

EDUCATION POLICY PAPER

**Confronting the edTPA in Connecticut:
Recommendations for Teacher Candidate
Quality, Sustainability, and Empowerment**

Cara Bernard, Ed.D.

Douglas Kaufman, Ph.D.

Mark Kohan, Ph.D.

Glenn Mitoma, Ph.D.

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Thomas J. Dodd Research Center

University of Connecticut

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy paper, *Confronting the edTPA in Connecticut: Recommendations for Teacher Candidate Quality, Sustainability, and Empowerment*, presents concerns and recommendations regarding the state's adoption of the edTPA teacher candidate assessment.

Based on a program evaluation conducted with students, faculty, and cooperating teachers in the University of Connecticut's teacher education program, the paper documents the experiences of participants and impacts of the implementation of edTPA. It finds:

- ***Diminishment of Candidate Learning***, through
 - the substantial time required to complete assessment tasks;
 - narrowed range of teacher practices considered by edTPA;
 - tensions created with various stakeholders; and
 - the emphasis on decontextualized, regimented standards.

- ***Perpetuation of Inequitable Systems***, through
 - bias against teacher candidates of color in the standardized assessment format;
 - the financial burden it places on low-income teacher candidates; and
 - the privacy concerns raised by the appropriation of video-recorded lessons by a for-profit company.

- ***Application of Developmentally Inappropriate Standards***, through
 - the evaluation of candidates' "readiness to teach" without accounting for their development across the years of the program;
 - the requirement to demonstrate "readiness to teach" in ways that lead to pedagogically inappropriate abstraction and isolation of certain teaching practices; and
 - the necessity of candidates in some academic areas to apply conventions that are inappropriate within their fields.

Given these concerns and impacts, this report ***recommends policymakers suspend the current planned implementation of the edTPA in Connecticut*** and work collaboratively with stakeholders in the state to develop a teacher candidate assessment that:

- can flexibly evaluate candidate in the range of teacher education programs in Connecticut;
- is developmentally appropriate for teacher candidates; and
- supports the state's goal of recruiting more minority teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Performance-based Assessment and edTPA's Introduction to Connecticut

edTPA is a teaching portfolio assessment developed by Stanford University faculty and staff at the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE), in conjunction with Pearson Education Publishing, a British multinational for-profit publishing and education company, which is the largest education publisher in the world. In December 2016, the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE) resolved to adopt the edTPA portfolio-based assessment as a requirement for students completing educator preparation programs in the state. This followed two years of piloting, and allowed for an additional two years of roll-out before Fall 2018, when all initial licensure teacher candidates were required to complete the edTPA. During this roll-out period, the required \$300 testing fee and a passing portfolio evaluation were waived. Beginning in Fall 2019, candidates will be required to pay the \$300 testing fee and pass the portfolio in order to obtain licensure in the state of Connecticut. The CSDE is currently determining the passing scores to be applied this fall¹.

Connecticut is well-versed with performance-based assessments for teacher professional development and practice. Prior to edTPA, Connecticut utilized the BEST portfolio for teaching. This portfolio was compiled after completion of an accredited educator preparation program (EPP) in the state during the first two years of teaching service. During the first year of service, novice teachers were mentored by BEST-trained senior colleagues, receiving support through deliberation and dialogue; new teaching strategies; regular feedback from those with deep contextual understanding of the school and community; and resources to enhance their

professional growth and practice². The portfolio included planning and preparation of lessons, artifacts of teaching (including formal and informal assessments), and reflections of teaching (CT Department of Education, 1999). Upon submitting their portfolio, new teachers received individualized feedback regarding their portfolio from two experienced teachers within the same content area (National Research Council, 2001).

A Brief Background of edTPA

It has been argued that teacher education needs “valid and reliable” assessments for pre-service teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2010) in order to determine that a candidate is “truly ready to teach”, although significant concern has been raised by top scholars in the field as to whether that can be achieved practically and at what cost (Henning et al., 2018; Zeichner, 2010, 2012). Examples of these assessments include the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) in Connecticut, National Board of Professional Teaching Standards, CalTPA, and the Performance Assessment of CA Teachers (PACT), and edTPA. However, in part because of the economic opportunity and potential for growth, for-profit companies have been eager to assist or lead in the development of comprehensive teaching portfolio assessments that can be used nationwide and adapted for use abroad. edTPA is an example of such a product intended to replace state-designed assessments with a one-assessment-fits-all approach. To date, the majority of states in the U.S. *are not using the edTPA*, despite its aggressive marketing over the past six years.

