*Testimony of*

**Katherine Grant**

**Connecticut Education Association**

*Before the*

**Education Committee**

Re:

**SB 363 AN ACT CONCERNING ASSORTED REVISIONS TO THE EDUCATION STATUTES**

March 11, 2024

Good afternoon, Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and distinguished members of the Education Committee.

My name is Katie Grant, and I work as an Organizer with the Connecticut Education Association on behalf of teachers across the state. I was previously a high school English teacher in Manchester, CT.

I testify today in support of Senate Bill 363, specifically section 7 of the bill, which outlines that, “The results of such preservice performance assessment (the EdTPA) shall not be used by (1) the State Board of Education to deny an application for the issuance of an initial educator certificate under section 10-145b, or (2) an institution of higher education to deny successful completion of a teacher preparation program.”

The legislature took an important step last year when edTPA was decoupled from certification. As a former teacher candidate at UConn who was required to complete edTPA, I am immensely grateful because the repeal of this assessment is critical in our efforts to recruit, retain, and support the most qualified and dedicated teacher candidates. Thank you for this work.

Being required to complete edTPA took away from my experience when I was student teaching because I had to complete a portfolio that was entirely inauthentic to my teaching context and style. The “lesson sequence” I had to teach for this test felt artificial to both the content of my teaching and the culture I had created in my classroom. It was so frustrating to know that I had to sacrifice time to complete a portfolio that would only provide me with scripted, rubric-based feedback instead reflecting on my practice with real, in-person people who knew me and knew my growth over the many years I spent preparing to become an educator.

Beyond my individual experience with the portfolio, research asserts that the use of edTPA is unwarranted on technical grounds. It is assessed to have alarming results from racial bias reviews. And, it operates as a gatekeeper, preventing qualified candidates from earning their initial teaching certification. The use of this portfolio has incredibly detrimental effects on future educators.

Yet, under the current legislation, edTPA can still be used as an accountability metric for Educator Prep Programs, where candidates are required to complete the portfolio in order to complete their program requirements–which they need for certification. Without this important addition to the current language, teacher candidates are being asked to complete a process that we know is an inauthentic measurement of their capacities and readiness, that we know is not valid or reliable, that we know is not a fair assessment across certain demographics of teacher candidates, and that we know is a cost-burden to hold their prep programs accountable.

If this portfolio is not a good metric for certification, it should also not be considered a good metric for completion of a program.

The legislature has taken an important step in ensuring that teacher candidates have certification requirements that are aligned with our values in the state and that implement good teaching practices. This proposed change ensures that those good teaching practices are upheld during a candidate’s time in an educator preparation program as well. I ask that you also consider adding additional language that outlines that if edTPA is used, it should be done so at no cost to the teacher candidate. This will help to ensure edTPA does not pose as a financial barrier to entering the teaching profession for a teacher candidate.

We know that schools are vital institutions for communities and individuals. We know that compassionate, capable adults who help run our schools play a critical role in the lives of young people. And we know that every student deserves a highly-skilled teacher at all stages of their education. This bill helps to make these ideals a reality in our state and aids in supporting the recruiting and retaining of teachers in a more sustainable profession.

I ask you to support SB 363, and specifically section 7, to continue your support of teacher candidates across the state and to clarify that if a student is required to complete edTPA, that it is at no cost to the student.

Thank you for your work on behalf of students, teachers, and future teachers in the state and for your consideration of this matter.

Please see below for more information regarding edTPA from the fact sheet I helped to develop last year:

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| **edTPA is not valid.**   * edTPA/Pearson has not released the validation metrics for outside analysis. * There is no peer-reviewed evidence that edTPA scores predict teacher candidate readiness to teach. |
| **edTPA is not reliable.**   * Gitomer et al. (2021) examination of edTPA “raise[ed] serious concerns about scoring design, the reliability of the assessments, and the consequential impact on decisions about edTPA candidates.” * They argue that the use of edTPA is unwarranted on technical grounds and should not be used as a high-stakes assessment (Gitomer, et al., 2021). |
| **edTPA is not an authentic measure of student teachers’ capacities or readiness.**   * edTPA scoring is decontextualized from the student teaching experience. The rater never meets the candidate, the students, cooperating teacher, nor the university supervisor. * Teaching videos and reflections required by the edTPA do not reflect the complexity and multifaceted aspect of teaching. * edTPA is “performative” and is more of a proxy of students writing fluency than ability to teach. |
| **edTPA diminishes professionalization of the teaching profession.**   * The use of edTPA reduces professionalism because it narrows the student teaching experience and school of education curricula to “teaching to a test” and monopolizes time during clinical coursework. * edTPA reduces the professionalism of teacher educators by giving a singular, outside, anonymous “evaluator” the power to overrule the decisions of qualified and experienced teacher educators and cooperating teachers. * edTPA has been criticized by several professional organizations (such as the National Association of Special Education Association Teachers), who argue that their own standards of excellence are not reflected in edTPA standards. This undermines the authority of professional organizations. |
| **edTPA is not a fair assessment across demographics of student teachers.**   * Petchauer et al.(2018) found “mixed and alarming results from edTPA racial bias reviews,” noting:   + “In the state of Washington in 2012-2013, Latinx teacher candidates were 3 times more likely to fail edTPA compared with White candidates.”   + Therefore, Edtpa produces “...mixed and alarming results from edTPA racial bias reviews… the exam may constrain or permit justice.” (p. 323) * edTPA operates as a gatekeeper preventing qualified candidates from earning their initial teaching certification, which is especially concerning during a teaching shortage (Okraski & Kissau, 2018). |
| **edTPA is infrequently used.**   * Only 3 states, including Connecticut, mandate the use of the edTPA portfolio–the other two are Utah and Alabama. * In the past 5 years, at least 6 states (including New Jersey and New York) have eliminated the use of edTPA. Many states eliminated the portfolio in response to their teacher shortages. |
| **edTPA does not allow for continual program improvement.**   * edTPA is a summative, not a formative evaluation. In the basic principles of teaching, formative assessment data is used to make modifications to teaching practices; summatives are not. * edTPA provides a singular data-point representing the qualifications of TCs and does not provide any feedback to teacher educators or to teacher education programs. |
| **edTPA is an additional cost-burden and stressor on teacher candidates.**   * TCs must pay $300, which goes directly from students of Connecticut to a private, for-profit company based outside of the state. * This cost occurs in addition to other cost-burdens on TCs: Currently, candidates pay upwards of $800 to over $1000 in out-of-pocket in standardized testing fees (e.g., CT Foundations of Reading test (Pearson) ($139), CTCE) Early Childhood exam ($139), Praxis Core ($150) / SAT, Praxis Content ($209), edTPA ($300), just to earn their initial teaching license. * If a candidate does not pass all or part of the required standardized tests, they may have to pay to retake it each time. * *“*As a state initiative, implementing edTPA as a licensure requirement was angst-ridden in Georgia*…* juggling and attending to competing demands, responsibilities, and roles caused immense levels of stress” (Many et al., 2019, p. 20) - *Education Policy Analysis Archives* |