

**OFFICE OF CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICER**  
**Summary of State Board of Education Agenda Items**  
**Consent Agenda**  
**May 17, 2018**

**OFFICE OF TEACHING AND LEADING**

- G. Approval to adjust the passing score for Praxis Subject Assessment *Mathematics: Content Knowledge* (Test Code 5161) as recommended by the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development

Background Information: On March 2, 2018, the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development met in its regularly scheduled meeting and approved the recommendation from an Ad Hoc Committee of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and Development to adjust the current qualifying passing score of 160 to a passing score of 152 for the Praxis Subject Assessment *Mathematics: Content Knowledge* (Test Code 5161). The qualifying passing score of (152) for the *Praxis Mathematics: Content Knowledge* (5161) will be effective upon approval by the State Board of Education.

Currently, school districts in the state are facing a shortage of licensed mathematics teachers to fill existing openings. Issues contributing to these shortages may include attracting students, current teachers, or career-changers, aligning preparation programs' curricula to the standards specified by the Department, and supports for candidates seeking licensure.

While the Department actively explores initiatives to both increase the number of students interested in teaching mathematics and improving the alignment of mathematics coursework and the content domain being assessed, the Office of Teaching and Leading, Division of Educator Licensure is seeking approval to adjust the current passing score for the Praxis Mathematics: Content Knowledge test to 152.

As a recommended best practice, states, when adopting a passing score for a new or revised licensure test, are encouraged to adopt an initial passing score that considers the recommendation from the multistate standard-setting study, other statistical guides, and the specific conditions and needs in the state. States are strongly encouraged to collect state-specific performance data over the course of one to three years while continually monitoring test-taker performance and, if necessary, adjust scores based on their contextual framework. Therefore, the decision to adjust the passing score to 152 may best be viewed not as an isolated decision, but rather as part of a more holistic and systematic way of addressing the issue that is in conjunction with the long-term solutions outlined below.

Any adjustment in the passing score will be monitored to evaluate the effect and to consider re-adjusting the score at a later time.

**Longer-term Solutions:**

***Attracting candidates to mathematics education.*** Initiatives will include:

- Outreach to high schools to promote mathematics teaching as an attractive STEM career;
- Outreach to all students admitted to colleges and universities with an approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP) who indicate education as an interest on the ACT or SAT background questionnaire to promote mathematics education; and
- Identifying students currently in teaching areas with a surplus who have demonstrated proficiency in mathematics and promote mathematics education as an option.

***Identifying weaknesses early.*** Either through admission test scores or early use of an interactive practice test (IPT), identify gaps in students' mathematical knowledge early enough to address through coursework.

***Aligning Educator Preparation Program (EPP) coursework to content domain.*** Working with the ETS client relations director for Mississippi, the Department will coordinate workshops to crosswalk the test specifications for the *Praxis Mathematics: Content Knowledge* test to the course requirements for mathematics education majors. EPPs can work in cohorts to identify courses that could address gaps in prescribed coursework and the set of courses can be disseminated not only to mathematics education majors but also to the nearly half of test takers who indicated mathematics or other major as their course of study.

***Promoting mobility with the ranks.*** The Department will explore the possibility of offering (a) targeted professional development for elementary school teachers with strong mathematics knowledge and experience teaching upper-grade mathematics to receive a middle school mathematics endorsement and (b) targeted professional development for middle school mathematics teachers with a strong track record to receive a secondary mathematics license. Working with already committed teachers who exhibit a strong background in mathematics would help to support shortage areas.

Recommendation: Approval

Back-up material attached

<b>APPENDIX B :</b> <b>PRAXIS II EXAMINATION SCORES REQUIRED BY MISSISSIPPI</b>
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**SPECIALTY AREA TEST CODE SCALED SCORE**

