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**TO:** Members of the State Board of Education

**FROM:** Carey M. Wright, Ed.D., Interim State Superintendent of Schools 

**DATE:** February 27, 2024

**SUBJECT:** Teacher Licensure Assessments: Adoption of Regenerated Assessment

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this item is to seek approval from the State Board of Education (SBOE) to adopt the Educational Testing Service (ETS) Praxis subject assessment Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355). This assessment is a regenerated from the previous version that is currently adopted in Maryland. The regenerated assessment was designed to align with the 2020 Council for Exceptional Children Standards for Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators.

### **Background**

Code of Maryland Regulation 13A.12.01.05A(3)(a) states that the SBOE shall approve licensure assessments and the State Superintendent of Schools shall set the qualifying scores. Since 1987, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has required state licensure tests to assess basic skills, content knowledge, and pedagogy. These tests provide a means to validate that teacher candidates have entry-level skills to begin their professional careers. To maintain currency in various content fields, ETS revises most tests on a five-year schedule and at the same time works to create new tests based on a demonstrated need.

To support the decision-making process for state departments of education regarding establishing a passing score, research staff from ETS design and conduct two Multistate Standards Setting Studies for each test (25 educators on each team). The two, non-overlapping panels represent and provide a replication of the judgment process to strengthen the technical quality of the recommended passing score. The panelists, selected from states that will use the test, are recommended by state departments of education to participate as experts for the Multistate Standards Setting Studies. One Maryland panelist participated in the Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355) Multistate Standards Setting Study.

The panelists judge the extent to which the knowledge and/or skills reflected by the content specifications are important for entry-level teachers. ETS also collects content-related validity evidence to confirm the importance of the content specifications for entry-level teachers. The recommended cut scores from the two panels are averaged and then converted to a scale score with a range from 100 to 200. This score becomes the recommended qualifying score for the study.

ETS guidelines seek to adopt a score that does not exceed a plus or minus two standard errors of measurement from the recommended qualifying score. In this way, ETS is able to assure states that they have engaged in a process that ensures legal defensibility of the score.

**Executive Summary**

The Praxis Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355) assessment was redesigned to align with the 2020 Council for Exceptional Children Standards for Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators. ETS is scheduled to remove the older version of the assessment (5354) from its catalog in August 2024. An overview of the regenerated assessment, including a comparison to the previous version, is enclosed.

**Action**

Requesting that the SBOE approve the adoption of the following regenerated Praxis subject assessment for purposes of licensure:

<b>Test Code</b>	<b>Test Name</b>	<b>Qualifying Score</b>	<b>Scale</b>
5355	Special Education: Foundational Knowledge	145	100-200

**Attachments**

Overview of Regenerated Assessment: Special Education: Foundational Knowledge



# Praxis<sup>®</sup>

## Overview of Regenerated Assessment Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355)

September 2023



# ETS Background

- Non-profit organization
- World's largest private educational assessment and research organization
- Our mission is to help advance quality and equity in education by providing fair and valid assessments, research, and related services

