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Teacher Performance Assessment in the Age of Accountability: The Case of the edTPA

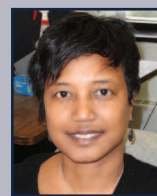
By Celina Chatman Nelson, Amy Waechter-Versaw, Carole P. Mitchener, and Victoria Chou

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

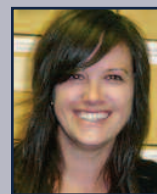
Legislatures in several states, including Illinois, have begun to mandate the use of assessments for evaluating in-service teachers' effectiveness and preservice teachers' readiness to teach. The edTPA, a teacher performance assessment originally developed as a professional development tool, is already being formally implemented in seven states and is being considered in at least four others as a precondition for licensing. While states are enacting such assessment policies to ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to enter the teacher workforce and engage in effective instruction, they can be improved in several ways. Because such assessments are not well suited for directly predicting teacher candidates' later teaching effectiveness, they should not be used at this point for licensure decisions. However, these assessments can be very useful for

evaluating how well teacher candidates use data about student learning to inform their practice, and for informing teacher education program development and improvement.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Celina Chatman Nelson is a visiting program associate in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Amy Waechter-Versaw is a doctoral candidate in Curriculum & Instruction: Language, Literacy, and Culture in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Carole P. Mitchener is an Associate Professor and the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.



Victoria Chou is Dean Emerita of the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Chicago and principal investigator on a Teacher Quality Partnership grant.

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INTRODUCTION

Legislatures in several states, including Illinois, have begun to mandate the use of assessments for evaluating in-service teachers' effectiveness and preservice teachers' readiness to teach. The edTPA, a teacher performance assessment originally developed as a professional development tool, is already being formally implemented in seven states and is being considered in at least four others as a precondition for licensing. While states are enacting such assessment policies to ensure that teacher candidates are prepared to enter the teacher workforce and engage in effective instruction, they can be improved in several ways. Because such assessments are not well suited for directly predicting teacher candidates' later teaching effectiveness, they should not be used at this point for licensure decisions. However, these assessments can be very useful for evaluating how well teacher candidates use data about student learning to inform their practice, and for informing teacher education program development and improvement. In this brief, we take a close look at states' teacher performance assessment policies and offer recommendations for how such policies can be developed and refined in ways that focus on inputs rather than outputs in improving the quality of individual teachers and the teacher workforce.

TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT IN THE AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Teacher performance assessment policies as they are being implemented today can be traced back to teacher education reforms of the 1970s which themselves were based in broader educational reforms.¹ The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 was the federal government's first formal legislation regulating K-12 education and it included, among other provisions, grants to states to improve the quality of teacher preparation at colleges and universities. Less than two decades later, federal policy had moved from supporting teacher preparation to making it accountable for teacher quality.

The National Commission on Educational Excellence released its report *A Nation at Risk* in 1983, calling for accountability among colleges and universities for the quality of the teachers they prepare.² Among its findings, the commission reported that public school students in the United States overall compared poorly to students in other nations on numerous indicators, making the U.S. less economically competitive as a nation. The report also acknowledged the importance of continuing to address issues of equity while raising student achievement overall. The commission proposed promotion

of excellence as a solution to these dual issues, and therefore recommended setting high standards for academic achievement in the core subjects.³ Thus began the present era of standards-based reform in America's public schools, which up until recently still focused on inputs to teacher quality.

The Improving America's Schools Act passed in 1994 focused on adopting world-class content standards, supported by recommendations by the National Research Council for aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment with standards. But this legislation was low-stakes, intended primarily to use standards-based assessment as a way of improving student learning and achievement outcomes.⁴ The stakes were raised in the 2002 reauthorization of ESEA or the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which called for even greater accountability by requiring states to have "highly-qualified" teachers in every school and linking escalating sanctions to students' performance on standardized tests of achievement. Thus, federal approaches to teacher education reform shifted from focusing on inputs (supports to preparation programs) in the original ESEA to outputs (effects on student achievement, or *teacher effectiveness*) in NCLB.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the

1 Eileen Sclan and Linda Darling-Hammond, *Beginning Teacher Performance Evaluation: An Overview of State Policies*. (Trends and Issues Paper No. 7) (Washington, DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Teacher Education, 1992).

2 *A Nation at Risk* (Washington, DC, The National Commission on Educational Excellence, 1983).

3 Jim Flaitz, "Assessment for Learning: US Perspectives," in *Education in the Asia-Pacific Region: Issues, Concerns, and Prospects, 14 (Special Issue): Assessment Reform in Education*, eds. Rita Berry and Bob Adamson (Hong Kong: Springer, 2011): 33-47.

4 Robert J. Marzano and John S. Kendall (1996). *A comprehensive guide to designing standards-based districts, schools, and classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

federal “Stimulus”) raised the stakes for teachers and the programs that prepare them, setting aside \$4.35 billion for the federal Race to the Top program. This program provided competitive grants to states partly based on their commitment to evaluate practicing teachers. Such evaluations were in turn required to be grounded partly in students’ demonstrated learning gains as indicated by changes in students’ year to year performance on standardized tests of achievement—notwithstanding that these tests were neither developed nor validated for this purpose.⁵ Now, persistent pressure from various education stakeholders (e.g., independent policy organizations and think tanks such as Students First, and the National Council on Teacher Quality [NCTQ]) for schools and districts to demonstrate accountability for student learning has extended to teacher education programs, calling for their evaluation to be based not only on the quality but also the effectiveness of the teachers they produce.⁶

It is important to note here that the teaching profession, in association with organizations such as the American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE), Council for the Accreditation of

Educator Preparation (CAEP, formerly NCATE), and with other higher education stakeholders, already had begun to focus on accountability for the quality of the teacher workforce and specifically teachers’ impact on student learning. However, as in the original ESEA provisions, the teaching profession initially focused more on inputs like teacher quality rather than outputs.⁷ This grassroots professionalization effort⁸ established a nationwide movement to set high standards for initial preparation, licensing, and certification of teachers as part of a continuum of standards-based professional development throughout a teaching career.⁹ Long recognizing the need to emphasize student learning more explicitly both in the initial preparation of teacher candidates and in ongoing teacher development across the career span, the teaching profession supported the development of tools such as the Danielson Group’s *Framework for Teaching* and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) certification. Both of these tools specify what teachers should know and be able to do, and include at their core the careful analysis of classroom and student data to evaluate quality teaching. Performance assessment for *preservice* teachers grew directly

out of these efforts, presenting the potential for the profession to create a continuum of professional development standards from preservice teaching through the span of a teaching career.

PRESERVICE TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT POLICIES: HISTORY, EVIDENCE, AND KEY CONSIDERATIONS

HISTORY OF TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT POLICIES

The roots of recently enacted preservice teacher performance assessment policies can be traced back to policies instituted in California in the early 1990s. At this time, teacher education scholars in California¹⁰ were already working to identify common standards for what teachers should know and be able to do, meaningful ways to assess new teachers’ acquisition of that knowledge and skill base, and associated improvements to the teacher education curriculum accordingly. Indeed, teacher performance assessment policy in California was driven largely by the professionalization agenda in teacher education reform efforts. In 1992 California’s Senate Bill 1422 mandated that teacher preparation

5 Jim Flaitz, “Assessment for Learning: US Perspectives.”

6 Michael J. Feuer et al., *Evaluation of Teacher Preparation Programs: Purposes, Methods, and Policy Options*. (Washington, DC: National Academy of Education, 2013); Jian Wang et al., “Understanding Teacher Education Reform,” *Journal of Teacher Education* 61, no. 5 (2010): 395-402.

7 Jerry McBeath, Maria Elena Reyes, and Mary F. Ehrlander, *Education Reform in the American States* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc, 2008).

8 Marilyn Cochran-Smith and Mary Kim Fries, “Sticks, Stones, and Ideology: The Discourse of Reform in Teacher Education,” *Educational Researcher* 30, no. 8 (2001): 3-15.

9 Some states offer a teaching license and others offer a certificate. Although the two differ mostly in terms of their legal implications, in this brief we use them interchangeably to refer to the process by which states determine that individuals have obtained the minimum agreed-upon knowledge and skills to teach in public school settings and formally confer upon them permission to do so.

10 See Linda Darling-Hammond, *Getting Teacher Evaluation Right: What Really Matters for Effectiveness and Improvement* (New York and Oxford, OH: Teachers College Press and Learning Forward, 2013); Linda Darling-Hammond et al., *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World: What Teachers Should Learn and Be Able to Do* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2007).

