

**OFFICE OF QUALITY PROFESSIONALS AND SPECIAL SCHOOLS**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**July 19-20, 2012**

**OFFICE OF EDUCATOR LICENSURE**

18. Approval to Increase Praxis Tests Cut Scores  
(Has cleared the Administrative Procedures Act Process with public comment)

Background Information:

The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development convened a subcommittee, at the request of the State Superintendent, to review current passing scores on a selected group of Praxis tests. These tests were chosen because Mississippi scores are the lowest in the nation on these specific tests. The committee met with Educational Testing Service (ETS) and Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) officials to discuss and propose a recommendation to the Commission to increase the required passing scores for these tests. The information included in the back-up material shows the recommendations of the review committee.

The recommendation has been amended to increase the Mathematics (Test 0061) cut score to 128 to become effective September 1, 2012. Additionally, the cut score for the 0061 license will be increased to 130 effective September 1, 2014 and 132 effective September 1, 2016.

The Office of Educator Licensure will develop a Board policy to ensure that all Praxis scores will be reviewed every three (3) years.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

Blake Wilson  
President & CEO  
Mississippi Economic Council  
bwilson@mec.ms



June 7, 2012

Cindy Coon  
Director of Licensure  
Mississippi Department of Education  
359 North West Street  
Suite 201  
Jackson, MS 39205

Dear Cindy,

The Mississippi Economic Council supports increasing the required score on the Praxis II test, which was proposed at the State Board of Education meeting on May 18, 2012.

Improving teacher quality is a key recommendation of Blueprint Mississippi. The Blueprint report, which was released in January 2012, points to strengthening teacher certification requirements as essential in ensuring continual improvement in teacher effectiveness. Raising the required Praxis II score is crucial in helping *Increase the Educational Achievement Level of Mississippians* – one of Blueprint Mississippi's nine priority goals.

Exceptional education starts with great teachers. We must begin to put into place today the elements necessary to allow Mississippi to thrive in the future. Having highly qualified educators in the classroom will provide significant returns for all citizens of our state.

The State Board of Education is to be congratulated for having the foresight to address teacher quality. Increasing the requirements on the Praxis II test is an important step that direction.

Sincerely,

Blake A. Wilson  
President & CEO

## Increase of Praxis Tests Cut Scores

### *Recommendation from Committee June 2011*

<b>Praxis Test</b>	<b>Cut Score</b>
Praxis I Reading (0710)	172
Praxis I Writing (0720)	173
Praxis I Mathematics (0730)	172
Business Education (0101)	153
Mathematics (0061)	128
Middle Grade Mathematics (0069)	146
Middle Grade Science (0439)	144
Middle Grade Social Studies (0089)	149
Physical Education (0091)	145
Social Studies (0081)	150
Special Education (0354)	152
Speech Communication (0221)	143

**From:** Claiborne Barksdale [<mailto:barksdac@msreads.org>]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 04, 2012 11:55 AM  
**To:** Cindy Coon  
**Cc:** 'Nancy Looime'; 'Blake Wilson'; 'Hank M. Bounds'; 'Burnham Tom'; 'Jim Barksdale'  
**Subject:** Proposed Praxis II Test Cut Score Increase - Public Comment

Cindy – I am writing on behalf of the Barksdale Reading Institute in support of the proposed increase in the Praxis II test cut scores proposed by the State Board of Education at its May 18, 2012, meeting.

I chaired the education task force of Blueprint Mississippi in 2011, and increased Praxis II cut scores was a recommendation of that task force. We feel that this is essential to strengthening the teacher work force in the state which is, in turn, critical to the future strength of the schools. Consistent with this change in cut scores, the task force also has recommended strengthening the entry requirements for the state's schools of education (Praxis I). We hope to work with Dr. Bounds at IHL to accomplish that. As another component of our work, we also recommended a change in curricula at the schools of education to have more content-focused curricula. Finally, we have recommended a move toward merit-based compensation so that excellent teachers can be rewarded for their successes in the classroom; we have been keeping up with Daphne Buckley's work on that front.

Obviously, there are many other pieces to the very complex puzzle of education transformation. But the piece that dwarfs all others is having quality teachers in the classrooms. This board recommendation on cut scores is an important step in that direction.

Many thanks to the board, to Dr. Burnham, to you and to others who have gotten this moving.

Cordially, Claiborne Barksdale

Mr. Claiborne Barksdale  
Barksdale Reading Institute  
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662-236-5611 Fax

**From:** David Rock [<mailto:rock@olemiss.edu>]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 28, 2012 11:14 AM  
**To:** Cindy Coon  
**Cc:** Kaye Pepper  
**Subject:** Re: APA board item from Licensure

Cindy,

First, I applaud our focus to raise the bar. I am sure you know that I support increasing our standards.

I have a couple of questions though.

1. We raised Special Education 354 to the second highest cut score in the nation. While I applaud raising the bar, we did not come closing to raising the bar in the other areas such as Social Studies and math.
2. Social Studies recommended score is 150 which will be the third lowest cut score in the nation. The average for this test is 154.
3. Math's recommendation is 128 which will be the 8th lowest in the nation. The average is 133.

I am glad we have decided to raise the bar, but if we are going to state we are going to align to the national average, then we need to get closer to that average.

Dr. David Rock  
Dean, School of Education  
The University of Mississippi  
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**From:** Dr. Bridgette L. Davis [<mailto:ScienceEd@comcast.net>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 29, 2012 3:58 PM  
**To:** Cindy Coon  
**Subject:** Praxis Scores Increase - Consider including PLT increase passing score as well

Dear Sir/Mam,

I am writing to express my support for the increase in passing scores for the identified Praxis tests. I would like to recommend that the PLT test scores be included in the increase. The *Principles of Learning and Teaching* (PLT) test is valuable in assessing teacher candidates understanding of pedagogy and classroom management. Because these two areas are most often associated with teacher effectiveness and student achievement, the low scores required now on the PLT should be reevaluated and increased. In addition, I strongly recommend that the PLT be added to the Praxis test requirements for alternative route teachers.

It would be my pleasure to present a full disclosure of the reasons to increase the required passing score on the PLT and to justify the inclusion for alternate route teachers.

Sincerely,

Bridgette L. Davis

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**Bridgette L. Davis, Ph.D.**  
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**Southern Miss - *Creative.* Bold. Determined.**

**From:** Scott Waller [<mailto:swaller@msmec.com>]

**Sent:** Thursday, June 07, 2012 8:42 AM

**To:** Cindy Coon

**Cc:** [barksdac@msreads.org](mailto:barksdac@msreads.org); [nloome@msparentscampaign.org](mailto:nloome@msparentscampaign.org); [hmbounds@ihl.state.ms.us](mailto:hmbounds@ihl.state.ms.us); [ptburnham@gmail.com](mailto:ptburnham@gmail.com); [Jim@barksdale.ms](mailto:Jim@barksdale.ms); Blake Wilson

**Subject:** Letter of Support to Increase Praxis II test cut scores

Cindy,

Blake Wilson asked me to forward the attached letter of support from the Mississippi Economic Council to increase the requirements on the Praxis II test.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

Thanks

Scott



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