



UNITED UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONS

Testimony on the New Statewide Teacher Certification Requirement, the edTPA

Presented To:

Assembly Higher Education Committee
Assemblymember Deborah J. Glick, Chair
and

Assembly Education Committee
Assemblymember Catherine T. Nolan, Chair

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Chairperson Glick, Chairperson Nolan, members of the Assembly Higher Education and Education Committees, thank you for the opportunity to address you today concerning the implementation of the educative teacher performance assessment, or edTPA, the new high-stakes certification requirement for student teachers.

I am Frederick E. Kowal, President of United University Professions (UUP). We are the nation's largest higher education union, representing more than 35,000 academic and professional faculty and staff at SUNY four-year campuses statewide.

First, I would like to thank the Assembly for their responsiveness in pushing back against the premature use of the edTPA as a certification requirement. It was the Assembly's introduction of legislation and subsequent call for a hearing that created the conditions for collaboration and movement on this issue. We look forward to working with the Assembly to make sure that the performance assessment that is ultimately used will provide the best and most accurate evaluation of our student teachers.

We would also like to express our approval and support of the Regents' resolution, and Commissioner King's willingness to work with us, which prompted the Regents to approve a resolution that delays implementation of the edTPA to June 30, 2015—and more importantly, provides an important safety net for student teachers. We look forward to collaborating with Commissioner King, the Board of Regents and our higher education colleagues around the state. In fact, the new task force established by the Regents offers us an opportunity to join with the Professional Staff Congress/CUNY, NYSUT, SED, the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equality (SCALE), and the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education in a review and refining of the rubrics and handbooks associated with this assessment.

The task force is a solid step toward what needs to occur over the next several months. Delaying the edTPA implementation and forming this collaborative partnership is key to making necessary, positive changes—based on concerns expressed by students and educators—to the edTPA and its implementation. It is crucial that the issues and concerns surrounding the edTPA are brought to the forefront and addressed through a collaborative effort.

Issues Surrounding New York State's edTPA

Today you will hear from students and faculty who have serious concerns with the edTPA. We're hopeful that these concerns can be addressed through collaboration. If not, students who have invested in their college education, successfully completed their teacher preparation programs, and have been sanctioned by experienced educators as prepared to enter the teaching profession may be unfairly denied teaching certification. We now have a process that allows for collaboration and we are committed to actively participating in that process. Toward that end, we would like to elaborate on the issues and concerns we feel need to be addressed, studied and corrected over the next year.

Testing before Training

With the way that the edTPA was implemented over the past year students were assessed on their teacher training before they had time to complete it. SCALE, the edTPA's developer, recommends programs schedule initial edTPA submissions at a point in student teaching placements after candidates have had sufficient opportunities to practice, learn, and perform. Many students had to videotape their lessons and complete other components after a few weeks in their student teaching placements.

In fact, pilot studies by colleges nationwide caution against introducing edTPA skills and language during a student teaching semester. Yet, this is what generally occurred at campuses across New York State during the 2013-14 academic year. SCALE recommends that edTPA preparation begin during the sophomore and junior years. That was not possible for May graduates since the Board of Regents didn't make a final decision to use the edTPA until March 2012, and final edTPA handbooks to guide faculty and students were unavailable in most fields until fall 2013. UUP members have informed us that information is *still* incomplete for some programs. One example is in the Library Specialist programs; there is no edTPA assessment information for students. We look forward to working with SED to address these concerns.

Technical and Parental Consent Problems

The edTPA requires a lengthy electronic portfolio that includes written work and videos of candidates interacting with K-12 students. Issues pertaining to videotaping in K-12 classrooms and other technological issues also need further examination, including:

- Parental consent, required for video recording, has become a major obstacle for many student teachers.

- Obtaining the appropriate technical training and capabilities to successfully submit the video component of their edTPA has also plagued students.

This and other concerns have led to legitimate questions about whether aspects of the edTPA might be better placed as requirements for permanent rather than initial certification. This question must be fully addressed in substantive dialogue between SED and educators at the college and K-12 levels.

Measuring Validity and Reliability

It is not yet certain whether the edTPA is a valid predictor of teacher effectiveness. Serious questions and concerns about the predictive validity of the edTPA must be examined before this assessment is used as a certification requirement.

Implementation Time Frame

It is obvious that New York State needs time to develop and adjust its implementation method, if the edTPA is to be used productively. Legitimate questions need to be adequately addressed and educationally sound changes need to be made.

Time for Change

I want to thank the Assembly again for their time and efforts in pursuing this issue. Your efforts have already resulted in a workable solution that will allow the edTPA to be examined and improved, and I thank you for that. I am asking the Assembly to continue to press SED to work in partnership with the unions, the students, and the faculty to guarantee that this process leads to the development of an accurate evaluation of our student teachers. The edTPA needs to be adjusted, and we now have the time to make those changes.

Thank you for your time today.