



**Teacher Induction, Retention, and Advancement Act of 2016  
Workgroup  
February 21, 2017 Meeting  
Committee #1- Certification Restructuring**

**Committee Members Present:** Darren Hornbeck, MSEA; Karen Robertson, USM; Kelly Meadows, MSDE; Jessica Cuches, PSSAM; Nomsa Geleta, USM; Audra Butler, MADTEC

**Committee Members Absent:** Margret Trader, MICUA, Carrie Conley, MAESP;

**MSDE Staff:** Tanisha L. Brown

**Attorney General's Office:** Derek Simonsen, Esq., Assistant Attorney General

**Guests:** Charles Hagan, Principal, Harford County Public Schools

**Alternates Present:** N/A

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**Discussion**

Ms. Spross began the meeting asking if any changes were necessary for the minutes from the January 31, 2017 meeting. Mr. Hornbeck requested that his comment on adjuncts be updated to read: "adjuncts should not be permitted to teach students with special needs unless they have had proper training."

Ms. Meadows began the committee discussion by handing out a letter from the MD House of Delegates regarding Professional Technical Education (PTE) certification requirements. The group began discussing their experiences with PTE teacher shortages and how it relates to certification deadlines and requirements.

- Ms. Cuches indicated they are having similar issues as Mr. Hagen in Anne Arundel County (public comment presenter).
- Ms. Cuches asks what is the purpose of the basic skills test? What are they supposed to demonstrate?
  - Dr. Robertson suggests it is supposed to indicate individuals have the basic skills to enter the classroom.
    - Ms. Cuches indicates there are good teachers who have not passed the Praxis I Core or equivalent, as well as not-so-good teachers that have passed.
- Dr. Robertson asked if PTE teachers were always hired as Conditional teachers. Ms. Meadows shares the four routes to PTE certification and reminds group members that they all include pedagogy requirements.
- Mr. Hornbeck asks Ms. Cuches if she thought an extra year to meet certification requirements would *really* rectify retention concerns with PTE teachers; Ms. Cuches indicates it would not necessarily rectify the problem in her opinion.

- Ms. Meadows reminds the group that it can also be difficult for PTE teachers to find needed courses
  - Ms. Butler shares, community colleges have more flexibility with course offering, and also notes that her IHE (Anne Arundel Community College) has a Praxis prep course. Ms. Butler suggests that community colleges may be able to offer the PTE pedagogy courses.

Mr. Hornbeck asks how MD's cut scores compared to other states? Ms. Meadows indicated the chart disseminated at the previous meeting listed the cut scores established by ETS as well as Maryland's scores. Maryland's passing scores are within a few points of the recommended scores for each test with the exception of physical education. Currently, we do not have every state's cut scores. Ms. Meadows would need to request them from ETS. Ms. Spross indicated MD teachers, on average, are outperforming other educators in the nation.

Dr. Geleta asked why B.A. holders are required to take the basic skills test, given that a B.A. indicates you have generally met a certain level of proficiency in reading, writing and math?

Ms. Meadows notes that at one point, experience was taken in lieu of basic skills for PTE teachers, but she is not sure why this stopped and other options are not in place for initially certified PTE teachers?

- Dr. Robertson recommends using 2 years successful teaching as an alternative to testing for PTE teachers, or extending the deadline for requirements to three years.
  - Ms. Cuches suggests that if the deadline for completion of requirements for the conditional is to be extended it should be extended to at least 4 years, otherwise it will not fix the problem. Ms. Meadows asked if an extension to 4 years would solve the issue if the person couldn't pass the tests. Ms. Cuches stated that it would not.

Ms. Butler indicated that they sometimes advise students to take ACT prep and take the ACT exam for the basic skills requirement.

Mr. Hornbeck questioned the validity of the test and noted some people are not good test takers. He recommended asking for a waiver to the test and offering another option to replace the test. Ms. Meadows reminds him that by regulation tests cannot be waived and that although the waiver regulation could be changed, it is more productive to change the actual regulations so as not to require a waiver.

