

RUMORS

As we await the decision by the State Board of Education regarding paraprofessional assessment, rumors have been circulating throughout California. Thanks to notification by many of our friends, we have been able to stop many of them. Some of the rumors we have heard include:

- *The union can have access to CODESP Instructional Aide test materials.*

Wrong Our tests are made available only to member district representatives who have completed a security agreement. Giving a union representative CODESP test materials would be a violation of the security agreement. If they have questions refer them to our website or they can contact us directly.

- *CODESP Instructional Aide test materials have not been approved by the State of California.*

Wrong The State School Board will not be endorsing any one particular test and they will leave the choice of test vendor/consortium to the local education agency (LEA).

- *Veteran Paraprofessionals do not have to be retested.*

Uncertain We are still waiting for a more direct answer from the state, which they promise soon. It does appear that some of the old tests used by districts do not meet the rigorous criteria standard.

- *Veteran Paraprofessionals only have to retake the Ability to Assist portion of the test.*

Uncertain This will also depend on the quality of the test used previously by the LEA.

- *The test can be an Evaluation/Observation.*

Uncertain We are waiting to hear if this will be true for veteran paraprofessionals who have been tested adequately in the past. Remember the content of the assessment should reflect both the state and academic standards and the ability of the candidate to assist in instructing students in the content.

NCLB INTERPRETATIONS

Few details for implementation were included in the NCLB Act from the federal government so each state must establish its own standards for each option provided. While waiting for California to post their recommendations, (I have heard they will not be detailed) we have been browsing through different state websites to see what they are doing.

The **State of Hawaii** provides detailed standards regarding paraprofessional qualifications, including specific coursework to meet the requirements for the 48 units. There will be no grandfathering for veteran paraprofessionals.

The **State of Illinois** has adopted criteria including the following:

The paraprofessional assessment is expected to evaluate paraprofessional candidates at a level equivalent to the second year of college.

The law does not require a paper and pencil test, but there must be evidence that the assessment is valid and reliable.

The assessment results must ensure that more than basic skills are assessed. The law requires that the test cover subject knowledge of reading, writing and math as well as the "ability to assist in instruction."

LEA's have the flexibility in the determination of the content and format of any assessment of paraprofessionals, although the expectations cited in the NCLB must be observed. While an appropriate assessment might be entirely a written test, it alternatively could be a combination of competence in instruction (assessed through observations via a series of rubrics).

The assessment should be rigorous and objective; each evaluation should have a standard that the candidate is expected to meet or exceed. These standards for evaluation must be applied to each candidate in the same manner.

SELECTION TOOL CRITERIA

Recently the Western Regional Intergovernmental Personnel Assessment Council (WRIPAC) released an updated monograph, *Types of Tests and Appropriate Usage: Revisited*, by Terry McKinney of the City of Phoenix. This monograph provides an overview of the selection tools typically available and the respective “pros” and “cons” of each. The following is an excerpt from the monograph:

When developing a selection tool, the analyst has a number of “scientific” tools available. The most important of these is the job/task analysis. The job/task analysis is the most acceptable method of determining which KSA’s should be tested. Although what we do in personnel selection is based in part on the scientific method and on detailed analysis, we must always remember that much of what we do is based on informed professional judgment. It is critical that an analyst maximizes his/her knowledge and skill of informed judgment.

The monograph provides the analyst with some of the factors to consider in order to select the most appropriate, cost-effective and timely selection tool will be discussed. Given that there are very few absolute truths with which everyone in the personnel selection profession will agree, the material provided must be taken with “a grain of salt.” The specific environmental conditions within each agency and the experience of the analyst should be considered.

While it is seldom possible to develop the “perfect” selection tool, the analyst should strive to develop the best selection tool available in a given situation. An appropriate selection tool maximizes the validity (job relatedness) and minimizes the degree of adverse impact. The concern regarding adverse impact relates not only to our legal obligations under the Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures (1978), but also our ethical concerns as professionals. The concerns for validity lie at the very heart of our profession and are the foundation of the merit system concept.

A good selection tool will be cost-effective. When considering costs, development, administration and scoring must be evaluated. Both costs to the Human Resources Department and to the operating department should be considered. While a valid selection tool will eventually have a major impact on productivity, we must also react to the more immediate budget concerns of our respective agencies.

A good selection tool will minimize the total time for the entire recruiting, testing and certification process. Often, operating departments are more concerned with how soon they can fill a vacancy than they are with the degree of perfection in the testing process. Also, better available applicants will often be lost to the employer who makes the first job offer.

Thus, the best selection tool would be the selection tool that maximizes validity, cost-effectiveness and efficiency while minimizing adverse impact.

