



April 22, 2024

The Honorable Anna M. Caballero  
State Capitol, Room 412  
Sacramento CA 95814

**RE: Opposition to SB 1263 (Newman)**

Dear Senator Caballero:

As an organization committed to advancing policies and practices that dismantle the racial and economic barriers embedded in California’s education system, Ed Trust–West (ETW) must oppose SB 1263 (Newman). This bill would remove teaching performance assessments (TPAs) from teaching credential requirements. ETW opposes SB 1263 because research has proven that TPAs are a valuable tool for measuring and developing teacher effectiveness and for evaluating and improving educator preparation programs. While significant work must be done to ensure assessments are high quality and not overly burdensome, scoring of rubrics is free of bias, and candidates receive the support needed to demonstrate mastery, we believe that eliminating performance assessments would not be in the best interest of California’s students of color and low-income students. These students are most likely to be taught by novice teachers and deserve for those teachers to be adequately prepared for the classroom.

ETW is committed to ensuring that California’s students, particularly students of color, have access to a high quality, racially and linguistically diverse teacher workforce, and as such, we share your desire to remove unnecessary barriers to entering the teaching profession. For this reason, we support Governor Newsom’s proposal to eliminate the basic skills requirement because research has failed to demonstrate a relationship between aspiring teachers’ performance on basic skills assessments and their students’ learning. Research does, however, indicate that teaching performance assessments are the best available measure of teacher preparedness.

Research on TPAs suggests that candidates’ performance is predictive of their students’ learning gains as measured by standardized test scores, and that TPAs are less likely to produce disparities in pass rates by teacher candidates’ race/ethnicity than traditional multiple choice exams (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Wilson, M., Hallam, P. J., Pecheone, R., & Moss, P. A., 2014; Goldhaber, D., Cowan, J., & Theobald, R., 2017). TPA portfolios collect evidence



of teachers' actual instruction through videotapes, curriculum plans, and samples of student work and learning, along with teacher commentaries explaining the basis for teachers' decisions about instructional strategies. They are designed to assess teachers' ability to plan instruction, teach diverse learners, assess student learning, and reflect on and improve their practice.

TPAs should be considered alongside more comprehensive evidence of teaching competencies, and the workload required for TPA completion should be reduced to ensure the assessment is not deterring qualified candidates of color from entering the profession. In an important step to that end, in December 2023, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) relaxed TPA scoring requirements so even more candidates will pass on the first try. The CTC added a secondary passing standard so candidates who are within 1 standard error of the TPA cut score can still be moved forward for a credential if their program determines there is other evidence to suggest they are ready. If the new standard had been used over the past two years, the CTC reported that this change would have allowed preparation programs to review other performance measures for “2,000 of the 2,731 candidates who did not pass CalTPA Cycle 1 on their first attempt, 953 of 1,152 candidates who did not pass CalTPA Cycle 2 on their first attempt, and 360 of the 1,124 candidates who did not pass the edTPA in 2021-22 and 2022-23”, rather than requiring these candidates to resubmit (CTC, December 2023). This important change has not yet had a chance to take effect, suggesting that a radical change to licensure requirements prior to letting the new policy take effect may be premature.

TPAs provide a crucial measure of educator preparedness that is consistent across preparation pathways and institutions, thus providing a way to hold programs accountable for adequately preparing candidates and providing information about how they can better do so. Recent research suggests that candidates of color are more likely to attend lower quality preparation programs, contributing to lower first-attempt TPA pass rates for these candidates (Patrick, S. K., Darling-Hammond, L., & Kini, T., 2023). Best-attempt passing rates for the CalTPA and EdTPA suggest that, with support, over 95 percent of candidates of each race/ethnicity pass the assessment to obtain their credential.

We believe that rather than eliminating all performance assessments, the state can and should streamline and improve the administration and scoring of TPAs to ensure they are an additive, constructive experience for candidates, and that they do not have a disparate impact for candidates of color. Doing so is critical for both addressing the state's shortage of teachers of color and providing all students with teachers who are fully prepared to teach.

For all of the above reasons, we must respectfully oppose SB 1263.



**The Education Trust—West**  
Fierce advocates for educational  
justice, pre-k through college.

Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

Brian M. Rivas  
Senior Director, Policy and Government Relations  
Ed Trust—West

cc: Senator Josh Newman  
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee  
Lenin Del Castillo, Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee