
Item 11:

Discussion and Update Related to Educator Certification Testing Program

UPDATE AND DISCUSSION ONLY

SUMMARY: This item provides an update to the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) concerning the educator certification testing program.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND SIGNIFICANT ISSUES: This item presents an overview of various components of the educator certification testing program, including the testing contract, the scope of work planned for 2016-17, the transition to the Commissioner of Education setting the passing standards/cut scores on certification exams, consideration of a performance-based principal certification exam, and other related testing information.

Currently, TEA utilizes three testing vendors for examinations leading to issuance of Texas certification: Educational Testing Service (ETS) administers the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TExES), Texas Examinations of Master Teachers (TExMaT), and the Texas Assessment of Sign Communication (TASC and TASC-ASL). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL), through its testing division Language Testing International (LTI), administers oral and written tests in the following languages for Texas teachers: Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, Turkish, and Vietnamese. These tests are used for Bilingual Education and Languages Other than English (LOTE) certification candidates. The American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (AAFCS) administers the Family and Consumer Sciences Composite; Hospitality, Nutrition, and Food Science Concentration; and Human Development and Family Studies Concentration examinations to validate the content area knowledge and skills of candidates pursuing one of the state's Family and Consumer Sciences teacher certifications/licenses.

ETS is the main testing vendor for the Texas certification program, and the most recent testing contract ended on August 31, 2016. A one-year contract extension with ETS was approved to maintain test administration activities and continue priority test development work for principal, pedagogy and professional responsibilities, and early childhood through August 31, 2017.

TEA staff anticipate ongoing conversations regarding next steps with certification testing (i.e., release the next request for proposal or provide a second one-year extension to the contract), and will continue to keep the SBEC apprised of work in this important area.

The principal test is being updated to align with the new principal standards, which were approved by the SBEC in April 2016 and became effective August 28, 2016. The principal standards were updated to better align with the knowledge and skills required for today's principal and to better align with the principal appraisal standards. Several additions were made to the school culture and leading learning domains. A committee comprised of principals and principal preparation program staff met in early August 2016 to develop the framework upon which the new principal test will be based. Committee members discussed the possibility of making the principal test more performance based to ensure that new principals were able to demonstrate the competencies required of today's school leader and expressed interest in continued involvement in the evolution of the new principal test.

Attachment I provides a high-level overview of test administration and test development activities for 2016-2017. Attachment II provides a summary of key steps related to the Commissioner's approval of passing standards/cut scores for certification tests. Attachment III gives the board an overview of test administration numbers for 2015-2016 and includes an update on waiver requests related to the four-time test retake limit.

Staff Members Responsible:

- Marilyn Cook, Director
Educator Certification and Testing
- Becky McCoy, Manager
Educator Certification and Testing
- Jennifer Perez, Program Specialist
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Attachments:

- I. Overview of 2016-2017 test development and test administration activities
- II. Update on Commissioner approval of certification test passing standards/cut scores
- III. Testing data for 2015-2016 administration year and update on four-time test retake limit

Attachment I**Overview of 2016-2017 Test Development and Test Administration Activities**

- Testing Contractor: Educational Testing Service (ETS)
- Length of Contract: September 1, 2011 – August 31, 2016 with two one-year extensions possible
- Scope of Work for 2016-17:
 - Test Development
 - Developing test items/forms to support continuous testing rollout (i.e., moving from offering during limited-administration windows to offering on a continuous basis)
 - American Sign Language (ASL)
 - Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities for Trade and Industrial Education
 - Visually Impaired
 - Completing development of “new” tests
 - Technology Applications EC-12 (Fall 2016)
 - Computer Science 8-12 (Fall 2016)
 - Dance 6-12 (February 2017)
 - Performing development activities for new or revised tests
 - Braille (Fall 2017)
 - Principal (Fall 2018)
 - Early Childhood
 - Developing and administering new forms for Core Subjects tests and conducting statistical equating tasks
 - Creating representative tests to assist educator preparation program staff in measuring candidates’ knowledge and skills in relation to the test frameworks and determining readiness for testing
 - Technology Applications EC-12 (Winter 2017)
 - Music EC-12 (Spring/Summer 2017)
 - Physical Education EC-12 (Spring/Summer 2017)
 - Developing and launching an Interactive practice test for LOTE-Spanish
 - Test Administration, Scoring, and Reporting
 - Maintaining test registration system
 - Providing testing centers throughout Texas, the United States, as well as in Puerto Rico and Mexico
 - Scoring all tests and reporting results
 - Maintaining a secure online system for educator preparation programs and TEA staff to access test taker information and score report data

