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New Low for the Multistate Bar Exam

February 2020 MBE Score Reaches New Low? Will Bar Pass Rate Follow Suit?

After a slight increase last year, the average scaled score on the February multistate bar exam dropped to 132.6 in 2020, a new low that raises concerns about a similar decline in bar pass rates once that data is available. The National Conference of Bar Examiners notes that more than two-thirds of the MBE test-takers in February 2020 were retaking the exam, and that their lower performance may have negatively affected the average. [ABA Journal](#) has more details, including the average scaled score for February 2019, how the new low compares with the previous low for February MBE scores, and how the February 2020 average compares with that of July 2019.

An Around-the-Globe Look at How Legal Profession Is Coping with COVID-19

In the United States and around the world, the economic fallout that many have predicted for the legal profession as a result of COVID-19 is well under way. For example, at least one big law firm is cutting salaries for U.S. lawyers and high-paid staff by 15 percent starting on May 1. In the U.K., nearly 80 percent of law firms in a recent survey said they planned to furlough some staff and cut partner compensation. [Bloomberg Law](#) takes a sobering look at the situation in several different countries, at which areas of practice have been hardest hit, and at how some bar leaders are working to prevent some of the worst effects on the global legal profession.

State Bar of Texas Studies Budget Impact from COVID-19, Sees Spike in Lawyer Health Insurance Enrollment

At its most recent meeting, the board of the State Bar of Texas began to grapple with the financial impact on the bar from COVID-19. Thus far, that impact is just over \$447,000, with \$686,000 in lost revenue partially offset by expenditure reductions of nearly \$239,000, according to [Texas Lawyer](#), which notes that the impact is fairly minimal, under the circumstances. In other news from the State Bar of Texas, enrollment in individual health insurance through the Texas Bar Private Insurance Exchange increased by 17 percent in the period from March 1 to April 21, compared with the same period last year. Trey Apffel, the bar's executive director, told [Texas Lawyer](#) that this increase is directly linked to lawyers losing jobs because of the COVID-19 crisis.

Utah Grants Temporary Diploma Privilege for Many Who Would Have Taken July 2020 Bar Exam

Last week, the Utah Supreme Court approved temporary diploma privilege for individuals who meet certain requirements and who were scheduled to take the July 2020 bar exam? making Utah the first state to take this action in response to COVID-19. What are the parameters for this temporary accommodation? Find out at [ABA Journal](#). The ABA Center for Professional Responsibility is tracking similar developments in other states and has a [chart](#) that is frequently updated. Meanwhile, one state has kept diploma privilege (which once was much more prevalent) in place for many years, according to another [ABA Journal](#) article. What could Wisconsin's experiences reveal about the value of the bar exam as a

necessity to ensure or predict lawyer competence?whether during a crisis or in ordinary times?

3 Ways to Engage the Board, and Why Now Is the Time to Reach Out

In a time of high anxiety and many operational challenges, it may be difficult for the staff at bars and other nonprofits to prioritize engaging their board members. But Jean Tickell, vice president at consulting firm Schultz & Williams, thinks that this is a big mistake. Now is the time to connect with the board more fully than ever, she writes, in order to draw strength from it and to ensure that it, too, stays strong. At [BoardSource](#), she outlines three steps you can take to reach out to your board and keep everyone engaged.



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