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STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK AT CORTLAND TEACHER EDUCATION COUNCIL
STATEMENT on the edTPA

The Teacher Education Council of SUNY Cortland represents *[number]* nationally-accredited teacher education programs at a SUNY campus with a long and well-respected history of training teachers. It is comprised of teaching education professionals with considerable experience and expertise. Along with other campus faculty and staff, TEC members are committed to rigorous, meaningful requirements for teacher certification. Professional ethics demand that these requirements be fairly and transparently applied. This latter concern has moved the TEC to *[call for a moratorium?]* on the edTPA, an assessment administered and scored by Pearson Incorporated. The edTPA is a new state requirement for initial certification, applied to this year's cohort of candidates. We also call on public officials to investigate the edTPA and Pearson's role and performance in New York State education at all levels—including the influence of Pearson lobbying on the NYS Department of Education (NYSED).

The edTPA requires teacher candidates to submit a lengthy electronic portfolio which can reach up to 100 pages of writing and includes videos of candidates interacting with K-12 students, and samples of student work. All materials are submitted through web-based platforms and "Pearson manages the electronic platform on which they sit."[1] Pearson scorers evaluate the portfolios and additional Pearson employees may access the materials, which are stored by Pearson for training purposes.[2] Though the edTPA ostensibly is owned by the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE), and materials claim that SCALE developed the instrument, Pearson has a key role in its design, piloting, and ongoing revisions and implementation. Currently, candidates pay $300 to Pearson to submit the edTPA, a 200% increase over the cost of the previous NYSED application for certification.

In theory, most aims of the edTPA are worthy: to evaluate candidates' performance of "authentic tasks" in the areas of planning, instruction, and assessment. However, the instrument and its ongoing implementation reveal enormous flaws. The TEC opposition to currently requiring the edTPA for certification revolves around three areas of concern.

1. Both the edTPA Handbook and Support Guide contain design flaws that undermine the edTPA's accuracy as an evaluation tool and the goal of fairness in assessing candidates.
2. The parties responsible for piloting, revising, and now administering the edTPA have consistently failed to meet deadlines and deliver on other promises crucial to the quality, accuracy, and transparency of the edTPA as an instrument that determines candidates' professional fate. Most concerning are problems in the area of scoring.
3. Pearson Incorporated holds exclusive contracts with NYSED for administering and scoring the edTPA (like other assessments for other groups of students). Pearson's failures in some areas of the edTPA implementation parallel a history of problems in its state and national performance as a commercial provider of testing and curricular materials and services. The company is currently under investigation by the NYS Attorney General for its lobbying, an activity with documented impacts on other states' adoption of contracts with Pearson.

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1. Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity (SCALE), "2013 edTPA Field Test Summary Report" November 2013, p. 2. Available online at https://secure.aacte.org/apps/rl/resource.php?resid=313&ref=edtpa
2. edTPA, Confidentiality and Security of edTPA Candidate Materials and Assessment Data, Accessed November 21, 2013. http://www.edtpa.com/Content/Docs/ConfidentialityAndSecurity.pdf

<u>Design flaws</u>

The edTPA Field Test Summary Report, issued in November 2013 after many months of delay, reads like promotional material for a product, which it is.[3] It claims that the edTPA was "Developed by the Profession for the Profession," a statement that like many others in the report is partially true. A number of education professionals did participate in a design process that reportedly began in 2009.[4] However, input of many more practitioners "in the profession" has been excluded. A poll of those who must actually use the materials would be revealing.

In fall of 2013, teacher education faculty in New York State began scrambling to interpret edTPA guides that contain poorly-worded, unclear, and sometimes contradictory sections—and to prepare their candidates to write portfolios according to these guidelines. The edTPA materials were released behind schedule in almost all disciplines, some Handbooks being disseminated in September as the academic year began—in some cases with lists of errata and corrections, and new rubrics, coming later in the fall as candidates were already writing their portfolios.[5] Apparently responding to the lack of clarity in earlier materials, the edTPA released a "Support Guide" in fall 2013, so now faculty and candidates must work through two differently-organized sets of instructions, each some 40-50 pages in length.

To some degree, the main challenge is mastering edTPA's version of lingo for certain educational ideas and elements, many linked to Common Core literacy goals. Faculty and candidates must spend considerable time and energy learning the edTPA "dialect," translating it into terminology used in other education arenas, and noting its inconsistencies. For example, the Handbook for Secondary History/Social Studies refers alternately to "learning outcomes," "objectives," and "learning objectives"—all in different sections. This particular inconsistency has negligible repercussions, but this same Handbook contains more serious mismatches.

As a prime example of design flaws, this Handbook asks students in "Task 1: Planning" to select and write about a "learning task" in which students are supported to employ "one language function" (essentially, the verb in a typical instructional objective). A chart lists possibilities which range from higher-order cognitive tasks like "analyze" and "compare and contrast" to lower-level tasks like "identify" and "describe." According to the instructions for this section, the candidate may select from a wide range of "language functions" and "learning tasks."[6] However, the wrong choice will have serious repercussions when the candidate tackles "Task 3: Assessment." Embedded in instructions for writing about "Evidence of Language Understanding and Use" is the call to "explain and provide evidence for" students' use of language, including "selected function."[7] The term "selected" raises an issue that is not clarified; the rubric for this task only contains the term "the language function."[8] There is no further discussion of how and why a particular "function" should be "selected." Only in the separate "Support Guide" is the important issue of choosing a particular "[language] function" clarified. The Support Guide refers to a "one major language function" for Task 1 and in a later section states that the assessment section (Task 3) should discuss the "key language function identified in your Planning Task commentary."[9] (The correct term for this should be "Planning Commentary for Task 1.") In sum, the edTPA Handbook instructions for Task 1 steer candidates to potentially choosing a "language function" that would not work for the higher-level assessment demands of Task 3 ("building and supporting arguments" related to the "central focus" of lesson content). Only

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3. The "Preface and Acknowledgements" state that the summary report is "shared with state education agencies and institutions of Higher Education that are considering adoption of the edTPA." This may be a partial explanation for the omission of many issues that have been raised by those now using the edTPA.
4. SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," "Major Milestones," p. 14.
5. The "September 2013" Handbooks
6. SCALE, "edTPA Secondary History/Social Studies Handbook," September 2013, p. 11.
7. SCALE, "Social Studies Handbook," p. 28.
8. SCALE, "Social Studies Handbook," p. 33.
9. SCALE, "Making Good Choices: A Support Guide," p. 9 and p. 19.

supplementary instructions in the Support Guide clarify that candidates must write about the same "language function" (verb).

Flaws like this example raise serious questions about the validity of scores and the edTPA's effectiveness in identifying candidate competencies that are actually meaningful in the classroom. In addition to poorly-designed prompts for the written portions of the portfolio, the edTPA requires candidates to submit video footage and work of schoolchildren to Pearson—through web-based platforms whose security the candidate cannot control. Candidates must obtain parent-guardian permission to submit "artifacts" involving these human subjects, and the edTPA calls for emphasis on "focus students" with special needs, such as ELLs or students with IEPs. The implications raise serious practical and ethical problems. In this area the responses of SCALE, Pearson, and NYSED officials have been cavalier and even negligent.

The edTPA materials provide minimal discussion of parent-guardian permission, or impacts of permission being denied; a review of the materials' evolution reveals a pattern of evasiveness. As late as mid-September 2013, sample permission forms omitted mention of the online submission of video and work samples. Acknowledgment appeared only on samples posted in October, long after teacher education institutions had prepared their own forms based on earlier models.[10] Not until mid-September did the edTPA website have a statement on "Confidentiality and Security of edTPA Field Test Materials and Assessment Data."[11] Before then, the "FAQ: What policies are in place to ensure the confidentiality and security of edTPA candidate materials and assessment data, including access to and use of video recordings?" pointed concerned individuals to a link that promised "Operational Content Coming Soon."[12] Thus, even as candidates in the field were requesting permission to film students, parents/guardians could not access complete information about the online submission, storage, and continued access of images of their children. The forms candidates are required to use contain language in which candidates promise "confidentiality" to parents, but Pearson stores, and its employees may access, the student data—issues beyond candidates' control.[13]