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programs include performance assessments in their curricula as part of an induction initiative to support beginning teachers and improve programs.¹¹ Subsequent legislation in 1998 (SB 2042) further required candidates to complete a teacher performance assessment as a precondition for individual teacher licensing. California worked with Educational Testing Services (ETS) to develop the California Teaching Performance Assessment (Cal TPA), aligned with California's standards for professional teachers, for this purpose. Teacher preparation programs were afforded the opportunity to use Cal TPA or to develop their own state standards-based performance assessment. Twelve universities in the state responded by forming the Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT) consortium, capitalizing on their collective capacity and resources to develop an alternative assessment.

PACT's work resulted in the PACT portfolio of assessments, based in part on the preexisting NBPTS certification process. Designed to preserve "authenticity" in teacher performance assessment and ground it in programs' values and goals for their students,¹² the PACT instrument soon garnered growing attention from teacher preparation programs across the nation. The Teaching Performance Assessment Consortium (TPAC) was established in 2002 to take PACT to national scale. Using the PACT as a model, the Consortium began work

on a common assessment that could be used at institutions nationwide to inform licensing in states outside of California. That assessment, known today as edTPA, was developed at Stanford under the early direction of Linda Darling-Hammond and was intended to serve as a means for the teaching profession to take charge of its own evaluation and its program redesign, beginning with teacher candidates in teacher education programs.

According to its developers, edTPA bases assessment of teaching performance in candidates' use of evidence pertaining to student learning. The assessment requires teacher candidates to analyze student artifacts gathered while teaching a series of self-designed lessons. The student work products are first analyzed as a whole class set and then with respect to case examples of specific individuals' needs (e.g., English language learner, special education) to assess student success in achieving teacher candidates' intended learning goals for lesson plans. The candidate's analysis of student learning in this context is intended to drive her subsequent decision-making and reflective practices, making perceptions of student learning the centerpiece of the teaching performance.

Unfortunately, teacher performance assessment policies in general and those involving edTPA in particular are focused almost exclusively on the summative function of the instruments, which

typically evaluates only the student teaching component as the basis for determining whether a candidate is ready for the classroom. As a result, the policies allow for little or no support for the instruments' educative or formative function, which prepares candidates for the student teaching on which they will be evaluated and enhances their learning and development within their programs. While candidates' performance on the assessments can and should inform program improvement and redesign as inputs to improving the quality of the teacher workforce overall, current policies may shift the emphasis to outputs. Teacher educators and teacher candidates, in particular, may become especially concerned with the high-stakes nature of the assessment for teacher licensure.

THE EVIDENCE: EDUCATIVE AND SUMMATIVE FUNCTIONS OF PRESERVICE TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS

To be sure, the move among states to require candidates to pass authentic assessments of teacher performance as a precondition for licensing is an improvement over systems that require only a paper-and-pencil test.¹³ The content validity of paper-and-pencil tests has long been challenged since such tests assess basic knowledge about teaching but fail to evaluate

11 Andrea Whittaker, Jon Snyder, and Susan Freeman, "Restoring Balance: A Chronology of the Development and Uses of the California Standards for the Teaching Profession," *Teacher Education Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (2001): 85-107.

12 Ruth R. Chung, "Beyond Assessment: Performance Assessments in Teacher Education," *Teacher Education Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (2008): 7-28.

13 Linda Darling-Hammond and Jon Snyder, "Authentic Assessment of Teaching in Context," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 16 (2000): 523-545.

authentic teaching in practice. Further, no evidence exists to indicate that paper-and-pencil tests are at all related to the instructional choices teachers make or the effects of instruction on students and classrooms. Moreover, paper-and-pencil tests are frequently associated with a disproportionate impact for certain groups of test-takers. For example, pass rates for Black and Latino/a candidates are disproportionately lower than those for White and Asian candidates,¹⁴ affecting the teacher pipeline for schools and districts and ultimately the students who would otherwise benefit from a highly-qualified but more racially and ethnically diverse teaching pool. Teacher performance assessments such as edTPA are now being heralded as a way to correct for the deficiencies of paper-and-pencil tests, thereby improving quality, learning, and development for all teachers as well as for teacher preparation programs and curricula.