Dr. Geleta recommends again that individuals with a B.A. should not be required to take the basic skills test. Dr. Shapiro agrees, but notes it does not address testing requirements for non-B.A. PTE teachers who come in with an AA degree or high school diploma may still have difficulty.

Mr. Hornbeck asks, if someone has the skills (implied through a B.A.), why can't they pass the Praxis I Core? Dr. Geleta shared that when one has not actively practiced skills, such as algebra, they may lose them and then do not perform well on an assessment. Dr. Shapiro suggests offering and accepting competency based credits so certain candidates can avoid taking unnecessary classes (unnecessary because they have mastered these things through work or other avenues).

Ms. Butler recommends requiring a portfolio in lieu of the basic skills exam, but also mentions: "Who will review the portfolio?" Ms. Meadows asks, what about fee payers? Who would review for them?

It was suggested that PTE teachers without a B.A. present course credits in lieu of the basic skills exam. Everyone agreed this could be a reasonable alternative. Ms. Cuches mentioned it could potentially address the PTE teacher issue.

Mr. Hagen recommended a hybrid course covering reading, writing and math to replace the basic skills test, perhaps offered at the community college level.

Ms. Meadows and Ms. Gronberg-Quinn mentioned it was best to focus on classes that currently exist (there are no known hybrid reading, writing and math classes).

Ms. Meadows asks if offering a composite score for the Praxis Core would help?

It was mentioned that a composite score exists with SAT and GRE so it is understandable to offer a comprehensive score for the Core.

Mr. Hagen notes that PTE teachers can *do* math, as it relates to their career, but often have difficulty with it from a math textbook.

The group questioned if requiring reading and math coursework could be used in lieu of meeting basic skills exam requirement, since reading coursework will encompass writing as well.

Ms. Meadows asked if we go to a four year extension, would there be a renewal of the conditional, and if so, what would individuals need to bring? Everyone agreed that there would be no renewal if the conditional certificate was to be a 4 year certificate.

- Ms. Cuches suggested PTE teachers complete a competency based demonstration, evaluated by the local education agency (LEA).
- Ms. Butler suggested creating a course where candidates build a portfolio.
- Ms. Meadows reminded everyone that they must think from the state wide perspective (include fee payers), rather than the local perspective. Having requirements in place that involve review of a portfolio is not feasible for fee payers.

Dr. Robertson suggests maybe there should be easier entrance requirements and harder exit requirements into the field?

Ms. Meadows asked if the committee was comfortable with the pedagogy requirements for PTE teachers. The committee felt they were sufficient for minimum requirements.

Ms. Meadows asked if the 50% rule for coursework that applies to transcript analysis is still necessary.

- Dr. Geleta noted that because of online courses, the landscape of education has changed, leading to many people selecting courses from a variety of institutions, as they feel appropriate for their schedule or timeline.
- Dr. Robertson felt that it is important that 50% is taken at the same school so that it is taken as a program. Ms. Meadows reminded the group that this requirement is for those coming into certification via the credit count route.
- Ms. Butler mentions the rule can be a barrier because community colleges often work together to offer courses and will send students to the schools they know are running the course at a given time.

The committee would like to discuss the following alternatives to basic skills and the conditional certificate in more depth:

- Using math and reading coursework (college level credit bearing) in lieu of basic skills;
- Not requiring the basic skills if one has a Bachelor's Degree;
- Using a composite score for the Core
- Allowing a local school system superintendent to approve an "equivalent" measure for basic skills (e.g., evaluation, portfolio); and
- Length of conditional certificate.

**Materials of Interest requests for next meeting:**

- Heather Lageman was not able to speak to the group today. The group would like to hear from her regarding micro credentialing at the next meeting.
- Chart of states' ETS cut scores.