September 20, 2016

MEMORANDUM

TO: County and City Superintendents of Education

FROM: Michael Sentance
State Superintendent of Education

RE: edTPA: A Partnership Between P-12 Schools and Educator Preparation Programs

On September 10, 2014, members of the Alabama State Board of Education adopted a resolution to endorse the concepts reflected in the report of the Alabama Commission on Educator Preparation, Licensure, and Entry into the Profession (ACEPLEP). One of the recommendations contained in the Commission report was that we explore the use of performance-based assessments of teaching practice. To this regard, the Alabama State Board of Education supported the use of edTPA teacher performance assessment to better prepare Alabama teachers for classroom instruction, thereby promoting student growth. Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) began piloting the edTPA in the Fall of 2015. Alabama is on target to fully implement the edTPA as a criterion for earning an initial Professional Educator Certificate by the fall semester of the 2018-2019 school year. That means that all teacher candidates completing Class B and Alternative A state-approved programs fall semester 2018-2019 and thereafter will be required to document having earned an acceptable score on the statewide performance assessment. Additionally, a performance assessment will be required for alternative routes leading to initial certification such as the Provisional Certificate in the Teaching Field (PCTF) approach beginning fall semester 2018-2019.

The EPPs were notified on October 6, 2014, that funds would be available to assist in integrating edTPA, a performance assessment developed by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) that is supported by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) that is based on the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) portfolio into their existing curricular and assessment frameworks. Performance assessments like edTPA provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate the complex knowledge and skills necessary as they begin careers in teaching. The edTPA challenges teacher education candidates to integrate their content knowledge into professional practice that promotes student learning and success. The edTPA will provide a uniform assessment that allows candidates, regardless of preparation pathway, to demonstrate that they are indeed ready for the profession before assuming full responsibility for teaching your students.
As educators and administrators, you know that evidence-based feedback on a teacher’s practice in the classroom is an invaluable resource in improving teacher performance and effectiveness. The edTPA process fosters this type of feedback in the scoring component and provides opportunities for teacher candidates to engage in self-reflection. In this regard, the edTPA promotes professional growth and better prepares candidates for the challenges of classroom instruction.

The continued successful implementation of the edTPA requires a deeper partnership between P-12 schools and EPPs. The edTPA is a multiple measure system that includes two primary components:

1. Teaching-related performance tasks embedded in pre-internship/student teaching that focus on planning, instruction, assessment, academic language, and analysis of teaching.

2. A three- to five-day documented learning segment. As in the past, you will be asked to host teacher candidates for their internship and strengthen pre-internship experience partnerships with your local EPP; however, these roles may change slightly with this additional edTPA requirement:

   - As a P-12 partner, local education agencies will be asked to allow student interns to videotape in your classrooms. The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has developed a uniform consent form to be used by each EPP and teacher candidates. Several school systems have communicated that it would be helpful to send these electronic video permission forms with other documents when parents are filling out registration forms for their children. This is definitely possible. Please consider using the video/audio release form in your registration process. The form is available in English and Spanish on our Webpage: http://www.alsde.edu/sec/ea/Pages/edtpa-all.aspx?navtext=edTPA. The first two forms listed are the parental consent forms. Alternatively, some school systems have requested to embed information in the current video release documentation that is sent home to parents. This also is possible. The information sent home must mention that students may be featured in a video used for education purposes and evaluated by third-party sources. Furthermore, this correspondence should mention that students’ work may be blindly submitted as part of this review. The ALSDE supports school systems embedding this information in their current video release. Many of the institutions have communicated that they would like to have the candidates practice capturing video clips of their teaching during field experiences. Having this information embedded in your current video release materials would ensure that this practice is covered and supported.

   - Teacher candidates will need input into the context and background, including Individualized Education Plans, of their students early in the clinical experience process so that they can learn to plan instruction based on specific student strengths and needs. We ask that you continue supporting them by providing this information.

   - The cooperating teacher will have a critical role in assisting the teacher candidate reflect on his or her instruction and lessons. Please allow teachers to assist the candidates in this preparation and reflection process.
In return, implementation of edTPA will foster professional dialogue that will enhance the mutual benefits for veteran teachers, teacher candidates, EPPs, and, most importantly, Alabama's school children. I am excited about Alabama's commitment to the continual improvement of instructional practice of our educators. I ask you to join me in this initiative through communicating this information to all P-12 stakeholders. Soon the ALSDE will be developing a training program to assist individuals seeking certification through the Provisional Certification in the Teaching Field approach. An invitation will be extended to all LEAs to have representatives participate in these training sessions. Greater understanding of the edTPA process will benefit the candidates, teacher education programs, and the profession. Opportunities will be provided for individuals, programs, and cross-institutional research and collaboration to occur that will allow us to build and share professional knowledge that can influence policy and practice. If you would like to obtain additional information about edTPA, please access the following Web site: http://edtpa.aacte.org. You may also contact my staff member in Educator Assessment, Dr. Alethea Fletcher Hampton, at ahampton1@alsde.edu. The ALSDE looks forward to working alongside you to ensure that Alabama is providing the best possible teacher education and preparation for our teachers.

MS/JAM/SG

cc: Deans of Education
    Dr. Mark Kirkemier
    Mrs. Juliana Teixeira Dean
    Dr. Jayne A. Meyer
    Mrs. Shavon H. Cummings
    Dr. Alethea F. Hampton

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