



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

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Deputy Commissioner  
Office of Higher Education  
Room 977, Education Building Annex  
Albany, New York 12234

Tel: (518) 486-3633  
Fax: (518) 486-2254  
E-mail: [jdagati@mail.nysed.gov](mailto:jdagati@mail.nysed.gov)

## **Recent Topics and SED Responses Related to the Certification Examinations**

### **Topic: Implementation Timeline Concerns**

When NYS committed to develop new and revised certification examinations in 2009, we held meetings regularly with stakeholders to seek input and carefully considered their feedback. edTPA, along with several other new certification examinations, was originally scheduled to be implemented for candidates beginning May 1, 2013. The Department shared feedback from the field regarding the need for more time with the Board of Regents in 2012. The Board approved moving back the implementation of the certification exams to May 1, 2014. This implementation date was selected in order to provide educator preparation programs with an additional year to prepare candidates, align with our Race to the Top timelines, and allow thoughtful and strategic development of the new exams. Other key milestones in the implementation timeline are as follows:

- November 2009. The Board of Regents discussion included the development of new examinations and the revision of the current Content Specialty Tests (CSTs). [www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/November2009/1109heemscd2.pdf](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/November2009/1109heemscd2.pdf)
- December 2009. The Board of Regents continued to discuss the certification examinations. [www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/December2009/1209hed2.htm](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2009Meetings/December2009/1209hed2.htm)
- May 2010. The Board of Regents discussed the conceptual design for teacher and school leader certification assessments. At that time, the proposal included an implementation date of January 2012. [www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/May2010/0510hed2.htm](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2010Meetings/May2010/0510hed2.htm)
- February 2012. The implementation date for new exams was changed from May 1, 2013 to May 1, 2014 to provide educational programs with an additional year to prepare candidates. [www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/February2012/212hed2.pdf](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/February2012/212hed2.pdf)
- March 2012. The Department informed the field of the decision by the Board of Regents to use the edTPA specifically as New York State's performance assessment. [www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/March2012/312hed5.pdf](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2012Meetings/March2012/312hed5.pdf)

The notion of programs not having ample time is also problematic because, prior to adopting edTPA, the Department began work with the field on the development of its own performance

assessment in 2010. The move to a performance assessment was widely known and information was publicly disseminated including a memorandum from Joseph Frey on November 17, 2010 which included an overview of the performance assessment. For example, the November 17, 2010 memorandum stated:

*Examples of tasks under consideration for the teacher assessment and currently being pilot tested include the following:*

- *Create a lesson plan, video-record the lesson, and reflect on the outcomes*
- *Develop or select an assessment, administer it, analyze the results, and plan instruction based on the results*
- *Analyze and reflect on collaboration and communication with colleagues and families, and on feedback received regarding one's teaching practice*

The development and design of our performance assessment was supported by teachers and faculty from across New York State. That assessment was eventually field tested and over 250 faculty members and over 550 students participated. Whether they participated in the development of the performance assessment or in the field test, or both, faculty members were well aware of the new performance assessment and what would be expected of their students for certification. All of this work on our performance assessment was done with an expectation that implementation of the new requirement would be May of 2013, and the field was certainly well aware of this implementation date. Soon after we developed and field tested our performance assessment, the Department, based on recommendations from the field, decided to partner with Stanford to adopt its performance assessment, now known as the edTPA. A review of the performance assessment we developed and that of the edTPA shows that they are nearly identical in their requirements. Based on this work, we feel that educator preparation programs did have the time to make necessary changes to ensure a smooth transition to the edTPA, including the review of curriculum and clinical experiences. Further, in reaction to concerns shared by the field, we extended out the time line for implementation for an entire year, from May 2013 to May 2014. Hence, educator preparation programs have already received additional time to make adjustments and extensive support from the Department and the Stanford Center for Assessment Learning and Equity to adequately prepare.

### **Topic: Support for Educator Preparation Programs**

The Department realized early on that educator preparation programs across the State would benefit from additional support in order to prepare for edTPA along with the rest of our new certification examinations. We invested \$10 million of federal Race to the Top money to provide ongoing support within CUNY, SUNY and the independent colleges for faculty professional development on topics such as the Common Core and the new certification examinations. We recently offered an additional \$1.5 million so that this work can continue through 2015. According to SCALE, NYS has invested considerably more on capacity building than any other state, including hosting nearly 50 edTPA professional development events.

