

## COMMISSION ON TEACHER CREDENTIALING

1512 9TH STREET  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814-7000

93-9301



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**To:** All Individuals and Organizations Interested in the  
Activities of the Commission on Teacher Credentialing

**From:**  Philip A. Fitch, Executive Director

**Subject:** Revised Passing Scores on the Multiple Subjects Assessment  
for Teachers (MSAT) and New Standards for Advancement to  
Student Teaching

The Commission recently revised the passing scores on the Multiple Subjects Assessment for Teachers (MSAT). The Commission also adopted new standards for advancement to student teaching on the part of candidates for Multiple and Single Subject Teaching Credentials. Concise information about these changes is provided below. For answers to several questions about the Commission's new performance assessments (MSAT and CAPAs), please see the enclosure.

#### New Assessment for the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential

After a three-year process of research and development, the Commission on June 5, 1992, adopted the Multiple Subjects Assessment for Teachers (MSAT) for appraising the subject matter competence of applicants for the Multiple Subject Teaching Credential. Beginning with the October, 1992, administration of the NTE, applicants who seek to qualify for this credential by examination must pass the MSAT. In this regard, the MSAT replaced the General Knowledge Test of the NTE Core Battery. The Commission's action did not affect candidates who seek to qualify for the Multiple Subject Credential by completing approved subject matter programs.

On August 21, 1992, the Commission established *interim passing standards* for the MSAT, which were operative for the October, 1992, administration only (and were published previously). For the Content Knowledge Section and Content Area Exercises of the MSAT, the interim passing standards consisted of interim passing scores, minimum allowable scores (which were lower than the passing scores), and an overall passing score (the sum of the two passing scores). Examinees can pass the MSAT without passing scores on both MSAT sections, provided they earn minimum allowable scores and a total score at or above the overall passing score.

The Commission also announced its intent to reexamine the interim passing scores on January 7-8, 1993, when the results would be available from the October, 1992, administration of the MSAT. Finally, the Commission announced that examinees in October would not be adversely affected by any subsequent increase in the interim passing scores. If these scores were lowered, however, examinees would be held only to the reduced scores.

## Revised MSAT Passing Scores

In December, 1992, the Commission completed a thorough review of the MSAT passing standards, which included (1) an analysis of all MSAT test questions by 27 elementary classroom teachers and (2) an evaluation of the first test results by a panel of experts in elementary education. As part of their evaluation, the expert panel reviewed the teachers' analysis as well as data about the impact of the MSAT on many groups of examinees. On January 7-8, 1993, the Commission adopted the recommendations of the expert panel and modified the interim passing scores. As the following table shows, the Commission lowered the standards on the Content Knowledge Section, but raised the standards on the Content Area Exercises.

Sections of the MSAT (Each Score Scale: 100-200)	Interim Passing Scores (Applied Only on October 24, 1992)	Revised Passing Scores (Apply in January & March, 1993)
Content Knowledge Section		
Passing Score	162	160
Minimum Allowable Score	154	152
Content Area Exercises		
Passing Score	152	155
Minimum Allowable Score	143	147
Overall MSAT Passing Score	314	315

A candidate can pass the MSAT by earning a passing score on each section of the test. Alternatively, a candidate can pass by earning the minimum allowable score *and* an overall score that equals or exceeds the required total. Because of the Commission's prior decision, the *reduced* Content Knowledge passing score applies retroactively to the October examinees. However, the *increased* passing score on the Content Area Exercises applies to examinees who take the MSAT in January and March, 1993. The next table shows the scores needed on the first three test dates.

Test Dates	MSAT Test Sections	Passing Scores	Minimum Allowable Scores	Overall Scores
October 92	Content Knowledge Section Content Area Exercises	160 152	152 143	314
January 93 March 93	Content Knowledge Section Content Area Exercises	160 155	152 147	315

A candidate may pass the two MSAT test sections on a given test date, or on separate dates. Candidates who passed one section of the MSAT last October should determine whether their scores on the other section were above the minimum allowable score. If they were not, then the failed section must be repeated. If they *were* above the minimum, then the overall passing score can be achieved by raising the score on *either* section of the test. It may be advantageous for some candidates to attempt to increase their scores on a section they have already passed, to earn an overall passing score.

