



March 7, 2022

**Position Statement
Supporting
S-896 (Turner, Greenstein)**

Prohibits State Board of Education from requiring completion of performance-based assessment as condition of eligibility for certificate of eligibility with advanced standing.

The New Jersey School Boards Association (NJSBA), a federation of all of the district boards of education in the state, believes that continuous efforts to improve and increase the supply of qualified candidates for school employment are beneficial as long as those efforts do not compromise the quality of the applicant pool and do not result in state mandated intrusions into the authority of local boards of education, including but not limited to their right to: determine their local budgets and deliver an instructional program that best meets the needs of their students and their local communities.

The NJSBA supports S-896. New Jersey has a teacher shortage that has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important that the legislature make every effort to increase the supply of qualified teaching candidates. Part of that effort must include the removal of barriers to entry into the profession. The edTPA assessment may be one of those barriers.

If the edTPA was removed as part of teacher candidate preparation, there are still other accountability measures in place to ensure that every classroom of students has an effective teacher. The 2012 TEACHNJ act, *N.J.S.A.18A:6-117 et seq.*, provided the greatest paradigm shift to ensure excellence in the teacher corps. It and the AchieveNJ implementing regulations, ensure that educators in NJ receive the most effective evaluations to improve instruction. Administrators must be certified in a research-based, NJDOE-approved evaluation system. The focus of New Jersey's teacher evaluation system is on ensuring effective teaching and learning.

Teacher recruitment and induction has also changed. Candidates demonstrate their accomplishments through professional portfolios and evaluations conducted by professors, cooperating teachers, and district/school administrators. District rigorous hiring processes include multiple interviews and demonstration lessons. Induction programs provide professional learning in content, and district instructional expectations. Effective mentoring is also another critical aspect to ensure excellence in the classroom.

These recruitment, induction, mentoring and evaluation processes provide greater assurance of teacher quality than arbitrary cut scores on teacher assessments and GPAs. These authentic measurements of teacher quality provide districts with significantly more information with which to ensure teacher quality and success.

Additionally, teacher professional learning supports the continued improvement of their craft. In many districts, the local teachers' association collaborates with building administration and identifies coaches to assist teachers with their instructional and/or student management practices.

When considering the TEACHNJ act's significant impact on instructional quality and its impact on practice based on both legislation and research, revising the qualifications to be a successful teacher in NJ will not be detrimental to the students of our state and will provide additional qualified candidates to address the shortages that districts across the state are experiencing while supporting local control and furthering equity in our schools.

The NJSBA urges the Senate Education Committee to approve S-896.