
4E

Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Proposed Adoption of Passing Standard for the Education Specialist edTPA Performance Assessment

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents for review and potential adoption a passing standard for the California Education Specialist edTPA performance assessment.

Recommended Action: That the Commission adopt the edTPA Education Specialist Teaching Performance Assessment for operational administration and establish the recommended passing score standards for initial implementation.

Presenters: David DeGuire, Director, and Mike Taylor, Consultant, Professional Services Division; Nicole Merino, edTPA National Director, Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE); Kellie Crawford, Director for edTPA, and Lori Kroeger, Senior Educational Consultant, Evaluation Systems group of Pearson

Strategic Plan Goal

I. Educator Quality

- b) Develop, maintain, and promote high quality authentic, consistent educator assessments and examinations that support development and certification of educators who have demonstrated the capacity to be effective practitioners.

Proposed Adoption of Passing Standard for the Education Specialist edTPA Performance Assessment

Introduction

This agenda item provides information about the standard setting process and recommendation for passing score standard for the Education Specialist version of the edTPA for Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN) and Extensive Support Needs (ESN) candidates.

Background

At its [August 2018](#) meeting, the Commission adopted program standards and Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs) for the MMSN and ESN credentials, and in [April 2019](#) adopted authorization statements for these education specialist credentials. In addition, the Commission acted in December 2020, to make the successful demonstration of proficiency on a performance assessment for education specialist candidates a requirement for the preliminary credential. Education Code section 44259 was amended to include this requirement for earning a Preliminary Education Specialist Teaching Credential.

At its [August 2022](#) meeting, the Commission heard an update on the development of the Education Specialist versions of the edTPA and Fresno Assessment of Student Teaching performance assessments and separate analyses regarding a content review and a review for compliance with the [Commission's Assessment Design Standards](#). The Commission approved all three assessments as having met the content requirements and Assessment Design Standards and directed the assessment sponsors to conduct standard setting studies.

edTPA Field Test Summary

During spring 2022, Stanford University and the Evaluation Systems group of Pearson (Evaluation Systems) conducted a field test of the edTPA Special Education for California Handbook assessment. Recruitment for the field test was conducted through announcements in the Commission's PSD e-News, monthly California edTPA Coordinator Checkpoint meetings, and direct outreach by Stanford University. In total, two California programs participated in the Special Education for California Handbook field test. From one program, 19 candidates submitted scorable portfolios; two candidates from the other program registered for the Special Education for California Handbook field test, but neither submitted a portfolio.

While the participation in the Special Education for California Handbook field test was limited to these programs, other California candidates have completed the national edTPA Special Education assessment as a program completion requirement since 2014. During the initial years of operational use, the national handbook underwent several revisions. The current version of the handbook became available in 2018. The data provided in this report includes data from both the 19 Special Education for California Handbook field test examinees who submitted a portfolio and 75 examinees from the California sample who completed the national edTPA Special Education assessment between October 2018 and April 2022. The use of data from the

national assessment in this summary report is appropriate because the two assessments share many requirements, including exact prompts and scoring criteria for 14 of the 15 rubrics.

Scoring and Scorers

Scoring of the Special Education for California Handbook field test was conducted by current, qualified, and calibrated assessors who have expertise in special education, specifically within the field specialty areas of MMSN and ESN for the Special Education for California Handbook field test; experience in working with English learners; and who completed the Special Education for California Handbook field test scorer training. The Special Education for California Handbook field test scorer training was conducted by Stanford University and Evaluation Systems in May 2022 and provided all Special Education for California Handbook field test scorers with an opportunity to learn about the differences between the national edTPA Special Education and edTPA Special Education for California Handbook assessments as well as an opportunity to ask clarifying questions about the Special Education for California Handbook. Additionally, scorers reviewed and calibrated against a benchmarked portfolio from the Special Education for California Handbook field test submissions.

Scoring of the 19 Special Education for California Handbook field test portfolios took place over a period of two weeks in May 2022. The additional 75 California Sample examinee portfolios were scored by nationally trained scorers with an expertise in special education, specifically within the field specialty areas indicated by candidates during registration, and experience working with English learners.

