



## LETTER OF INTENT

Arthur C. Peters  
ACT, Inc.  
301 ACT Drive  
Iowa City, IA 52240

Michael Sessa  
Executive Director, PESC  
One Dupont Circle NW  
Suite 520  
Washington, DC 20036

December 6, 2005

Re: Letter of Intent

Dear Michael Sessa,

I am pleased to submit this letter to notify PESC that **ACT, Inc** intends to work collaboratively with the higher education community to develop the following XML-based standard on National Test Score Reporting.

We propose developing and eventually submitting for approval national Test Score Reporting standard that can be used by any testing agency to fully communicate test score information. This includes test reporting information sent from the testing agency to high schools, colleges and universities, affiliated third parties such as athlete clearinghouses, employers, vitae repositories, research facilities, and local, state, and federal agencies. The intent is to create a standard that effectively communicates all pertinent testing information including cognitive as well as non-cognitive information. The intention is to create a standard that can be used for communication of initial test results as well as communicating requests for additional score reports. If possible, we hope to also engineer a means to convey survey information.

Please note the attached Business Case that covers an historical overview, justification, and a description of the planned collaboration.

I am most pleased on behalf of ACT, Inc to submit this request, and look forward to preparing a national standard that will greatly enhance the process of communicating test score report information. I am designating R. Bruce Nielsen as ACT's official representative to head this initiative on behalf of ACT.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur C. Peters", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Arthur C. Peters  
Vice President  
Information Technology  
ACT, Inc.

# **The Business Case for the development of a PESC Standard in XML for Test Score Reporting**

**Overview:** The creation of a national standard to officially communicate test score information has been contemplated by various organizations, but has yet to become an official project. Formats that represent test score information already exist as part of current EDI standards such as the TS-130 Student Information Record (transcript), TS-189 Application for Admission to an Educational Institution. Other similar test reporting formats are incorporated into XML standards currently under design and review in the PESC workgroups including College Transcript, High School Transcript, and the Admission Application workgroups.

The use of test scores in the admission process, guidance counseling, and student placement process within postsecondary institutions plays a critical part in a student's success. Test scores provide indicators of a person's strengths and levels at which further education should continue. So quite naturally it is vital to include test score information as part of the student's profile to be considered when making admission decisions. It is important to note that test score information divides roughly into two categories of data: cognitive and non-cognitive. Cognitive data is usually the testing results reported as the test scores and subscores. Non-cognitive data is supplemental test information that may include national norms, interest inventory, student's educational plans, out-of-class achievements, etc. In order to be effective a national test score reporting standard must include precise and accurate representations of both cognitive and non-cognitive information.

Transmitting test score information for postsecondary purposes has always been the primary focus of those contemplating the creation of a national standard. However in order to be effective a national test score reporting standard needs to facilitate all educational testing purposes including licensure and certification, work force testing and reporting, vitae repositories, third parties such as the NCAA athlete certification, research firms, and affiliated local, state, and federal agencies.

## **Justification for a National Test Score Reporting standard:**

A prospective student is faced with assembling information from a variety of sources in order to be considered for admission including permanent record transcripts, ranking information, national test score data, and letters of recommendation. The process has always been daunting since it is left up to the student to coordinate sending all the information to an admissions office. The recent advent of the Internet and on-line availability of information by the various institutions poses a significant relief to the process. National standards for delivering most of the required information either already exist or are close to being ratified. Adding a national test score reporting standard will help round out the services that today's student has come to expect through Internet access and the convenience and speed it provides.

As mentioned above, the case for a national test score reporting standard is enhanced when other educational testing is considered. The bridge between preparation received through educational institutions, and the skills required in the workforce is now being addressed through testing. This applies as well to licensure and certification processes where testing is utilized as a core component.

All tests communicated over Internet should be able to use a common format or standard. The proposed format is flexible and comprehensive, and meets the cognitive and non-cognitive needs of the testing agencies. Another important objective of this standard to assure that it will easily accommodate test agency requirements and downstream changes in test result reporting that will occur over time. It promotes quick and easy communication of test results, for initial as well as subsequent additional score reports. It will meet the growing user/student demand for responsiveness through the Internet. Institutions and Systems Integrators will be able to program a common standard interface for all test results that they receive and process. The Test Score Reporting standard can be directly incorporated into existing as well as developing national standards such as the PESC College, PESC High School, and PESC Admissions standards

**Planned Collaboration for Developing the Standard:**

The work group is to be composed of staff from professional testing companies such as ACT, Inc. and ETS, representatives from postsecondary institutions including members of AACRAO, representatives of educational software vendors, and representatives of state and federal agencies interested in the electronic exchange of educational records, and others who may be interested in the project.