



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Johnny Key
Commissioner

September 1, 2015

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of Education**

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Pete Yeager
National Director, Teacher Licensure and Certification
Educational Testing Service
Rosedale Road, MS 51-L
Princeton, NJ 08541

Dear Mr. Yeager,

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) formally encourages Educational Testing Service (ETS) to develop a Praxis II exam for computer science that appropriately assesses the computer science knowledge of modern computer science teacher candidates.

The State of Arkansas and ADE are committed to providing Arkansas K-12 and postsecondary students with multiple opportunities to experience a robust and relevant computer-science education. The State of Arkansas is also working to expand gainful employment opportunities for students who develop and demonstrate competency in computer science and technology as potential employees. In 2015, the Arkansas General Assembly passed and Governor Asa Hutchinson signed into law Act 187, which requires every public high school in Arkansas to make a coding course available to its students. To support this legislation, Governor Hutchinson and the General Assembly appropriated \$5 million in funding to be utilized over two years to support the growth of computer science within the state. In addition, ADE demonstrates its long-term commitment to this initiative by employing a Coordinator of Computer Science who is charged with facilitating the development of computer science as a focused subject area within ADE and K-12 institutions as well as coordinating the efforts of other state agencies and private entities that can provide support for this statewide educational initiative.

ADE acknowledges every Arkansas student will not enter a traditional computer science field; however, ADE also believes that the knowledge and problem solving skills gained through exposure to computer science education is beneficial to students both in their academic studies and future occupations, regardless of the field. With this in mind, ADE has begun the process of developing a comprehensive system that includes K-12 computer science standards and courses to be implemented in Arkansas schools beginning in the 2017-2018 school year. As Arkansas is expanding educational opportunities in computer science for its students, the state is encountering a shortage of qualified and licensed computer science teachers. ADE, in partnership with numerous entities, is working through pre-service and in-service programs to provide teacher candidates and current teachers with opportunities to become qualified. In addition, ADE established a teacher license for computer science that currently utilizes the ETS Computer Science 5651 Praxis exam as a qualifier. Due to the time required to develop a teacher pre-service program, a majority of teachers entering this field during upcoming years will be individuals interested in career changes; an appropriate computer science assessment is a necessary measure of competency for candidates. ADE is appreciative to ETS for making the 5651 Praxis available; however, this exam cannot remain as a long-term solution for the assessment of appropriate computer science knowledge of Arkansas's potential computer science teachers.

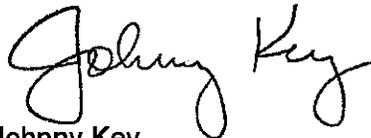
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Yeager
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If ETS engages in the work of developing a Praxis II exam as requested, ADE further encourages ETS to align its exam with nationally recognized modern computer science standards. ADE recognizes that development of this exam, if undertaken by ETS, may take up to two years; therefore, ADE urges ETS to begin the development process as soon as possible. ADE awaits your decision and welcomes the opportunity to support the development of this exam through expertise and personnel.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Johnny Key". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Johnny Key
Commissioner

JK:ao

c: Kathy Pruner, Client Relations Director