

MEMORANDUM

To: School District Superintendents
School District Personnel Administrators

From: Washington State Professional Educator Standards Board

RE: Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA)

Date: June 18, 2012

Prompted by Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) recommendation and broad-based stakeholder support, the 2010 Legislature, in enacting SB 6696, put in place a new, performance-based assessment of teaching effectiveness all preservice candidates must pass in order to receive their first (residency) teaching certificate. Washington State is now the lead in a consortium with over 20 states committed to implementation of the Teacher Performance Assessment (TPA). The TPA is a classroom-based assessment administered during the student teaching field experience. The readiness of a candidate to teach effectively is the focus of this assessment and it includes written documents, video clips, samples of P-12 student work and written teacher candidate reflections. This assessment is in addition to the existing candidate observations by university/college supervisors and P-12 mentor teachers. All PESB-approved teacher preparation programs in Washington State are currently piloting the TPA with all their preservice candidates. By 2013, successful passage of the TPA will be required for certification. At the national level, the consortium of states led by Stanford University, American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, and the Council of Chief State School Officers, with Pearson as an operational partner, are all committed to a rigorous research and policy agenda aimed at ensuring the predictive validity of this assessment for use across all states.

Part of the PESB's charge in ensuring the highest standards for educator preparation and certification is ensuring high quality field placements for preservice teachers. More than ever, we rely upon districts to help us ensure that teacher candidates—who represent your future workforce--have opportunities to demonstrate the extensive skills needed by today's teachers. Research also suggests that student learning and veteran teacher professional development significantly benefit when preservice teacher field experiences are well integrated. We believe the TPA supports both of these benefits and hope you will work with our teacher preparation programs to support their efforts in producing beginning teachers who have demonstrated effectiveness in planning, instruction, assessment, and analysis of teaching, with an emphasis on academic language and use of "student voice".

How Districts Can Support High Quality Field Placements and Implementation of the TPA:

- Research, and the TPA, support early and careful consideration of student teaching placements and the teachers who mentor them, including:
 - Selection of cooperating teachers who possess newer knowledge and skill competencies now expected of beginning teachers, such as English Language Acquisition, cultural competence and academic language.
 - Planning for longer field placements than traditional student teaching, including extended time when the student teachers will play a more primary instructional role. Early planning can ensure student teaching is well-integrated into the classroom / school curricular / instructional goals rather than distract from it

- Communication to Parents
 - P-12 students will be videotaped during lessons conducted by the preservice candidates as evidence for the TPA. These video clips will be submitted for scoring purposes only. Parental permission will be required before videotaping can take place. Each district, in collaboration with their partner teacher preparation program, will need to review and determine whether current district processes and procedures for securing parental permission are adequate or whether additional measures are necessary. A sample consent form is available on the PESB website at [insert link]. Use of this particular form is not required but may be helpful; in many cases, existing district procedures may provide adequate assurance.

The PESB is proud to have positioned Washington State as leader of the national consortium, but our enthusiasm primarily lies in the positive benefit of this assessment to teachers and students. The success of this assessment and the pre-service candidates who are participating in the assessment will depend on the involvement of knowledgeable and effective educators who are working side by side with the next generation of Washington teachers.

PESB staff and PESB-approved teacher preparation programs look forward to working with Washington school districts and their teachers as we join efforts to support and guide pre-service candidates through the TPA. Please do not hesitate to contact your university/college partner or PESB staff if you have any questions or concerns. Below are links to additional information regarding the TPA.

PESB TPA website: <http://assessment.pesb.wa.gov/assessments/pact>

Pearson TPA website: <http://tpafieldtest.nesinc.com/>