

**ILLINOIS LAW ENFORCEMENT TRAINING AND STANDARDS BOARD  
4500 South 6<sup>th</sup> Street Road, Room 173, Springfield, IL 62703-6617**

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE  
CURRICULUM & SCHOOL STANDARDS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ILETSB Office Conference Room • Springfield, IL 62703  
November 21, 2017**

**I. ROLL CALL – ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM**

The November 21, 2017 special meeting of the Curriculum & School Standards Advisory Committee was held in Springfield, Illinois, and was called to order by Committee Chairman Paul Williams at 10:14 a.m. Roll was called by Ellen Petty and a quorum of committee members was established.

Members in attendance:

Paul Williams  
Tim Becker  
Brian Fengel  
Timothy Nugent – via teleconference  
J.W. Price  
Marie Rangel for Thomas Dart  
Keith Calloway for Eddie Johnson  
Michael Schlosser  
Leo Schmitz – via teleconference

Members absent:

None

Staff in attendance:

Brent Fischer  
John Keigher  
Ellen Petty  
Eric Pingolt  
Pat Connolly  
Kelly Griffith  
Jennifer Wooldridge

Others in attendance:

Chris Campbell, ISP  
Officer Tramell Henderson, Chicago P.D.

**II. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

**III. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Cooper Institute/POWER Test

Director Fischer reported that concerns about the Sit and Reach portion of the POWER test have been brought to our attention recently as potentially problematic. He asked Director Schlosser to expand a little bit on the issues that have come to light.

Schlosser explained that the sit and reach test, according to the Cooper Institute, can still be considered a valid test, but that this test has much less value than the other tests used in our POWER test. This was determined sometime around 2007. Most academies around the U.S. have already gotten rid of the sit and reach test. When measuring flexibility, from a fitness point of view, the body type of the individual testing plays a large part in the ability to pass the test, regardless of actual flexibility. It still has some credibility, but is considered one of the least valid tests of flexibility.

Marie Rangel added that most tests accurately measure around 90%, while the sit and reach only accurately measures about 10%, proving to be less effective as a flexibility test. However, no other alternatives have been suggested. Schlosser agreed that he could not find any other measure of flexibility being used, either.

Fischer went on to say it's been a long time since we've reviewed the POWER test, so with the potential issues, now might be a good time to consider a thorough and professional review and/or possible changes.

Keigher stated that there are Board notes going clear back to 1985 when the POWER test was first being developed, and he has spoken with the Cooper Institute himself, and was told that they still feel sit and reach is a valid test, but that it's not really related to job preparedness for police officers. That position deviates from the purpose of our POWER test, as it has always been specifically used for academy readiness, not for job preparedness, and this is a very important distinction. Therefore, the reason Cooper has dropped it from their police program is not necessarily related to our test, in that the purpose for the tests are different. Keigher said the Board needs to focus on what tests will accurately measure the recruit's abilities to meet the rigors of the academy – not readiness for the job itself. This has saved us from litigation for the past 30 years.

Schlosser agreed with what Keigher reported on Cooper's stance, but reported that kinesiologists agree that the test is much less valid. They say that the 1.5 mile run, 300 meter run, vertical jump, and max bench press are highly predictive of the job performance in all cases. Situps and pushups are predictive of job related tasks in most cases, and the sit and reach in few cases. If we are not necessarily looking at the test results being job-related, we might have Cooper backing it up saying it's valid, but other experts out there saying it's not.

Keigher reports that in his research, he's discovered a problem that might be a bigger issue, in that Cooper Institute seems to be getting out of the business of training law enforcement specific certified trainers. There are no more instructor trainer courses being held and none being planned for the future. Since they are the experts we have always depended upon, this may be the time to start trying to find out who else is out there who can take on the task of training our trainers to perform the POWER tests. Marie Rangel agreed that she has found this as well. Schlosser agreed as well, saying that Cooper has been the "go to" for many years and he doesn't know of anyone else out

there who does this specifically for law enforcement. Keigher advised that he has run into an entity called “FitForce” out of Massachusetts. Their President is Tom Collinswood, who was our expert back in the 80’s when we were working with.

Keigher stated, since 1990, we have had a statewide POWER test program. The Board was able to avoid litigation because our test was a training standard, not an employment standard. We are not the employer – we are the entity that sets training standards. Since our test was based on academy readiness, rather than job preparedness, we were able to get around a lot of the legal developments happening around that time.

Mayor Price said that the Feds no longer use the sit and reach test either, and asked if maybe we might want to consider revising our test to include some of the other tests mentioned.

Schlosser indicated that out of the 23 different states that have responded to his request for information, they were all “academy standards”. However, some of those did it differently than we do, preparing recruits to pass the test at the end of the academy, rather than requiring they pass it at the beginning. He prefers to do it at the beginning, because it prevents people from getting hurt and having to leave the academy before finishing.

Keigher reported that after looking at 10 years worth of data, sit and reach does not appear to be a major problem. There were only 4 instances of someone failing the sit and reach in 10 years, but all 4 of those also failed another portion of the test as well. There were zero instances where someone failed the test by failing the sit and reach exclusively. There were 3 instances when all other tests were failed except the sit and reach. Schlosser stated he did not feel that the sit and reach was necessary, but 300 meter and vertical jump would be more helpful for the types of activities required of recruits in the academy.