The following chart shows the scores that need to be earned in January or March by examinees in five different circumstances, based on their scores from last October.

Five Groups of Examinees Based on October Results	Alternative Ways for These Groups to Pass the MSAT in January or March, 1993
<p><i>Group One</i> Passed Content Knowledge (160+) and earned a score <i>above</i> the minimum on Content Area Exercises (143-151), but did not earn a total score of 314 or higher.</p>	<p><i>Candidates in this Group Need to Either:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retake the Content Area Exercises and earn a passing score (155 or higher), <i>or</i></li> <li>• Retake either or both sections and earn a <i>cumulative</i> overall score of 315 or higher.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Group Two</i> Passed Content Knowledge (160+) but earned a score <i>below</i> the minimum on Content Area Exercises (143), and therefore did not earn a total of 314 or higher.</p>	<p><i>Candidates in this Group Need to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retake the Content Area Exercises and earn a passing score (155 or higher), <i>or</i></li> <li>• Retake the Content Area Exercises and earn a minimum score (143+) that makes the <i>cumulative</i> overall score 315 or higher, <i>or</i></li> <li>• Retake both sections and earn a minimum score (143+) on Content Exercises and an overall score of 315 or higher.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Group Three</i> Passed Content Area Exercises (152+) &amp; earned a score <i>above</i> the minimum on Content Knowledge (152-159), but did not earn a total MSAT score of 314 or higher.</p>	<p><i>Candidates in this Group Need to Either:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retake the Content Knowledge Section and earn a passing score (160 or higher), <i>or</i></li> <li>• Retake either or both sections and earn a <i>cumulative</i> overall score of 315 or higher.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Group Four</i> Passed Content Area Exercises (152+) but earned <i>below</i> the minimum on Content Knowledge (152), and therefore did not earn a total score of 314 or higher.</p>	<p><i>Candidates in this Group Need to Either:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retake the Content Knowledge Section and earn a passing score (160 or higher), <i>or</i></li> <li>• Retake the Content Knowledge Section and earn a minimum score (152+) that makes the <i>cumulative</i> overall score 315 or higher, <i>or</i></li> <li>• Retake both sections and earn a minimum score (152+) on Content Knowledge and an overall score of 315 or higher.</li> </ul>

<p><i>Group Five</i></p> <p>Earned scores on both sections that were below the passing scores,</p>	<p><i>Candidates in this Group Need to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retake both sections and earn passing scores on Content Knowledge (160+) and Content Area Exercises (155+), or</li> <li>• Retake both sections and earn one minimum score plus an overall score of 315 or higher.</li> </ul>
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### MSAT Registration Procedures

The 1992-93 *NTE Programs Bulletin of Information* provides information about registering for the MSAT. The *Bulletin* refers to the Content Knowledge Section (Test 14) and to two Content Area Exercises (Content Area Exercises 1 and 2, Tests 15 and 16). A candidate who wants to take all sections of the MSAT must register *separately* for the Content Knowledge Section *and* the Content Area Exercises 1 and 2. A candidate who wants to take only half of the MSAT on a given date may register for the Content Knowledge Section *or* the Content Area Exercises. The Content Area Exercises 1 and 2 are listed separately in the *Bulletin*, but *candidates must take both Content Area Exercises 1 and 2 on the same date in order to receive a score.* A candidate may take the MSAT outside of California by requesting a supplementary test center; see page 18 of the *Bulletin* for more information.