Candidates are thus placed in a terrible bind. They need footage of children (ideally with "special needs") to pass the edTPA, but face complex issues of informed consent, due to the limited information provided directly to parents/guardians, and linguistic and literacy challenges in ever-more diverse communities (another issue swept under the rug by SCALE/Pearson). Undeniably, permission issues have at least some effect on classroom setup and dynamics during the filmed instructional activity—even if it is simply the effort redirected from instruction itself to grappling with filming logistics. The edTPA website offers a non-answer to a pressing "FAQ":

Question: What if a candidate's classroom contains students who may not be filmed (witness protection program, religious objections, etc.)?
Answer: The classroom and filming angle may be set up to exclude these students from the video without excluding them from instruction.[14]

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10. This line was added to the sample form: "My assessment materials may also be used by Stanford University and Pearson under secure conditions for edTPA program development and implementation, including scorer training, and to support continued program improvement activities such as future validity and reliability studies." edTPA, http://www.edtpa.com/Content/Docs/SampleReleaseForm.pdf
11. Confidentiality and Security of edTPA Candidate Materials and Assessment Data: http://www.edtpa.com/Content/Docs/ConfidentialityAndSecurity.pdf
12. edTPA, "FAQ" Accessed September 8, 2013. http://edtpa.aacte.org/faq#22
13. From the "Confidentiality and Security" statement cited above: "Access: By using industry-standard security software (encrypted protocols and encrypted and expiring tokens), the system ensures that access to view the stored assessment materials/videos is granted only to authorized users. 1. Authorized Pearson users may include scorers, scorer supervisors, scorer trainers, scoring support personnel, and personnel required to conduct quality control. 2. Authorized SCALE personnel associated with assessment development may view candidates' edTPA materials for the purposes of selection of scorer training materials and scorer training activities."
14. edTPA, "FAQ," Accessed November 21, 2013. http://edtpa.aacte.org/faq#22

Candidates facing the edTPA are raising the reasonable question: "What if I don't have any, or significant numbers of, students with permission to film?" Teacher education faculty and administrators have raised all of the above questions to NYSED officials, including concern about K-12 schools' reluctance to allow this filming (or even take student teachers, given these demands of the edTPA). Education Commissioner John King's response was to issue an Oct. 9 memo to K-12 administrators, urging them to host student teachers and support their work on the edTPA, possibly through alterations of existing policies on filming students.[15] Not only did this action sidestep multiple and reasonable concerns of educators, it continued a pattern of ignoring the interests of K-12 students and their parents/guardians.

In striking contrast to its dismissal of privacy concerns raised by teacher education candidates and faculty (and potentially by parents once fuller information about the edTPA is known), in its materials for scorers the edTPA acknowledges the insecurity of online data. What does the warning below imply about Pearson's "infrastructure" for the edTPA "including the electronic portfolio platforms"?

> "INFORMATION COLLECTED AND PROCESSED IN CONNECTION WITH APPLICATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN SCORING SESSIONS
> Information transmissions to this site and e-mails sent to us may not be secure. Given the inherent operation and nature of the Internet, all Internet transmissions are done at the user's own risk… This Web site may contain links to other Web sites on the Internet that are owned and operated by third parties, or by Pearson or its affiliates. The information practices of those Web sites are not covered by this Privacy Policy, but by their own terms and policies."[16]

Currently, parents in New York State (and elsewhere in the country) are learning more about the Pearson testing regime, and opposing it. This includes opposition to the ways NYSED and engageny are packaging and pushing the Common Core, however laudatory CC goals may be in theory. The edTPA, however, is currently unknown to K-12 parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. Once its flaws and impacts are felt, opposition will likely grow—placing yet another obstacle in candidates' path to certification. The launch of the edTPA this fall is already creating great hardships and stress, due to implementation failures as well as design flaws.

