
3D

Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Update on Plans for Commission-Approved Examinations and Consideration of New Examination Options

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents an update to the workplan for Commission Examinations approved by the Commission at the October 2025 Commission Meeting. The update includes discussion of changes to subject matter verification that were enacted in the 2026-27 budget and will have an impact on the Commission's current subject matter examinations. In addition, the item presents options for Commission consideration related to next steps for assessing basic skills and identifies new tests for the Commission's consideration that would make the Early Completion Option available for PK-3 Early Childhood Specialist Instruction (PK3) and Education Specialist Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN) Intern credential candidates.

Recommended Action: That the Commission review the recommendations presented on page 3D-13 in this agenda item and approve those the Commission deems appropriate.

Presenters: Mike Taylor, Consultant, and Juliet Michelsen Wahleithner, Director, Division of Research, Evaluation and Assessment

Strategic Plan Goal

Continuous Improvement

- **Goal 7.** The Commission's work is grounded in research, informed by the voices of practitioners and communities of interests, and supports continuous improvement in educator preparation and licensure.
 - Q. Use data to inform Commission and staff decision-making and continuous improvement

Update on Plans for Commission-Approved Examinations and Consideration of New Examination Options

Introduction

At its October 2025 meeting, the Commission discussed a [long-term work plan for California educator examinations](#) and directed staff to continue evaluating the California Basic Education Skills Test (CBEST) and the California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) exam. The Commission also directed staff to investigate available options for examinations to support the Early Completion Option (ECO) for intern credential candidates to ensure that the Commission continues to meet evolving statutory requirements. Since that meeting, staff has reviewed nationally available examinations that may satisfy the Commission's needs regarding the Basic Skills Requirement and the Early Completion Option for intern credential candidates, evaluated the impact of recent statutory changes affecting subject matter examinations, and continued discussions regarding the future of the California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL) examination program.

This agenda item provides an update on staff work since October 2025 and presents information for Commission discussion regarding several examination programs. The item also includes an updated examination work plan that reflects work completed over the past year, recent statutory changes, and anticipated future examination activities.

Background

The October 2025 work plan recognized that many of California's educator examinations have been in place for a significant number of years and that changes in educator preparation, assessment practices, and state and federal policy warrant periodic review to ensure examinations continue to meet the needs of candidates, educator preparation programs, school districts, and California's students.

Since October 2025, Commission staff have conducted additional analyses of several nationally available examination programs identified for potential use in California. Staff also reviewed recent statutory changes enacted through the 2026 California Budget Trailer Bill that affect future planning for subject matter examinations. This agenda item summarizes staff's work to date and identifies potential next steps for the Commission's consideration.

I. Basic Skills Requirement

California law requires credential candidates to satisfy the Basic Skills Requirement (BSR) prior to earning teaching credentials or permits (Education Code §44252(b)). Historically, candidates satisfied the BSR by passing the California Basic Educational Skills Test (CBEST). Over time, additional options to satisfy this requirement became available, including completion of qualifying coursework, completion of a combination of coursework and examinations, and passage of basic skills exams from other states. In 2024, Governor Newsom signed SB 153, which included language that allows candidates to also meet the BSR simply by possessing a

bachelor's degree. Most credentials the Commission issues require, at a minimum, possession of a bachelor's degree, meaning that applicants for most credentials have already satisfied BSR with their degree. However, the Commission issues four credentials that do not require a bachelor's degree. While some individuals applying for one of these credentials likely already possess a bachelor's degree, those who do not must satisfy the BSR through completion of coursework, successful passage of the CBEST, or some combination of the two. The four credentials that do not require a bachelor's degree include:

- Emergency Substitute Teaching Permits for Prospective Teachers
- Exchange Certificated Employee Credentials
- Sojourn Certificated Employee Credential
- Designated Subjects Supervision and Coordination Credentials

In 2024-25, a total of 1271 credentials were issued across these four areas, as displayed in Table 1. Yet as reported in [Agenda Item 3C](#), the number of CBEST administrations during that time was much higher. As displayed in Table 2, there were 13,501 administrations of all three CBEST sub-sections at once in 2024-25, and just over 15,000 administrations of individual CSET sub-sections. Although an individual may have taken one or more sub-sections multiple times, the number of CBEST administrations in 2024-25 is still much greater than the 1,271 credentials issued to applicants who may have needed to successfully pass the exam to demonstrate BSR. While it is not clear who is taking the CBEST, it is clear that a significantly higher number of individuals take the exam each year than are required to do so.

Table 1. Credentials Issued in 2024-25 Areas That Do Not Require a Bachelor's Degree

Credential Type	Number Issued in 2024-25
Emergency Substitute Teaching Permits for Prospective Teachers	1199
Exchange Certificated Employee Credentials	0
Sojourn Certificated Employee Credential	3
Designated Subjects Supervision and Coordination Credentials	69
Total	1271

Table 2. CBEST Administrations in 2024-25 (An individual may have taken one or more sections multiple times)

CBEST Sub-Section	Administrations
All Three Sub-Sections in a Single Session	13501
Reading	5093
Mathematics	5306
Writing	4916

BSR Exam Options

The CBEST was developed more than four decades ago at a time when few nationally available educator basic skills examinations existed. The exam was last updated in 2013, with initial administrations of the current version occurring in 2014. At that time, CBEST was taken by close to 50,000 individuals annually, meaning that even with sizable item banks, the approved exam items have been seen by thousands of individuals. Refreshing the exam would require the

Commission to enter into a contract with the Evaluation Systems Group of Pearson (ES), the exam vendor that administers the CBEST, to complete that update. Given the significantly reduced number of individuals who now take the CBEST annually and the even fewer who potentially need to take it, a contract to update the exam may not be economically feasible.