The structure of edTPA portfolios focuses on the preparation and teaching of a unit of study, with an emphasis on simultaneously learning and applying

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https://www.edtpa.com/PageView.aspx?f=GEN_Connecticut.html

² See full report on BEST portfolio at

https://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/pridata/Studies/BEST_Final_Report.htm

new academic language and discourses. Teacher candidates choose a learning segment of 3-5 lessons in one designated class. Coupled with this, they collect teaching artifacts, such as lesson plans they have created, instructional materials, teaching videos, assessments, and sample student work. Both before and after their teaching segments, they write commentaries in response to prompts in the subject-specific edTPA handbook; these commentaries provide a rationale to support candidates' instructional practices, based on their students' learning strengths and needs. Teacher candidates submit their artifacts and commentaries for professional scoring by SCALE-trained evaluators, including content-specific retired teachers, teacher educators, and in-service teachers who have little to no connection to the specific teaching context in which the teacher candidate is working.

Supporters of assessments like edTPA claim that in addition to determining if students are ready to teach, these pre-service teacher assessments have the potential to identify strengths and weaknesses in a teacher education program (Lit & Lotan, 2013) and affect substantive institutional change (Peck, Galluci, & Sloan, 2010) in said programs. However, extant research on such teacher portfolio assessments, particularly edTPA, have found that the use of these portfolios fosters an ideologically narrow view of how teaching is performed (Sato, 2014), and can encourage new teachers to engage in inauthentic and subtractive teaching practices (Ledwell & Oyler, 2016; Clayton, 2018). Additionally, implementing edTPA is often a “program eater” for teacher education programs, monopolizing teaching and learning time in courses and substituting compliance with edTPA requirements with the considered professional judgement of teacher educators (Baron, 2015; Greenblatt & O'Hara, 2015; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016). Researchers have also noted that the structure and demands of edTPA perpetuate racism and racist legacies (Kuranishi & Oyler, 2017; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016), as they systematically favor teacher candidates and teaching settings of particular socioeconomic and racial demographics.

About this Program Evaluation

To better understand the impact of edTPA's adoption in Connecticut on our efforts as the state's highest *Confronting the edTPA in Connecticut*

ranked teacher education program, we conducted a program evaluation of two content programs—elementary education and music education—within teacher education in the Neag School of Education at the University of Connecticut. Our evaluation included completing a document review of the content specific edTPA handbooks in elementary education and music education. We also conducted semi-structured interviews with students in the elementary education cohort, teacher educators who ran student teaching seminar (which helps students to prepare edTPA), the director of teacher education, and elementary and music cooperating teachers. We also led focus groups with student cohorts in music education. We analyzed our evaluation data individually and then together as a group, looking for common themes. We compared and contrasted these to the extant literature on edTPA.

VOICES AND CONCERNS

Below, we share concerns about the edTPA as a result of that evaluation. These stem from data evaluation, and are rooted in the lived experiences of students, faculty, and cooperating teachers – those most impacted by the new policy and practice. Their narratives frame contexts in which they have been navigating edTPA.

Diminishment of Candidate Learning

Teacher education faculty devoted substantial time to completing edTPA requirements at the expense of valuable non-edTPA related teaching activities. The teacher education faculty have devoted a large portion of their courses to supporting students completing edTPA tasks, particularly in developing “academic language” as defined by edTPA. Further time is spent situating these tasks in their portfolio unit plans and teaching videos. Faculty expressed concern that this left them unable to address important aspects of candidate classroom experiences—so called “teachable moments”—that arose throughout the semester.

“But my big concern is that those students didn't get to process their experience in my class to the degree that they should have and that should be the focus of that course as I understand it. And that really feels almost criminal to me. And the kids. I'm sure everyone can attest the students are very frustrated.”

- Teacher Education Faculty Member

Teacher candidates often felt encouraged by the requirements of the edTPA tasks to focus on a narrow range of teacher practices during their student teaching. The teacher candidates concern with executing the required edTPA tasks led them to prioritize completing their lesson as written over responding to emergent student and classroom issues, even when they recognized such a response would have high educational impact. Being able to respond to these issues is a core practice (Grossman et al., 2009; Zeichner, 2012) of teaching, as identified by UConn's Teacher Education program.

