CODESP NEWS

CODESP SERVICES

With each new program year we like to offer as many new services as possible to our members.

This past year our focus was on the following:

- Increase multiple choice items in item banks.
- Update existing items in banks.
- Increase test item graphics.
- Increase interviews available.
- Provide specialized materials for Community Colleges and County Offices of Education.
- Increase writing samples available.
- Decrease paperwork.
- Increase test material delivery speed.
- Increase member services on web site.

The new CODESP Computerized Item Bank Catalog has been compiled and lists the type of items by subject areas available in the bank. 1,641 new items have been added to the bank since July 2000.

We have edited items in most of our banks, especially in the areas of Instructional Aide, Clerical, Information Technology, Electronics, Plumbing, Personnel, Math, Word Processing and Custodian. Many of these improvements included updating and adding graphics, which helps in the visualization process for candidates as they answer questions.

As CODESP increases in membership it also has increased in the diversity of districts. This past year we have provided test materials for unique positions ranging from Zookeeper to a combination position for Superintendent/Principal/Teacher. This diversity of subject areas has increased the number and types of interviews and writing samples available.

Also, as we have increased our membership participation from Community Colleges and County Offices of Education and therefore have added interview questions and writing samples created specifically to meet their unique needs.

WHAT'S NEW?

Decreasing the amount of paperwork exchanged between our office and member districts has been an ongoing project. This past year we eliminated the need to return test items to us by mail and went to a faxable Test Request Form. We also improved our C-CIB Request Form, which allows members to order sample job descriptions, multiple choice test questions, interviews, and writing samples/performance tests directly on the web.

Our newest feature allows us to provide members with multiple choice test questions, in a variety of subject areas, through password protected email.

Once a member submits a request for multiple choice test items they will receive a phone call from CODESP staff notifying them if the items they requested are available through email attachment. If they are, a password will be provided so the files can be opened.

At this time copier-ready tests cannot be emailed, but will be returned by mail as quickly as possible.

SEPTEMBER MTM

On Friday, September 21, Garden Grove Unified School District will be hosting a Membership Training Meeting from 10-12 noon (see codesp.com for details). The topic of the meeting will be **Cut-Off Scores** and **AB 2222**. Our speaker will be Robert Schulze, an attorney with Latham and Watkins, a law firm with offices nationwide who specialize in public employment law.

He will discuss recent court cases relating to cut-off scores, such as the Lanning case. He will also discuss AB 2222, which is current legislation that increases the coverage by the Americans with Disabilities Act in California. There will be discussion on the new meaning of "disability" and how it effects the selection process.

RATING SCALES

CODESP staff is frequently asked for assistance in developing rating scales, especially for interviews. There are a variety of options for districts to choose from.

Typical rating scales follow these sample formats:

5 point scale		7 point scale	
Performance Level	*Rating Scale*	*Performance Level*	*Rating Scale*
Well Qualified	*5 points*	*Well Qualified*	*6 to 7 points*
Qualified	*3 to 4 points*	*Qualified*	*3 to 5 points*
Not Qualified	*1 to 2 points*	*Not Qualified*	*1 to 2 points*

For each response, you may include a description of the performance levels listed. Generally the following criteria is used:

Well Qualified: Candidate demonstrates thorough knowledge and understanding required for position.

Qualified: Candidate demonstrates sufficient knowledge and understanding required for position.

Not Qualified: Candidate does not demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding required for position.

Rating scales which describe samples of behavior are likely to be more reliable than purely numerical scales, or the vague descriptions listed above, that raters must interpret. Raters may not agree on what well qualified, qualified and not qualified, etc., mean. Generally, behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS) result in fewer rating errors than other scales and are more likely to be used properly by raters with different kinds of previous training and experience.

BARS describe samples of behavior which reflect levels of competency for the content area being evaluated. The descriptions help anchor the observable behavior of the applicant in the interview situation on different levels and help improve the reliability of the rating. The behaviors displayed by the applicant are compared with the behavior descriptions for the same content area on the scale. If the applicant displays a preponderance of similar behaviors, then he or she is described as having that level of competence for that content area.

Authentic job-related behaviors need to be included in BARS. Subject-matter experts are the best source for developing descriptions of various behaviors for any content area evaluated in the interview. Several descriptive phrases which have been agreed on by the experts are appropriate for each level on the scale. For example under the content area, "Ability to Establish and Maintain Effective Working Relationships," the BARS for a high rating could include the following descriptors:

Acted poised. Answered questions tactfully. Was pleasant and cooperative. Spoke of successful experiences in dealing with people.