Data Analyses

The analyses presented in this report provide descriptive statistics for both the California Sample portfolios and the Special Education for California Handbook field test portfolios, including modeled pass rates.

Between October 2018 and April 2022, 75 teacher candidates from the California Sample completed the national edTPA Special Education handbook as a program completion requirement. During registration, candidates identified their special education specialty area from a list of nine options:

- Autism and developmental disorders
- Career development and transition
- Early childhood special education
- Emotional or behavioral
- Deaf and hearing impaired
- Learning disabilities
- Mild/moderate
- Moderate/severe
- Physical, health, and multiple disabilities
- Blind and visually impaired

To best represent MMSN and ESN California Education Specialist credential areas, only data from the California Sample examinees who selected the Learning Disabilities, Mild/Moderate,

and Moderate/Severe specialty areas have been included in the analyses reported here. Those data, along with data from the 19 candidates who completed the Special Education for California Handbook field test, have been included in this summary.

Standard Setting Event Overview

The standard setting was held in a one-day online event on September 28, 2022. A group of subject area experts and educators were convened into a panel for the standard setting session. Panelists were informed of the purpose of the assessment and provided the online materials (digital briefing book) to guide their activity. During the facilitated session, panelists familiarized themselves with the assessment and with the information contained in the briefing book. After a series of “Policy Capture Activities,” panelists recommended an initial cut score (which may also be referred to as a “passing standard”), which was then discussed and evaluated. Following that, panelists recommended a final cut score.

Prior to the meeting, each invited panelist received the edTPA Special Education for California Handbook, rubrics, scoring materials, and three previously scored sample submissions from the field test, representing different performance levels from the MMSN and ESN credential areas. Panelists were asked to review materials submitted by candidates and the scoring evidence identified by trained benchmarkers for the submissions that were assigned to them. The purpose of the pre-work was to ensure that participants were able to review the assessment architecture, to gain some exposure to a range of candidate responses, and to apply that information in the policy capture activities at the meeting.

edTPA Special Education for California Handbook Standard Setting Guiding Question

Throughout the standard setting event and examination of sample edTPA score profiles, a context statement and guiding question was used and revisited to frame all discussions. This statement and question provided a common framework in which all participants could anchor their decisions:

- Think about whether this candidate is “a teacher who is just at the level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform effectively the job of a new education specialist teacher in California public schools for students with Mild/Moderate Support Needs (MMSN) or Extensive Support Needs (ESN).”
- Guiding question: What score (the sum of all of the rubric scores of the edTPA) represents the level of performance that would be achieved by this individual?

Descriptive and Summary Data

Panelists were provided descriptive and summary data to help guide their recommendations. Descriptive and summary data included the number of portfolios scored in the two education specialist credential areas of MMSN and ESN, a summary of the population aggregate rubric, task and total edTPA performance (i.e., mean, standard deviation, median, minimum, maximum) for all candidates.

Demographics and total score descriptive performance statistics (i.e., number, percent, mean, standard deviation, median, minimum, maximum) were provided by gender and ethnicity. Finally, a distribution of total scores was provided for the data set.

Descriptive statistics for aggregated and disaggregated total score performance for California Sample examinees and Special Education for California Handbook field test Sample examinees are presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3.

Table 1. edTPA National Handbook California Sample: Mean Total Scores					
Specialty Area	Number of Examinees	Mean	Std	Min	Max
All specialty areas combined	75	42.44	5.80	30	65
Learning Disability	17	43.59	4.80	32	52
Mild/Moderate	40	42.13	5.56	32	60
Moderate/Severe	18	42.01	7.25	30	65

Table 2. edTPA Special Education for California Handbook field test Sample: Mean Total Scores					
Specialty Area	Number of Examinees	Mean	Std	Min	Max
Both specialty areas combined	19	40.00	5.01	30	50
MMSN	14	40.36	4.78	30	50
ESN	5	39.00	6.08	32	46

Table 3. edTPA Special Education for California Handbook Field Test Demographics with Total Score Descriptive Statistics							
Subgroups	N	Percent	Mean	Std	Median	Min	Max
Female	14	74	40.1	5.36	41.0	30	50
Male	5	26	39.6	4.39	39.0	34	46
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	11	41.0	4.24	41.0	38	44
Hispanic	12	63	40.2	5.44	41.0	30	50
Multiracial	2	11	36.5	6.36	36.5	32	41
White (not of Hispanic origin)	3	16	41.0	4.36	39.0	38	46

After reviewing the descriptive and summary data, and following discussion with the whole group, panelists were asked to make an initial recommendation for a cut score. Individually each panelist completed an initial cut score recommendation form and cut scores were gathered and tallied.