Education Code section [44252.5](#) still requires the Commission to maintain a basic skills examination. Specifically, 44252.5(a) states: “The commission shall administer the state basic skills proficiency test pursuant to sections 44227, 44252, and 44830 in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the commission.” Because so few credentials require passage of the CBEST, the Commission may wish to explore a legislative change that would eliminate the need for the Commission to administer its own basic skills proficiency test by allowing the use of nationally available basic skills tests.

Since CBEST’s initial development, nationally available examinations measuring reading, writing, and mathematics skills have become widely available and are accepted by educator preparation programs and state licensing agencies throughout the country. Amended Education Code could allow the Commission to approve one or more of these national exams to be available to candidates who need to demonstrate basic skills in a manner other than through coursework or degree, rather than require the Commission to administer a California-specific basic skills exam.

Review of Nationally-Available Basic Skills Exams

Staff identified and reviewed two examinations to determine how well they assess the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics, if the decision is made to sunset CBEST.

Staff’s review included the [National Evaluation Series \(NES\) Essential Academic Skills](#) examinations, developed by the Evaluation Systems of Pearson Publishing (ES) and the [Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators](#) examination series, developed by Educational Testing Service (ETS). Staff evaluated these examinations by reviewing the content measured, examination design, administration procedures, score reporting, and alignment with California’s statutory Basic Skills Requirement.

Each of these exams includes three subtests, one that measures Reading skills, one that measures Writing skills, and one that measures Math skills. Like the CBEST, individuals may take one or all subtests, depending on their needs. Both exams are aligned with current national and professional standards for teacher education, and both exams are used in multiple states across the country. Again, like the CBEST, both exams are computer-based, and both are available for online proctoring.

NES Essential Academic Skills Examination

The NES Essential Academic Skills exam contains the following three subtests:

Reading. The 1-hour and 15-minute Reading subtest contains 44 multiple-choice items covering four competencies:

- **0001:** Apply knowledge of word structure and contexts to determine the meaning of words and phrases. (11 items),
- **0002:** Analyze the main idea and supporting details in a wide range of texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, classic, contemporary). (11 items), and

- **0003:** Analyze a writer's purpose, intended audience, and point of view in a wide range of texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, classic, contemporary). (11 items).
- **0004:** Apply critical reasoning skills to evaluate a wide range of texts (e.g., fiction, nonfiction, classic, contemporary). (11 items).

Mathematics. The 1-hour and 15-minute Mathematics subtest contains 44 multiple-choice items covering five competencies:

- **0001:** Apply knowledge of number properties and operations. (9 items).
- **0002:** Apply algebraic principles and concepts. (9 items).
- **0003:** Apply knowledge of measurement principles and geometric concepts. (9 items).
- **0004:** Apply knowledge of probability and statistics principles and concepts. (9 items).
- **0005:** Analyze mathematical problem-solving, reasoning, and communication skills. (9 items).

Writing. The 1-hour and 30-minute Writing subtest contains 36 multiple-choice items and one written assignment covering four competencies:

- **0001:** Demonstrate knowledge of the writing process and apply understanding of purpose, audience, organization, and development in writing.
- **0002:** Demonstrate knowledge of effective syntax, sentence formation, and clarity in written selections.
- **0003:** Demonstrate knowledge of standard (i.e., formal, academic) U.S. English writing conventions.
- **0004:** Demonstrate the ability to compose a developed and cohesive composition in response to an assignment on a given topic.

The reporting scale for all three of the NES Essential Academic Skills subtests ranges from 100 to 300 scale-score points, meaning score points have been adjusted to account for any differences in item difficulty across test versions.

Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators

The Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators exam contains the following three subtests:

Reading. The 1-hour and 25-minute Reading subtest contains 56 selected-response items covering three knowledge and skill areas:

- Key Ideas and Details (approximately 17-22 items),
- Craft, Structure, and Language Skills (approximately 14-19 items), and
- Integration of Knowledge and Ideas (approximately 17-22 items).

Mathematics. The 1-hour and 30-minute Mathematics Subtest contains 56 selected-response and numeric entry items covering three knowledge and skill areas:

- Number and Quantity (approximately 20 items),
- Data Interpretation and Representation, Statistics, and Probability (approximately 18 items), and
- Algebra and Geometry (approximately 18 items)

Writing. The 1-hour and 40-minute Writing subtest contains 40 selected-response items and 2 constructed-response items covering two knowledge and skill areas:

- Text Types, Purposes, and Production (approximately 6-12 items and 2 essays), and
- Language and Research Skills for Writing (approximately 28-34 items).

The reporting scale for all three of the *Praxis* Core subtests ranges from 100 to 200 scale-score points.

Results of Staff Content Evaluation

Staff's reviews of the NES Essential Academic Skills and the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators indicate that both assessments measure substantially similar knowledge and skills to those measured by the CBEST.

Factors to Consider Regarding Options for Basic Skills Assessments

In addition to the content of potential basic skills assessments, other factors must be considered when determining whether to sunset the current CBEST and adopt one or both of the existing nationally-available assessments, including the exam passing rates and the fiscal impact to both candidates and the Commission.

Passing Rates. In addition to reviewing the content of the examinations, Commission staff also requested national pass rate information for each exam, including pass rates broken down by demographics, for review. [Appendix A](#) provides the full report of passing rates for each exam.

As reported in [Agenda Item 3C](#), the Annual Report on Passing Rates of Commission-Approved Examinations, in 2024-25, the average first-time passing rate for the CBEST sub-tests were 75% for Reading, 71.4% for Writing, and 72.8% for Mathematics. For the Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators, the passing rates for each content test provided by ETS were 50.8% for Reading, 36.1% for Writing, and 48.7% for Mathematics. For the NES Essential Academic Skills, the passing rates for each content test provided by ES were 65% for Reading, 51% for Writing, and 74% for Mathematics. When considering these passing rates, it is important to note that the Praxis and NES passing rates are based on a national sample of test-takers whereas the CBEST passing rates are based only on California test-takers. This means that the populations from which the samples of test-takers were pulled are different, and so the rates are not directly comparable. Additionally, it is worth noting the significant difference in the number of individuals included within each sample. For CBEST, the mean number of test-takers for the three subtests was 3,940. For Praxis Core, the mean sample size was 16,017, whereas for the NES Essential Academic Skills exams, the mean sample was 280.

Fiscal Impact to Candidates. In addition to considering the content of each exam, the fiscal impact to California test-takers must also be considered. Currently, the cost of the CBEST is \$30 for each of the three sections. In contrast, each of the three Praxis Core Examinations is \$90. A single NES Academic Skills Examination is \$70, though a candidate may take two exams for \$90 and three exams for \$120.

Although the current cost of the CBEST is lower than the national exams, historically, when the Commission has updated an exam, it has funded those efforts by entering into an extended contract with an examination vendor. In the case of CBEST, that is ES. The vendor has covered the cost of the exam update in exchange for the right to administer the exam and collect the registration fees for a set period of time. Given the reduced number of individuals currently

taking the CBEST and the even smaller number of individuals potentially needing to take the exam, entering into an update contract would, most likely, lead to an increase in the registration cost for candidates in order to cover the costs of the update.

Fiscal Impact to the Commission. Approving one or more nationally-used basic skills exams and sunsetting the CBEST would also have a fiscal impact on the Commission. As discussed above, CBEST was custom-developed for California credential candidates, and as such is the Commission's sole intellectual property. Because of this, the Commission shares revenue for CBEST administrations with ES. For each CBEST administration, the Commission receives a small "management fee" that has historically funded new examination development and validation activities, along with other agency functions.

However, the amount of revenue the Commission has received from CBEST has declined significantly over the years as CBEST administrations have declined. Staff estimate that the Commission has received just over \$50,000 in CBEST revenue between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026. In contrast, in the 2016-2017 fiscal year, prior to the adoption of additional options for meeting BSR, the Commission received nearly \$900,000 in CBEST revenue.

While adoption of nationally-available examinations to replace CBEST would eliminate the revenue source associated with CBEST administration, the loss of this declining revenue stream is unlikely to materially affect Commission operations.

Possible Actions

If the Commission directs staff to pursue statutory change, that would enable the use of one or more nationally-available basic skills tests to meet the BSR for credential candidates who do not hold a bachelor's degree. One option would be to adopt one or both of the nationally-available examinations described above as acceptable methods for satisfying the BSR. Providing candidates with multiple examination options could increase flexibility while continuing to ensure that candidates demonstrate the required level of basic skills competency. The CBEST would be maintained until statute is amended, at which time it would be sunsetted.

In the event that the Commission chooses to adopt either or both proposed basic skills examinations, staff recommend the Commission also adopt publisher-recommended cut-scores (minimum passing standards) during the first year of administration. Staff also recommend that the Commission direct staff to work with examination publishers to collect data from California candidates during the first year and then organize California-specific standard setting workshops with California educators. Staff would return to the Commission following standard setting workshops with recommended California-specific minimum passing standards for each examination adopted by the Commission.

II. Early Completion Option for Intern Credentials Examinations Requirements

Authorized under [Education Code 44468](#), the Early Completion Option (ECO) offers qualified intern candidates an accelerated route to a preliminary teaching credential through Commission-approved examinations in place of most coursework. This statute requires the Commission to make the ECO available to interns seeking a Multiple Subject, Single Subject, PK–3 Early Childhood Specialist Instruction (PK3), and Education Specialist: Mild-to-Moderate

Support Needs (MMSN) credential. In order to qualify for the ECO, Education Code 44468 states that an intern is required to:

- (1) Pass a written assessment that assesses knowledge of teaching foundations;
- (2) Pass the appropriate Teaching Performance Assessment on the first attempt;
- (3) Pass a Commission-adopted literacy assessment; and
- (4) Meet the requirements for teacher fitness as set forth in Sections 44339, 44340, and 44341.

The Commission previously adopted the ES National Evaluation Series Assessment of Professional Knowledge (APK): Elementary for the written assessment component of the ECO for Multiple Subject and the APK: Secondary for the written assessment component of the ECO for Single Subject, which meet the first of four ECO requirements, outlined below.

The Commission has not yet adopted comparable examinations for the PK3 or MMSN credential areas. The October 2025 examination work plan identified that staff would review potential examinations that could satisfy the written examination requirement for PK3 and MMSN intern candidates pursuing the ECO.