Art Education (5134)	158
Audiology (5342)	170
Biology (5235)	150
Braille Proficiency (0633) – Visually Impaired (5282) is also required.	165
Business Education (5101)	153
Chemistry (5245)	151
Chinese Mandarin (5665)	164
Economics (0911)	150
Education of Young Children (5024)	160
Elementary Education (K-6) (5017)	153
Elementary Education (4-6) (5018) Alternate Route Only	163
Emotionally Disturbed/Behavior Disorders (5372)	154
English Language and Literature (5038)	167
English to Speakers of Other Languages (5362)	149
French (5174)	153
German (5183)	154
Professional School Counselor (5421)	156
Health Education (5551)	149
Hearing Disability (5272)	160
Home Economics/Family & Consumer Science (5122)	153
Latin (5601)	152
Library Media Specialist (5311)	143
Marketing (5561)	151
<b>Mathematics (5161)</b>	<b>160</b>
Middle Grade Math (5169) supplemental <i>only</i>	165
Middle Grade Language Arts (5047) supplemental <i>only</i>	164
Middle Grade Social Studies (5089) supplemental <i>only</i>	149
Middle Grade Science (5440) supplemental <i>only</i>	150
Music Education (5113)	161
Physical Education (5091)	145
Physics (5265)	139
School Leaders Licensure Assessment (6011)	169
School Psychologist (5402)	147
Social Studies (5081)	150
Spanish (5195)	160
Special Education (5354)	152
Special Education Fundamental Subjects HQ (5511)	142
Speech Communication (5221)	143
Speech-Language Pathology (5331)	162
Technology Education (5051)	159
Visually Impaired (5282) – Braille Proficiency (0633) is also required.	163

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Mississippi Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators

March 7, 2018

Dr. Cindy Melton, Mississippi Educator Licensure Commission Chair  
cc: Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent, Mississippi Department of Education  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Melton and Educator Licensure Commission:

The Mississippi Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators (MAMTE) is an organization comprised of community college, college, and university faculty who teach the mathematics content and pedagogy courses for pre-service teachers. Our mission is to support mathematics teacher educators in providing high-quality teacher preparation in Mississippi through professional development and research. Since 2007, the membership has met at our Annual MAMTE Symposium to work through issues facing mathematics education in our state. As a result of our diligence and collective voice, we have been asked to serve on a variety of committees and sub-committees within the Mississippi Department of Education. Since 2015, there have been discussions about concerns with the current Praxis II Math 5161 passing score. Many noted that there has been a low percentage of students passing with the current passing score of 160. A committee was established in October 2016 to investigate other states' pass scores, the current national average, and Mississippi's average as well. This conversation continued at our May 2017 Symposium, and at the October 2017 MAMTE Business Meeting a letter recommending a change in pass score was approved by the MAMTE membership.

The MAMTE membership is very interested in maintaining high expectations for Mississippi's teachers and students and are most interested in the new Praxis II Math 5161 pass score. Currently, the national mean score for test takers is approximately 153 (N=8458), and the Mississippi mean score for test takers is approximately 142 (N=493). By comparison, six states currently have lower pass scores than Mississippi (Alabama: 145; Colorado: 152; Iowa: 134; Kansas: 152; Nebraska: 146; and South Carolina: 150).

The MAMTE membership supports the recommendation from the Mississippi Educator Licensure Commission to change the pass score to 152, which is one standard deviation below the ETS recommended score.

If a new passing score is adopted, another question was raised concerning making the new score retroactive. The MAMTE membership is recommending that if our recommended new pass rate for the Praxis II Math 5161 is enacted, that it be retroactive to when it was initially required. We commend your efforts and hope that you will accept our support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Jessica Ivy  
President, MAMTE

Officers:

Jessica Ivy, President, Mississippi State University  
Liza Cope, President-Elect, Delta State University  
Dana Franz, Secretary, Mississippi State University  
Alice Steimle, Treasurer, University of Mississippi



**STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING**

Glenn F. Boyce, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Higher Education

March 9, 2018

Dr. Cindy Melton, Chair  
Mississippi Educator Licensure Commission  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Melton:

The Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) governs a strong public university system with eight distinct, mission-driven universities, whose shared vision is to enhance the quality of life of Mississippians by effectively meeting their diverse educational needs. In so doing, IHL has become nationally recognized for its emphasis on student achievement and on preparing responsible citizens; its adherence to high academic standards and to quality of instruction, research, service and facilities; and its commitment to affordability, accessibility, and accountability.

