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State Superintendent of Schools

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TO: Members of the State Board of Education
FROM: Lillian M. Lowery, Ed.D. *lmlowery*
DATE: August 28, 2012
SUBJECT: Teacher Certification Assessments, Revisions
TEST Approval and the Establishment of Qualifying Scores

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this item is to seek State Board approval of three new Educational Testing Service (ETS) PRAXIS II assessments and to share the established qualifying scores for these tests and the ACTFL World Languages Test that will be used for teacher certification.

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. With changing content, new and revised national standards and the advent of the Common Core for K-12 students, ETS has implemented a five year test revision model, known as “regeneration”. Regeneration is an 18-24 month process, which begins with a National Advisory Committee (for each test) that provides expert input into the test development, review of the recent research, examination of the latest standards in the field, including the national Common Core Standards, and the redesign of the overall structure of the test. A national job analysis in the specific field is also conducted by ETS, and a Test Development Committee is formed to write items and review them for clarity, content, and equity. The last step is for ETS to conduct a multi-state standard setting study.

To support the decision-making process for state departments of education with regard to establishing a passing score, research staff from ETS designs and conducts two multi-state standard-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 multi-standard setting studies. 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 becomes the recommended qualifying score of the study. Each state determines its own qualifying score; however,

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. All of these tests will be offered for the first time in the 2012-2013 academic school years. The schedule for the phase-in will be on the MSDE website and the Maryland page of the ETS website.

The recent adoption of COMAR13A.12.02.28, World Languages, PreK- grade 12, includes an option which requires that the candidate achieve a higher score than the score required for initial certification. This option was specifically designed for native speakers of a language. A small panel of World Language experts and practitioners was convened; the panel recommended a qualifying score of Advanced-Mid on the ACTFL assessments: Written Proficiency Test and Oral Proficiency Interview.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

In an effort to keep current in various content fields, ETS is revising many tests on a five year schedule. Beginning in September 2012, Maryland will adopt a revised music test, *Music: Content and Instruction (0114)*. Maryland will also adopt two new tests; *Environmental Education (0831)*, and *Mandarin Chinese (5665)*. The Music and Environmental Education tests are offered in a paper version, while all ETS World Language tests, including the *Mandarin Chinese*, are only offered in a computer-delivered version. MSDE is recommending adopting the multi-state standard setting panel's recommended score as the Maryland qualifying scores on the aforementioned content assessments. ETS and MSDE will track the results of the tests. When there are sufficient data nationally and on Maryland test takers, the scores will be revisited.

A panel of experts and practitioners on World Languages in Maryland also reviewed trend data for World Language Maryland test-takers from the past five years. After discussion, the panel recommended using the ACTFL tests to satisfy the requirement of Option 2 of the recently-adopted World Languages regulation. Their decision in part was based on the interactive format required by ACTFL which, in the opinion of the panel, reflected a more authentic assessment of the candidate's ability to speak and write the world language.

The established scores are as follows:

Music Content and Instruction (0114); 162

Environmental Education (0831); 156

Mandarin Chinese (5665); 165

World Languages *ACTFL Oral Proficiency Interview*; Advanced Mid and ACTFL
Written Proficiency Test; Advanced Mid

ACTION:

I am requesting that the State Board approve the following PRAXIS II content assessments.

Test Name and Test Code:

Music: Content and Instruction (0114)

Environmental Education (0831)

Mandarin Chinese (5665)