

2/1/07

To: California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

From: Credential Counselors and Analysts of California*

Re: RICA-TPA Public Study Session

Concerns should the RICA be combined with the TPA:

1. Multiple Versions of the TPA: It is virtually certain that in the near future there will be at least two approved versions of the TPA in use by university credential programs: the CA TPA and the PACT. It is possible that additional versions of the TPA will be developed and approved in at a later time. The RICA measure would need to be re-configured for each version of the TPA. Would this cause extra cost and confusion?
2. Different Programs: IHE's offering both Multiple and Single Subject teacher preparation programs would be required to maintain two versions of whichever TPA they were using, one including the RICA measure for Multiple Subject Candidates and a second without it for Single Subject candidates, who are not held to RICA.
3. Special Education: Education Specialist credential candidates are required to pass RICA but they do not take the TPA as it is not required for the education specialist programs. If only Education Specialist candidates need the stand alone RICA, the costs of administration would be excessively high due to the much smaller number of test takers. Would this result in the RICA exam being priced out of reach of credential candidates?
4. Validation and Consistency: As a stand alone exam, the issues of test validity and consistency in scoring of the RICA are laid solely on the company administering the exam. If the TPA and the RICA are combined, such responsibility would shift to almost a hundred IHE's, districts and county offices with multiple subject and/or education specialist programs. Would training competent reading specialists to score the RICA at the program level would be a burden, especially at IHE's without reading programs and at districts and county offices?
5. Independent Monitoring: The RICA was created to answer a concern about the assessment of ability, skills and knowledge related to effective reading instruction in multiple subject and education specialist programs in the state. Will handing the administration and the scoring of the exam back to the programs jeopardize the important independent monitoring function?
Is an objective evaluation of expertise the goal? It would appear that moving the process to the TPA would create a more subjective evaluation. What value does the objective RICA evaluation have over the more subjective TPA? Is a balance between the objective and the subjective desirable as it appears that the current system may provide that balance. It also seems that by having such a balance, the RICA exam is confirming the training and assessment and conversely the training and assessment is confirmed by the RICA exam.
6. Funding: Administration and scoring the TPA costs money. Will funding be provided to either the state-supported or private teacher preparation programs in the state? Shifting

the costs of the RICA measure to the same programs makes the funding issues worse. There is no way to assure that costs to the students will actually decrease.

CONCLUSION: SB 1209 mandates study of combining of tests to eliminate the amount of testing required of credential candidates and to reduce costs to those candidates. Combining CBEST and CSET and/or offering other options to the CBEST makes sense to achieve this goal. In the case of RICA it appears from the above concerns that combining the RICA into the TPA could result in more testing and higher costs to credential candidates and to programs that offer credentials. Would a better solution for RICA be to retain the current testing instrument?

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input.

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* Credential Counselors and Analysts of California (CCAC) is a non-profit professional organization of credentialing personnel from universities, school districts and county offices of education in the state of California. The organization is dedicated to the dissemination of credential information and provides liaison services to agencies involved in the credentialing process for California school personnel. The website and a member list serve is maintained to distribute time sensitive and important information.

CCAC committed to furthering the knowledge of its members by maintaining an informational network between certification personnel at California institutions of higher education, school districts, county offices of education and the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CCTC). CCAC represents the link between the CCTC and teachers, students and the public in the state of California. Members interact with students at universities who seek certification, with teachers employed at school districts, with those seeking employment and with personnel involved in assigning teachers to appropriate grade levels and subject areas. CCAC, in collaboration with the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, sponsors and organizes an annual fall conference in Sacramento and regional workshops in the spring.