

# CODESP NEWS

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## ***TEST ITEMS BY E-MAIL***

Our new service that was announced in last month's newsletter has expanded. We now have additional items from several of our computerized item banks, sample tests and interviews available by e-mail.

Members can request test materials by completing the C-CIB Request Form which is available on our website. If the items requested are available through this new service, a CODESP representative will contact you and tell you that the materials will be sent by e-mail.

Sample tests currently available through this service include Custodian, Food Service Cashier, Food Service Worker, Instructional Aide, and Office Clerk. These tests are comprised of multiple choice test items that have been used most frequently by our members. If subject matter experts in your district believe the tests are job-related they can be used without modifications. If changes need to be made items can be added or deleted as needed.

Several interviews are also available through this process in the areas of Clerical, Food Service, Grounds, Instructional Aide, and Maintenance.

The selection materials sent through e-mail are only accessible by using a password. The documents are designed to be viewed on your computer screen or printed. Your word processing program will not allow you to edit these items. Willfully trying to unlock, edit or tamper with these items is a violation of the CODESP Security Agreement. Forwarding the items to Subject Matter Experts or others is considered a violation of the agreement. The items should be reviewed in the Human Resource office with individuals who have signed the agreement present.

**WWW.CODESP.COM**

## **NOVEMBER MTM**

On Friday, November 2, **Westminster** School District will host a Membership Training Meeting from 10-12 noon (see codesp.com for details). The topic of the meeting will be **Promotability and Using Technology to Train Employees**. Executive Director Marianne Tonjes will discuss training employees to take promotional examinations. Some of our better classified employees have a difficult time passing promotional examinations due to poor test taking skills. By offering training a district can provide professional growth opportunities for their current employees and increase district loyalty and retention.

The second speaker will be Richard Quinones, Director of the Educational Telecommunications Network (ETN) at the Los Angeles County Office of Education. ETN provides local school districts and clients across the state and nation, via technologies including Web, multimedia, broadcast, videoconferencing and networking. Production includes CD-ROM and DVDs which can be used in training programs.



## **JANUARY MTM**

The **California School Personnel Commissioner's Association** (CSPCA) will be holding their annual conference in **San Jose** January 10 - 13. Staff training will be offered the first day of the training from 1:00 - 4:45 p.m. It is free for CSPCA members but will cost \$25 for non-members. You do not have to be from a merit-system district to attend the training. Topics for the meeting will include a CODESP staff presentation regarding test development and writing skills.

Registration forms are available on the CSPCA website at:

**[www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/cspca/confer1\\_02.doc](http://www.smcoe.k12.ca.us/cspca/confer1_02.doc)**

# READING LEVEL

When choosing items for a written test, it is important to ensure the reading level of that exam is appropriate for the candidates who will be taking the exam. Many times for entry level positions candidates do not possess high levels of education. They may have little experience taking written examinations and when the test items are overly difficult it creates an even greater burden on them. The CODESP Computerized Item Bank (C-CIB) contains test items at various reading levels. It is up to you and your subject matter experts to choose the ones with the most job-related simplest language as possible.

By reducing the reading level the actual validity of the exam will increase. If candidates are confused by the wording those receiving higher scores may not be the most qualified, they may just be the better reader. They may know the correct answer, but have difficulty understanding what is being asked due to the more complicated wording of the questions.

If the reading level is too high it automatically increases the educational qualifications of the job thus raising the minimum qualifications to levels beyond those that are job related. Remember the minimum qualifications for the job describe the amounts, kinds and sometimes combinations of general education, specific education, training, experience, or credentials for a specific job. The reading level should never go beyond that. If the reading level of the test is too high the minimum qualifications become too stringent. When that occurs there are fewer candidates to choose from, there could be less competent candidates, adverse impact, and increased legal risk.

Also, when exams are too difficult there is an increase in the complaints. Tests already cause anxiety so it not helpful to add to the applicant's anxiety level by making the exam more difficult to read than is required.

Do not rely solely on one subject matter expert to determine the reading level necessary for a position. If necessary you may want to give a practice examination to incumbents to see what level questions they can successfully answer. Check the type of materials that they must read during the performance of their job duties and compare the reading level of the test items with these materials.

Using questions with graphics sometimes reduces the amount of reading necessary to answer the question correctly. C-CIB contains several of these items for entry level positions such as Food Service, Custodian, Grounds, General Maintenance Worker, and Instructional Aide.