As teacher educators in California worked to develop teacher performance assessments over the past several decades, researchers launched investigations into whether these assessments in fact do what they are intended to do. The research base is relatively scant, but promising. Research on teacher performance assessment, based largely on California's edTPA predecessors CalTPA and PACT, addresses four general questions:

1. Does teacher performance assessment adequately measure a candidate's readiness to teach?
2. Does teacher performance assessment enhance candidate learning and development of skills?
3. Does teacher performance assessment inform program curriculum development and improvement?
4. Does teacher performance assessment predict beginning teacher effectiveness?

Below we summarize the evidence for each of these questions except the last, on teacher effectiveness. We offer some final thoughts on this issue later, at the end of this brief.

Does teacher performance assessment adequately measure a candidate's readiness to teach? Since teacher performance assessment is based on standards for what teachers should know and be able to do, it has great appeal for assessing teacher knowledge and skills. Most of the research investigating the validity of teacher performance assessments is based on the PACT, the direct predecessor to edTPA. Developers of the edTPA have also cited research on instruments designed to assess performance for in-service teachers, including the NBPTS assessment and Connecticut's Beginning Educator Training and Support assessment, as

Teacher educators report that teacher performance assessments allow them to better understand candidate strengths and weaknesses, support candidates, and make necessary curricular and program improvements.

14 Raymond L. Pecheone and Ruth R. Chung, "Evidence in Teacher Education: The Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT)," *Journal of Teacher Education* 57, no. 1 (2006): 22-36.

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evidence for the edTPA's validity.¹⁵ Overall, these measures show good content validity—the assessments are tightly aligned with the standards. In addition, surveys of K-12 educators have indicated that the assessments capture what it means to them to be a good teacher.¹⁶ The measures also show good construct validity, which means that they generally assess well candidates' readiness to teach. The evidence particularly shows that edTPA scores are positively related to alternative indicators of candidates' readiness to teach, including scores on other assessments and faculty members' holistic evaluations of the candidates' teaching events.¹⁷

Does teacher performance assessment enhance candidate learning and development of skills? Teacher performance assessment was designed primarily to promote teacher learning and reflective teaching, based on a common set of standards for what teachers should know and be able to do. The alternative assessment that the PACT consortium developed in the late 1990s, for example, includes both a separate evaluation of the Teaching Event (or the student teaching experience) and “signature

assessments” that are embedded in coursework throughout the preparation curriculum. The embedded assessments are intended to be educative or formative in that they are part of candidates' preparation experience, contributing to their learning and development of targeted skills. The PACT Teaching Event is summative, as it is an evaluation of the candidate's readiness to teach, based on the candidate's performance on her practice as it is enacted in a real classroom setting with actual students. Only the Teaching Event is scored, and the score profile is then used to inform licensure decisions about individual candidates.

Chung's¹⁸ case studies and focus groups in the instrument's first year pilot demonstrated that teachers paid more attention to student learning in their practice as a result of the performance portfolio assessment. An earlier study demonstrated that candidates report significant learning from the experience of participating in the assessment, especially when they are supported within their programs.¹⁹ Importantly, there were no systematic differences in performance on the assessment

across race, ethnicity, or percentage of English language learners and differences in socioeconomic status in candidates' classrooms; candidates who were assessed in suburban schools, however, scored higher than those in inner-city or urban schools.²⁰

Does teacher performance assessment inform program curriculum development and improvement? Teacher education program leaders and faculty participating in early piloting of the PACT reported that results of their students' scores on the Teaching Event formatively guide program review and revision.²¹ In addition, scores are positively associated with candidates' reports of program supports and preparation, suggesting that aggregated scores may be reflective of program quality at least as perceived by the students. Finally, teacher educators report that teacher performance assessments—particularly the aggregated student score profiles—allow them to better understand candidate strengths and weaknesses, support candidates, and make necessary curricular and program improvements.

15 Linda Darling-Hammond, Stephen P. Newton, and Ruth Chung Wei, *Developing and Assessing Beginning Teacher Effectiveness: The Potential of Performance Assessments* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE), 2010); Ruth C. Wei and Raymond L. Pecheone, “Performance-Based Assessments as High-Stakes Events and Tools for Learning,” in *Handbook of Teacher Assessment and Teacher Quality*, ed. Mary M. Kennedy (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 2010): 69-132; Mark Wilson et al., *Using Student Achievement Test Scores as Evidence of External Validity for Indicators of Teacher Quality: Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training Program* (Stanford, CA: Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education and Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE), 2010).