Required ECO Exam Content

Education Code 44468 identifies specific content that written assessments used to meet the ECO must include. Specifically, Education Code 44468 states the exam must assess all of the following:

- (A) Human development as it relates to teaching and learning aligned with the state content and performance standards for pupils adopted by the state board.
- (B) Techniques to address learning differences including working with pupils with special needs.
- (C) Techniques to address working with English learners to provide access to the curriculum.
- (D) Reading instruction as set forth in paragraph (4) of subdivision (b) of section 44259.
- (E) The assessment of pupil progress based upon the state content and performance standards for pupils adopted by the state board and planning intervention based on the assessment.
- (F) Classroom management techniques.
- (G) Methods of teaching the subject fields.

Since this statute was enacted, the Commission has developed the Literacy Performance Assessment and embedded it in the TPA for PK3 and MMSN credentials. As such, requirement D, Reading instruction as set forth in paragraph (4) of subdivision (b) of section 44259 is addressed in 44468(a)(2).

Commission staff evaluated nationally available examinations developed for Early Childhood Educators and Education Specialist candidates, including examinations currently used by other states for educator licensure, to determine whether they assessed each of the areas identified within Education Code section 44468. The review included examinations from within ES's National Evaluation Series (NES) and ETS's Praxis series that best aligned with the MMSN and PK3 credential areas.

Potential PK3 Early Childhood Specialist Instruction ECO Options

For the PK-3 Credential, staff reviewed Praxis: Early Childhood Education (5621) and NES: Early Childhood Education (Age 3- Age 8) (107).

Praxis: Early Childhood Education (5621)

The two-hour *Praxis Early Childhood Education* assessment is divided into two parts. Part A contains 70 multiple-choice items covering:

- Students as Learners
- Instructional Process
- Assessment
- Professional Development, Leadership & Community

Part B contains four constructed-response questions covering the same four content areas as Part A.

The reporting scales for the Praxis: Early Childhood Education assessment ranges from 100 to 200 scaled-score points.

NES: Early Childhood Education (Age 3- Age 8)(107)

The two-hour *NES: Early Childhood Education* assessment contains 100 multiple-choice items covering four competencies:

- **0001:** Understand child development from ages 3 to 8, including developmental, heritage-based, linguistic, and other differences among children, and factors that influence young children's development and learning
- **0002:** Understand how to create positive learning environments that are welcoming, safe, and challenging and that support linguistic differences and acceptance of all students
- **0003:** Understand how to design, implement, and evaluate learning experiences and instruction in order to promote all children's development and learning
- **0004:** Understand the goals, benefits, types, and uses of assessment to support young children and families

Potential Education Specialist (MMSN) ECO Exams

For the Education Specialist (MMSN) Credential staff reviewed Praxis: Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355) and NES: Special Education (602).

Praxis: Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355)

The two-hour *Praxis: Special Education: Foundational Knowledge* assessment contains 120 selected-response items covering four content areas:

- Human Development and Individual Learning Differences
- Effective Planning and Instruction and Productive Learning Environments
- Assessment
- Professional Learning, Practice, and Collaboration

NES: Special Education (602)

The two-hour *NES: Special Education* assessment contains 100 multiple-choice items covering ten competencies:

- **0001:** Understand the historical, philosophical, professional, and legal foundations of special education.
- **0002:** Understand human development and the implications of the characteristics associated with disability on students and their families.
- **0003:** Understand the role of assessment in identification, evaluation, program planning, and progress monitoring to meet the needs of all students with disabilities.
- **0004:** Understand strategies and methods for establishing a positive and productive learning environment across instructional settings for all students with disabilities.
- **0005:** Understand strategies and methods of individualized programming and planning to facilitate learning and independence for all students with disabilities.
- **0006:** Understand evidence-based instructional practices for providing specialized instruction to advance the learning of all students with disabilities.
- **0007:** Understand strategies for developing the social-emotional learning needs of all students with disabilities.
- **0008:** Understand strategies and methods for developing language skills and enhancing the communication of all students with disabilities.
- **0009:** Understand how to establish and engage in collaborative partnerships with stakeholders to enhance learning opportunities for all students with disabilities.
- **0010:** Understand the professional and ethical roles and responsibilities of the special education teacher.

Passing Rates and Demographic Information

Staff requested passing rate information by demographic variables from the publishers of these exams. The information provided can be found in [Appendix B](#). It is important to note that the data provided do not include California candidates, as these exams have never been used in California. Instead, the data provided in [Appendix B](#) reflect a national sample of test takers.

Results of Staff Evaluation

After careful review of each potential exam, staff concluded that both the Praxis: Early Childhood Education and the NES: Early Childhood Education exams sufficiently address the elements listed within Education Code section 44468(a)(1)(A-G). The only potential concern is that the Praxis: Early Childhood Education exam includes content related to children from infancy through childhood, whereas the NES: Early Childhood Education exam focuses specifically on ages 3-8, nearly the same age-range as taught by individuals with a PK3 credential. Similarly, staff concluded that both the Praxis: Special Education: Foundational Knowledge and the NES: Special Education assessments sufficiently address Education Code 44468(a)(1)(A-G). Staff recommend that the Commission consider adopting all four exams as options for PK3 and ES MMSN intern candidates pursuing the ECO.