The two most common formulas to use to determine reading level are the SMOG and FOG indexes. SMOG is best used in exam items and FOG is better for longer passages. Both these methods require counting syllables and words in a sentence. Word software also contains a reading level option.

To reduce the reading level of a test choose items with shorter words unless they are used typically by employees in that field of work. Choose items that have several short sentences rather than one long sentence and do not select test items that contain more than one thought in the stem.

If you are having difficulty selecting test items that match the reading level of your position, contact CODESP staff. We will search for similar items that have a lower level of reading. You will not be able to determine the reading level of a position unless you have determined your minimum qualifications through a job analysis. If you cannot conduct a complete job analysis at least talk to the supervisor and incumbents, and review reading material used on the job.

# **TRAINING**

## **WRIPAC JOB ANALYSIS WORKSHOP**

*November 8 & 9, San Francisco*

*December 6 & 7, Carlsbad*

These two day Western Regional Intergovernmental Personnel Assessment Council (WRIPAC) workshops will focus on job analysis methods involving the identification of critical tasks and associated knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) for selection procedure development. The WRIPAC Job Analysis Method was developed to be flexible enough to be used in any jurisdiction, to comply with the 1978 Federal Uniform Guidelines on Employee Selection Procedures and the ADA, and to be used for a variety of purposes including selection, classification, performance appraisal, and development of training curricula. The cost of the workshop is \$250 for WRIPAC Members and \$270 for Non-Members. Contact Becky Tietz at [btietz@cya.ca.gov](mailto:btietz@cya.ca.gov) for information.

# **MEETINGS ELSEWHERE**

## **CSPCA**

January 10 - 13

The California School Personnel Commissioner's Association annual conference, "To Market, To Market" will be held at the Wyndham Hotel (408-453-6200) in San Jose. A special room rate of \$109 is available through December 20. Come learn how to market yourself, your Commission, and the Merit System. Registration prior to November 12, for CSPCA members is \$275. Contact Dr. Toni Hyland at [hyland@sccs.santacruz.k12.ca.us](mailto:hyland@sccs.santacruz.k12.ca.us) or Eileen Wilkerson at [ewilkerson@lsusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:ewilkerson@lsusd.k12.ca.us) for information.

## **WRIPAC**

January 23 - 25

WRIPAC will be holding their winter conference at the Stardust Hotel in Las Vegas. Pre-conference training will be held on Wednesday with a choice of two topics, Item Writing or Easier, Speedier and Still Valid Tests.

This organization does not require membership fees, only attendance at two of the three meetings held throughout the year. WRIPAC members represent state and local governments, school districts, utility districts, and other public agencies who develop and/or administer employee selection procedures.

There is no cost for conference registration and hotel res-

# **HR JOBS AVAILABLE**

To view 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](http://www.codesp.com) - **HR Job Openings**.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

### **WELCOME TO CODESP!**

- Colton Joint USD
- Stanislaus COE
- Redondo Beach USD

## **C-CIB**

New additions to the CODESP Computerized Item Bank include:

Instruc. Aide:	Art Technology
Clerical:	Proofreading Paragraph
Custodian:	Basic Definitions
Food Service:	Health/Sanitation
Personnel:	Workers Compensation
Math:	Community College Tuition Refund
	School Supplies/Bookstore
Science:	General

Several new interviews have been added in a variety of subject areas.

Writing sample additions include Attendance Accounting and Entry Level Payroll.

Check out the Test Materials Available listing on our website at [www.codesp.com](http://www.codesp.com).

## REGIONAL TRAINING

CODESP staff has traveled to several school districts already this program year to provide training. In 2002 we plan to increase the number of meetings in central and northern California. All school districts are welcome to participate as CODESP membership is not mandatory to host or attend training meetings. There is no charge for attendance.

Training meetings this past year have included topics such as *Preventing Violence in the Workplace, Recruitment and Retention of Special Education Instructional Aides, ADA and AB 2222, Cut-off Scores and the Lanning Case, Selection Planning, Interview Development, Exam Planning A-Z, Item Banking, and Promotability.*

If you have suggestions for training meetings and/or speakers, please contact CODESP staff. We are also looking for districts who would like to volunteer to host the meetings.

We appreciate the help received from the following districts who have hosted training meetings since July 1:

San Diego County Office of Education  
San Luis Obispo County Office of Education  
El Dorado County Office of Education  
San Joaquin County Office of Education  
Garden Grove Unified School District  
Westminster School District

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