structure, the focus of this session was reviewing two sample SVPs and two sample TSPs, all of which were completed in an Extensive Support Needs context.

The goal for the group was, again, to review the sample projects and their alignment with the SVP task-specific rubrics (Planning, Implementation, and Reflection) and the TSP task-specific rubrics (Students in Context, Learning Outcomes, Assessment Plan, Design for Instruction, Instructional Decision-Making, Analysis of Student Learning, and Reflection and Student-Evaluation). Again, the group was responsible for ensuring that the level 2 for each SVP and TSP rubric reflected a reasonable level of proficiency for an entry-level Education Specialist—Extensive Support Needs teacher.

Site Visitation Projects

Prior to the session, group members reviewed the sample projects. During the session, the group first discussed the two sample SVPs, talking through each project and how it scored on each element of the rubric. Group members agreed that both projects did pass. However, there

were concerns in some areas, particularly in rubric areas that specified alignment with the standards. This led the group to review the Site Visitation Project task instructions and to make suggested revisions in order to clarify expectations for candidates. In particular, the group recommended:

- Revising the Class Profile sheet to include a column to list each student's Qualifying Disability (IEP) or Condition (504) and to include details about each student's reading and writing proficiency,
- Adding a section to the suggested Lesson Plan template for candidates to indicate which TPE they addressed, how they were utilized, and what the rationale was, and
- Adding to the instructions for the Activity/Strategy Table to include how the activity or strategy addresses focal students' learning needs and/or IEP goals.

Teaching Sample Projects

The group followed a similar process when reviewing the sample TSPs. Again, the projects were found to pass, but there were some concerns with some elements of the projects that were thought to be largely due to lack of clarity in the instructions.

One significant concern from the group was that candidates were not provided with a space to indicate the scaffolded standard or essential skill that was the focus of the instruction. Consequently, the Unit Learning Outcomes Table was revised to include a column for this information to be identified. Additionally, the language in the instructions for the Learning Outcomes task was also revised.

Like with the SVP, the Students in Context was also revised to provide more comprehensive information about each student, along with the source for that information. Candidates are now asked to provide the following for each student:

- Reading ability
- Writing ability
- Other Student Factors related to learning (interests, learning preferences, etc.)
- IEP goals and requirements
- Special Needs not documented in the IEP

Revisions were made to the FAST ESN Manual in preparation for fall 2023.

Standard Setting Session 3 • December 2023: MM TSP & ESN TSP

Following the revisions to both the FAST: ES-MM and FAST ES-ESN tasks and rubrics, a third standard-setting was held in December 2023.

This session was again led by the Director of Educator Preparation Programs and Accreditation (formerly the Assistant Director of Teacher Education), with support from the FAST Coordinator. For this third round, three Education Specialist program faculty members and two coaches who support Education Specialist candidates participated. All were familiar with the FAST: Education Specialist assessment. The focus for this session was the Teaching Sample Project.

In advance of the Standard Setting Session, all focus group members were provided the FAST: ES-MM Manual, the FAST: ES-ESN Manual, two TSPs completed in a Mild-to-Moderate context, and two TSPs completed in an Extensive Support Needs context. Group members were asked to read through each project and score it on the appropriate rubric.

To begin, the group briefly reviewed each project and then each person shared how they scored it on each element of the appropriate rubric. As in the other sessions, the groups were within one score point on each element of the rubric. After discussion, groups agreed on standard scores for the projects. Moving forward, these scores and these projects will be used when calibrating future scorers.

Although the group was only able to review one TSP from each context, the focus group members had recommendations for revisions to be made to the task instructions and corresponding rubrics. In particular, focus group members noticed that candidates need specific instructions to include how they are addressing IEP goals for each element, as this language is included within the rubric. These revisions have since been made.

The current handbooks for FAST: ES are available online: [MM](#) and [ESN](#).

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt the passing standard of 2 for each task in both the Site Visitation Project and the Teaching Sample Project for the FAST: ES-Mild to Moderate Support Needs and FAST: ES-Extensive Support Needs.

Next Steps

If the Commission adopts the recommended passing standard, staff will notify the assessment sponsor, California State University, Fresno.