



School of Education  
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Emmitsburg, MD 21727

February 21, 2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to express my FAVORABLE support for HB 888 (Education – Initial Certification – Qualifications) as introduced by Delegates Fair, Ebersole, and Kerr. Please allow me to explain my position.

As Dean of the School of Education at Mount St. Mary's University, I have been very concerned about the current requirement that teacher candidates in higher education teacher preparation programs must complete a nationally recognized portfolio-based assessment of their teaching ability. My concern includes several facets. First, previous legislation waived this requirement if teacher candidates were enrolled in a teacher induction program in their local LEA (local education agency). However, teacher candidates obtaining their teaching degrees from traditional programs face the obstacle of still being required to take a nationally recognized portfolio-based assessment. Currently, edTPA (Pearson) is the only product available to teacher preparation programs. The cost of the Pearson product is \$300.00 minimum per teacher candidate. The cost will exceed \$300.00 if a candidate does not attain the required cut score and must retake all or a portion of the assessment. Please note, this cost is in addition to other Praxis tests which, for critical shortage areas such as special education, can exceed \$900.00.

Second, we are absolutely committed to performance assessment and believe it reflects what teachers do every day—plan, teach, assess, reflect. It is a critical component of the overall assessment process of teacher candidates. Without performance-based assessments, teacher candidates have not engaged in a rigorous process of data-informed instruction and reflection. It is this continuous focus on pedagogy that allows candidates to begin experiencing impactful instruction for all students. We believe, however, that one size does not fit all and that a collaborative classroom-based assessment of performance, versus a product-based performance assessment, can and does support beginning teachers in their journey toward resilience and retention. We note that many teacher preparation programs have rigorous, validated, and accredited performance-based assessments integrated into their programs- and have for many years.

Last, it must be noted that many states have already done away with the product-based performance assessment (Pearson) due to the often-cited research that points to potential bias in the assessments against minority teachers – a group most often underrepresented in the teaching profession.

House Bill 888 addresses the inconsistencies and concerns raised above by allowing teacher candidates who have already been part of a portfolio-based assessment system recognized by the IHE's (Institution of Higher Education) national accreditor during their teacher preparation program or their school system's induction process be spared the redundancy of completing an expensive product-based assessment of skills that have already been mastered. If a college or university teacher preparation program chooses to continue a product-based portfolio-based assessment (Pearson), they are free to do so.

I believe that HB 888 will positively impact our ability to maintain high levels of rigor for our teacher candidates as well as remove unnecessary regulatory barriers for our promising new teachers who are taking their first steps into the teaching profession.

Barbara A. Marinak, PhD  
Dean  
School of Education