At the start of edTPA implementation, the Department initiated strong systems to ensure that each college and university had the information needed to successfully prepare its candidates. For instance, each college and university was asked to identify a person to serve as the edTPA coordinator. These edTPA coordinators serve as the point of contact for the Department and SCALE for the dissemination of announcements and resources. In addition, the Department conducts bi-weekly telephone calls with CUNY, SUNY, and the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, seeks counsel and provides important information to the Teacher Education Advisory Group, and has consistently advised programs of their need to communicate regularly and provide support for faculty members, candidates, and P-12 partners.

Collaboration with SCALE has been essential. SCALE planned and delivered several webinars around edTPA implementation and offered Local Evaluation training sessions on several campuses in NYS. In addition, the level of professional dialogue and engagement about teacher performance assessment and edTPA among college and university representatives at both the 2012 and 2013 joint conference sponsored by the New York State Association of Teacher Educators in conjunction with the New York State Association of Colleges for Teacher Education has been instructive around this work.

### **Topic: Availability of edTPA Materials**

Programs had access to an earlier version of the edTPA handbook well before August 2012 to support an introduction to the assessment. In fall 2012 programs received a field test version of edTPA handbooks. Although the operational handbooks were not released until August 2013, in order to make minor changes and refinements based on field test data, programs had access to handbooks more than one year prior to an operational release. Operational handbook changes were minimal in nearly all handbooks, support materials and webinars were also provided to NYS to support faculty learning about and implementing edTPA.

Faculty support materials, including handbooks, the Resource Library, and Online Community, are available at <http://edtpa.aacte.org>. Faculty members associated with an educator preparation program that is administering the edTPA must simply establish a log-in and password in order to receive access to edTPA handbooks. In addition, program leaders can send edTPA materials (including handbooks) to faculty and cooperating teachers via email or post in password protected (not publicly accessible) campus websites or other platforms. In all cases, recipients

should be informed not to distribute to others unaffiliated with the preparation program and not to post them publicly. Distribution of handbooks and the Making Good Choices document to candidates follows the same guidelines.

### **Topic: Candidate Readiness to take edTPA**

edTPA is an entry level assessment. It is a standard of performance that ensures that all prospective teachers are ready for the classroom, or in the language applicable to the other professions we license, “safe to practice.” As a State we are committed to raising the bar on teaching practice to support greater student learning. Passing edTPA is one indicator of a candidate’s readiness to teach and the threshold for who enters the classroom to support and advance student learning should be high. It is the only way we will ensure all students are college and career ready. It is also the best way to close the persistent achievement gap for English language learners, students with disabilities, and Black and Latino students. Educator preparation programs in NYS are changing not only because of edTPA, but because the expectations for school-age students have changed and schools and districts are seeking teachers in the job market who can demonstrate they are prepared.

### **Topic: Identifying the Best Time in the Program to Introduce the Concept of Academic Language**

According to SCALE, academic language is a critical skill to support student learning. There is considerable support of this construct in the research literature. Because the research literature has been strong on the importance and relevance of this skill, and the importance has been further supported by the job analyses, SCALE has not conducted any studies related to this issue and is not familiar with the caution against academic language. Academic language has been an important part of SCALE's performance assessment work for more than a decade, as it is part of teaching and learning. As with key components of teaching, academic language exists in all contexts and therefore has always been considered an integral part in assessing a candidate's ability to teach all children. edTPA “skills” are aligned with what we know about effective educator preparation programs. SCALE has always recommended that programs consider the best time to implement the assessments within the program. SCALE asks programs to take into consideration that edTPA assesses a candidate's ability to support student learning and understand that edTPA is a support and assessment system that includes formative experiences in order to prepare candidates to complete edTPA. Timelines are neither required nor enforced by SCALE. Decisions about course sequence and articulation of teaching competencies are unique to each educator preparation program in NYS. edTPA simply serves as a way to allow candidates to demonstrate their readiness to enter a classroom and to become the teacher of record.

### **Topic: The Extra Math Task in the Elementary Handbook**

edTPA, along with our new certification examinations, serves as a critical benchmark of a candidate’s readiness to teach in NYS and the Department has incorporated feedback from the field in the design of each assessment. One area of consistent concern is the preparation of teacher candidates in the area of mathematics. As a result, NYS incorporated a math task as part

of the elementary education edTPA handbook. In addition, the Department worked with panels of educators to ensure that each of our new assessments requires candidates to demonstrate the same Common Core literacy and mathematics skills expected of the students they will someday teach. More importantly, the May 1, 2014 implementation is essential to ensure that every newly certified teacher is ready for the job. edTPA includes a review of a teacher candidate's authentic teaching materials as the culmination of a teaching and learning process that documents and demonstrates each candidate's ability to effectively teach his or her subject matter to all students. We believe that the edTPA can help guide the development of curriculum and practice in our colleges of education in ways that support our common goal of ensuring all of our K-12 students graduate college and career ready.