IHL is committed to maintaining high expectations and standards for Mississippi's teachers and students. We have recently discussed the new recommended Praxis II Math 5161 passing score. As Commissioner of Higher Education, I support the recommendation from the Mississippi Educator Licensure Commission to adjust the passing score to 152, which is one standard deviation below the ETS recommended score. In addition, I support the recommendation that the new pass score for the Praxis II Math 5161 be retroactive to when it was initially required. I commend the efforts of the Educator Licensure Commission to improve education in Mississippi for all students and hope you will accept my support.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn F. Boyce".

Glenn F. Boyce, Ed.D.  
Commissioner of Higher Education

Cc: Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent  
Mississippi Department of Education



*"Strengthening Educator Preparation Collaboratively"*

**March 9, 2018**

Dr. Cindy Melton, Mississippi Educator Licensure Commission Chair  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Dr. Melton and Educator Licensure Commission:

Mississippi Association of Colleges for Teacher Education is a statewide organization affiliated with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Its members include the departments and schools of Mississippi's regionally accredited colleges and universities engaged in the preparation of professional school personnel. As a consortium of teacher education schools, MACTE is vitally interested in the support and enhancement of all aspects of education in Mississippi.

MACTE is committed to maintaining high expectations for Mississippi's teachers and students. We have recently discussed the new recommended Praxis II Math 5161 pass. MACTE supports the recommendation from the Mississippi Educator Licensure Commission to adjust the passing score to 152, which is one standard deviation below the ETS recommended score.

In addition, MACTE recommends the new pass score for the Praxis II Math 5161 be retroactive to when it was initially required. We commend your efforts of the Educator Licensure Commission and hope that you will accept our support.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Rock".

David Rock  
President, MACTE

Cc: Dr. Carey Wright, State Superintendent, Mississippi Department of Education

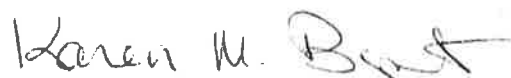
March 13, 2018

Dr. Cindy Melton  
Lowrey 209  
Mississippi College  
200 South Capitol Street  
Clinton, MS 39056

Dear Dr. Melton:

Enclosed is a personal letter to the Members of the Mississippi Department of Education on behalf of my daughter, Kaitlyn Bryant, a senior at Delta State University. I was informed you were collecting letters to present to the Board of Education on behalf of the proposed changes to the Praxis II: Mathematics 5161 requirements for licensure for teachers. I would like the enclosed letter to be included in your presentation to the Department of Education. Thank you for your work for this proposed change to the Praxis II.

Sincerely,

  
Karen M. Bryant



March 13, 2018

Mississippi Department of Education  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Members of the Mississippi Department of Education:

The Mississippi legislature recently passed a bill to reduce the extreme requirements needed for student teachers to graduate and become fully licensed teachers in the state of Mississippi. Please consider passing this bill in the Department of Education related to the Praxis II: Mathematics 5161. My daughter, Kaitlyn McCullough Bryant, is a senior at Delta State University who is graduating with a degree in Mathematics and is in the process of taking the Praxis II to begin her student teaching for a degree in Mathematics Education. However, she has taken the Praxis II six times from June 2017 to March 2018 and has been within points of passing (137-154). The score required by the state of Mississippi (160) is the highest in the nation. As a parent, I have been confused as to how her subtest scores continue to vary inconsistently with her cumulative score, and the cost of taking the test multiple times has been prohibitive. This is also unreasonable as the state is facing a shortage of teachers who would be qualified to teach in other states for the same exam. I believe that she will be an excellent math educator and a great asset to the state of Mississippi if this bill passes and allows her to retroactively complete this requirement needed for her graduation. Thank you for considering this bill and the effects it will have on innumerable families in the state of Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Karen M. Bryant

March 20, 2018

Dr. Cindy Melton  
Lowrey 209  
Mississippi College  
200 South Capitol Street  
Clinton, MS 39056

Dear Dr. Melton,

Enclosed is a personal letter to the Members of the Mississippi Department of Education on behalf of my daughter, Sarah Elizabeth Moncrief, a junior at The University of Mississippi. I was informed you are collecting letters to present to the Board of Education on behalf of the proposed changes to the Praxis II: Mathematics 5161 requirements for licensure for teaching in the state of Mississippi. I would like the enclosed letter to be included in your presentation to the Department of Education.

