

V.B.

**CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford**

TO BE PROPOSED:

January 4, 2017

RESOLVED, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Public Act 16-41, adopts the attached guidance document to provide information on the use of the state reading, writing, and mathematics competency examination to identify the broad areas in which candidates may need additional support to be successful in their Connecticut educator preparation program; and approves the use of Praxis Core, SAT, or ACT tests to meet this state requirement, and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action.

Approved by a vote of _____, this fourth day of January, Two Thousand Seventeen.

Signed: _____

Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Secretary
State Board of Education

CONNECTICUT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Hartford

TO: State Board of Education

FROM: Dr. Dianna R. Wentzell, Commissioner of Education

DATE: January 4, 2017

SUBJECT: Approval of Guidance Document Pursuant to Public Act 16-41

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to present to the State Board of Education (SBE) a guidance document that addresses the use of competency examinations in reading, writing, and mathematics pursuant to Public Act 16-41, *An Act Concerning the Minority Teacher Recruitment Task Force*. P.A. 16-41 makes a change to the competency assessment requirement for teacher candidates attending an approved Connecticut educator preparation program (EPP) and requires that the SBE adopt guidelines that address this new policy.

The proposed guidance document (**Attachment A**) was developed by a group of stakeholders including representatives from public and private institutions of higher education, alternate routes to certification (ARCs), and Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) staff and leadership.

Historical Context/Background Information

Subsections (a) and (b) of Section 10-145f of the Connecticut General Statutes stipulate that any person who does not already hold a valid Connecticut certificate and who seeks admission into an EPP or certification in Connecticut shall achieve a satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate SBE-approved basic skills assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics, unless otherwise eligible for a waiver. On May 7, 2014, the SBE approved the Praxis Core assessments for use in meeting the state reading, writing, and mathematics competency examination requirement, with allowance for a waiver based on criteria administered by the CSDE.

Passage of P.A. 16-41 in 2016 amends the basic skills testing requirement such that candidates shall take the competency assessment upon entry into a Connecticut EPP, whereas previously it served as a certification requirement. Results on the competency assessment are to be used to identify the broad areas of reading, writing, and/or mathematics in which candidates may need additional support to be successful in their preparation as a Connecticut educator. P.A. 16-41 directs the SBE to adopt guidelines establishing standards for using candidates' assessment results to accomplish this objective.

The attached guidance document was developed by CSDE staff and leadership with input from a group of stakeholders representing the diversity of EPPs across the state.

The CSDE also recommends that the SBE adopt the SAT and ACT to satisfy the competency examination requirement for candidates as an alternative to Praxis Core. This is consistent with expectations established by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) national accrediting body for EPPs and will provide candidates with additional flexibility in meeting state requirements for the requisite reading, writing, and mathematics competency examination. The attached document provides implementation guidance to EPPs regarding the appropriate use of Praxis Core, SAT, or ACT, as diagnostic tools for teacher candidates upon entry into a Connecticut EPP.

Recommendation and Justification

The CSDE recommends adoption of this guidance document to support Connecticut EPPs in the implementation of the competency assessment requirements for pre-service teacher candidates as outlined in P.A. 16-41. The CSDE also recommends approval of the use of SAT or ACT, in addition to Praxis Core, as the state-approved competency assessment for reading, writing, and mathematics.

Follow-Up Activities

Upon adoption, the CSDE will disseminate the guidance document to administrators of all Connecticut EPPs, including deans of education and certification officers, and update the CSDE certification website with the new policy. The CSDE will continue to assist in the ongoing implementation of this policy.

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STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



State Competency Examination Guidance Document
(Public Act 16-41)

Purpose and Background:

This document provides information about changes to the competency (i.e., Praxis Core) examination requirement for candidates entering a Connecticut educator preparation program (EPP). Subsections (a) and (b) of Section 10-145f of the Connecticut General Statutes stipulate that any person who does not already hold a valid Connecticut certificate and who seeks admission into an EPP or certification in Connecticut shall achieve a satisfactory evaluation on the appropriate State Board of Education (SBE)-approved competency assessment in reading, writing, and mathematics, unless eligible for a waiver or exemption.

Passed in 2016, Public Act 16-41 amends the basic skills competency assessment requirement, as follows:

Sec. 4 (a) [No] Each person [shall be] formally admitted to a State Board of Education approved teacher preparation program [until such person has achieved satisfactory scores on] shall take the state reading, writing and mathematics competency examination¹, prescribed by and administered under the direction of the State Board of Education, [or has qualified for a waiver of such test based on criteria established by the State Board of Education] Each person's results shall be used as a diagnostic tool, in accordance with the guidelines adopted by the State Board of Education pursuant to section 5 of this act...

This policy applies to all Connecticut EPPs, including alternate route to certification (ARC) programs. Candidates entering an EPP in Connecticut must take the Praxis Core reading, writing, and mathematics tests or an equivalent assessment (see below).

Equivalent Competency Assessments and Waivers:

In lieu of Praxis Core assessments, and notwithstanding the requirements set forth in Sections 10-145h (Bilingual Education Teacher), 10-145k (International Teacher Permit), and 10-145q (Charter School Permit) of the Connecticut General Statutes, EPPs may accept candidate results on the SAT or ACT to satisfy competency examination requirements for entry into a Connecticut EPP.

Additionally, candidates may continue to obtain a waiver of the basic skills testing requirement using scores on the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Prueba de Aptitud Académica (PAA). Effective January 1, 2017, the CSDE will no longer process and issue waivers. Candidates may apply directly to the EPP for a waiver.

Use of Praxis Core, SAT, or ACT as Diagnostic Tools and Considerations for Candidate Support:

Results of Praxis Core, SAT, or ACT tests may be used to indicate areas in which a candidate may need further instruction during the course of his or her teacher preparation. Neither the legislation nor the SBE requires a singular approach to such support. Rather, EPPs may determine criteria and processes for support, based upon candidate test results and any additional preparation program requirements.

If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Amanda Turner, Associate Education Consultant, at amanda.turner@ct.gov or 860-713-6737.

¹ Waiver criteria is based on research conducted by ETS investigating the relationship between scores achieved on the SAT, GRE, ACT, and PAA and performance on Basic Skills assessments (i.e., Praxis I and Praxis Core), through which ETS determined the score that a candidate must earn on any of the aforementioned tests that would relate to a passing score (the Multi-State Standard Setting Recommended Cut Score (MSSS) on the Basic Skills assessment.