If the Commission chooses to approve any or all of the recommended exams for the ECO, staff recommend the adoption of the national passing standard until sufficient data can be collected from California candidates. At that point, staff will work with the exam publishers to hold standard settings to determine California-specific passing standards. These recommendations would be brought back to the Commission for consideration and possible approval.

III. Subject Matter Examinations

Since the Commission adopted the October 2025 Examination Work Plan, the Governor signed the 2026 California Budget Trailer Bill ([AB 126](#)), which amended several provisions of the Education Code related to subject matter competency. The statutory changes expand the use of degree majors and coursework to satisfy subject matter competency requirements and clarify the Commission's ongoing responsibility to establish standards for determining qualifying subject matter preparation. These statutory changes expand non-examination options for meeting the Subject Matter Requirement (SMR), clarify the specific situational appropriateness of subject matter examinations, and will affect the timing and scope of future work related to the California Subject Examinations for Teachers (CSET). Staff have updated the examination work plan related to the CSET to reflect the revised statutory framework and the evolving role of subject matter examinations.

The trailer bill amends Education Code sections 44259 and 44281 to expand the ways candidates may demonstrate subject matter competency. Specifically, [Education Code 44259\(b\)\(5\)\(A\)](#) has been amended to:

- Add a liberal studies major, education major, or other degree major that includes coursework required for the degree major in the content areas pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 44282 to satisfy subject matter competency for a Multiple Subject credential.
- Add child development majors and closely related majors for the PK-3 Early Childhood Specialist Instruction credential.
- Expand the list of acceptable degree majors that may satisfy subject matter competency for a Single Subject credential.
- Continue to require the Commission to establish standards for reviewing qualifying degree majors and coursework.
- Clarify the circumstances under which a subject matter examination would still be used.

Amendments to [Education Code 44281](#) repeal the previous statutory framework centered on subject matter examinations, instead requiring that the Commission (a) work with preparation programs to support candidates in meeting subject matter competence through completion of a degree or appropriate coursework; (b) update the degree majors for meeting subject matter competence; and (c) make subject matter exams available for those candidates who do not meet subject matter competence through degree or coursework.

These amendments represent a significant policy shift from what was in place previously. Historically, the primary mechanism for candidates to demonstrate subject matter knowledge was Commission-approved subject matter examinations aligned with adopted SMR domain descriptions. The amended policy shifts the emphasis away from demonstration through exam to instead foreground demonstration of subject matter competence through a degree or completion of aligned coursework. The exam remains as a final option, and so the Commission must continue to have subject matter exams available. However, because the number of administrations of these subject matter exams is expected to decrease as increasing numbers of candidates demonstrate their subject matter competence through one of the other available options, it may not be economically feasible for the Commission to develop and maintain its own, California-specific subject matter examinations.

National examinations measuring subject matter competence are available and accepted by educator preparation programs and state licensing agencies throughout the country. A potential solution to the need to update and maintain the CSET would be for the Commission to approve the use of one or more updated, nationally-used subject matter examinations.

Revisions to Work Plan

The original work plan approved by the Commission in October 2025 called for staff to spend 2026 revising SMRs for high-need credential areas and bringing those to the Commission for approval in early 2027. Following the adoption of the revised SMRs, staff would then issue a Request for Information to potential vendors for examination options aligned with the revised SMRs.

Following feedback received from the field regarding the challenges of evaluating candidate transcripts and additional direction from the Commission, staff revised and standardized all SMR domain descriptions. These updated descriptions were approved by the Commission in June 2026 ([Item 4C](#)), meaning this task was completed ahead of the anticipated timeline.

The next step in the approved plan was to issue a Request for Information (RFI) to vendors for the development of updated CSETs aligned with the revised SMR domain descriptions. Staff propose to, instead, issue an RFI to vendors to solicit information about existing, off-the-shelf subject matter exams for their potential alignment with the approved SMR domain descriptions. Exams found to be in alignment would then be brought to the Commission for review and possible approval for use by candidates for demonstrating subject matter competence, as required in statute. These reviews would begin with high-incidence CSETs in late 2026. In the event that existing exams are not found to be appropriate for one or more credential areas, an RFI would be issued to solicit potential interest in developing California-specific assessments for these areas. The updated work plan can be found in [Appendix C](#).

IV. California Teacher of English Learners (CTEL)

Authorized in Education Code [44253.5](#), the California Teachers of English Learners (CTEL) exam provides one option for earning the English Learner Authorization and partially fulfills requirements for the Bilingual Authorization. The examination measures proficiency in language development, assessment and instruction, and culture and inclusion, as defined in the [CTEL Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities \(KSAs\)](#). Each subtest aligns with California's adopted [English Language Development \(ELD\) standards, frameworks](#), and related instructional practices. Statute directs the Commission to ensure that the exam remains valid, reliable, and appropriate for its intended use as a measure of readiness to teach multilingual learners. The current CTET was developed in 2005, several years prior to the 2012 adoption of updated ELD standards. In 2011–12, a Commission-convened English Learner Authorizations Advisory Panel revised the CTET KSAs to reflect the new ELD framework and current research on effective instruction for multilingual learners. The Commission adopted those KSAs in 2013. While the examination has not yet been updated due to budget constraints, staff analysis confirms that there is still alignment between the CTET and the updated KSAs.

Staff have begun preliminary discussions regarding the future of the California Teacher of English Learners (CTET) examination program. These discussions have focused on the current

role of the examination, changes in educator preparation since CTET was originally developed, and the evolving methods through which candidates earn English learner authorizations.