Write the BARS using plain understandable language. If technical terminology is needed and frequently used by the raters, use it in the scale. This makes the scales seem more job-related both to the raters and to applicants, should feedback be necessary. Adequate benchmarks help raters to achieve consistent results and improve objectivity and reliability.

For more information refer to the CODESP Handbook, *Developing Job Relevant Selection Procedures.*

NOVEMBER MTM

On Friday, November 2, Westminster School District will host a Membership Training Meeting. The topic will be **Promotional Exams**. Often top employees cannot promote out of entry level positions due to test anxiety or lack of information on the testing process.

During this meeting we will discuss resources and programs which are available to help employees improve their test scores.

MEETINGS ELSEWHERE

SPCA/NC

October 5 – 7, Reno

The Northern California School Personnel Commissioner's Association annual conference, "A Merit Odyssey" will be held at the Reno Hilton Hotel (800-648-5080). A special room rate of $79 is available through September 4. The theme represents an effort to recognize the role of the SPCA in labor relations. The information presented at the conference is designed to increase knowledge of collective bargaining in the public sector and to improve understanding of the vital role SPCA plays in this arena. To register contact Elizabeth Rezaee at Fremont USD at 510-659-2546 or email her at erezaee@fremont.k12.ca.us.

MERIT ACADEMY

The Merit Academy has completed one successful session and now is planning another group of classes in the Southern California area. The classes will be held on the following five Saturdays: September 22nd, October 20, November 17, December 8, and January 26.

The classes will cover topics that have been designed for new and aspiring merit system directors. The cost is $500 per student, which includes tuition, books, and materials.

For information, contact Dick Ide at **Ride@HUSD.k12.ca.us.**

PTC/SC

The Personnel Testing Council of Southern California announces its Fall Conference November 7 & 8, with preconference training on the 6th. The topic will be "Test Accomodations: Where are we 10 years After ADA?"

The meeting will be held at the Buena Park Holiday Inn. For more information contact Laura Triner (213) 847-9136 or Hollie Levy (213) 847-9140.

HR JOBS AVAILABLE

To review current human resource jobs available we have added a new feature to our website, HR Job Openings. Members can now post HR vacancies (Analyst to Director level) at no additional cost.

When HR vacancies occur provide us with the title, salary, and closing date and we will post it at **www.codesp.com** - **HR Job Openings**.

NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME TO CODESP!

- **Oakley UESD**
- **Ramona USD**
- **Newman-Crows Landing USD**
- **Santa Clara USD**
- **Martinez USD**
- **Santa Maria-Bonita SD**
- **Rowland USD**
- **Riverside COE**
- **Long Beach USD**
- **Glendale USD**
- **Cypress SD**

CODESP.COM

Please provide us with updated email addresses, as we send out meeting notices, etc., using this method. Notify us when there are changes.

Also, we are still collecting website addresses, so check out codesp.com under Member's List and make sure the information for your district is correct.

Our newest addition to the website will be Human Resource salary information. Email us (marcodesp@aol.com) with the low and high salaries for Human Resource Analyst (4 year degree required) and Director, (include effective date). We will post the results on the web.

JOB MARKET AND RECRUITMENT

As the economy slows down and unemployment figures rise, employers will see an increase in applicants. Also, as more companies face lay-offs, the rate of employed individuals willing to jump to a job that would offer stability is climbing. The younger generation of workers has shown they weren't raised with the idea of just sticking things out in one place. The dot.com frenzy may have calmed their dreams of becoming instant millionaires, but their quest for a job that is stable, but still offers independence and personal and professional gain is strong. Although this is good news for employers who had difficulty staffing their organizations last year, it raises additional concerns.

An increase in the applicant population doesn't always mean a sufficient number of quality candidates will be available. The importance of testing candidates plays a bigger role in the process as the need to differentiate between qualified and unqualified candidates increases.

The type of tests used also becomes an important element in the search for hard-working, dedicated employees. Many times when the economy suffers those previously employed in professional positions look for a quick fix to their unemployment problem and turn to entry level jobs in public employment. These individuals may be able to score well on written tests, but may not be the best qualified to perform the job, and will probably only stay with an organization as long as it takes to find another job that more closely matches their skills and salary requirements. Others may not be qualified at all, but apply out of desperation for employment.

Make sure your tests are job-related and include an element in the selection process that exams "job fit". Don't screen out possibly well-qualified applicants by administering a written test which has a too high of a reading level. Use simulation interviews as much as possible, and use the written examination to screen for minimum qualifications in entry level jobs only.

CODESP
17210 Oak Street
Fountain Valley, CA 92708

Phone: 714 - 847-8203
Fax: 714 - 848-2963
email: tests@codesp.com
Internet: www.codesp.com