### MSAT Score Reports

The Commission recognizes that it is valuable for examinees to receive information about their strengths and weaknesses after they complete a standardized assessment like the MSAT. Fortunately, each MSAT score report provides 28 items of information that are intended to be helpful to candidates who want to prepare for their second attempt to pass this exam. Please note that the Performance Levels on the MSAT score report have the following definitions. A *high* performance is a score above the 75th percentile for that subject. An *average* performance is a score between the 25th and 75th percentiles for the subject. A *low* performance is a score below the 25th percentile for the subject. Please also note that an examinee may receive several *high* and *average* reports and still not pass the MSAT. This apparent anomaly occurs because the Performance Levels reflect the relation between the examinee's scores and those of other examinees; whereas the passing scores are levels of competence that are essential for entry-level teachers in self-contained classrooms in California.

### New Standards for Advancement to Student Teaching

In the Commission's Standards of Program Quality and Effectiveness for Multiple and Single Subject Teaching Credentials, Standard 18 defines the subject matter proficiency that must be attained by a candidate to be advanced to daily student teaching responsibilities. According to this standard, an institution may advance a candidate who has either (1) attained the Commission's *standard for advancement* on the relevant subject matter examination, or (2) completed at least four-fifths of a program of subject matter preparation that waives this examination.

Until the current academic year, the Commission's standards for advancement to student teaching were the same as the scores required to pass the subject matter examinations. This year for the first time the Commission has established flexible standards for advancement to student teaching for Multiple and Single Subject Credential candidates. Institutions with approved programs are now *authorized* (not required) by the Commission to admit into student teaching those candidates who attain the new standards for advancement.

*For institutions and candidates who take advantage of these new standards, passage of subject matter examinations or completion of subject matter programs are still required for earning credentials. In deciding whether to utilize the Commission's new standards for advancement to student teaching, institutions are encouraged to consider the fact that many examinees may be able to add several points to their scores only after intensive study of one or more subjects on the MSAT or CAPA.*

**Multiple Subject Teaching Credentials.** A multiple subject candidate *may at the institution's discretion* be advanced to student teaching by earning an MSAT score at or above the 35th percentile. For candidates who took the MSAT on October 24, 1992, a total MSAT score of 302 marked the 35th percentile.

Based on the Commission's recent action, an institution *may at its own discretion* adopt one of the following standards for advancement to student teaching by candidates for the Multiple Subject Credential: (1) passage of the MSAT examination; (2) a total MSAT score at the 35th percentile; or (3) a total MSAT score above the 35th percentile but below the passing score. The following chart shows these percentile scores for examinees who took the MSAT last October.

Total MSAT Scores	Percentile Levels
302	35
303	37
304	39
305	41
306	42
307	44
308	46
309	47
310	49
311	51
312	52
313	54
314	Passing

Candidates whose overall MSAT scores were lower than 302 should not be enrolled in student teaching, unless they have completed at least four-fifths of an approved Liberal Studies Program.

**Single Subject Teaching Credentials.** A single subject candidate *may at the institution's discretion* be advanced to student teaching by passing *either* the relevant NTE Specialty Area Test *or* the relevant Content Area Performance Assessment (CAPA). Candidates who have passed *neither* of these assessments should not be enrolled in student teaching, unless they have completed at least four-fifths of an approved subject matter program in the relevant subject.

Based on the Commission's recent action, an institution *may at its own discretion* adhere to either one of the following standards for advancement to student teaching by candidates for the Single Subject Credential: (1) passage of the NTE *and* the CAPA; or (2) passage of the NTE *or* the CAPA.

### **Credential Application Procedures**

When applying for a credential based on MSAT passing scores, a candidate must submit to the Commission the official examination score report for all sections of the test and one Test Development and Administration Fee (\$30), which was formerly called the "filing fee".

### **Further Information about Examinations and Passing Standards**

For additional information about the MSAT and CAPA assessments, please see the enclosed questions and answers. If your questions remain unanswered, please call our Information Services Office between 12:30 and 4:30 any weekday afternoon at 916-445-7254, and select the menu choice that provides information about examinations.