Impact Data

Panelists were provided with impact data (see [Appendix C](#)) to help inform their final recommendation. Impact data included the reporting of the passing rate that would have been observed based on the range of possible cut scores determined in Policy Capture. The number of candidates passing and the passing rate (as a percentage of all candidates in a given group) overall, by credential area and gender were also provided.

After reviewing impact data, and following discussion with the whole group, panelists were asked to make a final recommendation for a cut score. Individually, each panelist completed a final cut score recommendation form and cut score recommendations were gathered and tallied.

Panelist Recommended Passing Score

The panel followed the Briefing Book method described in [Appendix B](#), which looks at the content of actual candidate responses to determine which responses demonstrate the expected level at which candidates should perform. Individual panelists recommended passing scores between 39 and 41.

Table 4. Individual Panelist Recommended Cutscore

Cutscore	# Panelists
38	0
39	2
40	2
41	3
42	0

The mean score was 40.1, the median was 40, and mode was 41, and the panel’s final recommendation was 40. This is almost identical to the passing standards adopted by the Commission for the general education edTPA handbooks that also have 15 rubrics, which is 41.

Consideration of the Standard Error of Measure (SEM)

When the final panel score recommendation is determined, an additional modification is sometimes made to that score before it is presented to the Commission for potential adoption. This modification is the determination and potential application of an adjustment known as the SEM.

The SEM takes into consideration the fact that an assessment represents one single point in time when a candidate’s knowledge, skills, and abilities are measured. The score obtained on that day may or may not be fully reflective of the candidate’s true knowledge, skills, and

abilities. For example, if a candidate were to retake the test on multiple occasions, the candidate might well obtain several different scores. Scores are influenced by many factors, including, for example, the candidate’s health on a particular day, the candidate’s frame of mind, the point in the program at which the candidate takes the assessment, difference in the ratings given by the assessors, and other such factors that may have an influence on the score received on that assessment on that day. The candidate’s “true” score that most accurately reflects the candidate’s full set of knowledge, skills, and abilities, may lie somewhere within that total range of scores, and not just in one score obtained on one date in time. In addition, a single score could also potentially represent a “false negative” (i.e., the candidate did have sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities but the actual score did not closely enough represent the candidate’s true abilities) or a “false positive” (i.e., the candidate did not actually have sufficient knowledge, skills, and abilities but was able to earn a higher score than otherwise warranted). Finally, candidates were not required to achieve a passing score in the field test, so these scores may not represent their best efforts. For these reasons, an adjustment for this SEM may sometimes be made to address these factors.

The SEM has been calculated, and the corresponding passing scores at different SEM applications are found in the tables presented below. There are cautions in the interpretation of these SEM values. First, it is not known if this small sample represents the larger population of candidates; therefore, this may not be representative of the performance of the population. And, most importantly, due to the small sample, there is no way to know if these SEMs represent those that may be seen in the future, based on a larger group of candidates

Panelist Final Recommended Cutscore	Median	-2.0 SEM	-1.5 SEM	-1.0 SEM	-.5 SEM
Calculated Cutscore	40	37.30	37.97	38.65	39.32
Rounding Down in favor of candidate	40	37	37	38	39

Commission Passing Score Recommendations and SEM

Upon completion of the Standard Setting Study, Commission staff considered all field test data and important issues for consideration in setting initial passing standards that have been raised in other recent standard setting studies. Issues included concerns about how schools are adjusting to the return to in-person instruction for students, families/guardians, and teachers due to the COVID pandemic and the need to allow time for programs to incorporate the TPEs and performance assessments into coursework and clinical practice. Only two programs participated in the field test of the assessment and candidates from only one program submitted scorable assessments. This means there will be a large need for faculty, supervising teachers, and other district support providers to have the opportunity to learn about the assessment and how to appropriately support candidates. In addition, staff was concerned that with only 19 scores in the field test, it is very challenging to extrapolate to the general population of Education Specialist candidates, especially because there were ethnic subgroups not represented. In other words, because of the small sample size, the impact data in Appendix C may not be an accurate reflection of how a broader pool of candidates will perform on this assessment.

