

# New Jersey Educators Call for the Elimination of edTPA



Dear New Jersey State Legislators and State Board of Education,

As pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, supervisors, administrators, teacher educators and researchers, we, the undersigned, urge you to eliminate edTPA as a requirement for teacher licensure in the state of New Jersey. edTPA is costly, redundant, and fails to provide useful information about effective instructional quality beyond what is already collected in educator preparation programs and multiple measures of evaluation within the provisional certification phase.

Across the United States, state boards of education are recognizing the significant barriers edTPA poses to recruiting qualified educators at a time when school districts are facing teacher shortages. Delaware, Georgia, and Washington have recently eliminated edTPA as a requirement for teacher licensure. New York has also begun the process of removing it as a requirement, replacing it with a teacher performance assessment or similar clinical experience.<sup>1</sup> As the COVID-19 pandemic continues into a third academic year, serious, well-documented concerns about edTPA call for much more than a temporary waiver as was granted in 2020. We support the proposed legislation [A677/S896](#), which would end the edTPA requirement in New Jersey.

As defined by Pearson Education, “edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States to emphasize, measure and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need from Day 1 in the classroom.”<sup>2</sup> Educator experiences and research paint an entirely different picture. Instead of acting as a “support system” in developing “skills and knowledge,” edTPA negatively impacts pre-service teachers<sup>3</sup>, cooperating teachers, students, and their districts. It lacks statistical reliability and validity, even using misleading claims to justify its use as a high-stakes assessment, and is not a useful tool in predicting change in student achievement. More specifically, edTPA:

**Interferes with pre-service teachers’ professional growth.** During the student-teaching experience, pre-service teachers must focus on completing the assessment<sup>4</sup> which takes a significant amount of time that could be used for bettering instruction<sup>5</sup> or learning culturally relevant pedagogy<sup>6</sup> to engage New Jersey’s diverse student population. While student-teaching full-time, the edTPA assessment requires pre-service teachers to collect various classroom artifacts and write lengthy commentary to reflect mastery of skills and concepts that have already been covered in their coursework. These artifacts and commentary can result in up to 50 minutes of video and 50 pages of single-spaced text for 15 different rubric assessments.<sup>7</sup> In completing all of these steps, pre-service teachers spend an excessive amount of time working on their portfolios - time that would be better spent on improving instruction and building relationships with students.

**Negatively impacts the mental and emotional health of pre-service teachers.** As a high-stakes assessment which determines whether an individual can become licensed, edTPA contributes to stress and anxiety among preservice teachers.<sup>5</sup> Hundreds of educator testimonials submitted to the New Jersey State Board of Education in January 2022 document the significant mental and emotional toll that edTPA has on pre-service teachers. This is particularly troublesome at a time when decision-makers are committing to the need for recruitment of educators and the prioritizing of their mental health.

**Creates a significant financial burden for pre-service teachers.** In addition to numerous certification fees,<sup>8</sup> pre-service teachers are responsible for the costs associated with a number of required assessments. These assessments include Praxis Core (\$150), Praxis II (\$120-200 depending on certification area), and edTPA (\$300). Given the context of the national student debt crisis, requiring these college students to pay an additional \$600, at a minimum, is unnecessary and serves only as a financial deterrent to aspiring teachers.

**Increases racial inequities in the teacher workforce.** Studies in New York<sup>9</sup> and Washington<sup>10</sup> have found that racial disparities exist in edTPA assessment outcomes, marginalizing Black and Hispanic teacher candidates. Disparities in passing rates strongly imply that the use of edTPA as a high-stakes assessment tool has an adverse impact on the diversity of a state's teacher candidate pool.<sup>10</sup> Given New Jersey's commitment to diversifying the teaching workforce and recent research about the positive impact of teachers of color on student achievement, this is a major concern.<sup>11</sup>

**Creates an undue burden on cooperating teachers who are both supporting student teachers and teaching in the classroom.** Instead of focusing on collaborating with cooperating teachers or attending professional development, pre-service teachers need time to work on edTPA. Furthermore, learning how to support edTPA completion is an additional process for cooperating teachers who are already overburdened.

**Lacks transparency in the scoring process.** Pearson states that edTPA submissions are "officially scored", yet does not report on the qualifications of the scorers who have completed between 19- 24 hours of training.<sup>12</sup>

**Misleads stakeholders through claims designed to bolster the reliability and validity of edTPA.** Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE) reported that a technical advisory committee (TAC) annually reviewed all of the edTPA assessment results.<sup>12</sup> However, a recent article found that members of the TAC have not been involved in the assessment since 2014, before the test was adopted as a high-stakes assessment.<sup>13</sup> edTPA has since removed this from their reporting of 2019 data, which was released in 2021.

**Misapplies statistical methods to inaccurately report reliability.** Recent research reviewing the technical quality of edTPA found there is insufficient evidence that edTPA is a reliable tool in making decisions about who can become a teacher.<sup>7</sup> In summary, edTPA created their own statistic, not used in any other measurement research, to make the assessment *appear* reliable. This has resulted in researchers calling for a moratorium on edTPA's use as a high-stakes assessment.

**Does not predict future teacher effectiveness.** Research has shown little to no relationship between an individual's ability to pass edTPA and their impact on student achievement.<sup>10</sup>

**Reflects an "over assessment" of a profession that already has embedded and ongoing evaluation procedures and policies in place.** As previously stated, teachers in New Jersey take a minimum of three standardized assessments. In comparison, lawyers (LSAT, State Bar exam) and doctors (MCAT, USMLE) in New Jersey only take two standardized tests to become licensed.

**Is redundant and unnecessary due to existing multiple measures of performance to evaluate pre-service and in-service teachers.** TEACHNJ and AchieveNJ call for a multi-year process to obtain a Standard instructional certificate.<sup>14,15</sup> The existing evaluation systems in our accredited educator preparation programs and districts are comprehensive and rigorous, providing opportunities for educators to demonstrate effective instructional practices and receive the support they

need. Existing safeguards protect teacher quality and keep our public schools top-ranked in the nation, making edTPA redundant and unnecessary.

Our concerns about the continued use of edTPA as a requirement for teacher licensure are wide-ranging and numerous. From the detrimental effects edTPA has on pre-service teachers, cooperating teachers and their districts, to its lack of statistical reliability and validity as a tool for measuring teachers' skills and knowledge, ending edTPA is a necessary next step in recruiting qualified educators and expanding and diversifying the teaching workforce.

Sincerely,

**New Jersey Education Association**



**Preservice New Jersey Education Association**



**New Jersey Policy Perspective**



**Education Law Center**



**Save Our Schools NJ**



**New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association**



**New Jersey Association of School Administrators**



**New Jersey Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/  
New Jersey Bilingual Educators**



**New Jersey Council of County Vocational-Technical Schools**



**New Jersey School Boards Association**



## References

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