16 Ruth C. Wei and Raymond L. Pecheone, “Evidence in Teacher Education: The Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT).”

17 Linda Darling-Hammond, Stephen P. Newton, and Ruth Chung Wei, *Developing and Assessing Beginning Teacher Effectiveness: The Potential of Performance Assessments*; Pecheone and Chung, “Evidence in Teacher Education: The Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT)”; Ruth C. Wei and Raymond L. Pecheone, “Performance-Based Assessments as High-Stakes Events and Tools for Learning”; Wilson et al., *Using Student Achievement Test Scores as Evidence of External Validity for Indicators of Teacher Quality: Connecticut's Beginning Educator Support and Training Program*.

18 Ruth Chung, “Beyond Assessment: Performance Assessments in Teacher Education.”

19 Raymond L. Pecheone and Ruth R. Chung, “Evidence in Teacher Education: The Performance Assessment for California Teachers (PACT).”

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS: STAKEHOLDER POSITIONING, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND RESOURCES

Collectively, California's teacher preparation, licensing, and induction policies paved the way for the proliferation of current state policies around teacher performance assessment throughout the nation. The edTPA is already being formally implemented in seven states and is being considered in at least four others; at least one program in 22 other states has piloted it.²² Throughout the process of scaling up edTPA, in some instances teacher preparation programs (especially those residing in institutions of higher education) have been positioned in ways that conflict with state agendas. In some instances, teacher preparation programs have found themselves as important participants in a collaborative decision-making process, while they have been absent from that process altogether in other states. The relative positioning of teacher preparation programs in the decision-making processes around teacher performance assessment policy development, implementation, and refinement interacts with infrastructure and resource distribution in ways that can compromise professional accountability as originally intended by edTPA's developers.

Stakeholder Positioning. States'

collaboration with stakeholders in designing and implementing teacher performance assessment policies is critical for their successful implementation, such as it was in California. In Minnesota, for example, where the state has formally adopted the edTPA, implementation has been a collaborative effort among policymakers, teacher preparation programs, and school systems. In fall 2010, before the legislature mandated performance assessment, the Minnesota Board of Teaching and the Minnesota Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE) conducted the first TPA Implementation Summit, established a TPA Steering Committee, and then hired a TPA coordinator using grant funds provided by the Bush Foundation. The Minnesota Board of Teaching formally adopted edTPA in 2011 as the statewide performance assessment tool that would be used to meet the state new legal requirements for program accreditation. As part of the implementation process, all 31 Minnesota teacher education programs within institutions of higher education began requiring their teacher candidates to complete the edTPA starting with the 2012-13 academic year.²³

Although New York also has adopted the edTPA, its policy has been developed and implemented much differently than in Minnesota. Teacher preparation programs in New York were held to an extremely tight timeline for

implementing the edTPA. In spring 2012, the state announced that edTPA with its high bar for passing the assessment would go into effect on May 1, 2014 with only a one-year pilot, making 2013-14 a consequential year. There was less time in New York than in Minnesota for teacher preparation programs to create systems for administering the assessment and less collaboration among stakeholders in developing and implementing the policy. As a result, New York's teacher educators have engaged in public and sometimes contentious dialogue around the edTPA policy and its implementation.

Infrastructure. Taking the examples of Minnesota and New York a step further, stakeholder positioning—particularly that of the state boards of education and the teacher preparation programs charged with administering edTPA to their students—bears some relation to infrastructural issues in implementing teacher performance assessment policies. As in California, the Minnesota state board of education worked closely with teacher preparation programs at every level of policy development, allowing representatives to have some input in selecting the teacher performance assessment that would be used, deciding what would constitute a “passing” score on the assessment and what sort of remediation process would be used, and identifying timelines and structures (e.g., time for practice) that needed to be put in place

22 The non-profit Educational Testing Services (ETS) has been working since 2010 with state officials and teacher education professionals in Missouri to develop the Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT) which is similar to edTPA. Since this instrument was only recently introduced and has just begun field-testing, we do not have enough information to include it in our analysis. Therefore, we focus largely on edTPA as an example.

