

September 27, 2005

Ms. Maribel Martins Azevedo

Re: In the Matter of the Application for Certification of Maribel Martins Azevedo  
Docket No. 0506-107

As you are aware, you have appealed the determination that you are ineligible for teacher certification because your score on the Praxis test fails to meet the current requirement. At its meeting of September 22, 2005, the State Board of Examiners reviewed the information that you provided in support of your appeal. After careful consideration, the Board voted to deny your appeal because the documentation that you submitted failed to prove that your Praxis score meets the new standards.

In order to enhance teacher quality in New Jersey, the State Board of Education many years ago directed that all applicants for instructional certificates pass the appropriate state test of subject matter knowledge. The State Board of Education has designated the Praxis test as the appropriate test for licensure purposes. In addition, after much discussion, it also increased the passing score needed for various certificates for application received as of September 1, 2004.

In your appeal you indicated that you took the Praxis test prior to September 1, 2004 and you were advised that you had achieved a passing score. You should note, however, the following caveat that is on the Praxis score report that you received from the Educational Testing Service (ETS), which administers the test:

PASSED/NOT PASSED INFORMATION BASED ON  
HIGHEST SCORES EARNED AS OF [DATE]

Passed/not passed status provided in this report is based on the passing score in effect on the test date or on the date reported (as indicated next to each score recipient's name). Agencies reserve the right to accept the

reporting of scores but not necessarily the passed/not passed status.  
[Underlining in original.]

You noted in your appeal that you advised your college to hold your application so that you could apply for two certificates at the same time. Thus, your applications for certification were not submitted until after September 1, 2004, when the new score requirements went into effect. Applications are governed by the regulations in effect at the time that they are received. Because your applications were submitted after the new Praxis requirement was effective, you must meet the new passing score in order to be eligible for certification.

A passing score on the test shows that the applicant has the minimum knowledge required to teach a particular subject. All candidates must therefore meet that standard. The State Board of Examiners is unable to issue teaching certificates to individuals who have not achieved a passing score on the state-required test. Nor does the Board have the authority to waive the requirement or substitute applicants' life experiences for the grade requirement, regardless of the applicants' circumstances. The schoolchildren of New Jersey have a right to teachers who prove that they possess the minimum knowledge required to instruct them.

The State Board of Examiners would like to encourage you to retake the test in the hopes that you will achieve a score that meets the current requirements.

Sincerely,

Robert R. Higgins, Acting Secretary  
State Board of Examiners

RRH/AGL/azevdomaribel-Praxis appeal  
By certified and regular mail  
Date of mailing:

This matter may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education pursuant to *N.J.A.C.* 6A-3.