



# TEXAS edTPA PILOT IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES *and* RECOMMENDATIONS

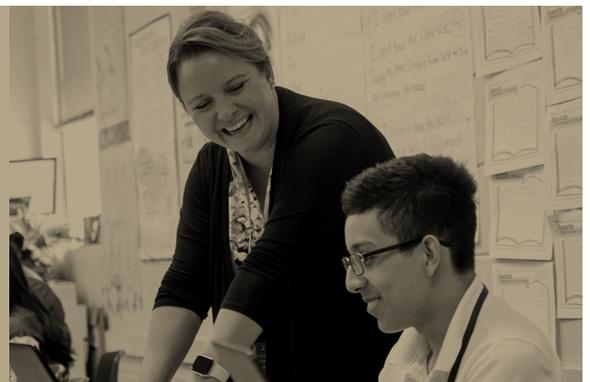
The edTPA is a performance-based, subject-specific teacher certification assessment and support system that the State of Texas is piloting through 2022. Launched by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in 2019, the edTPA represents one of the most significant, transformative initiatives the agency has offered related to educator preparation programs (EPPs) coursework and programming. For the first year of the pilot, 2019-2020, 23 EPPs signed up to participate.

Educate Texas Convened the edTPA Community of Practice (edTPA CoP), a diverse collection of educator preparation programs from across the state committed to thoughtful implementation of the edTPA assessment and quality educator preparation overall. The edTPA CoP met regularly from the launch of the pilot through 2021 to share experiences, best practices, and resources to help other current and future pilot EPPs better serve their teacher candidates.

TNTP conducted one-on-one interviews with EPP staff from participating programs and gained insights from participants on the pilot program in year one of implementation 2019-2020. Together, with the feedback from the edTPA CoP participants, key findings emerged that we outline below along with recommendations to further support edTPA implementation. Notably, in 2020, the pilot programs had to contend with the needs that the COVID-19 Pandemic induced. The findings below are considered non-COVID related and should be considered for future programs as we navigate out of the COVID-19 Pandemic.



“The candidates themselves could point to improvements because it makes you reflect, and it makes you write, and it moves the assessment into the classroom of kids at their work, so they’re reflecting deeply about the kids in their class... I would say just the self-reflection is fantastic.”



## PREPARATION FOR IMPLEMENTATION

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Participants indicated needing a minimum of two full semesters prior to implementation to prepare faculty and students, gain their buy-in, and embed edTPA in their current programs, specifically working on aligning the academic language. They also stated the need for TEA to make clear and defined announcements of the requirements well in advance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide as much time as possible for EPPs to prepare if the edTPA is implemented at additional sites or statewide.
- Offer workshops and training materials to EPPs in the year prior to implementing edTPA.

## FINANCIAL BARRIERS

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The financial costs of edTPA combined with the fees that candidates already pay for their courses and tests may prove to be a barrier of entry into the profession as well as disproportionately impact candidates of color.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider financial supports for candidates to offset the cost of edTPA, particularly in shortage areas such as bilingual education and special education.
- Mitigate financial barriers to entry, such as upfront costs experienced by clinical teachers and other candidates.
- Explore additional financial supports for candidates taking the clinical teaching track that mirror the Title II funds internship candidates who are teachers of record can receive.
- Identify ways to streamline the reimbursement/ stipend process for teachers of record to ensure that Title II fund reimbursements reach the candidates.

## TESTING BURDENS

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Teacher candidates are expected to complete multiple assessments that overlap with one another, creating barriers for candidates to complete certifications for high shortage areas.

Candidates seeking certification in EC6 and special education are required to submit two full handbooks under current edTPA implementation, which is both cost- and time-prohibitive.

Those seeking bilingual instruction face a minimum of 6 different assessments, including the edTPA, even if they are native Spanish speakers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Minimize burden of testing.
  - Identify areas of duplicative content across general, specialization and high shortage areas, and eliminate those requirements where possible
  - Consider the additional requirements with science of reading and whether there are ways to consolidate and streamline testing requirements for candidates.

## DIVERSE NEEDS

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Alternative Certification Programs and Traditional Programs found they had differentiated needs amongst their candidates.

- Alternative Certification Program candidates found it challenging to balance their responsibilities being a teacher of record with completing the edTPA.
- Candidates in different stages of their training found that their needs were different enough to warrant specific group pairings and separate guidance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Connect programs working with teachers at the same stage of training (pre-service versus in-service) and consider providing differentiated guidance for these two groups.

Develop guidance specifically for alternative route programs on how to best implement edTPA (informed by best practices in other states).

Provide guidance on how to build candidates' writing skill sets, with edTPA requirements in mind.

## TIMING PRESSURE POINTS

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Many teacher candidates experienced issues with the timing of submission for edTPA on top of their program coursework, internships and student teaching testing.

Specifically, teachers of record in spring have to submit portfolios on limited timelines built around contract renewal deadlines and standardized testing dates.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Identify and address timing pressure points experienced by edTPA candidates.

Consider offering the option to extend the Intern Certificate an additional year to provide more flexibility to candidates finishing their edTPA requirements.

## COMMUNICATION NEEDS

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Educator Preparation Programs struggled to communicate what edTPA was, how it differed from the PPR, and that it was an "official" alternative to the PPR.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Post edTPA pilot information on the TEA website so that districts understand what the edTPA is and that it is "official."

Provide branded TEA communication deliverables targeted toward districts that:

- Validate the pilot
- Explain that the edTPA replaces the PPR
- Outline tasks candidates must perform for a successful submission
- Provide guidance to districts on providing video recording permissions for the edTPA

Share lessons learned from pilot programs with Texas-specific examples of what went well, what was challenging, and how EPPs addressed the challenges. Include teacher voice and experience in these communications.



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