



Texas Classroom
Teachers Association

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**Testimony to the State Board of Education
Committee of the Whole
Item #1 Public Hearing Regarding Review of 19 TAC Chapter 230, Professional
Educator Preparation and Certification, Subchapter C, Assessment of Educators,
§230.21, Educator Assessment
by Holly Eaton, Director of Professional Development and Advocacy
June 14, 2022**

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. TCTA, representing classroom teachers and instructional personnel across the state, asks that you reject the SBEC proposal before you and send it back to SBEC to be reworked.

There is really no debate that the better prepared a teacher candidate is prior to entering the classroom, the more successful they'll be in the profession. However, we don't believe TEA's chosen method for doing that, by using edTPA at the end of the training process as a certification test, will accomplish that goal. Why? Because the majority of teacher candidates enrolled in teacher training programs wouldn't be taking edTPA prior to entering the classroom as teacher of record, because they're in alternative certification programs.

A better way to ensure that ALL teacher candidates are better prepared prior to entering the classroom as teacher of record is to **require a portfolio-based assessment like edTPA earlier in the process so that it is embedded as part of the teacher training program itself.**

The claim is that requiring edTPA as a certification exam will help ensure that teacher candidates can demonstrate their readiness **prior to** becoming a teacher. As stated above, the majority of teacher candidates – those who come through the alternative certification route – will already be teaching by the time they take the exam. **So, it would do nothing to ensure their readiness to teach before they start teaching.**

That's because of the nature of alternative certification programs, which provide an expedited route into the profession for individuals already holding bachelors' degrees. In the alternative certification route, candidates are placed into the classroom as teacher of record far earlier in the process than those in the traditional route. After 15-30 hours of introductory field-based experiences, as well as some coursework, they take their content certification exam in order to get an intern certificate, under which they then serve as teacher of record for a year. They then have that first year of teaching to take and pass their pedagogy certification exam, which under this proposal would be edTPA.

This is compared to the remaining 31% of teacher candidates enrolled in traditional programs in which they engage in coursework and student teaching and do not serve as teacher of record until they have passed both certification exams.

The proposal before you would not require the majority of teacher candidates to pass edTPA prior to serving as teacher of record on a one-year internship certificate. But it would add a significant new burden for these first-year teaching candidates during an incredibly challenging time. These candidates would have to spend many hours on edTPA during their first year of teaching when new teachers are struggling with learning the basics of running a classroom, along with many other things. Adding edTPA on top of all this will likely be overwhelming.

This concern is borne out by the evidence. According to the survey of edTPA pilot participants conducted externally by TNTP in partnership with Educate Texas, “Most teacher candidates indicated that the amount of time required to complete the edTPA portfolio was a major challenge, and **teacher candidates from alternative route programs found it especially challenging to balance their responsibilities being a teacher of record with completing edTPA.**”

Here is a representative quote from one of these teacher candidates: “I did the edTPA while I was teaching. I didn't get a student-teaching year or observation or anything. I was just thrown into it, which I knew that ahead of time. I think it **would have been so much more helpful if I did that while I was in college, or while I was student-teaching. Doing it in my first year all by myself as a real teacher was very difficult.**”

Another of the survey findings was that “The amount of time required to plan and record lessons for edTPA also sometimes interfered with the regular flow of instruction.”

Again, here is a representative quote from a teacher candidate: “The only thing that was hard was that it was so detailed and that it took me way longer than when I was actually doing that unit... By the time I actually finished all of the documentation and recording everything and the testing, my students were no longer learning that. It was hard to remember everything to put it into practice into the documents. It was stressful because we were no longer in that unit, I felt it did take a little bit away from my lesson planning and my real-life teaching.”

This is particularly concerning, given that the biggest drop in retention among alternatively certified teachers occurs after their first year of teaching and at higher rates than alternatively certified teachers.

In essence, using edTPA as a certification exam does not fit well with our certification training system, nor does it serve the interests of teachers or students. This could easily be remedied by instead using portfolio-based assessments like edTPA earlier in the process so that it is embedded as part of the teacher training program itself.

Accordingly, we urge you to reject the proposal before you and send it back to SBEC to rework so that it accomplishes the goal of better preparing ALL teachers prior to serving as teacher of record.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.