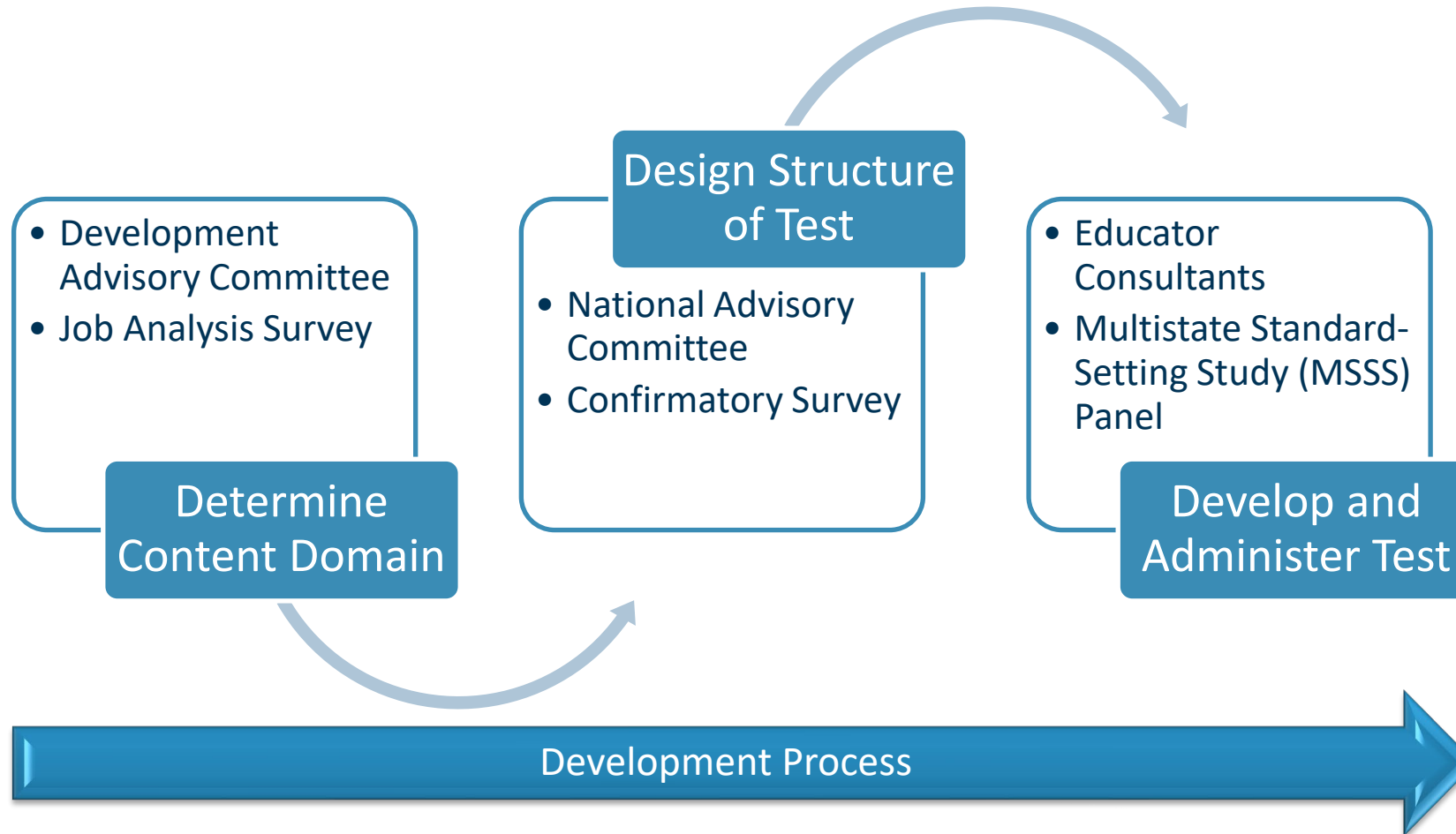


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# Developing Teacher Licensure Tests

From Design through Implementation



Practicing educators involved throughout the process

# Overview of the Test

**Praxis Special Education: Foundational Knowledge** is designed to measure knowledge and competencies important for safe and effective beginning practice as a special education teacher in grades K-12.

- Developed with practicing special education teachers, teacher educators, and higher ed content specialists.
- Designed to reflect:
  - Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards for Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators.
  - Content topics span the areas of (I) Human Development and Individual Learning Differences, (II) Effective Planning and Instruction and Productive Learning Environments, (III) Assessment, and (IV) Professional Learning, Practice and Collaboration.

# Regeneration Description

## Purpose of Redesign

- Standards updated in 2020

## Overall Design Changes

- The test title changed from *5354 Special Education: Core Knowledge and Applications* **to** *5355 Special Education: Foundational Knowledge*
- Weightings added a stronger focus on culturally responsive collaboration among stakeholders, human development and individual learning differences and planning and instruction.
- This design includes items that have instructional scenarios with students who have mild-to-moderate disabilities, that include a range of learning disabilities, ADHD, emotional and behavioral disorders, and students with high-functioning autism spectrum disorders, typically placed in the inclusion setting.

## Standards

- Standards 2020 Initial Practice-Based Professional Preparation Standards for Special Educators (Initial K-12 Standards)

# What has Changed?

Previous 5354		Redesigned 5355	
Content Categories	Approximate Percentage of Examination	Content Categories	Approximate Percentage of Examination
I. Development and Characteristics of Learners	20%	I. Human Development and Individual Learning Differences	26 %
II. Planning and the Learning Environment	23%	II. Effective Planning and Instruction and Productive Learning Environments	32 %
III. Instruction	23%	III. Assessment	23 %
IV. Assessment	18%	IV. Professional Learning, Practice, and Collaboration	19 %
V. Foundations and Professional Responsibilities	20%		

**Timing** – Timing remains the same at 120 minutes (about 2 hours)

## Any Addition or Subtraction of Content

- To best align with CEC’s new standards, the number of Score Categories for this test 5 Content Categories to 4 Content Categories based on the updated CEC standards (See Weighting Table)
- There was no subtraction of content
- Grade level changed from Pre-K-12 to K-12

## Professional Organization

- Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)





# Weighting the Scoring Categories

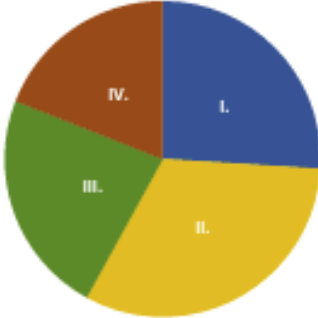
- Reflects the relative importance of each major category and sub-category on the exam
- Scores are reported for the four major categories and their subcategories
- The weightings guide test assembly by making sure that we include enough items per category and sub-category to get meaningful information about what candidates do and do not know

Redesigned 5355		
Content Categories	Subcategory/Objective	Weighting
I. Human Development and Individual Learning Differences	A. Human Development	26 %
	B. Individual Learning Differences	
II. Effective Planning and Instruction and Productive Learning Environments	A. Planning and Instruction	32 %
	B. Productive Learning Environments	
III. Assessment	A. Interventions, Eligibility, and Identification	23 %
	B. Program Planning Based on Data	
IV. Professional Learning, Practice, and Collaboration	A. Ethical Guidelines, Legal Policies, and Procedures	19 %
	B. Professionalism and Collaboration	

## Special Education: Foundational Knowledge (5355)

### Test at a Glance

The *Praxis*® Special Education: Foundational Knowledge is designed to measure knowledge and competencies that are important for safe and effective beginning practice as a special education: foundational knowledge specialist.

<b>Test Name</b>	Special Education: Foundational Knowledge		
<b>Test Code</b>	5355		
<b>Time</b>	2 hours		
<b>Number of Questions</b>	120 selected-response questions		
<b>Format</b>	The test consists of a variety of selected-response questions. You can review the question types in Understanding Question Types.		
<b>Test Delivery</b>	Computer Delivered		
	<b>Content Categories</b>	<b>Approximate Number of Questions</b>	<b>Approximate Percentage of Examination</b>
	I. Human Development and Individual Learning Differences	32	26%
	II. Effective Planning and Instruction and Productive Learning Environments	38	32%
	III. Assessment	27	23% <sub>8</sub>
	IV. Professional Learning, Practice, and	23	19%

# Test at a Glance (TAAG)

# Special Education: Foundational Knowledge

