



Frequently Asked Questions: Changes in the Certification Examinations for Teachers

1. When did the Regents adopt the new certification requirements?

This work is critically important and we began back in 2009. Key milestones are as follows:

- In 2009, the Board of Regents approved a number of initiatives to transform teaching and learning and school leadership in New York State. One of those initiatives was to strengthen the examinations for the certification of teachers and school leaders.
- Certification examination changes were included in New York's successful Race to the Top application in 2010.
- In 2010, we began to develop our own performance assessment which was based on the TPA (the pre-cursor to the edTPA):
 - developed by New York institutions of higher education and P-12 educators
 - piloted in 2010 and field tested twice in 2011 (Spring and Fall)
 - over 500 candidates and 250 faculty participated in this performance assessment (fully aligned with edTPA)
 - discussed at NYSATE-NYACTE (2010), CUNY Dean's Meeting (2011), and SUNY Dean's Meeting (2011)
 - fully aligned with the edTPA (New York used Stanford's assessment as the model for our exam)
 - In February 2012, the Board of Regents voted to push back the timeline to give higher education an additional year from May 2013 to May 2014 to prepare for the certification examinations.
- In March 2012, the Board of Regents endorsed edTPA, developed in partnership by Stanford University and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, as the NYS performance assessment.
- In April 2012, the Office of Higher Education announced the creation of a set of agreements with SUNY, CUNY, and the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities to assist New York's public higher education institutions with assimilating the new information on teaching and learning into their programs. Race to the Top funding was used to provide \$10 million total to SUNY, CUNY, and the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities.
- In January 2013, the Education Reform Commission, recognized the need for excellent teachers, released its preliminary report and recommended the establishment of a "bar"-like exam for entry into the teaching and principal profession.
- In March 2013, the state budget is enacted with a provision requiring the creation of standards for a teacher and principal bar exam certification program.
- In November 2013, the Office of Higher Education offered the sectors an additional \$1.5 million total to continue faculty professional development using Race to the Top funding.

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The changes we made across all preparation programs will assure that education program graduates are more effective teachers when they arrive in our classrooms. If you want to be a future teacher in NYS you must do the following:

- Demonstrate strong reading and writing skills by passing the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST). The ALST is focused on Common Core academic literacy and writing skills. The exam is designed to determine if teacher candidates have a minimum of 12th grade academic literacy skills necessary to support and advance student learning. This replaces the Liberal Arts & Sciences Test (LAST).
- Show you can teach by passing the edTPA. Developed by Stanford University, the edTPA is a performance-based assessment aligned to state and national standards – including Common Core State Standards. Candidates compile a portfolio consisting of: 1) 3-5 lessons unit, instructional artifacts (i.e. student work), and 1-2 unedited video clips that show the candidate teaching in a classroom and interacting with students. This replaces in part the Assessment of Teaching Skills – Written (ATS-W).
- Display your knowledge of diverse learners by passing the Educating All Students (EAS) Test. The test addresses five competencies: Diverse Student Populations, English Language Learners, Students with Disabilities and Other Special Learning Needs, Teacher Responsibilities, and School-Home Relationships. This exam is designed to ensure that candidates understand the characteristics, strengths, and needs of all learners.
- Show you have content expertise in the subject(s) you want to teach by taking the required Content Specialty Tests for your subject area. These tests are already required, but have been updated to align with NYS Common Core Learning Standards. These exams are designed to ensure that future teachers have the knowledge, skills, and abilities in their chosen field to provide effective instruction of the content and skills as required by the NYS Teaching and Learning Standards.

2. When were colleges first made aware that the edTPA was coming and when it would become effective? The college people said they didn't have adequate time to prepare.

- In 2010, we began to develop our own performance assessment which was based on the TPA (the pre-cursor to the edTPA):
 - developed by New York institutions of higher education and P-12 educators
 - piloted in 2010 and field tested twice in 2011 (Spring and Fall)
 - over 500 candidates and 250 faculty participated in this performance assessment (fully aligned with edTPA)
 - discussed at NYSATE-NYACTE (2010), CUNY Dean's Meeting (2011), and SUNY Dean's Meeting (2011)
 - fully aligned with the edTPA (New York used Stanford's assessment as the model for our exam)
 - 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. For example, in a November 17, 2010 memorandum to ALL Deans of Teacher Education Programs; Deans of School Leadership Education Programs; Members

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of the Professional Standards and Practices Board for Teaching; and Members of NYSATE and NYACTE entitled, “New Teacher & School Building Leader Performance-Based Assessment for Initial Certification,” we 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*
- In February 2012, the Board of Regents voted to push back the timeline to give higher education an additional year, from May 2013 to May 2014, to prepare for the certification examinations.
- In March 2012, the Board of Regents endorsed edTPA, developed in partnership by Stanford University and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, as the NYS performance assessment.

3. Of the 35 states using the edTPA, only New York and Washington are requiring passage for initial certification. Why did New York take this step?

The use of edTPA as a licensure examination is endorsed by both SCALE and AACTE. The edTPA was purposefully designed as a summative assessment of pre-service teaching. The design and development of the edTPA was guided 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.

Further, unlike other states, we began the development of a performance assessment as far back as 2010 based on the edTPA. Other states also have not been able to invest \$10 million in professional development opportunities for faculty.