### **Topic: The Use of edTPA as a High Stakes Assessment**

edTPA was purposefully designed as a summative assessment of pre-service teaching. The design and development of the edTPA was guided by and shaped by the technical standards for consequential assessments endorsed by the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education standards. edTPA had a set of validation studies conducted to confirm the content validity, job relevance, and construct validity of the assessments. In combination, these studies documented that the assessment is well-aligned to the professional standards it seeks to measure, reflects the actual work of teaching, and that the score measures a primary characteristic of effective teaching. These attributes contribute to the validation of use of edTPA as a consequential assessment. While NYS (after a year of field testing) along with Washington State are among the first to use edTPA for licensure, several other states will begin implementation for licensure requirements in the next year. Seven states (GA, HI, MN, NY, TN, WA, WI) have adopted policies for using edTPA. Illinois and Ohio are considering policies at the state level, and campuses in 19 other states and DC are piloting as a preparation requirement for new teachers, as a formal requirement for licensure, or as part of institutional accreditations.

### **Topic: Selection of the NYS edTPA Cut Score**

The standard setting process used in New York State was the same process used in all states that are implementing the edTPA consequentially, including Washington State. The state-level standard setting process is guided by the findings of the National Standard Setting committee that was convened at Stanford in August 2013. However, authority to set performance standards rests exclusively with each state. That is, each state is responsible for setting its own performance standard based on the advice of its standard setting committee to determine the state cut score that reflects the minimum level of knowledge, skills, and abilities a candidate must demonstrate in alignment with state-specific teaching standards. As a result, standards will differ across states.

In NYS, we convened our standard setting panel in October of 2013. The panelists included certified teachers, school building leaders and higher education faculty. Panelists were nominated by organizations such as NYSUT along with superintendents, school building leaders and Deans of Schools of Education. Panelists also represented geographic as well as racial and ethnic diversity. The standard setting panel was charged with recommending to the

Commissioner and Board of Regents the minimum level of knowledge, skills and abilities a teacher needs in order to be competent in the classroom and positively contribute to student learning. This “cut score,” or *standard*, serves as the minimum threshold needed to pass the examination for certification purposes. Panelists were asked to recommend a cut score within a ½ Standard Error of Measurement of the maximum score of 42 recommended by the edTPA national standard setting panel. Panelists were also asked to recommend a standard that represents mastery of the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary for effective teaching. This “mastery cut score” will not be used in determining whether a candidate has passed the edTPA. Rather, the mastery cut score will provide a rigorous, aspirational goal for programs and candidates – a high benchmark to strive towards. Identifying this mastery standard provides a common point of reference across programs to inform practice, guide professional development, and evaluate needs and strengths.

Visit: <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/> to review the standard setting process and cut score recommendations.

### **Topic: Predictive Validity of edTPA**

The validation of teacher licensure assessments for standardized tests and performance assessment traditionally is anchored in establishing a systematic evaluation of the relationship between the theoretical constructs that define effective teaching and the individual characteristics that define successful job performance. Predictive validity studies for licensure assessments are routinely conducted after a test or assessment has been in operational use. In fact, examining the validity processes used for other forms of performance assessment of teaching, there is not one instance where predictive validity was established prior to the adoption and operational use of the assessment. Most notably, predictive validity studies for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) were conducted after the implementation of the program; the ProTeach performance assessment developed by ETS for Washington State also did not conduct predictive validity studies prior to the implementation and adoption of the teaching assessment. Moreover, conducting predictive validity studies during a field trial introduces many sources of error that could compromise the results, including the main concern that candidates are not the teacher of record during clinical practice which certainly would confound the results of the study.

The implementation of predictive validity requires following candidates into their teaching practice for several years in order to obtain a stable estimate of student learning based on the research findings of value-added studies conducted for teacher evaluation. Nevertheless, SCALE is committed to conducting predictive validity studies in the future for edTPA that follow candidates into employment. The edTPA National Technical Advisory Committee of leading psychometricians in the field are advising SCALE on the design of criterion and predictive validity studies for the edTPA. In summary, validation of the edTPA has been guided by the current standards for psychological testing for AERA, APA, and NCME (American Educational Research Association, 1999) and the EEOC Uniform Guidelines (U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training, 1999).

