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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Nancy S. Grasmick *Nancy*
DATE: December 10-11, 2009
SUBJECT: School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA)
Principal Certification State Qualifying Score
ACTION

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to affirm a state qualifying score on the revised School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA), the Administrator II (Principal) certification test.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Maryland has required the Educational Testing Service's (ETS) *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* for Administrator II (Principal) certification since April 28, 1998. For the past two years, ETS has been revising the test, employing significant test review and updating. The test in use previously was adopted in April, 1998.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

ETS implements a standard procedure for revising its tests which includes: formation of a National Advisory Council (with Maryland representation) to develop and approve the content categories on which the test will be based; review of pertinent national and state standards; review of current research and literature; conduct of a national job analysis survey (via the web); development and field testing of items; and invitations to states to review the test.

Finally, ETS convenes validity and standard setting panels. Research staff from ETS designed and conducted two multi-state standard setting studies on April 21-22, 2009 in Baltimore, MD and on May 12-13, 2009 in St. Louis, MO. The purpose of standard setting was to collect content-related validity evidence of the importance of the SLLA content for entry-level school leaders (principals). Two non-overlapping panels from 17 states that currently use the SLLA sent a total of 46 principals and college faculty who prepare school leaders. Maryland was represented by three principals and one college professor. The results from the panels were

combined, and a summary report was sent to the states, with a recommended qualifying score for the test. ETS suggested states could either adopt a score prior to the first administration of the new test in September 2009, using the recommendations from the panels, or wait until after the first administration of the test. The states that waited have both national and state-specific data from the September administration, allowing a more informed decision regarding which score to adopt.

Twelve states adopted their qualifying scores prior to the first administration of the test, with seven accepting the recommended score of 163. Three states chose to go higher and two chose lower scores. Our neighboring states of Washington DC, New Jersey and North Carolina are states that adopted 163 prior to the September administration. Pennsylvania did not participate, deciding instead to use another ETS test for administrator certification. Virginia waited until after the first administration and plans to recommend a score of 161 to their state board at their January 2010 meeting. At least three other states (Connecticut, Kentucky and Maine) have yet to make a decision. An immediate score decision by Maryland will enable candidates who took the test in September to ascertain whether they have been successful, while those planning on taking the test in January will be aware of the score in advance of the test administration. After studying the panels' recommendation, decisions from our neighboring states, and the data ETS supplied on Maryland scores as a whole and by subgroups, staff is recommending a score of 165. The score may be reviewed periodically to determine the efficacy of the score.

ACTION:

It is recommended that the Maryland State Board of Education affirm the qualifying score for the School Leaders Licensure Assessment at 165 for candidates seeking Administrator II (Principal) certification effective immediately.

NSG: jes

Maryland School Leaders Licensure Assessment

White Paper

I. Background: First Principal Assessment for Certification in Maryland

The first assessment Maryland required for Administrator II (principal) certification was the *Maryland Assessment Center*, a two-day performance assessment based on a model by the *National Association of Secondary School Principals* (NASSP) and adopted by the Maryland State Board of Education (State Board) on July 1, 1993. It had been used by two school systems (Howard and Baltimore County) prior to the state's adoption for certification on July 1, 1993. After it had been in use for several years, local superintendents expressed concerns about the time, labor-intensiveness and cost of this performance assessment. The center assessed 12 candidates at a time, using 12 trained principal assessors and two state leaders. This process also required principals trained on the procedure to leave their schools to assist in the assessment of the candidates. NASSP trained the assessors (at a cost to the state) and each principal/assessor committed to serving once per year; a four day commitment out of the school building.

In response to local superintendents' concerns, the State Board named an Advisory Committee to study the issue and look at other national assessments. The State's economy was in recession at this time (1997), and it was determined that Maryland needed to find a less expensive model to assess principal candidates. The Advisory Committee studied two options, the NASSP model and a new assessment commissioned by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the Interstate School Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), a committee of the CCSSO. The only other national assessment company was the *National Evaluation Systems* (now called the *Evaluation Systems Group of Pearson*), which offered state- customized tests for teacher certification, but had no administrator tests available. They were willing to develop a Maryland test (taking two years), but the Advisory Committee wanted a national test, using national standards, and decided to consider approval of the new CCSSO/ISLLC test when it was completed.

II. Adoption of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment for Principal Certification

The CCSSO/ISLLC test was developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS) upon completion of a request for proposal, using the six *Interstate School Leadership Licensure Consortium* (ISLLC) standards. The resulting test was a six hour constructed-response test, based on case studies and costing \$450. The Advisory Committee reported to the State Board in September 1997, recommending the new test, the *School Leaders Licensure Assessment* (SLLA) as the new certification requirement for Maryland's principal candidates. After a public hearing on the regulation, the State Board adopted the test on April 2, 1998, to replace the Maryland Assessment Center as the assessment required for certification in Maryland.

In 2005, the *Maryland Instructional Leadership Framework* was adopted by the State Board. These were state-specific standards that emphasized the principal as an instructional leader. At that time, a state group reviewed the SLLA and another test that ETS has for educational administrators (all multiple choice) to determine which was most appropriate for assessment of new state as well as national standards.

III. School Leaders Licensure Revision Process

Meanwhile, in keeping with their policy, ETS scheduled a revision of the SLLA in 2007, employing significant test review and updating. A state committee discussed whether to continue with the SLLA after it was revised. It decided to become actively involved in the revision process, and to make the final decision on its use when the test was completed. Maryland also had a representative on the National Advisory Council, the first step in the ETS process for revising a test. In addition, there were three principals and a professor from a Maryland educational administration program on the two validation and multi-state standard setting panels, which recommended the qualifying score. All 17 states using the SLLA were included in the process.

IV. New Version of the School Leaders Licensure Assessment

The new version of the SLLA, based on revised national standards, is a four hour test with 100 multiple choice and seven constructed-response questions (based on case studies) at a cost of \$325. In a memo from Dr. John E. Smeallie, Deputy State Superintendent for Administration, all stakeholders were informed that Maryland would continue with the SLLA, and was participating proactively in the revisions. Because the test had undergone a major revision, each state would be required to establish a new passing score. States could use the recommended score from the panels, but also consider multiple factors beyond the recommended score to make this decision, such as data from candidates; passing scores set by other states, especially neighboring states; and critical shortage concerns. The recommended qualifying score from the combined panels was 163. These are scale scores ranging from 100 to 200. ETS strongly suggests that for the test to be legally defensible, the adopted score be kept within two (plus or minus) standard errors of measurement (SEM) of the panel's recommended score

V. Maryland's Recommendation

Nationally 1,154 candidates, including 100 Marylanders, took the test on September 13, 2009. Data from this first administration was studied. As stated above, the panels recommended a qualifying score of 163. Based on the September administration of the SLLA, it is recommended that Maryland adopt a score of 165, which is +1 SEM higher than the panel's recommendation. This would give Maryland a passing rate of 80% using State data, and 75% using the larger national data. It is recommended that the Maryland State Board of Education affirm the qualifying score of 165.