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STATE SUPERINTENDENT

MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 8, 2020

TO: Deans of Approved Michigan Educator Preparation Institutions and Alternative Route Providers

FROM: Leah Breen, Director, Office of Educator Excellence
Division of Educator, Student, and School Supports 

SUBJECT: Michigan Test for Teacher Certification Elementary Education Fees Information

Following the State Board of Education (SBE) adoption of the PK-3 and 3-6 teacher preparation standards in 2018, development began for new Michigan Tests for Teacher Certification (MTTCs) aligned to these standards.

In partnership with the Michigan Department of Education, Evaluation Systems created a model with four multiple choice subtests: Literacy, Mathematics, Science/Social Studies, and Professional Knowledge.

In response to the concerns raised by you, our partners, we looked closely at the cost structures related to the examinations.

Attachment A has information regarding the new Elementary Education MTTC, including how registration is structured, what the new MTTC will look like in practice, what impact it will have on candidates, and more.

If you have additional questions, please contact me via email at breenl1@michigan.gov.

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Michigan Tests for Teacher Certification (MTTC) Fees: Elementary Education

What is the new Elementary Education MTTC?

Following the State Board of Education (SBE) adoption of the PK-3 and 3-6 teacher preparation standards in 2018, development began for new MTTCs aligned to these standards. The Action Team for updating literacy and mathematics licensure tests at the elementary level recommended a non-compensatory model. Candidates will not be recommended for certification if they do not pass all subtests. Additionally, legislative Boilerplate language for 2016-17 included a [required change to teacher candidate assessment to focus on literacy in section 5-507](#).

To avoid burdening candidates with a separate test beyond what would be required for elementary certification, the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) opted to address this mandate via a subtest model which includes literacy, aligned to the PK-3 and 3-6 teacher preparation standards.

In partnership with MDE, Evaluation Systems created a model with four multiple choice subtests: Literacy, Mathematics, Science/Social Studies, and Professional Knowledge. The framework for each subtest is based on the respective sections of the PK-3 and 3-6 standards. Each subtest will use scenario-based items and reflect the pedagogical content knowledge in the teacher preparation standards.

What does Elementary Education MTTC registration and cost look like?

Candidates will register separately for each subtest, taking the tests one at a time, all at once, or in combination. The non-compensatory model allows candidates to focus on one content area at a time, at their own pace.

The Literacy, Science/Social Studies, and Professional Knowledge subtests each cost \$59. The Mathematics subtest costs \$69. The cost for Mathematics is greater because the items are more likely to have graphics, which are more costly to develop. **The total cost of all four subtests is \$246. The current Elementary Education test costs \$129.** This subtest model allows retakes of single subtests, eliminating the need for multiple attempts of a full test and ultimately reducing retake costs.

What will this look like in practice?

Suppose a candidate struggles in Math.

Under the current model the candidate:

- pays \$129 for each retake
- needs to improve their math performance while maintaining performance in the other five areas
- receives minimal feedback about how to improve their performance in math

Under the new model the candidate:

- pays \$69 for each retake
- can isolate their studies to math
- receives detailed feedback about how to improve their performance in math, across three domains

If the candidate needs two retakes to demonstrate sufficient performance, their cost under the current model is $\$129 \times 3 = \387 . Their cost under the new model is $\$59 \times 3 + \$69 \times 3 = \$384$. The costs are nearly the same, but the candidate has a better experience under the new model, because they can focus their studies, receive better feedback, and spend less time testing. Using 2018-2019 data, this would apply to roughly 10% of candidates.

What impact will this have on candidates?

Candidates will experience a greater initial cost, compared to the current model. However, the new model offers many advantages:

- Ability to prepare for one subtest at a time
- More specificity in score reporting (performance reported in specific domains of math, rather than "math" as its own domain)
- Once a candidate meets the standard for one subtest, testing for the area is complete

Candidates who successfully complete each subtest will have demonstrated an ability to meet the standard for each content area, rather than being able to compensate for a deficit in one area (such as mathematics or English language arts) with an overperformance in another area (such as social studies or science).

What can Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) do to help candidates?

Vouchers

- Each provider receives a list of MTTC voucher codes before the beginning of the school year.
- Each provider can distribute vouchers based on their own criteria and judgement.
- Vouchers expire roughly 12 months after they are distributed to EPPs, usually in late July.
- Candidates can register and schedule their MTTC with a voucher for up to 12 months from registration date. For example, a candidate who registers for an MTTC with a voucher on March 15 has until the following March 14 to test.

Field Testing

- Candidates who are juniors, seniors, or graduate students are eligible to participate in field testing before a new MTTC goes “live.”
- Candidates who participate in field testing choose between a gift card and a non-transferable voucher for a future MTTC.
- Notices about field testing opportunities are shared through DARTEP, ARN, and on the MTTC website.

Lab Fees & Financial Aid

- Providers may have flexibilities in using lab fees, course fees, or other methods to build in MTTC costs. For example, a lab fee could be used to provide candidates with vouchers (purchased by the EPP).