The monograph discusses each type of selection tool separately, including training and experience evaluations, written tests, oral interviews, demonstration/performance tests, etc. A majority of organizations use more than one tool in a selection process. Traditionally many selection processes start with a minimum qualification screen followed by a written examination. Those candidates that pass the written examination go on to an oral interview. Each examination part is weighted. For example, the written examination may be weighted 50%, and the interview the remaining 50%. Whether an agency uses this multiple hurdle approach and/or assigns weights to individual examination parts is an individual agency decision.

WRIPAC members have compiled ten monographs focusing on different aspects of personnel selection. To order copies, visit the WRIPAC website at www.wripac.com. Multiple copy discounts are available. There is no cost to belong to WRIPAC, the only requirement is attendance at a majority of the meetings and participation on committees.

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

School Personnel Commissioners Association/Northern California

Santa Rosa, October 10 -12

Information and registration forms are available at:

<http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/cspca/cspca.html#CONFERENCE>



PTC-SC

**Fall Conference and 50th Anniversary
Back to the Future: Testing Yesterday,
Today and Tomorrow**

Long Beach, October 23 – 24

The Personnel Testing Council of Southern California will be celebrating their 50th anniversary this year with a special conference and banquet aboard the **Queen Mary**. Speakers will include six very distinguished Industrial Psychologists who are experts in the area of personnel selection.

To find out more, visit the PTC-SC website at:
<http://www.ipmaac.org/ptcsc/>



WRIPAC

**Western Regional Intergovernmental
Personnel Assessment Council**

Garden Grove

**Preconference Training: January 14
Conference: January 15 - 16**

There will be a choice of three training workshops during the preconference training:

Internal Consulting, *How to Hire Superstars* (interview training), and *Item Writing* (includes how to pick the right items for your test). To register contact Christine Erb at cerb@ci.oceanside.ca.us

There are no registration fees to attend the conference. Contact the Hyatt Regency in Garden Grove at (714) 750-1234. Visit www.wripac.com for more information.

OLD TESTS

We receive several requests each year to update old tests. This is an easy task if the test was made after 2000 and you provide us with the key. We have archived some of our old tests (this process should improve with our new software) and without the key it is a cumbersome task to redo old tests. The key tells us where the items are in the item bank. If you want a test redone, just mark the items you want removed on the key, add the new ones and fax it to us. This will allow us to deliver you a new test quickly. If your test was developed prior to 2000, please request new test items to review. Significant changes have been made to our software programs and item bank, and many items may be out-of-date.

Adobe Acrobat Problems? - Make sure you delete version 4.0 before installing 5.0.

NEW MEMBERS

Carpinteria USD
Contra Costa COE
Grossmont UHSD
Merced COE
Modesto City USD
Nuviv Union SD
Placentia-Yorba Linda USD
Placer COE
Porterville USD
Sacramento COE
Shasta COE
Solano COE
Tehachapi USD
Visalia USD
Yuba COE

WWW.CODESP.COM

This past year our website was updated and we hope you are finding it easy to use. To order test materials click on the C-CIB Request Form under SERVICES or click on REQUEST TEST MATERIALS in the center of the home page.

Membership paperwork, including a Security Agreement, can be found under JOIN CODESP.

CODESP FREE TRAINING

SAN BERNARDINO, SEPTEMBER 19, JOB RELATED TEST DEVELOPMENT

CODESP staff will provide a "hands-on" workshop on how to develop job-related tests. This will include discussions on legal requirements, job analysis, job description review, and selecting test items. Attendees will participate in an exercise where they will "build" a test.

The meeting will be held from 10:00 a.m. - 12 noon at the San Bernardino City USD at 1535 W. Highland Ave., San Bernardino.

REDDING, SEPTEMBER 29, HOW CODESP CAN IMPROVE YOUR SELECTION PROCESS

Executive Director Marianne Tonjes will provide information regarding CODESP services, the basics of job-related testing and a NCLB update. The meeting will begin at 11:30 a.m. at the Shasta County Office of Education at 1644 Magnolia Ave., Redding.

COLUSA, SEPTEMBER 29, HOW CODESP CAN IMPROVE YOUR SELECTION PROCESS

Selection Analyst Lisa Grech will provide information regarding CODESP services, the basics of job-related testing, and a NCLB update. Her presentation will be from 11:30 a.m. — 12: 15 in the Connell Rice room at the Colusa County Office of Education, 100 Sunrise Blvd., Colusa.

LODI, NOVEMBER 6, SELECTION RELATED TOPICS

We will be continuing CODESP's celebration of our 30th anniversary with a training meeting in Lodi. Speakers and topics are listed on the website. The meeting will begin at 9:00 a.m. at the Lodi Unified School District at 1305 E. Vine St., Lodi.

There is no cost or membership requirement for attendance. RSVP to marcodesp@aol.com.

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