The Commission was faced with a similar situation when setting an initial passing standard for the [CSET: Theater and Dance exam subtests](#) in February 2022. All four subtests had only 9-11 examinees, and the impact data had limited predictive value. At that time, the Commission approved the proposed preliminary score standards with a -2.0 SEM and directed staff to work with the examinations contractor to conduct additional standard setting workshops after a full year of test administration and return to the Commission with a new passing standard recommendation. Staff recommends following a similar course with the edTPA Special Education Handbook for California.

Staff recommend that the Commission adopt the passing standard of 40 recommended by the panel of California content experts with the application of a -2.0 SEM. This would bring the actual passing score for the first year to 37.

Staff Recommendations

1. That the Commission establish the passing standard for initial implementation at 40 with the application of a -2.0 SEM, making the actual initial passing score 37.
2. That the Commission require the assessment sponsor to collect additional data during this first year of implementation, hold a new standard setting study in spring 2023, and submit an updated recommended passing standard to Commission staff in time to present to the Commission for action during their June 2023 meeting.
3. That the Commission retain the option of adjusting the passing score for the first operational year if the new standard setting study and impact data indicate a need.

Next Steps

If the Commission adopts the recommended passing standards, notification will be posted on the ES exams website (www.ctcexams.nesinc.com) and will be communicated to the field. Supports to the field would continue and be enhanced as staff works with programs to understand what is needed to prepare for the first administration this fall and for continued implementation over the next several years.

Appendix A

Standard Setting Panel

Panelist Name	Affiliation
Nadja Conway	Loyola Marymount University
Sucari Epps	Five Keys Charter School and Programs
Carl Ferguson	CSU Monterey Bay
Virginia Kennedy	CSU Northridge
Hillary Kolodner	SFUSD Pathway to Teaching
Amber Moran	UC Santa Barbara
Amy Satter	San Diego Unified School District

Appendix B

Overview of the Briefing Book Method

Standard setting is a process of determining what score on a test or assessment demonstrates a specified level of performance. Very broadly, the process begins with a statement of the intended performance standard – that is, a description of what people meeting the performance standard know and are able to do. The goal is then to determine a cut score on an accompanying test or assessment that separates those who meet the performance standard from those who do not. From a technical standpoint it is important that the cut score accurately and reliably distinguish between people who do and do not meet the performance standard. However, because articulation of a performance standard and the accompanying cut score entail value judgments, it is also important to ensure the performance standard and cut score are appropriate for the intended use.

The Briefing Book Method (BBM) is an evidence-based standard setting method intended to develop an appropriate and defensible cut score that can be supported with a validity argument. The BBM provides a framework and approach to standard setting rather than a specific set of steps or procedures that must be followed exactly. The primary aim is to follow a process that allows a body with the appropriate authority and knowledge to reach a defensible and appropriate judgment of a passing cut score.

The BBM proceeds in a number of steps, including an articulation of the purpose for the standard setting, data collection and synthesis, a standard setting session, and continued evaluation.

1. *Define purpose of assessment and standard setting.* Here the purpose of setting a cut score is outlined. This describes how the assessment and cut score will be used. An articulation of the performance standard is formulated. When the performance standard is articulated here, it is essential that the performance standard represent an appropriate level for the intended use and that it be directly aligned to what the assessment measures.
2. *Initial administration and data collection.* The intended use of the assessment will dictate the data that need to be collected during this stage. Minimally, information about the distribution of scores on the target assessment across relevant groups is needed for construction of the briefing book. Additional data might include the results of validity or reliability studies conducted to inform what different scores on the assessment mean and how consistent they are for the intended use.
3. *Briefing book assembly.* The briefing book is the primary source of information for participants who will recommend a cut score. The briefing book describes the nature of the assessment and the goal of the standard setting process. In addition, the briefing book contains evidence to a) characterize the level of performance at different potential cut scores and b) provide contextual information about the likely impact and appropriateness of different potential cut scores (e.g., passing rates). The characterizations of performance at different potential cut scores serve as performance standards corresponding to each cut score. Contextual information informs participants about the likely impact of a potential cut score. Additional information can be included as available and necessary.
4. *Standard setting session.* A group of domain experts and relevant policy makers are

