

What Principals Should Know About edTPA

Teacher candidates pursuing their initial teaching certificate operate today in a robust culture of performance assessment. edTPA is a student-centered, multiple-measure assessment of teaching. It is intended to be used as a summative assessment given at the end of an educator preparation program for teacher licensure or certification and to support state and national program accreditation.

Essentially, edTPA is designed to answer the question, “Is a new teacher ready for the job?” It is part of a national effort to establish a high bar for entry into the profession. Thirty-eight states so far and the District of Columbia use this high-stakes performance assessment in varying ways.

By engaging in edTPA, beginning teachers should be able to:

- Develop and apply knowledge of their students’ varied language and learning strengths and needs;
- Consider research and theory about how students learn; and
- Reflect and act on evidence of the effects of their instruction on student learning.

Teacher candidates preparing for edTPA must document their classroom work by submitting a portfolio that includes lesson plans for three to five connected days of instruction, student assignments, assessments, unedited video clips of their own teaching, and commentaries on student learning and how the candidate adjusted instruction to meet student needs. edTPA is very similar to the assessment undertaken by candidates for National Board Certification, but is scaled to the preservice level.

6 Tips to Support Candidates Completing edTPA

Classroom teachers and school principals can play an essential role as they support and mentor the next generation of teachers who are preparing for this rigorous performance assessment.

The following tips are intended to help you support candidates as they engage in the high-stakes edTPA while staying focused on schoolwide teaching and learning goals.

1. Help candidates sort things out.

Student teaching is stressful for teacher candidates. Candidates often find themselves straddling the two worlds of classroom experience and completing their



program requirements. Although edTPA is designed to be educative, it is a high-stakes assessment. To support edTPA as a reflective experience, a principal can help candidates to prioritize their work, connect their edTPA work to the school's broader learning goals, and ease candidates' anxiety during the most intensive part of their teacher preparation.

2. Coach. Teacher candidates always benefit from instructional coaching and observations. Follow-up conversations with candidates can help them to understand the impact of their instruction on student learning, a key goal of edTPA.

will help reduce candidates' anxiety about fitting it all in.

In the weeks leading up to edTPA, cooperating teachers can help candidates get to know students, build confidence as teachers, and choose a class and topic and focus students for the edTPA learning segment. When candidates teach their edTPA lessons, cooperating teachers should give the candidate full responsibility for planning, teaching, and assessing the class.

4. Create space. With the growing prominence of rigorous curriculum, assessments, and testing, there is sometimes a tension between

teaching segment. Before recording their classroom instruction, candidates must ensure that they have the appropriate permission from the parents/guardians of their students and from the adults who appear in the video recording. The release form should be clear about the purpose and confidentiality of edTPA materials. Principals can support candidates' video requirements by making sure the permission forms are specific and limited in their focus and help to communicate with parents about the specific use of video to support the candidates' professional growth and certification.

Professional learning continuum



In particular, probing questions that ask teacher candidates to sort through their teaching can provide an outside lens on their teaching and analysis of student learning and support the candidates' written commentaries.

3. Help cooperating teachers understand edTPA. The experience is designed to align with the teaching and learning happening before and after the three to five days of instruction documented for edTPA. Principals can reinforce the key role that cooperating teachers play in supporting candidates as they work in their classrooms to complete edTPA while supporting their students' needs. Helping candidates and cooperating teachers to find space within all of their other classroom priorities for the candidates to teach and analyze their three to five edTPA lessons

urgent school needs to improve student performance and concerns about letting teacher candidates have enough time and space to practice teaching. Principals can help candidates and their cooperating teachers establish a dedicated "teaching window" for edTPA lessons during student teaching so there is a space in the classroom schedule to allow independent teaching. In the week or two after the learning segment, cooperating teachers should be aware that the candidate will need time to select video clips, write commentaries, and submit edTPA for scoring while keeping up with regular teaching duties; here, a co-teaching approach can provide some flexibility.

5. Support videotaping. Each candidate must record and submit an unedited video recording of a

6. Connect to the professional learning continuum for teaching. Help candidates see how edTPA is a part of the professional continuum of teacher assessment, particularly in states where there are ongoing performance assessments for teachers. Given the rigors of edTPA, it is helpful to understand how the assessment is not an isolated hoop to jump through. An increased focus on connecting to practicing teachers' professional development and assessment initiatives will provide both teacher candidates and their cooperating teachers with a vision of and support for how edTPA connects to a broader continuum of professional development for teaching. **P**

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