Director Fischer said we would like to address this matter at the December meeting, since that is when we approve all academy classes for the upcoming year, and now is the time to make changes to the POWER test if we are going to do that. We could go one of three routes: 1.) Do nothing. 2.) Drop Sit and Reach and keep the others. 3.) Continue to research over the next year and come back with proposals for other potential tests as a replacement. The test would need to be standardized for all academies, as that’s the whole reason for the POWER test’s existence.

The POWER test and its standards are in JCAR, so if we make any changes to any part, JCAR will have to be changed.

Price asked if the data isn’t already out there? Do we need to re-invent the wheel? If other academies, both state and federal, have done away with the sit and reach and added the 300 meter, can’t we just go and grab the data they based their changes on to make that decision, versus us spending 5 years and a lot of money studying it for ourselves and then not coming to an agreement? Keigher stated that most of the heavy lifting has already been done, but we would need to go through our 560 curriculum to compare what metrics we need to measure to meet the needs of a recruit going through our specific academy. They may be exactly the same, but need to be based upon the

review of our curriculum, and not just general concepts, nationwide. Calloway also suggests that we do our own due diligence and not just go with what the Feds are doing, to make sure it's going to work for us.

Fischer stated that we need to find out how long this study will take. We can use the time between now and the December meeting to try to get a time-frame, and if it will take more than a year, maybe we need to go another route. Rangel also noted that we will need to ensure that if trainers need to be certified to administer the test, including any newly added sections of that test, that we are able to access training for those trainers to do so. Calloway agreed.

Fischer stated that we will send out an email to Academy Directors asking them to submit any questions or concerns related to the POWER test, and then reach out to any applicable entities to get answers to those questions prior to the December meeting, where we can maybe have more information to make a decision at that time.

## B. PTBLE Proposed Rules & Regulations

Director Fischer stated that one of the big projects going on when he took over was moving from the 400 hour BLE to the 560 hour BLE, with that going into effect this year, the next logical project to address was the Part-time Academy. Initially, there were a lot of concerns regarding how much was online vs classroom time, and how the training was being administered across the state. The decision was to temporarily suspend it and get it up to date, professionalize the program and standardize how it is administered. When Deputy Director Pat Connolly came on-board, that was the first big project he was assigned. He has worked with MTUs, staff, Executive Institute, and put a lot of time and effort into the project. They've produced a document of proposed changes to the rules and regulations of the program which has been provided to everyone today.

These are presented today, so that they can be reviewed before the December Board meeting and hopefully a recommendation can be made to the full Board to approve these recommended changes and move forward with making changes to JCAR, if necessary.

Keigher advised that we looked at existing JCAR rules and how they are applied at the various MTUs offering the PTBLE across the state, and the rules have not evolved over time, the way the program itself has.

Fischer stated that the review started out with answering the question about if this program is something we even wish to continue to offer, but the feedback that we received indicated that agencies felt that it was important to continue to provide this option, due to the need of smaller communities. But we do need to professionalize the requirements and procedures to ensure the recruits graduating the PTBLE are of the same caliber as the recruits graduating the full time BLE.

Chairman Williams had several questions, and Pat Connolly answered those as presented, indicating that the PTBLE is hosted by the MTUs, and approximately 6 or 7

out of the 14 MTUs have hosted an offering in the past. Five MTUs have indicated a desire to go forward with offering the program in 2018 under the new guidelines. There are between 100-150 part-time recruits attending PTBLE each year, but 2018 will see higher numbers due to the temporary suspension of the program during the last half of 2017. This new PTBLE will be a far more structured approach than in the past. No training hours can be missed without being made up.

This will be brought up again in December, when the committee will be asked to make a recommendation.

### C. PTBLE Tuition

Director Fischer reported that tuition was another issue discussed. We asked MTUs to propose their budget for the new 560 hour PTBLE based on their cost with the additional hours and the number of students in their classes. A chart was handed out with this information to all committee members. The tuition amounts submitted varied greatly. The Board had to keep in mind the amount of tuition it could afford to reimburse. Looking at the average numbers, we looked at what we would have to reimburse in a year's time, so we worked backward from there. The decision was to limit the Board's reimbursement amount to \$2,000 per officer for the PTBLE. This would come to about \$300,000 per year in PTBLE tuition reimbursement. The MTUs would then have to decide if they could get enough students to enroll in their PTBLE to host the class for that amount of tuition, per officer. Looking at the list of MTUs and the tuition amounts they requested, this amount will fall within those limits for all except a couple of the MTUs that have consistently small class sizes. While a class size limit was not imposed, the \$2,000 reimbursement limit effectively makes it cost effective to host an academy only if class size did not drop below 15-20 students.

Williams asked if there is data on how many officers who graduate the PTBLE stay in the profession, and how many move on afterward, deciding law enforcement is not for them. Keigher replied that in most cases, the officers who graduate the PTBLE end up moving on to full-time law enforcement and go through the 80-hour transition course for full-time certification.

No motion is needed, as it will be discussed in December. Keigher added that PTBLE tuition does not go through the December approval process like the full-time BLE academies do.

## IV. UPCOMING MEETING DATES

### A. Curriculum and School Standards Advisory Committee

December 13, 2017, Chicago, IL

### B. Quarterly Board Meeting

December 14, 2017, Chicago, IL

## V. ADJOURNMENT

**Motion was made by Price, seconded by Campbell, and carried by all members present to adjourn the meeting at 11:01 a.m.**