convened as panelists for the standard setting session. These panelists are informed of the purpose of the assessment and provided with the briefing book. During a facilitated 1- or 2-day session panelists familiarize themselves with the assessment and with the information contained in the briefing book. Panelists recommend an initial cut score, which is then discussed and evaluated. At least one additional round of recommendations is usually conducted during the session, before the panel recommends a final cut score that best meets the needs of relevant stakeholders and the intended use of the assessment. Ideally this score is reached via consensus.

5. *Follow-up evaluation.* Following adoption of the cut score, subsequent administrations of the assessment are monitored to ensure the cut score is functioning as anticipated and is being used appropriately. This might include determining whether passing rates are at an acceptable level, whether those achieving passing scores demonstrate the intended level of performance in subsequent activities, and whether there is evidence of unequal passing rates or adverse impact across different groups of examinees.

References

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Appendix C

edTPA Special Education California Handbook Modeled Passing Rates: Impact Data

In this section, we report predicted passing rates at various cut scores. We do this by reporting the passing rate that would have been observed in the current sample of edTPA candidates based on a range of possible cut scores. We report the number of candidates passing and the passing rate (as a percentage of all candidates in a given group) overall, by credential area, and by demographic characteristics. These data provide information about anticipated passing rates, but as noted previously, because this is only a small sample of teacher candidates and because of the non-consequential stakes attached to the results varied by program and state, they do not necessarily represent the population of teacher candidates at large, or the exact passing rate expected in future administrations of the edTPA. They are meant to provide guidance in anticipating general passing rates.

Table 5. Modeled Passing Rates - edTPA Special Education for California

Cut Score	Total N	N Pass	% Pass
30	19	19	100
31	19	18	95
32	19	18	95
33	19	17	89
34	19	17	89
35	19	16	84
36	19	16	84
37	19	15	79
38	19	14	74
39	19	12	63
40	19	10	53
41	19	10	53
42	19	6	32
43	19	6	32
44	19	5	26
45	19	3	16
46	19	3	16
47	19	1	5
48	19	1	5
49	19	1	5
50	19	1	5
51	19	0	0
52	19	0	0
53	19	0	0
54	19	0	0
55	19	0	0

Table 6. Modeled Passing Rates - edTPA Special Education for California by Gender

Cut Score	Gender			
	Female		Male	
	N Pass	% Pass	N Pass	% Pass
30	14	100	5	100
31	13	93	5	100
32	13	93	5	100
33	12	86	5	100
34	12	86	5	100
35	12	86	4	80
36	12	86	4	80
37	11	79	4	80
38	10	71	4	80
39	9	64	3	60
40	8	57	2	40
41	8	57	2	40
42	5	36	1	20
43	5	36	1	20
44	4	29	1	20
45	2	14	1	20
46	2	14	1	20
47	1	7	0	0
48	1	7	0	0
49	1	7	0	0
50	1	7	0	0
51	0	0	0	0
52	0	0	0	0
53	0	0	0	0
54	0	0	0	0
55	0	0	0	0

Table 7. Modeled Passing Rates - edTPA Special Education for California by Race/Ethnicity

Cut Score	Race/Ethnicity			
	Hispanic		White (not of Hispanic origin)	
	N Pass	% Pass	N Pass	% Pass
30	12	100	3	100
31	11	92	3	100
32	11	92	3	100
33	11	92	3	100
34	11	92	3	100
35	10	83	3	100
36	10	83	3	100
37	9	75	3	100
38	8	67	3	100
39	8	67	2	67
40	7	58	1	33
41	7	58	1	33
42	4	33	1	33
43	4	33	1	33
44	3	25	1	33
45	2	17	1	33
46	2	17	1	33
47	1	8	0	0
48	1	8	0	0
49	1	8	0	0
50	1	8	0	0
51	0	0	0	0
52	0	0	0	0
53	0	0	0	0
54	0	0	0	0
55	0	0	0	0