“I think it took away from a lot of the other important parts of student teaching that I wanted to spend more time processing and reflecting about. That happened on a day-to-day basis instead of these isolated days where I had to teach an edTPA lesson, 'cause there's still so much that happens when you're in student teaching that I don't know how to process yet and that I'll be processing for a long time. And I don't know, I feel like I missed out on being able to do some of that in the moment by having to work on edTPA at certain times.”

- Student Teacher

Diminishment of Candidate Learning

Faculty, cooperating teachers, and candidates experienced tensions among their relationships that diminished their capacity to support student learning. Candidates expressed frustration that cooperating teachers, none of whom completed the edTPA, often could not provide the advice they needed in order to successfully complete edTPA. Teacher education faculty felt ill equipped to address student frustration regarding edTPA tasks given faculty's own concern with the misalignment between edTPA and the teacher education program philosophy. Cooperating teachers and other community partners worried that focus on edTPA requirements might provide difficulty in finding appropriate placements for student teachers. Such tensions were felt by candidates as undermining to the relationships of trust and respect required for successful professional development.

"The requirements in the formatting: everything is so specific--there's, like, an edTPA way of doing things. So, we learned how to lesson plan in a specific way, and then we go to student teaching, and our cooperating teachers might have us lesson planning in their specific way. 'For mine, she said, "This is the format you're gonna use; this is how you're gonna do it." And there's the recommended edTPA format for the lesson plans that's even more different. So, it feels artificial, I think is the best word to describe it."

- Student Teacher

In aligning with edTPA, teacher education program leaders expressed concern that the program would lose its effectiveness in preparing future educators to teach in diverse settings. Our evaluation provides evidence of the diminishing emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration and teaching and more focus on general pedagogical knowledge decontextualized from content area and pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987). Additionally, faculty expressed concern that edTPA will regiment teacher education programs within the state of CT, resulting in over-standardization and the loss of innovation that comes with a diverse, locally-responsive set of teacher education programs.

"We are creating more silos where they don't work across inter-disciplinary. That we are going to have to pull them apart so they can successfully get them through edTPA, which is antithetical to what our program stands for philosophically."

- Teacher Education Faculty Member

"Other places [states and schools] where it is being implemented with a little bit more fidelity than we were able to do it, they have put the responsibility on the university supervisors. Who, because they're in the field with the students, and they can look at the videos with the student and kinda walk through with them. But we don't pay our university supervisors enough, even now, to do the work that they do...In bigger programs than ours, university supervisors are typically doctoral students. In our program, they're retired educators, some of them have been out of teaching for 15 years."

- Teacher Education Faculty Member

Perpetuation of Inequitable Systems

Candidates and faculty members protested that edTPA actively undermined the stated policy goals of increasing minority teacher recruitment and ensuring equitable educational opportunities for all. Teacher candidates of color experienced edTPA as a barrier to access, in ways that reinforced their previous experiences of bias in standardized testing. Faculty noted that implementation of edTPA came at the expense of recent efforts to redesign the program to be more culturally responsive and inclusive. The implementation of edTPA countered these efforts not only by taking away time, but by privileging a narrow range of teacher practices that do not recognize or value the experiences, skills, and positions of some candidates of color.

“Can I be frank? As a student of color, um, I feel like within this program I kind of always feel that I have to prove something... So I’m looking around and I’m like, ‘do I really belong in this profession?’ And I think with all these tests and having to prove yourself with tests, edTPA and Praxis, ... I really do love education. Um, but sometimes it’s like, at what cost? In the back of my mind, being in this program...I’m not afraid to work hard...there’s just a lot that is required of us. And then with edTPA, they’re going to look at our videos...I feel like it’s going to be more,... I think it’s going to prevent possible teachers of color from wanting to come into a program like this. Even if they have the passion of working with students. I think these tests and constantly, again, having to prove yourself...like you already have to prove yourself on campus being on a white campus, and you always have to prove yourself and work so hard in the workforce. So like, this would be just an added stress again. It seems unnecessary. So I think that’s where I come from.”

