

**Division of Professional Education and Teacher Quality**  
**Email Update**  
**June 2, 2014**

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**Basic Skills Assessment:**

Last fall, after consultation with the State Board of Education, the BSLTQ implemented a policy to broaden the options whereby a student meets the requirements of a “basic skills” assessment under 22 PA Code 49.18 Assessment. At that time, the BSLTQ recommended a specific score achieved on the SAT assessment to meet the basic skills requirement. The recommended score was determined through consultation with the Office of Basic Education and the College Board, and considered to be in alignment with K-12 standards and college and career readiness expectations as well as predictors of college success. We would like to continue our plan to offer choice by adding the ETS Core assessment to the options available for students to meet the basic skills requirement for the following reasons:

- Students may have *ready access* to more designated testing sites, whether they are Pennsylvania residents or out-of-state residents.
- The ETS Core is a *nationally administered assessment* produced by a reputable testing company with an established testing network within Pennsylvania. There will be no additional cost to the taxpayer to offer this option.
- Pennsylvania allows multiple assessment choices for certification in other areas. This allows students more flexibility in timing their assessments with their program calendar, enabling them to test more conveniently whether they are at home or on campus.
- The vendor, ETS, offers specific client-focused resources (Data Manager, Data Requests) as well as student-focused resources (free webinars and priced online subscriptions) to help prepare for test taking. At a time when we are raising expectations of our K-12 graduates to be college and career ready, the Bureau considers these resources to be a valuable tool.

**Update for Discontinued Certification Tests:**

ETS notified the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) in December 2013 that they are discontinuing the five Praxis examinations listed below. Please inform past and present students affected by the change. We will be unable to issue certifications to anyone who has not passed an assessment. Direct all affected students to the [testing webpage](#) for updated information.

Current expiration dates and options:

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- **Communications (test code 0800)** ends June 2014. Candidates may take Speech Communication: Content Knowledge (5221) assessment beginning July 1, 2014. There is no impact on the programs or certification in this area.
- **Cooperative Education (test code 0811)** The deadline is extended until June 2016 with limited test offerings after June 2014. Look for a separate link on the [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis) Pennsylvania page. We have found a vendor to develop a new test and expect it to be available by 2016, but cannot guarantee it.
- **Environmental Education (test code 0831)** The deadline is extended until June 2016 with limited test offerings after June 2014. Look for a separate link on the [www.ets.org/praxis](http://www.ets.org/praxis) Pennsylvania page. No replacement test is available. Other science certificates may teach this subject.
- **Safety/Driver Education (test code 0860)** The test will end June 2014. Effective July 1, 2014, any PA Instructional certificate holder may add the Safety/Driver Education certificate by earning the PA Private Driver Instructor Training license.
- **Social Science (test code 0951)** The test ends June 2014. No replacement test is available. Interested candidates should pursue Social Studies certification.

## Student Teacher Assessment:

The Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality (BSLTQ) currently requires the use of the "430" form for programs to assess the performance of their educator candidates in the student teaching experience. This 430 form satisfies the requirements as set forth in Chapter 49.18 Assessments. The 430 form is not consistent with the revised methods of the current Educator Effectiveness System. It is in the best interests of students to instruct them in the evaluation requirements of the new system as well as offer increased reflective opportunities regarding their teaching skills and techniques. The BSLTQ will be piloting a new student teaching assessment in the future. In February 2014, the BSLTQ issued a Request for Information (RFI) to invite vendors to submit information regarding their assessment tools. We felt it was important to know the value of available systems. We received four responses to the RFI:

- Educational Testing Services (ETS); *Praxis* Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT)
  - Aligns with the Danielson framework being used in the observation/practice component of Pennsylvania's new Classroom Teacher Evaluation Tool -- consistent with the art of teaching.
  - Most cost effective for the student of the relevant submissions.
  - ETS Data Manager Tool (used to create reports, analyze test results) is straightforward and easy to use.
  - Opportunity exists for the student to make necessary adjustments to performance before moving on to Task 2 for formal assessment.
  - Three separate trained evaluators score a section of the assessment.
- Pearson; edTPA™
  - Aligns with 27 subject areas and is content specific, the areas are not specifically aligned with Pennsylvania certification areas.
  - One rater trained specifically for each subject area evaluates the submission.

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- There is an increased cost for the student, particularly if they must re-test.
- The Results Analyzer Tool is available.
- The candidate submits the entire assessment at one time with no preliminary feedback.
- The BloomBoard Management Platform tool is not an assessment and does not meet our needs.
- Randa Solutions Management Platform tool is not an assessment and does not meet our needs.

We are seeking additional information from the two relevant programs. We will be meeting with educators in Pennsylvania to discuss options prior to implementing a pilot. Individuals who know of other standardized approaches to student teaching evaluation should submit their ideas to PDE.