Implementation flaws

The edTPA Summary Report claims that "A hallmark of the edTPA is the principle that educators are crucial in the development process," and the "many educators who contributed to edTPA development" included "12,000+ teacher candidates from 430 campuses in 29 states."[17] The actual piloting of edTPA in spring 2013, in which these candidates product-tested for Pearson, tells a more troubling story. The rollout of the edTPA—affecting candidates now—reveals that this tool is not ready for use.

Perhaps the greatest consistency in SCALE/Pearson performance is the failure to meet promised deadlines. Scores for the spring 2013 pilot project were to be released in July. Finally, in late September-early October, participating programs received raw scores and in late October state and national scores and statistics were issued. As a result of these delays, neither SCALE nor NYSED officials would discuss what constituted a passing score. As late as November 21, 2013, this crucial issue was still "under discussion" by the NYSED Board of Regents even as candidates in the field are required to submit the edTPA this very semester. On November 22, Commissionaer John King released a memo announcing cutoff score of 41 (out of 75 possible points) would count as passing for most disciplines. The SCALE Summary Report, issued in mid-

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15. John King to "Dear Colleagues," October 9, 2013.
16. Evaluation Systems of Pearson, "Privacy Policy: INFORMATION COLLECTED AND PROCESSED IN CONNECTION WITH APPLICATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN SCORING SESSIONS," Accessed November 21, 2013. http://www.scoring.nesinc.com/privacy.asp.
17. SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," p. 13.

November, revealed that the mean scores for candidates who field-tested the edTPA were generally below the "3-Acceptable" standard in all categories.[18] Explanations would of course require substantive data.

Despite its claims that the edTPA provides "meaningful performance data" to help programs and candidates improve, this is far from the truth.[19] Pilot participants received only raw scores for their assessed performance on each of the rubrics. No explanations were provided, even as the raw scores were delayed by over three months. The one concession to candidates and programs so "crucial in the development process" was the announcement in October that candidates would receive "automated feedback" in the form of rubric phrases, to signal areas in which performance was lacking. Ironically, the candidates who take edTPA are evaluated on whether they provide their students with specific written and/or oral "Feedback [that] is accurate and addresses both strengths AND needs related to specific learning objectives."[20] Meanwhile, they pay $300 and receive no such feedback on their work.[21] This is a dramatic shift from the kind of meticulous evaluation and feedback conducted by college supervisors and other past determiners of candidates' effectiveness in the classroom.

Pearson pays scorers $75 per portfolio, and advises scorers it will take about two hours to evaluate a portfolio: 80-100 pages of written materials and two-three video clips. In contrast to the experiences and best practices of faculty working with candidates, this makes for an extremely hasty evaluation of a candidate's "fitness" for certification. The lack of specific feedback raises questions about accountability. The slowness and thinness of assessment data provided from the pilot project may be due to a problem currently plaguing the edTPA—and affecting candidates who must submit it this semester. In some areas, Pearson is unable to hire enough scorers. As of November 21, 2013, several Childhood Education student teachers must still delay submitting their portfolios. The latest Pearson estimate of when they might receive scores is in early December—as the student teaching placement and semester end. This is a far cry from earlier Pearson promises that scores and feedback would be provided within two weeks after submission, and thus candidates who submitted the edTPA early in their placements would have ample opportunity to resubmit if needed. There are additional reasons to doubt the efficacy of Pearson scoring.