- Student Teacher

Complying with the edTPA requirement adds significantly to the already substantial financial burden required for state licensure (including fingerprinting in multiple districts and the Praxis examinations), which disproportionately impacts low-income students. Teacher candidates report significant stress and anxiety around paying the various required costs, whether out-of-pocket or by applying for financial assistance. Low income and first-generation college students already take on substantial financial risk in pursuing teaching as a profession, given the relatively modest expected salaries. Additionally, applying for financial assistance is an added stress. The added cost of edTPA can dissuade low income students and first-generation college students from applying to teach, regardless of their ability and drive.

“And then it’s like, we don’t even get paid, like, as much as like, you don’t make say, like, teachers don’t get paid as much as they do for the job that they do. So if you’re constantly paying for these tests, edTPA, you have to renew your license or something...like it’s just I’m still money and they’re not even taking that into account. Like sometimes you have to pay out of pocket for stuff for your own students are like, what, where’s all this money supposed to be coming from?”

- Student Teacher

Perpetuation of Inequitable Systems

Production and evaluation of classroom video recordings presents risks to the privacy of vulnerable students, and centers a normative model of teacher performance that may be inappropriate for some contexts. Faculty and teacher candidates expressed concern with how videotaped lesson segments might be protected and evaluated by the private assessment company, Pearson. Unclear permissions, licensing, and privacy practices create risks for students who may need special protections from having their image circulated and stored electronically. Teacher candidates also worried that decontextualized assessment of their videos by anonymous Pearson evaluators might undervalue the local ways of being and learning appropriate to their specific school placement. Patterns in such undervaluing may reveal a systemic bias in edTPA in favor of videotaped lessons performed in white, suburban, and economically advantaged schools over those in communities of color, and/or urban, rural, and economically marginalized places.

“I’m more anxious and upset because when you have three times to videotape, and if a kid’s having a bad day, or said something inappropriate, you are then so upset because you only have 10 minutes to submit and they just messed up your video, and it’s not their fault, but it’s also not your fault, but you have to submit it, and yeah, life happens, but... I don’t know. It’s just, that was the hardest part for me was the videos. It was like I can’t control each child, I can’t make them sit there, “Don’t say a word, don’t ever misbehave, don’t have a bad day, don’t call out, don’t get up and walk around the room,” especially based on where your school is, my school is mastery-based learning, so there’s no consequences for anything.”

- Student Teacher

Application of Developmentally Inappropriate Standards

The edTPA evaluates teacher candidates' readiness to teach without adequately accounting for pre-service teachers' development across the range of the teacher education program. Faculty noted that the teacher education program is carefully designed to scaffold the development of novice teachers across both student teaching and Masters year internships. Assessing teacher candidates' readiness to teach during student teaching does not account for subsequent development prior to program completion. Teacher candidates expressed anxiety and frustration at the expectation of mastery after only completing half of the program.

"We started to grow into our own style, and then edTPA is all the same again, and it matches none of our styles, and we were just like, "Ahhhhh!" I'm not secure enough in any of my teaching procedures to be able to convert it and explain it to someone else differently."

- Student Teacher

Demonstration of "readiness to teach" under edTPA requires teacher candidates to abstract and isolate certain teaching practices in ways that do not enhance their professional development. Faculty and teacher candidates noted that edTPA tasks required demonstration of practices regardless of specific content area, course, or classroom context. The lack of authentic reasons for deploying such practices often means teacher candidates do not absorb them as aspects of their long term teaching repertoire. Teacher candidates experienced the edTPA tasks as exercises unrelated to their overall development as educators which is in line with findings in other states (Clayton, 2018; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016).

"But where I took the lessons from and how much I adapted them to actually fit the needs and learning styles of my students in my classroom probably don't necessarily reflect my best teaching practice. Because I was more, so focused on doing it for edTPA and not feeling like edTPA was a large factor in preparing me to feel ready to teach."

- Student Teacher

Application of Developmentally Inappropriate Standards

Application of edTPA to content areas outside traditional academic fields requires teacher candidates to adhere to conventions that are inappropriate for novice teachers. Teacher candidates in Music Education expressed frustration with application of “academic language” criteria for their performance-based lessons, and recognized the inauthenticity of the adapted exercises for their students. Cooperating teachers also expressed consternation in advising music teacher candidates on opportunities for performing tasks related to academic language. While such opportunities were identified and teacher candidates applied the convention, neither candidates nor cooperating teachers felt the task was helpful in advancing or assessing the candidates’ readiness to teach music.