At this time, staff does not recommend specific changes to the CTET examination program. Staff will continue evaluating available options and anticipate returning to the Commission in 2027 with recommendations following additional analysis and stakeholder engagement, as indicated in the work plan in [Appendix C](#).

V. California Preliminary Administrative Services Examination (CPACE)

The California Preliminary Administrative Services Examination (CPACE) serves as one option for earning the Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, measuring a candidate's knowledge of organizational management, instructional leadership, and related competencies aligned with the California Administrator Content Expectations (CACEs) and California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs).

The CPACE was last updated in 2017 to align with revisions to the [Administrative Services Credential Program Standards](#) adopted by the Commission that same year. Since that time, new statutory requirements and policy directions have made necessary a comprehensive review of the Administrative Services credential. [Assembly Bill 1454](#) (2025) requires the Commission to ensure that the program standards for Administrative Services credential programs include preparation on how to support teachers in delivering instruction through effective means for teaching literacy.

As identified in the October 2025 examination work plan, redevelopment of the CPACE remains a future priority, following the completion of the revision of the administrative services credential structure and preparation standards. Because those standards will directly inform the knowledge and skills assessed by the examination option for earning a Preliminary Administrative Services Credential, staff anticipate beginning examination redevelopment activities following completion of the standards revision process. We remain on-track with the 2025 Commission-approved plan for examinations to issue an RFI to vendors for the development of a new CPACE and begin technical consultations in Quarter 3 2027.

Updated Examination Work Plan

Since October 2025, staff have completed significant portions of the examination work plan originally presented to the Commission. Staff have completed reviews of nationally available examinations related to the Basic Skills Requirement and the Early Completion Option for PK-3 and Education Specialist Intern Credentials. Additionally, staff have updated future planning for subject matter examinations in response to recent legislation, initiated discussions regarding the future of CTET, and continue to monitor the appropriate timing for redevelopment of CPACE.

Staff will continue implementing the examination work plan and will return to the Commission with future agenda items as additional examination programs are evaluated and recommendations are developed. An updated Summary Plan for Commission Examinations is included in [Appendix B](#).

Staff Recommendations

Staff recommend that the Commission:

1. Direct staff to pursue statutory changes that would allow the Commission to consider sunsetting the CBEST and adopting nationally-available basic skills tests for use in California by credential candidates who do not hold a bachelor's degree.
2. Provide feedback to staff on the potential use of the National Evaluation Series: Essential Academic Skills (Reading, Math, Writing) and Praxis: Core Academic Skills for Educators (Reading, Math, and Writing) as examinations that satisfy the Basic Skills Requirement
3. Approve the Praxis: Early Childhood Education (5621) examination and the National Evaluation Series: Early Childhood Education (Age 3- Age 8) (107) examination to enable the Early Completion Option for the PK-3 Intern Credential and direct staff to work with the test publishers to conduct a California-specific standard setting workshop and return to the Commission in the future with a California-specific minimum passing standard recommendation.
4. Approve the Praxis: Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355) examination and the National Evaluation Series: Special Education (602) examination to enable the Early Completion Option for the Education Specialist, Mild to Moderate Support Needs Intern Credential and direct staff to work with the test publishers to conduct a California-specific standard setting workshop and return to the Commission in the future with a California-specific minimum passing standard recommendation.
5. Approve the updated work plan ([Appendix C](#)) for Commission examinations.

Next Steps

Several of the examination updates described in this item are dependent on the completion of related standards development processes. Specifically, updates to the CPACE are contingent on the Commission's adoption of revised Administrative Services Credential program standards, California Administrator Content Expectations (CACEs), and California Administrator Performance Expectations (CAPEs).

If the Commission directs staff to pursue statutory changes to sunset the CBEST and allow nationally-available exams to meet the BSR and those changes are implemented, staff will return to the Commission with exam recommendations for potential approval.

If the Commission adopts the identified tests for PK3 and MMSN for use in implementing the ECO option for interns, staff will work with exam publishers to make these examinations available to candidates as soon as possible. Staff will also work to update the field regarding changes to Commission examination requirements and options.

Finally, staff will continue to implement the plan for Commission examinations presented in [Appendix C](#) and update the Commission at regular intervals.

Appendix A

Passing Rate and Demographic Information for Proposed Basic Skills Assessments

Information below was provided by Evaluation Systems (ES) for the National Evaluation Series Exams (NES) and Examination Testing Services (ETS) for the Praxis Exams. Data provided do not include California candidates, as these exams have never been used in California. Instead, the data provided are from national samples.

Interpretive Note: If there is insufficient data (fewer than 10 examinees) for reporting purposes, pass rate Ns will be displayed as "Low N" and pass rate percentages will be displayed as "-".