The November 2013 Summary Report touts "Scoring *by* the Profession *for* the Profession" and claims that "university faculty and supervisors ["administrators" in another section] must have recent experience teaching methods or clinical supervision responsibilities in the subject matter they will score."[22] However, the online requirements for scorers permit individuals without K-12 classroom experience to be hired. A new "openness" in hiring means some scorers might only have taught content to candidates (confirmed by the author's call to Pearson November 21). Possible scorer qualifications:

> "Taught teacher candidates or teachers on content specific curriculum, instruction and/or assessment in the edTPA content area in which they will apply to score" OR
> "Are or have been educators at a College/University or alternative certification program providing instruction/professional development to teacher candidates or teachers in a content-specific area or assessment in the edTPA content area in which they will apply to score." *[This statement wins no prize for "syntax," a "language demand" the edTPA requires candidates to promote.]*
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> **AND** Have been working with teacher candidates within the last five (5) years."[23]

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18. SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," p. 32.
19. SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," p. 7.
20. SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," p. 31.
21. Here is the edTPA website's answer (replete with typo) to the question: Is feedback given to candidates? If so, how? "Institutions of Higher Education are encouraged to to [sic] provide formative feedback prior to a candidate's official submission of edTPA materials, edTPA,"FAQs," http://edtpa.aacte.org/faq#19
22 SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," p. 15.
23 edTPA "Scorer Experience Qualifications," Accessed November 21, 2013.
https://sites.google.com/a/pearson.com/score-edtpa/requirements

Scorer experience and qualifications are also questionable due to the remote evaluation. Evaluation of student teaching performance by college supervisors and cooperating teachers means evaluation by individuals who "live" in the classrooms with the candidates, and are able to experience and assess school populations, communities, and needs and assets. As seen above, a scorer might have no experience in the setting s/he is evaluating. Furthermore, the apparent scorer shortage and aspects of Pearson's application process raise the specter of possible outsourcing. Nowhere is it stated that an applicant must have experience in US schools, and advice for obtaining I-9 verification (required of all employees) is interesting.[24]

Another major problem in Pearson scoring is obscured in its promotional materials. Though the November 2013 Summary Report boasts that "With each scorer scoring an entire candidate submission (rather than independent scorers of discrete, isolated tasks), the scorer can effectively review the entirety of a candidate's teaching evidence and ensure the components are appropriately interrelated."[25] This statement is disingenuous, for an important shortcoming in the process is masked. Scorers lose access to previous portions of a candidate's portfolio once they submit the score for one of the three tasks and move to the next section. Thus, if they view the video portion (Task 2) and have a question about the description of student needs, the lesson plan or materials, or other items in the "Planning" section (Task 1) they cannot consult these items. For the final portion, assessment (Task 3), the scorer cannot consult any of the previous materials. Is s/he really going to vividly remember the video clips, important aspects of the lesson plans and school/student "social context" and "special needs" of learners? This is NOT the holistic, careful type of assessment currently conducted by college faculty and host teachers, and it is NOT what the edTPA promoters purport to offer. The Summary Report states, "The scorer utilizes a secure online scoring platform to access each candidate's materials and applies the rubric scores, viewing all evidence from artifacts, commentaries, and video recording(s) submitted by the candidate."[26] What it does not state is that the scorer can only view <u>portions</u> of this evidence as s/he scores each task, and cannot access previously-examined evidence should questions of memory, clarity, or "interrelation" arise.

In sum, the actual track record of Pearson/SCALE is poor in terms of timely, responsive delivery of materials, scoring. and data. Pearson holds exclusive contracts with NYSED that have current teacher candidates subject to a system with many flaws. Nationwide, Pearson plays an enormous, though not yet monopolistic, role in the curriculum-testing nexus.

<u>Pearson, Incorporated: A Problematic Reputation for Performance and Influence in Education</u>

For those outside of teacher education, the edTPA is a little-known element of Pearson's many-tentacled grip on public education.[27] Attention and opposition to this multinational corporation's influence—and failures—has been growing. However, discussion among policymakers and the general public remains limited. We demand a public investigation of the negotiation of Pearson's exclusive contracts with NYSED. Presumably the Attorney General is investigating Pearson lobbying of NYSED officials but the pace has been glacial; the investigation was launched in 2011 and only in April 2013 were some of the first subpoenas issued.