“I think our seminar class has been about nothing but edTPA—stupid things like, ‘Okay, tell me again what does syntax mean?’ Like, ‘Tell me again how many minutes of a video we’re supposed to have?’... I think had we just had a portfolio, or something that was free to be in our style of teaching—and still in some kind of like formalized manner so that somebody could look at it--but maybe our own kind of style and free to assess and show different things in different ways, we would have been able to have time to work on those portfolios. I think we would have had more time to give each other feedback. Because what happened is the days that [our seminar leader] had planned for us to give each other feedback, none of us were ready, because we hadn’t finished teaching, or we hadn’t done Part Two, or we hadn’t whatever. So, those times weren’t nearly as effective as they could have been in our seminar class.”

- Student Teacher

NATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE CONTEXTS

There is a substantive and troubling difference between the intent that the edTPA and its supporters champion and the actual impact of the assessment (Clayton, 2018; Dover & Schultz, 2016). It is the implementation is incapable of controlling all the variables it relies on to claim “validity and reliability.” There are too many human and dynamic elements in and across different schools, districts, teacher preparation programs, and states to properly implement a highly invasive measure like the edTPA, such as cases in New York state reveal³ (Clayton, 2018; Greenblatt & O’Hara, 2015; Ledwell & Oyler, 2016; Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016).

The National Association for Multicultural Education (NAME), one of the largest professional organizations for educators focused on equity, issued a position statement⁴ urging caution with respect to edTPA. NAME warned policymakers and teacher education programs that edTPA could promote a single way of training teachers that is decontextualized from the people and relationships that most support meaningful learning and limits the autonomy of students, teachers, and teacher educators to co-create new forms of educating in

diverse contexts (NAME Political Action Committee, 2014).

Further, adoption of nationally standardized teacher performance assessments such as edTPA disadvantages comprehensive, university-based teacher education programs as compared with so-called alternative certification, or “alt-cert,” pathways to credentialing. Designed to optimize “efficiency,” these programs, such as Relay Graduate School of Education, are often privatized and/or strongly aligned with the charter school movement. While edTPA sets a floor to prevent alt-cert programs from falling below a basic quality level, it also provides a template around which such programs can design their entire curriculum, in effect “teaching to the test.” The end result may be to give aspiring teachers the mistaken impression, based solely on edTPA scores, that these alt-cert programs are a more cost-effective option. Such misperception can only contribute to declining enrollments in university-based teacher education programs, which have developed research-based curricula designed to prepare professional, caring educators for the public schools of Connecticut.

³ *A collective of teacher educators chose to study the impact of the edTPA on teacher dispositions by piloting an edTPA Scoring Consortium that served as an alternative to Pearson scoring and project participants involved teacher educators of various ranks from the following institutions: State University of New York at New Paltz, D’Youville College, Teachers College, City University of New York Graduate Center, New York Institute of Technology, Hunter College, and State University of New York at Confronting the edTPA in Connecticut*

Cortland. The project incorporated both in-person and virtual collaboration and found persistent issues with how the edTPA was understood by teacher candidates as another measure to reinforce a White norm and emphasize performing Whiteness in teaching activities (Tuck & Gorlewski, 2016).

⁴ <https://www.nameorg.org/docs/Statement-rr-edTPA-1-21-14.pdf>

SCHOLARS RESPOND TO SCALE DEFENDERS

From “Navigating the Contested Terrain of Teacher Education Policy and Practice: Authors Respond to SCALE”, Henning et. al. (2018)

In their response to the edTPA critiques... Whittaker, Pecheone & Stansbury (2018)[...]refer to edTPA as “developed by and for the profession” (p. 3), liken it to professionalizing movements in medicine and law, and cite multiple SCALE-authored analyses of its validity. Moreover, although they note they are “consistently combatting” (p. 5) issues related to implementation, they are nevertheless “encouraged that edTPA can be a positive force in the development of teachers” (p. 5).

While teacher performance assessment “can” be a valuable tool within teacher preparation programs...our own experience, as well as those documented in the growing external research of edTPA implementation indicates that edTPA, as a privately operated, high stakes, and externally scored assessment, does not live up to this potential. Despite our respect for the scholars and faculty who originally developed teacher performance assessments, and for Whittaker et al. themselves, we do not see unrealized potential as sufficient rationale for national policy change. We question the motivation for SCALE and AACTE’s relentless edTPA advocacy at the state and university level, and especially the push for high-stakes state-level edTPA implementation prior to comprehensive, external analyses of equity, impact or predictive validity.