### **Topic: Institutional Program Profiles**

The Department continues to work on the development of the institutional program profiles and we are still considering which data will be included. There is a lag in the data reporting process. For example, we just reported back to the institutions their performance on the 2011-12 certification examinations. edTPA data will not be available for inclusion in the institutional program profiles until January of 2015. When ready, draft profiles will be provided to preparation programs for their feedback. Decisions on what data to include and when will be made after feedback from the programs is received and reviewed by the Department.

### **Topic: Design of Student Teacher Placements**

Currently Commissioner's Regulations require programs to include a minimum of two 20-day placements for student teachers. We know that many, if not all, educator preparation programs in NYS exceed this requirement. In addition, our regulations currently allow programs to seek a waiver in order to offer a different structure for student teaching. When we adopted edTPA, the Department began receiving inquiries from educator preparation programs interested in providing different experiences based on the campus implementation of edTPA along with our other new certification assessments. We decided at that time to seek broad input from all educator preparation programs and also sought input from the Professional Standards and Practices Board (PSPB). The Office of Higher Education staff conducted informational sessions and requested that each campus complete a survey regarding student teacher placements. One important note, our survey results indicate that a move to one placement is not supported by educator preparation programs across NYS. Many programs prefer the two shorter placements and these programs are ensuring that candidates have the opportunity to get to know their students and videotape during both placements. Input on the number and duration of placements, along with additional information, was gathered at the following meetings:

- SUNY Deans Meeting (June 12, 2013)
- CUNY Deans Meeting (October 3, 2013)
- cIcu Independent Sector Survey (Summer 2013)
- PSPB Higher Education Subcommittee members (November 21, 2013)

With that input, the Department developed a very basic form that the educator preparation programs can submit for a waiver of the two-placement requirement. The form requires the program to ensure that students in a program with a single placement will be assigned to a teacher that is rated effective or highly effective, is nationally board certified, or is designated by the school district as a mentor teacher. We also ask the institution to identify the specific programs seeking the waiver to ensure that, for program registration purposes, the college is protected in the event that they are audited in the future by an accrediting agency. The form provides "proof" that the program has permission from the State not to follow the current requirement of two placements. We are certainly willing to explore our current regulations regarding two separate student placements and the waiver process that is established for those wishing to offer one semester long placement.

### **Topic: Challenges in Fostering P-20 Collaboration**

The Department is committed to facilitating opportunities for strong collaboration which is why we sent letters to district-level and building-level leaders to both inform P-12 of the higher education reform work and to encourage collaboration. The Department has also provided opportunities for the field to provide additional incentives to encourage cooperating teachers to accept student teacher candidates in their classrooms. School districts and their collective bargaining units have the option to award points, under the 60 points “other measures” portion of the Annual Professional Performance Review, to teachers who effectively coach and mentor student teachers or new colleagues. Additional incentives for cooperating teachers are often determined locally between the institution of higher education and their P-12 partners. The Department continues to inform the P-12 community about this work. Our approach includes written correspondence, presentations and outreach to key stakeholders. However, it is important to note that workforce trends are affecting placements. As NYSUT has reported, over 5,000 educator positions were cut last year and, over the past four years, 35,000 educator positions have been eliminated. In addition, certain positions have very high supply and low demand, which also affects placements, while others have high demand and these positions are more readily accessible for placement. The feedback that we have received from institutions of higher education and P-12 districts continues to show that these initiatives are most successful when higher education institutions reach out to discuss the ways in which their work is aligned and to identify partnership opportunities that are mutually beneficial.

Further, in our meetings with K-12 leaders, concerns about the readiness of teacher candidates for student teacher placements is often cited as one of the reasons they are reluctant to place teacher candidates. With the current demands of implementation of the Common Core and the evaluation system, schools and districts want assurances that the teacher candidates we are sending them will be an asset to the cooperating teacher: a person who can support ongoing instruction in classrooms, work with small groups and tutor students – all of which can result in improved student learning and performance. Student teaching is not the time for a candidate to learn for the first time about the Common Core, or to learn for the first time about approaches to teaching Common Core math. Student teaching is intended to allow a candidate to fine tune his/her skills prior to becoming a teacher of record.