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April 27, 2014

The Honorable Merryl H Tisch, Chancellor  
The Honorable Members of the Higher Education Committee  
New York State Board of Regents  
89 Washington Avenue  
Albany, NY 12234

Dear Chancellor Tisch and The Honorable Members of the Higher Education Committee of the Board of Regents:

There are no school • ( š}œ • u}œ œµ ] o š} •šµ v š[• u] •µ •• š Z teacher in a school led by an effective principal. In its new report, Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) made it clear, ^ Y š Z ty of a school system cannot exceed the quality of its š Z œ New York is raising standards for student learning by implementing the Common Core, but that effort can only succeed if we expect this same excellence from the educators who will teach them

For this reason, we do not support the proposed legislative amendments that would delay implementation of the edTPA and other new certification assessments. Rather, we embrace the edTPA as a performance measure which represents the research base of our profession. The edTPA measures the knowledge and skills that teachers need to be successful in their beginning practice and aligns with well-defined and accepted evidence on what teachers need to know and be able to do to enhance academic performance among the diversity of learners in our schools. Leading researchers have developed this framework. Thirty-four states are currently implementing and studying this assessment as a national indicator of teacher quality.

The edTPA, along with the other certification examinations (the Educating All Students exam, the Academic Literacy Skills Test, and the Content Specialty Tests) only serve to strengthen teacher preparation and our profession as a whole. In fact, changes in teacher preparation programs are well underway; they are comprehensive, and they are transforming the work that we do. As examples, faculty has scaffolded assessments based on standards, revised and expectations for student teaching, implemented comprehensive strategies for their own professional development (both teaching and clinical across education and liberal arts and science faculty), and amended outcomes assessment systems in keeping with the State reforms and comprehensive changes in our accreditation mandates. In addition, the conversations and partnerships with 12 schools have begun a shift to shared ownership for comprehensive clinical practice.

Postponing the implementation of the reform measures already occurred and a further two-year delay (July 2015) would negate the current experience of over 1,500 teacher candidates who have already paid for and taken the new assessment and would also call into question the transformative initiatives currently underway at institutions of higher education across sectors and in the P partnerships being served.

Nonetheless, we do support a safety net for teacher candidates so that they can begin teaching and repaying their student loans. The New York State Education Department has proposed the use of the conditional initial certification to allow additional time for teacher candidates to pass required certification examinations. While this existing certificate was not developed for the edTPA, it

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over the next two years. With this in mind, we also support the identification of a formative plan that would facilitate teacher education preparation programs in using the data to inform their programs rather than using preliminary pass rates of the new assessments for institutional profiles and federally reported data. We also support the need for additional vouchers to offset the cost of the teacher certification examinations for higher education students with demonstrated financial need.

Every year, roughly 16,000 teacher candidates graduate from schools of education in New York State. It is of the utmost importance that we work together with our accreditation agency, 12 partners, and policy officials in the State Education Department to fully implement the necessary reforms. The calls for improvement in teacher preparation have come from the federal government, teacher unions, leadership organizations, and higher education accreditation bodies.

We owe it to our prospective teachers to make sure they are ready for the challenges of the classroom. More importantly, we owe it to children and youth across our State to ensure their teachers can facilitate their learning and advancement. Higher standards for our teachers will mean better chances for our students to graduate ready for 21st century colleges and careers.

Not only do we embrace the research-based assessment of the edTPA as a good measure for entry into the profession, we believe that the expectations of this assessment are aligned with the high standards of our profession, of our accrediting body, and of the needs of classroom teachers from their first day on the job.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kathleen DaBellavoie  
Chair, Department of Inclusive Childhood Education  
Nazareth College

*Lori V. Quigley*  
Dr. Lori V. Quigley

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