### Certification by Adding On:

To maintain high standards for content and pedagogy while providing the school districts with more flexibility for assignment, we are permitting teachers with valid instructional certificates to add the PreK-4 and the 4-8 certificates by passing the required certification assessment.

We will make this effective June 1, 2014.

- The new certificates (PreK-4 and 4-8) were created to provide teachers with more depth of knowledge and skills for the important developmental years of PreK through third grade and the middle level years of fourth through eighth grade.
- The Board added fourth grade to the early elementary certificates to provide more assignment flexibility for school administrators.
- The new assessments were designed to evaluate candidates on the new requirements and have proven to be rigorous.
- Superintendents are reporting that the grade spans do not offer sufficient flexibility, reporting that the K-6 grades are of more concern.
- Most other certificates, including all secondary subjects, can be added to a valid instructional certificate by passing the test.
- Chapter 49 specifically excludes special education, health and physical education and cooperative education from adding on through testing.
- Initial feedback from the Superintendents to this announcement at the State Board has been positive.

### Program Approval for the School Counselor Pk-12 Certificate:

As a reminder, IHEs wishing to offer the Elementary and Secondary School Counselor (PK-12) program **must** submit the following documentation by July 1, 2014 to Christina Baumer at [cbaumer@pa.gov](mailto:cbaumer@pa.gov):

- Advisement sheet; and
- Competency matrix

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Institutions currently not approved to offer a counseling program that would like to offer the new PK-12 school counseling program must complete an application in the PRS system.

The new Elementary and Secondary School Counselor Guidelines are posted to the PDE website at:

<http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt?open=514&objID=506706&mode=2>

**2014 Summer and Fall TIMS Online Sessions via Webinar:**

The Bureau of School Leadership and Teacher Quality is pleased to announce the 2014 Summer and Fall TIMS online session schedule.

- We will record training sessions to allow for greater participation and strongly recommend that you pre-register. If you cannot attend, please cancel your registration to release the seat for another participant.
- Question and Answer Sessions (Q&A) are offered for applicants and provisioned certifying officers. We do not record these sessions.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Session Title</b>	<b>Time</b>
07/08/2014	Certification Officers- LEA (Permits & Update Training)	10:00-11:00
10/07/2014	Certification Officers- IHE (Review & Update Training)	10:00-11:00
09/24/2014	How to Apply for Level II Teaching Certificate - Training	3:30-4:30
11/19/2014	How to Apply for Level I Teaching Cert. for PA Graduates	3:30-4:30
06/03/2014	Q & A-Applicant	4:00-4:30
07/01/2014	Q & A-Applicant	4:00-4:30
08/12/2014	Q & A-Applicant	4:00-4:30
10/29/2014	Q & A-Applicant	4:00-4:30
12/02/2014	Q & A-Applicant	4:00-4:30
06/24/2014	Q & A-Certification Officers	11:00-11:30
07/23/2014	Q & A-Certification Officers	11:00-11:30
08/06/2014	Q & A-Certification Officers	11:00-11:30
09/18/2014	Q & A-Certification Officers	11:00-11:30
10/22/2014	Q & A-Certification Officers	11:00-11:30
11/12/2014	Q & A-Certification Officers	11:00-11:30
12/09/2014	Q & A-Certification Officers	11:00-11:30

**Notes:**

- 1. Q & A Certification Officers is open to PK-12 Certification Officers, Superintendent/Chief School Administrators and Approved Prep Program Certifying Officers.**
- 2. Superintendents/Chief School Administrators are invited to all LEA Certification Officers' sessions.**

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Full details, schedule changes and pre-registration is available at [www.pdewebinars.org](http://www.pdewebinars.org). Search for TIMS. Recordings are on the Archives page.

### **TIMS Reminders:**

- TIMS currently lists the PAPA tests as the required basic skills tests. If certification candidates meet the basic skills requirement using one of the accepted alternative methods, please remind them that they do not have to contact PDE.
- Please remind certification candidates that PDE does not require the TIMS application coversheet unless the first page of the coversheet lists specific documents. If it only lists "Other", do not mail the coversheet.
- Please remind certification candidates that they can check the status of their application through their TIMS dashboard or on the TIMS public site. They should not call or submit a help desk ticket simply to ask the status.
- Application processing can take approximately 4-6 weeks at this time of year.
- Only an IHE or LEA can request an expedite of an application for a legitimate reason. Compose a message through your TIMS dashboard using the candidate's Application ID and PPID and select "Expedite" as the subject of the message, enter the reason for the expedite request in the body of the message and send. The application will automatically be flagged for expedite.
- Please remember that the call center is extremely busy during this time of year, we recommend that certification candidates submit a help desk ticket instead of waiting on hold. If you need to contact the call center, you can use the priority call feature to decrease your wait time on hold. Please do not give the priority number to your candidates.
- TIMS Release 6.2 is scheduled for implementation June 13, 2014. We will provide information on relevant changes in the next update.