Thank you for your work for this proposed change to the Praxis II.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lisa L. Miller".

Lisa L. Miller  
901-299-0958

March 20, 2018

Mississippi Department of Education  
P.O. Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Dear Members of the Mississippi Department of Education:

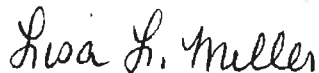
The Mississippi legislature recently passed a bill to reduce the extreme requirements needed for student teachers to become fully licensed teachers in the state of Mississippi. Please consider passing this bill in the Department of Education related to the Praxis II: Mathematics 5161.

My daughter Sarah Elizabeth Moncrief is a junior at The University of Mississippi. She plans to graduate in 2019 with a degree in Secondary Education/Mathematics. This is all she has ever wanted to do. She has a passion to educate students in Mississippi, her home state. She hopes that one day her students will say Ms. Moncrief cared about my education and helped me grow as a person.

The score required by the state of Mississippi (160) is the highest in the nation. As a parent, I am concerned that with a shortage of teachers especially in the field of Mathematics, you may lose great teachers to other states whose state requirement is much lower for the same exam.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns and for considering this bill and the effects it will have on countless families in the state of Mississippi.

Sincerely,



Lisa L. Miller  
901-299-0958

# Harrison County School District

**ROY GILL**  
SUPERINTENDENT

11072 Highway 49  
Gulfport, MS 39503  
(228) 539-6500  
Fax (228) 539-6507

**E. MITCHELL KING**  
ASST. SUPERINTENDENT

RECEIVED

April 24, 2018

Dear Dr. Murphy,

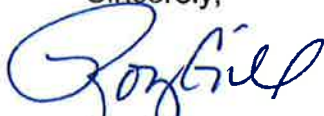
First, thank you for all the work you do to improve the educational climate of Mississippi. You are making it possible for our students to compete in the worldwide community, not just our state. I appreciate your effort.

I am aware that there has been an initiative to adjust the Praxis II cut score for our mathematics 7-12 teacher candidates. This is an effort that I support wholeheartedly. Mathematics teachers are in great demand. There are 11 districts across the southern portion of our state that have 7-12 math openings. Some have multiple openings. We tend to exchange current staff among one another rather than generate new teacher candidates. The problem has become critical. I currently have a teacher, who has been the district teacher of the year at the middle school level, score 153 of the 160 points needed. She is an outstanding teacher in every way and her Algebra I data bears this out. As a math major myself, I can see the need to adjust the cut to include teachers like the one I just described. Additionally, the test is comprehensive over ALL mathematics to include: probability and statistics, calculus, trigonometry, all algebra levels, geometry, and more. In science, we allow teachers to specialize in an area like biology. In math, candidates are expected to know the entire curriculum.

Again, I support the adjustment of the cut because it is what is best for our students.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Roy Gill

Superintendent of Harrison County School District

RECEIVED


April 24, 2018

Dear Dr. Murphy,

Thank you for your continued support of education in Mississippi in your role as the Director of Educator Licensure. Your work is invaluable to raising standards for our children. Know that you are appreciated.

My name is Stephanie Brewer, the Mathematics Specialist for Harrison County School District. It is my understanding that in May, the Mississippi Department of Education Board will be presented with an opportunity to adjust the Praxis II Math Content cut score to allow for additional mathematics candidates. I am writing to convey my full support in this effort. The assessment is more rigorous than most believe. I am often asked to tutor candidates who are having difficulty making the current cut (even math majors). Although two of my degrees are in mathematics and I have taught at the college level, I find the scope of the test rigorous. Candidates must have command of every area of mathematics which is not true in other content areas. A great algebra teacher does not have to know trigonometry to foster rigorous mathematical thinking for algebra. An adjustment to the score will generate more math teachers. We are reaching a critical demand as 12 districts across the coast have Grades 7-12 math teacher openings. I appreciate your consideration of this proposal. It will greatly relieve some of the burden of the math teacher shortage.

In Service of Mississippi Children,

  
Stephanie Brewer

Harrison County District Mathematics Specialist