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24. "With distributed scoring, scorers working from home may not be able to meet a Pearson representative in person to verify original identification documentation, which is required for the I-9 Form. The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services allows employers to designate external agents to complete the I-9 form. For this reason, Pearson has designated Notaries Public to act as their agents to assist with the I-9 Form completion process. Pearson has designated school principals, school or department assistant/administrator/coordinator and Notaries Public to act as their agent to assist with the I-9 completion process for our remote hires."24 edTPA, "I-9 FAQs," Accessed November 21, 2013. https://sites.google.com/a/pearson.com/score-edtpa/i9-faq

25. SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," p. 16.

26. SCALE, "Field Test Summary Report," p. 16.

27. Alan Singer is a leading analyst and critic of Pearson and other for-profit education "reforms." His articles in the *Huffington Post* provide important detail, including "Hacking Away at the Corporate Octopus" May 8, 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/alan-singer/hacking-away-at-the-pears_b_1464134.html. Expanded versions can be found online and the author expects future publication of one of them, presented at SUNY Cortland October 1, 2013.

In early August 2013, State Assemblyman William Magnarelli began requesting from NYS Education Commissioner John King information on NYSED contracts with Pearson—including amounts of the contracts. After repeated requests, on November 7 he finally received his response: $55 million for testing products and services. Strangely, the official record shows the contract for the edTPA costs the state $0, implying all costs will be borne by the candidates. But these stakeholders—and the parents and faculty who advocate for them—had no input into the $300 fee that goes directly to Pearson. This is a lucrative contract.[28]

As noted above, Pearson/SCALE performance in the administration of the edTPA has been faulty, with repercussions for hundreds of individual candidates. The awarding of state contracts to this company must be examined in the context of its other failures. Pearson is starting to look like the "Blackwater" of education privatization. Like the company that earned infamy for its military subcontracting, Pearson delivers shoddy goods and services that cost taxpayers dearly and some have dire consequences for users. The company has not followed "best practices" that would apply to public deliverers of the goods and services, and its intensive lobbying raises the ugly specter of corruption. Mainstream media have brought little attention to the issues, but some sources have spotlighted the company's dubious performance and influence. Examples of more recent problems:

- November 16, 2013. New York State Principals posted an update on their "Letter to Parents About Testing, with over 3000 people signing in support. Comments related to Pearson: "How Much this is Costing Already-Strained Taxpayers: We don't know how much public money is being paid to vendors and corporations that the NYSED contracts to design assessments, nor do we know if the actual designers are educationally qualified. … We believe that the failure [of new standardized tests by many students] was not on the part of our children, but rather with the officials of the New York State Education Department. These are the individuals who chose to recklessly implement numerous major initiatives without proper dialogue, public engagement or capacity building. They are the individuals who have failed.[29]

- October 2013: Pearson, subcontracting for Apple, Inc., failed to fully deliver on digital curriculum for the Los Angeles School District Common Core Technology Project. In the first phase of the project the District paid $30 million to Apple for iPads and the promised Pearson software; the second phase was expected to cost hundreds of millions of dollars.[30] Controversy continues over the $1 billion rollout.

- April 2013: Pearson claimed that it was "unintentional" that reading passages in NYS exams were identical to those in Pearson-produced curricular materials for grades 6-8.[31]

- April and May 2013: Parent inquiries led to the exposure of Pearson's many-faceted scoring errors in "Gifted and Talented" testing in New York City. Despite the impacts on students' eligibility, district officials retained the Pearson contracts.[32]

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28. The edTPA website reveals both a lack of concern for candidates' finances and a "tuition plan" for accessing fees before students submit the edTPA (before they might change their minds). From edTPA "FAQ: Costs Associated with the edTPA. Accessed November 21, 2013, http://edtpa.aacte.org/faq#22:

   "Question: What are some recommendations for dealing with the costs associated with edTPA?
   Answer: "Tuition" plan - In some states, costs are integrated into candidates' course tuition, analogous to a lab fee in science or visual arts. The fee is automatically assessed when a student enrolls in the seminar, and is covered by any financial aid the student receives for tuition. The institution of higher education then pays Pearson the registration fees and Pearson gives it registration vouchers to distribute to student teachers. "Layaway" plan - Costs are known to teacher candidates, who may then put money towards those costs during preparation."

