MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 28, 2017

TO: Teacher Preparation Institutions and Colleges of Education
    Michigan Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (MACTE)
    Michigan Independent Educator Preparation Institutions (MIEPI)

FROM: Leah Breen, Director, Office of Professional Preparation Services

SUBJECT: SAT as Michigan’s Basic Skills Examination for Teacher Candidates

As many of you know, Michigan Compiled Law (MCL) 380.1531 sets forth the requirement that teacher candidates pass an examination of basic skills before progressing to the student teaching phase of their preparation. This law defines the “basic skills examination” as “an examination developed or selected by the superintendent of public instruction” for the purpose of “demonstrating the applicant's knowledge and understanding of basic language and mathematical skills.”

In 2016, a recommendation was received by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) to accept the SAT as the basic skills examination that all teacher candidates must pass to fulfill this requirement. Upon examination of the technical features of the SAT, its wide range of supports for test-takers, and its current adoption as the assessment used to measure the career- and college-readiness of Michigan high school students, and upon the advice of stakeholders, the State Superintendent, Brian Whiston, has approved the adoption of the SAT as Michigan’s basic skills examination for teacher candidates.

Since 2013, Michigan has offered the Professional Readiness Examination (PRE) to fulfill the basic skills examination requirement. The PRE and its alternate passing measures will remain in place until October 1, 2017, as a recognized examination of basic skills. However, the SAT may now be used immediately and going forward for this purpose.

The SAT is available through the College Board (www.collegeboard.org), with several testing sites across Michigan. Candidates who have taken the redesigned SAT on or after March 5, 2016, may now use their test results to establish passing scores for the basic skills examination requirement under Michigan law. This includes, notably,
Michigan’s high-school students who took this test in March of 2016 and who might be considering pursuing a career in education later this fall.

Since the law clearly spells out the need for teacher candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding in two distinct areas—language and mathematical skills—a teacher candidate wishing to use SAT scores must show a score that is equal to or higher than the career- and college-ready (CCR) cut score on the SAT for both of the two subject area tests. Additionally, College Board does not support the validity of using a combined score to demonstrate proficiency.

According to the SAT’s publication *Understanding Scores 2016*, available from the College Board’s Web site (page 4), the CCR score for the **Evidence-Based Reading and Writing section is 480** on a scale of 200 to 800. For **Mathematics, this score is 530** on a scale of 200 to 800. Accordingly, teacher candidates must meet or exceed these two scores on both of these separate sections of the SAT to be considered passing the basic skills examination requirement before student teaching.

At such time as SAT and ACT determine appropriate equivalency scores, we will also begin accepting ACT scores as evidence of passing the basic skills examination.

Finally, I want to offer my thanks to all of you for the diligent work and partnership that facilitated this decision. I am hopeful that the adoption of the SAT for this purpose will benefit Michigan’s teacher candidates and their preparation programs—and most of all, the students who will one day be taught by the excellent graduates of these programs.

cc: Brian J. Whiston