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4. Some say that this year’s seniors – and maybe juniors – should be grandfathered in under the old system because they went through most of their college careers without knowing about edTPA. Should seniors be prepared?

A few things to keep in mind here:

1. In 2010, these seniors were freshman and the college and faculty should have been aligning at that time.
2. 2010 notification and the timeline of activities stated above in response #1
3. Also the reason we pushed back the timeline in 2012 is because the preparation programs knew the implementation date was approaching and they wanted more time to prepare. So the claim that they didn’t know cannot be supported.
4. With regards to the concern that candidates have not had the time to develop and practice the skills they will be assessed on, 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.” 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.
5. As we have seen with the implementation of the Common Core in K-12, there is a great deal of variability in how educator preparation programs moved from notification in 2010 to implementation at the campus level. For the past four years, many of our educator preparation programs have been engaged in program review, curriculum mapping, and redesign of courses and field experiences to support the transition to the new certification examinations, including performance-based assessment. However, we 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.

5. Are the tougher certification requirements – and high cut scores for the edTPA – designed to reduce the pool of new teachers?

We know that good teaching matters. This is why New York State (NYS) began to transform teacher preparation in 2009. In order to ensure that all students are college and career ready we know that we must not only support our current teachers by providing strong systems of support and professional development; we must also ensure that *every* future teacher is ready to support student learning.

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

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in the job market who can demonstrate they are prepared. Leaders and teachers at the P-12 level are making progress in the implementation of the Common Core Learning Standards. The Department has incorporated feedback from the field in our implementation of our new assessments.

Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that all teachers are ready to provide the level of instruction that we are currently seeing across the State. 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, Black, and Latino students.

Each state has the opportunity to convene a panel 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. The cut score for the edTPA was selected by a panel of New York State educators. We convened our standard setting panel in October. 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.

These higher standards for entry into teaching are the expectations at both the state and national levels. Examples:

- **Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).** By spring 2016, the new CAEP standards for educator preparation accreditation will be in effect. The draft standards are currently posted for public input and include: Throughout the CAEP standards there is a greater emphasis on P-12 partnerships, clinically rich experiences, rigorous standards for admissions and exit, evidence of impact on P-12 student learning (including graduate and employer satisfaction), and the use of data for continuous program improvement.
- **Governor’s Education Reform Commission.** Many of these issues were also addressed in the “Putting Students First: Education Action Plan, New NY Education Reform Commission Preliminary Recommendations.” Specifically the report calls for greater

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coherence in the ways that educators are recruited, trained, and developed. The relevant recommendations are:

- Recommendation 1. Establish model admissions requirements for teacher and principal preparation programs to raise the bar for new educators.
- Recommendation 3. Enhance the education training curriculum to better prepare teachers and principals to be highly effective upon entering the classroom.
- Recommendation 4. New York must raise the bar for entry into the profession.
- Recommendation 5. Strengthen educator preparation and in-service supports by establishing best practices to assure quality.

Additional resources on the standards for entry into the teaching profession include:

- American Federation of Teachers. Raising the Bar: Aligning and Elevating the Teaching Profession. Available online <http://www.aft.org/pdfs/highered/raisingthebar2012.pdf>
- CCSSO Task Force on Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession. Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Profession - See more at: http://cssso.org/Resources/Publications/Our_Responsibility_Our_Promise_Transforming_Educator_Preparation_and_Entry_into_the_Profession. Available online http://cssso.org/Documents/2012/Our%20Responsibility%20Our%20Promise_2012.pdf

Further, it is important to note that workforce trends are affecting opportunities for future teachers. 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. A recent update to the Board of Regents on the topic of NYS Teacher Supply and Demand Reports is available online at

<http://www.regents.nysed.gov/meetings/2013Meetings/November2013/TeacherSupplyDemandReports.pdf>

6. If a student fails the edTPA, what happens? Would he or she possibly have to return to student teaching for fresh video?

Candidates who do not pass the edTPA must determine, in consultation with their faculty advisors, whether to retake one portion of the edTPA or the full assessment. Pearson's commitment to the Department is that they will turn around scores within 30 days so that candidates have ample time to develop a plan for approaching the retake.

One important clarification: the candidate edTPA score profile provides a score for each rubric and a subtotal for each task - the candidate's retake strategy should be driven by that data. Based on the rubric and task scores, it is possible that a candidate may not need to gather additional

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video footage. We have also learned that many campuses have permission for teacher candidates to gather additional video footage and student artifacts while candidates are student teaching in case of technical issues with the video or the need to retake any portion of the assessment. The approaches vary from campus to campus and we have asked each sector to gather and share information about promising practices for candidate support in NYS.

Additional Resources

SED Resources

- Field updates on the new certification examinations available online at <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/certexam.html>
- Letter to school district administrators regarding the transformation of educator preparation programs (January 2013) <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/pdf/memo01112013.pdf>
- Letter to school building leaders regarding the transformation of educator preparation programs October 2013) http://www.highered.nysed.gov/pdf/LetterfromCommissionerKingRegardingtheedTPA_1.pdf
- Video library <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/media.html>:
 - former edTPA candidate, Nicole Renner
 - Jim Baldwin, District Superintendent, Teacher Supply and Demand
 - Sharon Robinson, President, American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education on edTPA and Common Core
 - Johanna Duncan-Poitier is the Senior Vice Chancellor for Community Colleges and the Education Pipeline for the State University of New York (SUNY).