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Technical Memo

To
Indiana State Board of
Education

From
**Indiana Technical
Advisory Committee**

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CC
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Re
Core Assessments

The Core Assessments are used as part of the educator credentialing process in Indiana. Licensure and certification tests such as the Indiana Core Assessments for educators are an important mechanism used by governmental agencies to determine whether individuals who are licensed to perform a job are likely to do so in a safe and competent manner.

The Indiana State Board of Education's Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was asked to review existing test development and validation for the Core Assessments. Overall, the TAC concludes that *there is sufficient validity evidence to support continuation of the Core Assessment program*. The balance of this memorandum provides a description of the activities engaged in by the TAC and our technical recommendations.

Timeline of Activities

The TAC initiated a review of the Indiana Core Assessment program as part of its scheduled in-person meeting in April 2017. At this meeting, the TAC was briefed about the Core Assessment program by the program contractor, Evaluation Systems. Based on the briefing provided, the TAC requested additional information about evidence related to the areas of content specifications, test development methods for low volume programs, fairness, reliability, and passing standards. In follow-up to this initial meeting, several activities occurred. Among them:

- * June 2017 – Evaluation Systems provided supplemental documentation.
 - * July 2017 – In-person TAC meeting; TAC reviewed the additional documentation provided; identified gaps in evidence and identified additional evidence needed.
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- * August 2017 – TAC documented specific recommendations in technical memorandum dated August 10, 2017.
- * November 2017 – In-person TAC meeting; TAC is provided with independent external review of Indiana Core Assessments by Dr. Ric Luecht (University of North Carolina-Greensboro) and Dr. Susan Phillips (consultant). Overall, Dr. Luecht’s and Dr. Phillips’ reviews confirmed the TAC’s conclusion regarding the continuation of the Core Assessment program; concurred with additional evidence needs identified by TAC; and, suggested additional considerations for the program to consider from psychometric and legal perspectives.
- * December 2017 – In response to the collective feedback from the TAC and the supplemental reviews, the contractor proposed plans to begin to gather the additional evidence requested.

Technical Recommendations

One clear finding of the TAC is that all state testing programs administered in Indiana (e.g., ISTEP+, ILEARN, ISTAR, IREAD-3) are committed to continuous improvement. The TAC commends this orientation and concurs that continuous improvement should remain a clear commitment for all testing programs, including the Indiana Core Assessments. To that end, the TAC has developed a set of recommendations and timeline for the Department to pursue, with its contractor, in the short and longer term. Three overarching recommendations are presented below related to validity, reliability, and program oversight. More detailed documentation of these recommendations is provided in 2017 TAC meeting minutes, supplemental TAC technical memoranda, and the independent external reviews related to the CORE Assessment program.

1) **Validity.** To fully align with best practices for credentialing examination programs, job analysis studies should be conducted to support the validity of the Indiana Core Assessments. The TAC believes that this work should begin immediately.

Because of the large number of Core Assessment areas, multiple policy and programmatic considerations, and the purposes of the Core Assessment program, this work will likely need to be completed in phases. For example, it will likely be most feasible to begin with job analysis studies for larger volume programs, such as Elementary Education and defer work for some smaller volume programs. Regardless, because this additional validity evidence is essential to support the Core Assessment program, the TAC concludes that the contractor and IDOE should establish a timeline and begin this work in the short term.

2) **Reliability.** Credentialing assessment programs must also be concerned with the dependability of assessment scores and candidate classifications (i.e., Pass/Fail decisions) based on those scores. Although no test yields perfectly dependable scores, it is essential to continuously monitor and work to enhance score reliability and classification consistency. The TAC has observed that the reliability of scores and classifications varies across the Core Assessment programs. Where appropriate, the TAC recommends that the contractor review item/test development strategies to enhance reliability for selected Core Assessment programs.

3) **Program Oversight.** Various improvements should be made related to practices, evidence, and documentation of evidence that are expected for

credentialing testing programs. The contractor has proposed plans for accomplishing these improvements, but the proposals have not yet been fully implemented. Accordingly, the TAC recommends that it should continue its involvement in providing support for these program improvements, including reviewing designs proposed by the contractor, implementation activities, outcomes, and ongoing monitoring of the contractors progress in responding to the recommendations.
