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Interim State Superintendent of Schools

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION
PREPARING WORLD CLASS STUDENTS

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education

FROM: Jack R. Smith, Ph.D.

DATE: September 22, 2015

SUBJECT: Teacher Certification Assessments, Revisions
TEST APPROVAL AND ESTABLISHMENT OF QUALIFYING SCORES

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to seek State Board approval of Educational Testing Service (ETS) PRAXIS II assessments for Early Childhood Education (5025) and Computer Science (5651) and to set the established qualifying scores for these tests.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:

Since 1987, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has required state certification tests to assess basic skills, content knowledge, and pedagogy. These tests provide validation that teacher candidates have entry level skills to begin their professional careers. In an effort to maintain currency in various content fields, ETS revises most tests on a five year schedule and at the same time works to create new tests based on a demonstrated need.

To support the decision-making process for state departments of education with regards to establishing a passing score, research staff from ETS designs and conducts two Multistate Standards Setting Studies for each test (25 educators on each team). The two, non-overlapping panels represent and provide a replication of the judgment process to strengthen the technical quality of the recommended passing score. The panelists, selected from states that will use the test, are recommended by state departments of education to participate as experts for the Multistate Standard Setting Studies. Maryland representatives included 2 representatives for early childhood and one for computer science.

The panelists judge the extent to which the knowledge and/or skills reflected by the content specifications are important for entry-level teachers. ETS also collects content-related validity evidence to confirm the importance of the content specifications for entry level teachers. The recommended cut scores from the two panels are averaged and then converted to a scale score with a range from 100 to 200. This score becomes the recommended qualifying score of the study. ETS and MSDE will track the results of the tests.

ETS guides states to adopt a score that does not exceed a plus or minus two standard errors of measurement from the recommended qualifying score. In this way, ETS is able to assure states that they have engaged in a process which insures legal defensibility of the score.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Praxis II Content Test for *Early Childhood Education* that we currently use has been revised and updated to reflect the College and Career Readiness Standards therefore requiring Maryland to select a new qualifying score. This will be offered beginning in October 2015.

The Computer Science Praxis is a newly developed test which includes questions about Technology Applications Core, Program Design and Development, and Programming Language Topics. This is the first time ETS has created a PRAXIS II Content Test in Computer Science. The test will be available beginning October 2015; however, MSDE will not begin requiring it for certification until July 1, 2016. This delayed adoption allows MSDE to continue to determine if there are other tests that could be offered in addition to the Praxis II Content Test to address other specializations within the computer science field; while simultaneously allowing individuals to take the test to add an endorsement in Computer Science to their existing certificate.

ACTION:

I am requesting that the State Board approve the following implementation dates and qualifying scores for the revised PRAXIS II content assessments for certification in the related areas:

Test Code	Test Name	Qualifying Score	Scale	Effective Date
5025	Early Childhood Education	156	100-200	9/1/15
5651	Computer Science	171	100-200	7/1/16

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