



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING

RICK SNYDER  
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL P. FLANAGAN  
STATE SUPERINTENDENT

November 14, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

As you know, increasing both teacher readiness and effectiveness has long been a priority of the State Board of Education (SBE), the Department and the Governor. More than a decade ago, the SBE issued "Policies on Ensuring Excellent Educators" which provided leadership and collaborative work with educational institutions, agencies, and other groups, organizations or partners to develop and sustain teacher excellence through policy action.

From strengthening teacher certification standards and certification licensure tests to working with Educator Preparation Institutions (EPIs) to increase readiness of new teachers -- we have all worked to support and improve classroom instruction and student learning.

During October 2013 new standard setting procedures were implemented for the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) program. The procedures were applied on newly developed content tests and the revised Professional Readiness Examination (the PRE, which replaced the former Basic Skills Test).

At nine (9) standard-setting conferences held from October 21-23, 2013, panels consisting of K-12 practitioners and higher education faculty applied SBE approved teaching standards and career and college ready standards to identify the "*level of content knowledge needed to perform effectively the job of a qualified Michigan educator.*" This represents a paradigm shift from previous standard setting conferences in which educators were asked to identify instead "*the minimum amount of content knowledge needed to perform in the role of an entry-level educator.*"

The *initial* student pass rates of the October 2013 MTTC administration have been substantially impacted in some areas and minimally in others. However, the majority of initial passing rates for the new or revised tests are below 50%, with some considerably below 50%. These changes in passing rates are not attributable solely to the change in standard setting paradigm. Additional changes to MTTC have also been made. Some tests were re-written to align to new standards (e.g. the common core). Multiple choice items and an additional constructed response items were added to the PRE writing subtest, making the assessment a deeper measure of candidate knowledge and skill.

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The paper-based MTTC is administered four times per year. Students not passing can retake the test during ALL future administrations and have the option of working with their educator preparation institution (EPI) to obtain additional support. MTTC test preparation assistance is also available on the MTTC website in the form of study guides and full-length practice tests.

In accordance with state law, candidates who do not pass all three PRE subtests (reading, writing and mathematics) are not allowed to enroll for student teaching. Those who did not pass content tests cannot be recommended for certification.

As a part of the standard setting conference, the standard setting panelists were shown the impact of the recommended cut scores. The significant drop in passing rates (as impacted by the new standard setting paradigm, new content standards, and/or deeper measurement of candidate skill) resulted in lengthy discussions. Those discussions resulted in both K-12 educators and EPI representatives largely deciding to remain with recommended cut scores very similar to those initially recommended before seeing the impact. The standard setting panelists' judgments indicate that despite initial concern about the drop in passing rates, they believed that it was important to retain their rigorous recommended cut scores in order to assure that all new Michigan educators are prepared to be effective in Michigan classrooms.

While it will be disappointing to some who did not pass the MTTC, our overall goal must be to ensure new teachers in the classroom have been well-prepared and have the content knowledge to effectively teach Michigan students. EPIs are encouraged to review MTTC test performance outcomes to determine where program preparation weaknesses may exist. As you are aware the aggregate 3-year cumulative MTTC passing percentage is used as one factor in the EPI performance score.

If you have additional questions you may contact Ms. Leah Breen at, [BreenL1@michigan.gov](mailto:BreenL1@michigan.gov), 517-335-1151 or Dr. Steven Stegink at, [SteginkS@michigan.gov](mailto:SteginkS@michigan.gov), 517-241-4945.

Sincerely,



Leah C. Breen, Assistant Director  
Office of Professional Preparation Services

The table below provides a list of the eight (8) individual content tests and the PRE in which the new standard setting procedure was implemented. The table includes initial passing rates for first-time test takers in the full 2011-12 and 2012-2013 school years compared with **preliminary estimated** passing percentages from the single administration of the new or revised assessments taken on October 5, 2013 (the first of multiple opportunities to be offered in the 2013-14 school year).

**Michigan Test for Teacher Certification Analysis**

Subject Area (Test)	Initial Pass Rate <2011-2012>	Initial Pass Rate <2012-2013>	Initial Pass Rate <Oct 5, 2013>	Factors that contributed to Pass Rate Change
Economics	55% [N=38]	57% [N=23]	< 10 test takers	New paradigm; new standards; new test
Geography	85% [N=58]	83% [N=40]	< 10 test takers	New paradigm; new standards; new test
History	77% [N=582]	71% [N=553]	25% (N=109)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
Political Science	78% [N=98]	77% [N=75]	21% (N=19)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
Social studies – secondary	65% [N=1077]	65% [N=1065]	22% (N=97)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
Social studies – elementary	NA	NA	13% (N=63)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
Elementary education	92% [N=3302]	83%* [N=3794]	49% (N=249)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
School Counselor	72% [N=159]	79% [N=191]	78% (N=36)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
PRE reading	94% [N=6395]	94% [N=6437]	81% (N=649)	New paradigm
PRE math	93% [N=5915]	90% [N=6428]	45% (N=675)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
PRE writing	95% [N=6065]	92% [N=6429]	26% (N=646)	New paradigm; new standards; new test
PRE total	86% [N=6437]	82% [N=6450]	22% (N=615)	New paradigm; new standards; new test

\*New Paradigm