23 “History of edTPA Minnesota”, www.edtpaminnesota.org/about/history/.

Because edTPA and similar assessments are intended to be standardized, their administration requires more human and other material resources than individual preparation programs can afford.

before the policy was rolled out. Since decision-making was collaborative in California and in Minnesota, with multiple stakeholders at the table, the states were armed with expert knowledge that helped them to put all the pieces in place for refining the policy and providing for smooth implementation. In New York, however, teacher preparation programs were not brought on board until much later in the process, and therefore found themselves less prepared to administer the assessment with few to no supports and in a short amount of time. Because edTPA requires significant time, planning, and human resources to administer, a lack of infrastructure is likely to undermine or at least attenuate its ability to function as a formative assessment for improving preservice teachers' knowledge and skills, and not just as a summative assessment to be used for licensure decisions.

Resources. Although the introduction of standardized performance assessments in teacher education is a national movement, performance-based assessments are not new and typically have been embedded in teacher preparation programs. For example, student teaching evaluations have always served as program-based performance assessments. Because edTPA and similar assessments are intended to be standardized, however, their administration requires more human and other material resources than individual preparation programs can afford. The development and piloting of instruments such as the PACT and the edTPA were originally made

possible by the availability of external funds. Minnesota, for example, had foundation support which allowed it to provide multiple professional development sessions in a coherent statewide effort. Such funds are not available to many teacher preparation programs that are now or soon to be mandated by their states to administer these assessments. Indeed, in efforts to scale-up edTPA nationally, the original developers have partnered with Pearson, the for-profit test-developer, to administer and score the assessment. Critics argue that outsourcing to Pearson represents a commercialization of teacher education, taking it out of the hands of the professionals and divorcing it from their expert knowledge about teaching and the communities their candidates are being prepared to serve.

PRESERVICE TEACHER PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT POLICY IN ILLINOIS

Illinois is one of the six states that participated in piloting edTPA in 2012. The administration of such an assessment is now mandated through legislation that, beginning September 1, 2015, will require all candidates enrolled in state-approved teacher preparation programs to pass “an evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness approved by the State Board of Education, in consultation with the State Educator Preparation and Licensure Board.”²⁴ The state has selected edTPA as the “evidence-based assessment” it will use for this purpose and, as of the writing of this

24 See 105 ILCS 5/21B-30 [f], from SB 1799.

brief, is working to determine an appropriate cut score—the score that candidates must achieve to be licensed. The edTPA is intended to complement rather than replace current assessments required by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and by the individual programs in which candidates are enrolled. According to a November 2013 letter of memorandum issued by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), “edTPA is meant to serve as a capstone assessment and complements other assessments of teacher readiness required by ISBE and the candidate’s individual program of study.”²⁵

Illinois candidates for teacher licensure currently must complete six to eight different assessments within their state-approved preparation programs before being entitled for licensure. Individual programs have some latitude in creating and utilizing two or three assessments of their own, based on their programs’ values and goals for their students; but there are three common assessments that are required for all preservice teachers enrolled in Illinois-approved preparation programs. All prospective applicants for an Illinois license must first pass a state test of basic skills in reading, language arts, and mathematics before they are approved to commence student teaching—currently the Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP). Applicants may also qualify with ACT scores equal to or greater than 22 composite, with writing. All applicants must also pass a test of content area

knowledge for all subjects they intend to teach prior to student teaching. Finally, all applicants must also pass the assessment of professional teaching (APT) as a requirement for completing the educator preparation program. Passing the TAP, all content area knowledge assessments, and the APT allows the institution of higher education to entitle the candidate to receive an initial Illinois teaching license, but under the new policy the candidate must also pass the edTPA prior to being licensed.