NES Essential Academic Skills for Educators: Overall Pass Rates (Best Attempt) (1/25-8/26)

Subject Area	% Passed	N	N Passed
Reading (005)	65%	271	175
Writing (006)	51%	269	138
Math (007)	74%	301	223

NES Essential Academic Skills for Educators: Overall Pass Rates by Ethnicity (1/25-8/26)

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Reading (005)			
African Amer/Black	-	4	Low N
Asian/Pac Islander	-	7	Low N
Hispanic	31%	13	4
Multiracial	-	2	Low N
Other	-	3	Low N
Undeclared	-	6	Low N
White (non-Hispanic)	66%	236	156
Writing (006)			
African Amer/Black	-	5	Low N
Asian/Pac Islander	-	7	Low N
Hispanic	40%	10	4
Multiracial	-	2	Low N
Other	-	6	Low N
Undeclared	-	4	Low N
White (non-Hispanic)	52%	235	122
Math (007)			
African Amer/Black	-	4	Low N
Asian/Pac Islander	-	6	Low N
Hispanic	-	9	Low N
Multiracial	-	5	Low N
Other	-	5	Low N
Undeclared	-	6	Low N
White (non-Hispanic)	75%	266	200

NES Essential Academic Skills for Educators: Overall Pass Rates by Gender (1/25-8/26)

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Reading (005)			
Male	78%	67	52
Female	59%	198	117
Other	-	6	Low N
Writing (006)			
Male	59%	73	43
Female	48%	190	92
Other	-	6	Low N
Math (007)			
Male	81%	78	63
Female	71%	213	151
Other	90%	10	9

Praxis: Core Academic Skills for Educators: Reading (5713)**Praxis Code Academic Skills for Educators: Overall Pass Rates (Best Attempt) (9/25-8/26)**

Subject Area	% Passed	N	N Passed
Reading (5713)	50.8%	15,484	7865
Writing (006)	36.1%	16,777	6056
Math (007)	48.7%	15,790	7690

Praxis Code Academic Skills for Educators: Overall Pass Rates by Ethnicity (9/25-8/26)

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Reading (5713)			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	47.5%	141	67
Asian or Asian American	43.4%	726	315
Black or African American	52.5%	2124	1116
Hispanic or Latino	46.3%	1433	664
Mexican, Mexican American, Chicano	56.3%	16	9
Middle Eastern or North African	40.9%	88	36
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	57.4%	68	39
Other	51.8%	303	157
Prefer to not respond	51.4%	451	232
Puerto Rican	50.0%	2	1
Southeast Asian or Southeast Asian American	37.1%	89	33
Two or more races	70.0%	20	14
White	51.7%	10,023	5182
Writing (5723)			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	36.4%	154	56
Asian or Asian American	36.8%	720	265
Black or African American	32.0%	2300	736

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Hispanic or Latino	31.2%	1528	476
Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano	28.6%	21	6
Middle Eastern or North African	32.6%	89	29
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	50.7%	73	37
Other	36.7%	305	112
Prefer to not respond	40.4%	498	201
Puerto Rican	33.3%	3	1
Southeast Asian or Southeast Asian American	32.0%	75	24
Two or more races	52.0%	25	13
White	37.3%	10,986	4100
Mathematics			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	40.7%	135	55
Asian or Asian American	52.4%	662	347
Black or African American	45.6%	2090	953
Hispanic or Latino	42.0%	1423	597
Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano	75.0%	12	9
Middle Eastern or North African	37.2%	86	32
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	50.0%	56	28
Other	49.0%	288	141
Prefer to not respond	45.9%	482	221
Puerto Rican	50.0%	2	1
Southeast Asian or Southeast Asian American	54.8%	73	40
Two or more races	64.3%	14	9
White	50.2%	10467	5257

Praxis Code Academic Skills for Educators: Overall Pass Rates by Gender (9/25-08/26)

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Reading (5713)			
Female	49.1%	12,339	6061
Male	57.4%	3024	1736
No Gender Response	0.0%	0	0
Non-binary	58.0%	50	29
Prefer not to answer gender	52.3%	65	34
Prefer to self describe gender	83.3%	6	5
Writing (5723)			
Female	34.5%	13,335	4598
Male	42.3%	3312	1400
No Gender Response	0.00%	0	0
Non-binary	45.6%	57	26
Prefer not to answer gender	42.0%	69	29

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Prefer to self describe gender	75.00%	4	3
Mathematics			
Female	46.8%	12,674	5927
Male	56.9%	2989	1700
No Gender Response	0.0%	0	0
Non-binary	50.9%	53	27
Prefer not to answer gender	48.5%	68	33
Prefer to self describe gender	50.00%	6	3

Appendix B

Passing Rate and Demographic Information for Potential ECO Examinations

Information below was provided by Evaluation Systems (ES) for the National Evaluation Series Exams (NES) and Examination Testing Services (ETS) for the Praxis Exams. Data provided do not include California candidates, as these exams have never been used in California. Instead, the data provided are from national samples.

Interpretive Note: If there is insufficient data (fewer than 10 examinees) for reporting purposes, pass rate Ns will be displayed as "Low N" and pass rate percentages will be displayed as "-".

