



TO: Roger Breed, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Education

FROM: Sharon Katt, Administrator, Adult Program Services

SUBJECT: Testing Requirements for Educator Preparation Candidates

**Proposed Board Action:**

Work session discussion item.

**Background Information:**

The discussion will focus on two primary areas of testing as it relates to educator preparation: basic skills and content testing. A third area of interest is a new generation of testing which is considered 'performance testing'. These tests involve significant observation, production of artifacts, and professional critique and evaluation leading to a program completion or certification decision. At this point we are not investigating this tier; however, we continue to monitor the development of the performance testing market. The current versions tend to be very costly in terms of financial and human resources.

1) Basic Skills  
As provided in Rule 23 (92 NAC 23) Nebraska currently requires the Praxis I (also known as the Pre-Professional Skills Test - PPST) for admission to a Nebraska teacher preparation program. The PPST scores are also included as a consideration in the Nebraska certification process. This test is a product of the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and provides information related to basic skills in mathematics, writing, and reading. ETS is revising the current PPST to include the common core standards expectations and, since NE will need to go through a standards setting/validation process, we determined that it would be appropriate to consider the basic skills test which has been developed (and widely accepted by other states) by NES Pearson. Over the next couple of months we will be comparing the testing options available from each vendor to determine which test best meets the needs of Nebraska's institutions and certification system, consider recommended passing scores, and make recommendations to the Board for Rule revisions.

2) Content Tests  
The majority of states have implemented content tests that are used by approved institutions in those states for designating program completion in the area of endorsement and/or for state certification decisions. In early 2013, Iowa will implement mandatory content testing for certification, leaving Nebraska as the only state that does not use content testing for program completion and/or certification decisions. The content tests we are considering will provide information about the level of content knowledge possessed by candidates. It is not intended/expected that these tests can be used to evaluate program completer's pedagogical knowledge, skills and dispositions for teaching. Over the course of the next few months the plan is to study available content tests, consider recommended passing scores, and make recommendations for Rule revisions incorporate the content testing requirements.

**Estimated Cost:**

Unknown at this time; however, there will be some financial implications associated with the review /standard setting of the basic skills tests; and operational costs to select and establish passing scores for content tests; and, new costs to the educator preparation candidates to take the content tests (likely around \$150 per candidate per endorsed area). It is

expected that the cost to take the basic skills test, depending upon the vendor will be similar or slightly less than the current costs for the PPST.

**Supporting Documentation Included:**

To be provided at the meeting.

**For Additional Information on this item:**

Sharon Katt, Administrator, Adult Program Services, sharon.katt@nebraska.gov, 402.471.2405  
Pat Madsen, Education Specialist, Adult Program Services, pat.madsen@nebraska.gov, 402.471.4863  
Kevin Peters, Director, Teacher Certification, kevin.peters@nebraska.gov, 402.471.0739