Although Illinois policy has determined that all programs must use edTPA as their capstone assessment and that all candidates must obtain a minimum score as determined by the state in order to be licensed to teach, teachers and teacher educators have played a reasonably active role in the decision-making process up to this point. Most notably, Illinois College, Illinois State University, and the University of Illinois at Chicago were pioneers in the state, having been selected to participate in the pilot for edTPA. Working closely with the national TPAC, these institutions joined with representatives from ISBE staff and the Illinois Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (IACTE) to form the Illinois Teacher Performance Assessment Consortium (IL-TPAC). As a result, teacher performance assessment policy in Illinois has already undergone several iterations and continues to change even as the policy is being implemented. For example, teacher performance assessment was at first presented as

high-stakes since licensing is conditioned on it; however, rules have changed such that candidates can retake the assessment as many times as they want, thereby lowering the stakes considerably. These changes can be attributed in part to pushback from teacher preparation programs and the students enrolled in them, and from feedback from IL-TPAC.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As preservice teacher performance assessment roll-out continues in Illinois, it will be important to ensure that the original policy achieves what it is intended to. We make the following recommendations based on our analysis of the history, evidence, and current landscape for teacher performance assessment policies nationwide:

- States must continue to collaborate with preparation programs and the institutions in which they are housed and PreK-12 professionals to develop, implement, and refine teacher performance assessment policies.
- To the extent possible, professional development should be disentangled from evaluation in order to capitalize on both the educative and summative functions of teacher performance assessment.
- Policies should take into account infrastructural and resource constraints that may inhibit educative as well as

25 Illinois State Board of Education, “edTPA: An Evidence-Based Assessment of Teacher Effectiveness,” www.isbe.net/licensure/pdf/higher-ed/edTPA/edTPA-informational-doc.pdf.

States must continue to collaborate with preparation programs and PreK-12 professionals to develop, implement, and refine teacher performance assessment policies.

summative functions of teacher performance assessment. As new requirements and assessments are added, states should concurrently consider which requirements and assessments may be eliminated.

- To the extent possible, both policy development and implementation should take relevant research and lessons from other states into consideration. The state should invest in monitoring and evaluating whether the policy and implementation yield the intended outcomes.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The predictive validity of teacher performance assessment appears to be what state policymakers are most interested in. Interestingly, the evidence on this point—the summative function of teacher performance assessments—is more mixed than that on their educative functions of enhancing teacher learning and development and informing program improvement. Although PACT scores have been shown later to predict candidates' students' performance in English and math in a single study²⁶ it is inappropriate to use preservice teacher performance assessment to predict candidates' later teaching effectiveness. Aside from the host of methodological problems cited regarding the use of standardized test scores to measure teaching effectiveness,²⁷ for preservice teachers the probability of statistical error is increased by the lag between

the assessment and the collection of student outcome data. Moreover, the assessments were designed to evaluate how well candidates use data about student learning to inform their practice, but not the effect of those practices on the extent to which students actually learn. It is imperative that the teaching and learning community, policymakers included, keep these complexities in mind in efforts to link teacher practices to student achievement.

26 Linda Darling-Hammond, Stephen P. Newton, and Ruth Chung Wei, *Developing and Assessing Beginning Teacher Effectiveness: The Potential of Performance Assessments*.

27 Jim Flaitz, "Assessment for Learning: US Perspectives."



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ABOUT US

The Research on Urban Education Policy Initiative (RUEPI) is an education policy research project based in the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Education. RUEPI was created in response to one of the most significant problems facing urban education policy: dialogue about urban education policy consistently fails to reflect what we know and what we do not about the problems education policies are aimed at remedying. Instead of being polemic and grounded primarily in ideology, public conversations about education should be constructive and informed by the best available evidence.

OUR MISSION

RUEPI's work is aimed at fostering more informed dialogue and decision-making about education policy in Chicago and other urban areas. To achieve this, we engage in research and analysis on major policy issues facing these areas, including early childhood education, inclusion, testing, STEM education, and teacher workforce policy. We offer timely analysis and recommendations that are grounded in the best available evidence.

OUR APPROACH

Given RUEPI's mission, the project's work is rooted in three guiding principles. While these principles are not grounded in any particular political ideology and do not specify any particular course of action, they lay a foundation for ensuring that debates about urban education policy are framed by an understanding of how education policies have fared in the past. The principles are as follows:

- Education policies should be coherent and strategic
- Education policies should directly engage with what happens in schools and classrooms
- Education policies should account for local context

RUEPI policy briefs are rooted in these principles, written by faculty in the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Education and other affiliated parties, and go through a rigorous peer-review process.

Learn more at <http://ruepi.uic.edu>

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1040 West Harrison Street
Chicago, Illinois 60607

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CONTACT US

bsuperfi@uic.edu
<http://ruepi.uic.edu>

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