Attachment II

Update on Commissioner Approval of Certification Test Passing Standards/Cut Scores

Summary: House Bill 2205, 84th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, 2015, amended the TEC, §21.048(a), to require the commissioner of education to establish the satisfactory level of performance required on educator certification exam and authorized the commissioner to require a satisfactory level of performance on each core subject covered by an examination. Before amendment by HB 2205, the passing standards were set by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

In September 2016, the Commissioner approved the cut scores or proficiency levels recommended by committees of Texas educators who worked with Educational Testing Service or Language Testing International in determining the appropriate passing standards for the tests shown below. Representatives from TEA attended the meetings and agreed that the recommended passing standards are reasonable.

Test Name and Number	Recommended Cut Score*
279 Dance 6-12, Form A	56 (out of a possible 80 raw-score points)
279 Dance 6-12, Form B	55 (out of a possible 80 raw-score points)
242 Technology Applications EC-12, Form A	60 (out of a possible 80 raw-score points)
242 Technology Applications EC-12, Form B	59 (out of a possible 80 raw-score points)
241 Computer Science 8-12, Form A	59 (out of a possible 80 raw-score points)
241 Computer Science 8-12, Form B	59 (out of a possible 80 raw-score points)

*This represents the total number of scorable items that need to be answered correctly on a form to obtain the minimum passing scale score of 240 on a certification test. Because no two forms are identical, the cut score may vary slightly from form to form to balance the overall difficulty of the test, yet maintain consistency in scoring.

Test Name and Number	Proficiency Level**
630 LOTE: Korean Oral Proficiency	Advanced Low (7 th of 10 proficiency levels)
631 LOTE: Korean Writing Proficiency	Advanced Low (7 th of 10 proficiency levels)
632 LOTE: Portuguese Oral Proficiency	Advanced Low (7 th of 10 proficiency levels)
633 LOTE: Portuguese Writing Proficiency	Advanced Low (7 th of 10 proficiency levels)

**Proficiency levels range from 1=Novice to 10=Superior.

TEA staff is in the process of getting the passing standards/cut scores for current educator certification examinations in Commissioner's Rules.

Attachment III

Testing Data

Educator Certification Examinations Administered					
	September- November 2015	December 2015-February 2016	March- May 2016	June- August 2016	Fiscal Year 2016 Totals (Sept 2015-Aug 2016)
TEExES	25,812	31,009	47,710	47,251	151,782
TASC/TASC-ASL	65	N/A	55	N/A	120
TEExMaT	50	2	27	N/A	79
TOTALS	25,927	31,011	47,792	47,251	151,981

Top Ten Tests by Volume					
	September- November 2015	December 2015-February 2016	March- May 2016	June- August 2016	Fiscal Year 2016 Totals (Sept 2015-Aug 2016)
Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities	5,102	7,182	10,081	7,821	30,186
Core Subjects EC-6	3,336	4,437	6,449	7,621	21,843
English as a Second Language Supplemental	3,416	3,618	5,366	6,774	19,174
Special Education EC-12	1,400	1,417	2,543	2,992	8,352
Principal	1,258	1,493	1,778	1,884	6,413
Social Studies 7-12	679	860	1,728	1,731	4,998
BTLPT – Spanish	1,338	510	1,560	960	4,368
Core Subjects 4-8	483	747	1,407	1,647	4,284
English Language Arts & Reading 7-12	822	1,652	1,403	18	3,895
Physical Education EC-12	560	748	1,275	1,289	3,872

Waiver Data		
	February – August 2016	September – November 18, 2016
Decision Maker	SBEC	TEA Staff
Waivers Received	23	41
Waivers Pending	0	16
Waivers Granted	14	25