29. New York Principals "Letter to Parents About Testing," Accessed November 21, 2013. http://www.newyorkprincipals.org/letter-to-parents-about-testing

30. Benjamin Herold, "Curriculum Prompts New Concerns in L.A. iPad Plan," *Education Week*, October 25, 2013 [online version] http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2013/10/25/10pearson_ep.h33.html?tkn= WTWFf3d3cLNAqCuDrIJ3gKsPIIZqkkTBb6tc&cmp=ENL-CM-NEWS1&print=1

31. Yaev Gonen, "Test Takers See Double," *New York Post* April 19, 2013. Cited by Alan Singer, "Enough is Enough: Pearson Education Fails the Test Again and Again," Huffington Post April 24, 2013.

- August 2012: Inspiring heated responses from Pearson, University of Texas professor Walter Stroup publicized flaws in the "Item Response Theory" employed by Pearson and other standardized test designers. Initially inspired by experiences in middle school programs, he and other researchers analyzed the Texas "TAKS" exam and found that "The test-taking profile is an ability to read tricky language, to think strategically about which one of these four letters is right. I don't think society should be optimizing education for that."[33] Texas has $500 million in contracts with Pearson, including for the TAKS.
- May 2012: NYSED acknowledged problems with a "talking pineapple" question in Pearson's 8th grade ELA test and that item was dropped from scoring. Additional problems were identified in different Pearson assessments.[34]

A much longer "History of Testing Problems" involving Pearson has been compiled by FairTest, and other analysts have also publicized the company's shortcomings.[35] Despite all of these problems, Pearson maintains its contracts and its control in every level of education in New York State.

Conclusion

As detailed above, the design and implementation of the edTPA reveal numerous flaws in an assessment with great impact on teacher candidates. The company administering and scoring this certification requirement has already harmed students in New York State and beyond, through a long history of errors in its testing products and services. The state is subjecting prospective teachers to an expensive and time consuming process with no evidence it will be a better screening tool than current evaluations. At its November 8 press conference, SCALE admitted they have "not completed" studies showing a positive relationship between edTPA and future success in teaching (however that success might be measured). Despite the frequently-touted twenty years of development, SCALE has never submitted its work to a peer review journal—a very odd circumstance. While the edTPA Summary Report touts the validity and reliability testing done using the pilot testing, the claims have never been subjected by independent external review.

The prices for all certification tests have risen now that they are designed and administered by Pearson. There is no evidence that the most expensive—the edTPA—is a better evaluation of teacher candidates' skills and success in the classroom than the past evaluation by college supervisors and host teachers. The edTPA is already adversely affecting the lives of many students, from college to K-12 levels. With its numerous problems it should be dropped so as to cause no further harm.

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32. Janet Lorin, "Pearson Contract Evaluated After Errors on NYC Gifted Test," Bloomberg, May 13, 2013. http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2013-05-13/pearson-contract-evaluated-after-errors-on-nyc-gifted-test.html; Al Baker, "2,700 More in City Qualify as Gifted After Scores Are Fixed," *New York Times* April 20. 2013.
33. David Maly, "Walter Stroup," *The Daily Texan*, August 5, 2012 http://www.dailytexanonline.com/person/walter-stroup
34. Anemona Hartocollis, "When Pineapple Races Hare, Students Lose, Critics of Standardized Tests Say," *New York Times*, April 20, 2012. http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/21/nyregion/standardized-testing-is-blamed-for-question-about-a-sleeveless-pineapple.html
35. Diane Ravitch is one, and her blog includes "FairTest: Pearson's History of Test Foul Ups," September 19, 2013. http://dianeravitch.net/2013/09/19/fairtest-pearsons-history-of-test-foul-ups/