As scholars, we are troubled by the lack of transparency regarding edTPA processes, and echo other scholars’ (Hébert, 2017) concerns about the risks of relying primarily upon self-published internal validity analyses. AACTE and SCALE have been active agents in advancing non-critical analyses of edTPA through the publication of a “review of research” (SCALE, 2015) comprised primarily of internal, unrelated and pro-edTPA research (see Hébert, 2017), the creation of an online edTPA “resource library” that features only pro-edTPA scholarship, and the use of AACTE listservs and social media platforms to publicize pro-edTPA research (Ayers, 2015). This is especially concerning in light of examples of teacher education scholars who have faced professional censure (Madeloni, 2014) or social media trolling (see Ayers, 2015) related to anti-edTPA speech or action. Indeed these are the types of ideological, professional, and personal attacks that helped to inspire our collective questioning.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

1.

Development of assessment that is flexible for teacher education programs and teaching contexts. Connecticut should develop a teacher assessment that can flexibly align with the unique philosophies and designs of its teacher education programs so as to preserve the high quality and rich range of programs across the state. Such an assessment should not require programs to comply to a privately copyrighted format and language and set of competencies, but should capture the range of core teaching practices (Grossman, et al., 2009), such as those identified by UConn’s nationally top ranked teacher education programs. This type of assessment might include a broader range of core practices and the unique expertise of all stakeholders--cooperating teachers, teacher educators, and the candidates themselves.

2.

Development of portfolio assessment that is developmentally appropriate to teacher candidates and aligned with the expectations for Connecticut practicing teachers. Connecticut should develop a teacher assessment that takes into account the development of educators across the range of their experience in a preparation program and allows them to demonstrate growth as well as mastery. Such an assessment might include reflective portfolios featuring a collection of longitudinal data documenting content knowledge development, professional engagement, and growth over time (Zeichner, 2012). Useful elements of the edPTA assessment, such as those targeting lesson planning and reflecting on practice, might be part of a portfolio approach that attends to developmental appropriateness and offers adequate time for candidates to reveal their learning processes and growth. This approach would also align with current induction and review practices of many Connecticut districts, which are rooted around core practices that include asking questions, differentiating instruction, providing multiple student assessments, all with a reflective component (Danielson, 2013; Marzano, 2013).

3.

Development of assessment that supports the state’s goal of recruiting more minority teachers and ensuring more equitable teaching and learning opportunities for all. Connecticut should develop an assessment that is specifically designed to support a diverse, culturally responsive teacher corps. According to the Connecticut State Department of Education (n.d.), it is the current policy of the state to “recruit minority students attending institutions of higher education to enroll in teacher preparation programs and pursue teaching careers.” Assessment of teacher candidates should be designed to honor the diverse experiences, skills, and capacities of candidates of color, and should encourage all teacher candidates to demonstrate cultural responsiveness across the range of their teaching practice.

4.

Development of assessment through an inclusive, deliberative, and consultative process. Connecticut should develop an assessment through a process that takes into account the perspectives, experiences, expertise, and interests of the full range of stakeholders in our schools. Such a process would include not only teacher educators, policymakers, and school administrators, but practicing teachers, students, parents, employers, and other community members.

Based on these recommendations, we strongly urge a pause in or reversal of the current implementation of edTPA in the state of Connecticut to consider these concerns. In creating a context for excellent schools and teachers, we cannot take shortcuts and must invest the time in creating a more thoughtful and specific assessment that is relevant and meaningful for teacher candidates and their students. While a reconsideration of what an assessment might look like would have short term costs, the edTPA in itself is not cost effective for its teachers; instead of putting the financial responsibilities for creating a strong teaching force on the state, it puts them on the teacher candidates and teacher education programs. We recognize that pre-packaged, easy solutions from external companies can be attractive; however, there is no substitute for creating nuanced, contextualized, and caring assessment for teacher candidates and practicing teachers because their growth and learning is intimately tied to the relationships and knowledge of their local communities in consideration with state and national standards. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with you and a broad coalition of public education stakeholders to help develop such an assessment system.

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