



The Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education

January 20, 2021

**WACTE: 28 Educational
Preparation Programs for
Teacher Education at
50+ locations throughout
Washington State:**

Antioch University
Central Washington
University
Centralia College
City University of Seattle
Eastern Washington
University
Gonzaga University
Grays Harbor College
Heritage University
Highline College
Lower Columbia College
NW Educ. Development
Northwest University
Pacific Lutheran University
Pierce College
Seattle Pacific University
Seattle University
Saint Martin's University
The Evergreen State College
University of Puget Sound
University of WA Bothell
University of WA Seattle
University of WA Tacoma
Walla Walla University
Washington State University
Whitworth University
Western Governor's
University
Western WA University
Yakima Valley College

Maddy Thompson, Senior Policy Advisor
Office of the Governor
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Ms Thompson,

Following up on our conversation this morning, the Washington Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (WACTE) is the professional association representing 28 universities, colleges, schools and independent organizations preparing P-12 teachers in our state. WACTE acknowledges there are issues with the edTPA, and we continue to work with PESB to ensure those issues are addressed.

However, WACTE firmly believes there must be statewide standards to measure the effectiveness of new teachers, and without a process to consider if that assessment should change, we anticipate the edTPA remains in place to ensure continuity of preparing future teachers.

The current edTPA problems are two-pronged, and WACTE is afraid the prongs are being confused. The pandemic and associated shut downs have made it difficult for candidates with emergency certification to complete the assessment. At the same time, there are issues with the assessment itself. The solution to the first, short-term problem is not the same as the solution to the second, longer-term problem.

The short-term solution may be for Governor Inslee or the Legislature to suspend the statutory requirement for candidates to complete the edTPA until emergency rules and suspensions are no longer required due to COVID-19.

A longer-term solution to the underlying edTPA issues is contained in the Professional Educator Standards Board pilot of "multiple measures." This allows preparation programs to recommend candidates for full licensure if they are within one standard error of measurement of the edTPA cut score, and their preparation program feels the body of their work throughout their education demonstrates their readiness to teach in Washington classrooms. Collection of data will continue through this year, then PESB staff will analyze the results to determine if the multiple measures pilot was successful in breaking down barriers to becoming a teacher, specifically for diverse candidates.

My understanding is that Governor Inslee can suspend RCW 28A.410.280 for the duration of the emergency, and the legislature can confirm that suspension to continue beyond the initial 30 days through a concurrent resolution. The legislature, on the other hand, could do what they are on track to do with high school graduation requirements and suspend the law for the duration of the emergency.

It is our belief that suspension of RCW 28A.410.280 would fall under the Governor's authority in 43.06.220(2)(g) since "strict compliance with the provision" is interfering with the ability to fully license new teachers. New teachers are going to be critical in getting schools physically reopened, something that is going to be a lynchpin of the work to fully reopen the economy.

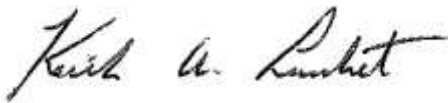
Just this morning, the New York Times detailed how pandemic teacher shortages are putting in peril the ability to hire thousands more teachers necessary for socially-distanced teaching.¹ The article details how many districts are dramatically lowering the required education for teachers and raising pay, but still cannot fully staff the classrooms they have opened.

Many Washington teacher candidates saw their student teaching experience cut short when the Governor's proclamation 20-08 closed schools in March. That made it impossible for them to gather the evidence they needed to submit for the edTPA. While many of them have been able to get a provisional teaching license, they only have two years under the PESB rules to complete the edTPA.

While preparation programs have been able to place some of their students in virtual student teaching as the pandemic wears on, it is my understanding that administrators of the edTPA were slow to adapt to scoring portfolios from virtual teaching. This leaves some candidates without the ability to even submit a portfolio for assessment, and others unsure of whether they will be able to achieve licensure because of systemic problems beyond their control.

As such, WACTE asks that Governor Inslee suspend the requirements of RCW 28A.410.280 for at least the duration of the declared pandemic emergency.

Thank you for your consideration.



Keith A Lambert, Ed.D.
WACTE President

¹ https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/19/us/pandemic-substitute-teacher-shortages.html?campaign_id=57&emc=edit_ne_20210119&instance_id=26182&nl=evening-briefing®i_id=101131966&segment_id=49744&te=1&user_id=953499fe9199dd88974ebec211955e89