National Evaluation Series Examinations: Overall Passing Rates (Best Attempt)

Subject Area	% Passed	N	N Passed	Program Years
Early Childhood Education (Age 3- Age 8) (107)	86%	266	229	2017-2021
Special Education (602)	47%	15	7	2024 to current Program YTD

National Evaluation Series Examinations Overall Passing Rates by Ethnicity

Early Childhood Education (Age 3- Age 8) (107)	% Passed	N	N Passed
African American/Black	-	4	Low N
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	6	Low N
Hispanic	85%	128	109
Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native	54%	24	13
Multiracial	-	8	Low N
Other	-	3	Low N
Undeclared	-	4	Low N
White (non-Hispanic)	96%	89	85
Special Education (602)	% Passed	N	N Passed
African American/Black	-	2	Low N
Asian/Pacific Islander	-	1	Low N
Hispanic	58%	19	11
Native American/American Indian/Alaska Native	-	3	Low N
Multiracial	-	1	Low N
Other	-	1	Low N
Undeclared	-	2	Low N
White (non-Hispanic)	-	9	Low N

National Evaluation Series Examinations Overall Passing Rates by Gender

Early Childhood Education (Age 3- Age 8) (107)	% Passed	N	N Passed
Male	82%	11	9
Female	86%	254	219
Other	-	1	Low N

Special Education (602)	% Passed	N	N Passed
Male	-	3	Low N
Female	45%	11	5
Other	-	1	Low N

Praxis Examinations Overall Passing Rates (9/2025-8/2026 Administrations)

Subject Area	% Passed	N	N Passed
Early Childhood Education (5621)	76.5%	1661	1270
Special Education Foundational Knowledge (5355)	92.06%	13450	12382

Praxis Examinations Overall Passing Rates by Race/Ethnicity (9/2025-8/2026 Administrations)

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Early Childhood Education (5621)			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	75.0%	12	9
Asian or Asian American	66.7%	39	26
Black or African American	61.3%	354	217
Hispanic or Latino	62.3%	77	48
Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano	75.0%	4	3
Middle Eastern or North African	100.0%	1	1
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	100.0%	4	4
Other	62.1%	29	18
Prefer to not respond	65.1%	43	28
Puerto Rican	0.0%	0	0
Southeast Asian or Southeast Asian American	100.0%	2	2
Two or more races	100.0%	5	5
White	83.3%	1091	909
Special Education Foundational Knowledge (5355)			
American Indian or Alaskan Native	89.0%	127	113
Asian or Asian American	84.0%	474	398
Black or African American	81.1%	2143	1738
Hispanic or Latino	86.9%	695	604
Mexican, Mexican American, or Chicano	100.0%	22	22
Middle Eastern or North African	80.8%	26	21
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	90.9%	44	40
Other	87.5%	231	202
Prefer to not respond	91.8%	377	346
Puerto Rican	40.0%	5	2
Southeast Asian or Southeast Asian American	91.7%	48	44
Two or more races	88.6%	44	39
White	95.7%	9214	8813

Praxis Examinations Overall Passing Rates by Gender (9/2025-8/2026 Administrations)

	% Passed	N	N Passed
Early Childhood Education (5621)			
Female	76.3%	1593	1216
Male	77.6%	58	45
No Gender Response	100.0%	1	1
Non-binary	75.0%	4	3
Prefer not to answer gender	100.0%	5	5
Prefer to self describe gender	0.0%	0	0
Special Education Foundational Knowledge (5355)			
Female	92.5%	11088	10257
Male	89.7%	2261	2028
No Gender Response	100.0%	2	2
Non-binary	97.7%	43	42
Prefer not to answer gender	94.4%	54	51
Prefer to self describe gender	100.0%	2	2

Appendix C

Updated Work Plan for Commission Examinations

Timing	Exam	Activity	Status
Q4 2025	ECO	Review TPEs for Education Specialist and PK–3 credentials to identify required competencies.	Completed
Q4 2025	BSR	Begin review of current content specifications and comparative analysis of available options.	Completed
Q1 2026	ECO	Explore available off-the-shelf assessments and consult with vendors to determine alignment and feasibility.	Completed
Q1 2026	BSR	Explore available off-the-shelf examinations and consult with vendors to determine alignment and feasibility.	Completed
Q2 2026	ECO	Analyze options and prepare a recommendation.	Completed
Q2 2026	BSR	Analyze examination options and prepare recommendations.	Completed
Q3 2026	ECO	Present recommendation and proposed contract to the Commission for review and possible approval.	Underway
Q3 2026	BSR	Present recommendations to the Commission for review and possible approval.	Underway
Q4 2026	BSR	Begin pursuing changes to current legislation related to BSR	Upcoming
Q4 2026	CSET	Issue RFI for existing subject matter examinations aligned with SMRs for high-need credential areas.	Upcoming
Q1 2027	CSET	Review existing subject matter examinations to determine alignment with SMRs for high-need credential areas	Upcoming
Q2 2027	CTEL	Convene expert group to review and revise CTET KSAs.	Upcoming
Q2 2027	CPACE	Commission adopts revised ASC program standards, CACEs, and CAPEs.	Upcoming
Q2 2027	CSET	Present proposed examinations for high-need credential areas to the Commission for review and possible adoption.	Upcoming
Q3 2027	CTEL	Present revised KSAs to the Commission for review and possible adoption.	Upcoming
Q3 2027	CTEL	Issue RFI to vendors and hold technical consultations.	Upcoming
Q3 2027	CPACE	Issue RFI to vendors and conduct technical consultations.	Upcoming
Q4 2027	CTEL	Evaluate vendor input and prepare recommendation.	Upcoming
Q4 2027	CPACE	Evaluate vendor input and develop recommendation.	Upcoming
Q1 2028	CTEL	Present proposed CTET contract to the Commission for review and possible approval.	Upcoming
Q1 2028	CPACE	Present proposed CPACE contract to the Commission for review and possible approval.	Upcoming

Timing	Exam	Activity	Status
2027– 2029	CSET	Continue examination reviews for remaining credential areas and present potential examination adoptions; Issue RFI for new exam development if/when necessary	Upcoming / Ongoing