



STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
LANSING



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

June 28, 2004

THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.  
SUPERINTENDENT OF  
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

**MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** State Board of Education

**FROM:** Thomas D. Watkins, Jr., Chairman

**SUBJECT:** Approval of the Process to Grant Exceptions to the Requirement That Secondary Teacher Candidates Pass Their Michigan Test for Teacher Certification Minor Subject Area Examinations

In March 2004, the State Board of Education held a discussion on the issue of requiring Michigan secondary teacher candidates to pass both their major and minor subject area Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) examinations in order to be recommended for certification. In accordance with Rule 390.1127, a secondary Provisional teaching certificate can only be issued when the candidate has completed a major of 30 semester hours or a group major of 36 semester hours and a minor of 20 semester hours or a group minor of 24 semester hours. Section 1531 of the Michigan School Code establishes the teacher testing requirements.

As the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I directed the Office of Professional Preparation (OPPS) staff to convene a forum with educational stakeholders to highlight the advantages and disadvantages of waiving the MTTC minor test, establish consensus on the conditions under which the minor test would be waived, and develop procedures to be followed in such cases. The forum was held on April 16, 2004, with 48 participants (Attachment A). Attachment B contains the summary of the advantages and disadvantages of waiving the minor test as identified by the five stakeholder subgroups. The primary advantages are:

- Aligned with NCLB highly qualified teacher requirement for deeper content knowledge as evidenced by completion of a subject area major.
- Allows candidates to be certificated who otherwise couldn't be.
- Addresses the needs of postbaccalaureate teacher candidates to have access to alternative certification programs.

The primary disadvantages identified are:

- Limits placement within the district/school to only one subject, which makes the teacher less marketable.
- May impact rural schools' ability to employ teachers endorsed in multiple subjects.

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- May have a negative impact on the teacher preparation institutions' Higher Education Act Title II report of MTTC passage rates.

The majority of the forum participants agreed that teacher candidates who fail their MTTC minor subject area examination should have the opportunity to be recommended for certification with certain criteria imposed. These criteria include:

1. The candidate must take the minor test at least once.
2. If the candidate fails the minor test, he/she must work with the teacher preparation institution to develop a plan of improvement and take the test again.
3. After failing the test a second time, the candidate would be given the option to apply for an exception (this term is preferred as opposed to "waiver").
4. Upon completion of the exception form (Attachment C) and approval by the teacher preparation institution, the candidate would be recommended for certification.

It is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the proposed exception procedure for allowing teacher preparation institutions to submit certification recommendations for secondary teacher candidates who do not pass their MTTC minor subject area test, as discussed in the Superintendent's memorandum dated June 28, 2004.

## ATTACHMENT A

### April 16, 2004 Minor Test Meeting – State Board Room – 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

Andrews, Janet	Wayne State	<u>State Staff</u>
Ashley, Roger	Coalition of Subject Matter/MAME	Ciloski, Frank
Behrens, Scott	Adrian College	Jenkins, Flora
Bennett, Tim	Aquinas College	Khoury, Ghada
Blews, Edward	AICUM	Ried, Krista
Bowen, Judith	Wayne State	Smith, Catherine
Chipman, Jeanne	Saginaw Valley	Whitthorne, Rosheeda
Clarke, Jane	Stockbridge (TEAC)	Zolinger-Russell, G.
Cogan, Joella	Michigan State	
DePlonty, Stella	Lake Superior	
Dittenber, Hal	Wayne State	
Eikenberry , Glenda	Grand Valley	
Elliott, Sharon	Wayne State	
Fahlman, Mariane	Wayne State	
Fourneier, Barbara	Grand Valley	
Garrett, Ann	Albion	
Grzelak, Beth	U of M-Ann Arbor	
Jacobson, Kate	Central Michigan	
Jacobson, Kathleen	Central Michigan	
Kramer, Jane	Western Michigan	
Lemmen, Laurie	Calvin College	
Lofton-Doniver, Lois	MFT	
Looman, Tammy	Cornerstone	
Markle, Barbara	Michigan State	
McFedries, Gayle	Marygrove	
Moir, Olga	MASCD	
Pawson-Amlotte, Robin	Adrian College	
Robinson, Jan	Grand Valley	
Rubio, Reuben	Spring Arbor	
Schairer, Cher	Hope College	
Schmiedicke, Elizabeth	Aquinas College	
Schram, Chris	Baker College	
Serbin, Terry	Monroe (MASPA)	
Sister Carol	U of D Mercy	
Smith, April	Grand Valley	
Smith, Joan	Michigan State	
Snyder, JoAnn	Wayne State	
Stuive, Jo	Calvin College	
Tonda, Vickie	U of M-Flint	
Wiggins, Bob	Oakland University	
Zeller, Julie	Spring Arbor	

***GROUP I***

**Advantages**

1. Choice
2. Alignment with out-of-state alternate route
3. High need areas – good
4. Increase advising

**Disadvantages**

1. Limit employability
2. Group major will have advantages over single areas
3. Confuse students
4. Monitoring public schools
5. How to word the certificate (NOTE: doesn't change the certificate)
6. See it as an exception – give waivers for high needs areas only

***GROUP II***

**Advantages**

1. Helps the student in the short run.
2. Will help with some subject-area exams.
3. Helps student hung up on the minor exam.

**Disadvantages**

None listed.

***GROUP III***

**Advantages**

1. Potential to certify.
2. Major area teachers would be of high quality.

**Disadvantages**

Employability:

1. Candidates – Maze
2. Add to minor to get additional teaching area
3. LEA – Less flexible/schedule
4. More cost

5. Unions
6. K-12 Student Achievement
7. Institutions of higher education
8. More recordkeeping
9. Advising – complexity
10. Test pass scores visible – minors often score lower pass rates
11. High quality
12. One test exempt. Why not other tests? Major exempt?
13. Narrowing breadth of knowledge

#### ***GROUP IV***

##### **Advantages**

1. Students who are unable to pass MTTC exam will find minor testing proposal/passed by legislation an advantage to being certified without passing minor.
2. Could strengthen post baccalaureate students allowing more focus on major content area.

##### **Disadvantages**

1. Less marketable.
2. Title II pass rate may be impacted.
3. School districts may have greater difficulty hiring.
4. Problem for higher education institutions in notifying graduates (previous)
5. Bait and switch potential.
6. NCLB ramifications (This is actually an advantage with regard to content majors.)
7. Approval may lead to further erosion of standards.
8. Grandfathering previous students may be a problem.
9. Quality of teachers may be impacted if minor/testing approved by legislation
10. Reduce revenues or fees for MTTC testing.

#### ***GROUP V***

##### **Advantages**

1. Allows a candidate to be certified who otherwise couldn't be.
2. More people teaching in majors (stronger subject area – NCLB)
3. Aligns more consistently with elementary education candidates.
4. Secondary requirements need to be aligned with the elementary requirements.
5. The minor test is “strongly recommended but not required.”

##### **Disadvantages**

1. Less marketability.
2. Opens up to why a minor is needed at all.
3. Negative affect on rural schools.
4. Bar coding may be negatively affected.

