






**TO:** Higher Education Committee  
P-12 Education Committee

**FROM:** John L. D'Agati   
Ken Wagner 

**SUBJECT:** Proposed Options for the Creation of Safety Nets for Candidates Who Take the New Teacher Certification Examinations (ALST, EAS and the Redeveloped CSTs) and an Extension of the Safety Net Provisions for the edTPA

**DATE:** April 6, 2015

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

## SUMMARY

### Issue for Discussion

Should the Board of Regents provide a safety net for candidates who take the new teacher certification examinations (ALST, EAS, and the redeveloped CSTs) and extend the safety net provisions for the edTPA?

### Reason(s) for Consideration

Review of policy.

### Background

At the November and December 2009 Board of Regents meetings, the Board approved a number of initiatives for the purpose of transforming teaching and learning in New York State. One of those initiatives was to strengthen the certification examinations for teachers and school leaders. In May 2010, the Board reaffirmed this direction for the new teacher certification examinations, which included the development of the Academic Literacy Skills Test (ALST), Educating All Students examination (EAS),

redevelopment of the Content Specialty Tests (CST) and the implementation of a teacher performance assessment.

In April 2012, Governor Cuomo established an Education Reform Commission that was charged with reviewing a broad range of education policy issues. The Commission made several recommendations, one of which was the creation of a “bar-like” exam, indicating the importance of ensuring that only qualified individuals are given the State’s approval to educate our children. The requirement for a “bar” exam for teachers was codified in the 2012-13 Enacted Budget.

In an effort to implement this requirement and transform teachers and leaders, new and revised certification exams were developed. The development of each certification examination follows a design and development process that is consistent with the standards of (i) the American Psychological Association; (ii) the National Council on Measurement in Education; and (iii) the American Educational Research Association. Separately, each certification examination has also gone through the process of content validation, job analysis, and construct validity. The new examinations were specifically developed to be more rigorous and raise the entry bar to the teaching profession. In addition, each examination was developed to assess specific areas of knowledge, skills, and abilities that teachers need to be effective in the classroom. Studies have repeatedly shown that students taught by better prepared teachers achieve better results.

### **Description of the New and Revised Examinations**

The edTPA, a performance assessment, is a multiple-measure examination system comprised of three tasks: (i) planning instruction and examination; (ii) instructing and engaging students in learning; and (iii) assessing student learning.

The ALST measures skills and competencies in reading and writing aligned to college and career readiness standards, including: (i) analyzing text structure; (ii) writing to sources; and (iii) using valid reasoning and relevant evidence to support claims.

The EAS measures skills and competencies that address: (i) diverse student populations; (ii) English language learners; (iii) students with disabilities and other special learning needs; (iv) teacher responsibilities; and (v) school-home relationships.

The CSTs measure content knowledge in a particular subject area, and are aligned with the New York State learning standards.

Throughout the development of the new and revised certification examinations, the Department has worked closely with the field. Over 2,000 New York State educators and New York State teacher preparation program faculty have directly participated in various stages of the development process, including the establishment of the examination frameworks, validation and review of the frameworks, development and review of examination items, content review and bias review panels, and the establishment of performance standards for the examinations. As part of this process, the new and redeveloped assessments have been extensively field tested by over 10,000 New York State teacher candidates.

## **Supports, Accommodations and Professional Development for the New Examinations**

The Department has also established support systems for the field to ensure each college and university has the information necessary to adequately prepare its teacher candidates for success on the new and revised certification examinations.

In April 2012, the Office of Higher Education entered into agreements with SUNY, CUNY and the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (clcu) to provide \$10 million of Race to the Top funded professional development to further enhance collaboration between schools of education and the Department in the examination development process.

In February 2012 the Board of Regents also approved a shift in the implementation date of the new and revised certification examinations, from May 1, 2013 to May 1, 2014, to provide the field an additional year to prepare their teacher certification candidates for success on these new examinations.

In November 2013, the Department added an additional \$1.5 million for the three higher education sectors to continue to support a range of professional development activities.

With the resources provided by the Race to the Top grant, the field participated in an extensive series of workshops and meetings to adopt the curriculum and instruction to prepare students for these new and revised examinations. In February 2015, the Department provided the Board of Regents with an overview of the work. In summary, over 20,000 university faculty and deans, certification officers, P-12 representatives and BOCES representatives have participated in these meetings, as outlined below.

	<b>Total Meetings</b>	<b>Total Participants</b>
SUNY	2,149	8,765
CUNY	1,884	6,115
clcu	2,862	5,759
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,895</b>	<b>20,693</b>

These workshops and meetings have resulted in institution-developed resources to assist with preparing certification candidates for the new examinations to complement the resources made available by the Department. For example:

- faculty at CUNY Brooklyn College have developed EAS practice materials for candidates, which can be found at [www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/academics/schools/education/certification/exams.php](http://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/academics/schools/education/certification/exams.php);
- clcu conducted a series of webinars focusing on “Reflective Writing for edTPA”; archived copies of the webinars are available at [www.vimeo.com/isnetworked/videos](http://www.vimeo.com/isnetworked/videos); and

- SUNY has created a new online resource center which contains a media library designed to support candidates who are preparing for the new certification examinations; the resource center is located at <https://dspace.sunyconnect.suny.edu/handle/1951/65104>.

Other professional development resources have been created for university and college faculty to ensure they have the tools necessary to prepare candidates for the new examinations:

- At CUNY, many college campuses offer continuing education courses to support candidates who need to retake the certification examinations, such as Queens College's EAS and ALST course, information about which may be found at <http://www.qc.cuny.edu/pcs/Programs/ProfessionalDevelopment/Pages/ExamPrep.aspx>;
- A SUNY New Paltz faculty member has created a collection of video resources providing information on the ALST and EAS. Widely utilized, these resources may be found at <http://www.symbaloo.com/mix/educatingallstudents>; and
- clcu held a statewide conference in Albany with presentations on the EAS, ALST and edTPA; those presentations may be found at <http://www.isnetworked.org/page/isnetworked-june-18-2014-conference-66.html>.

As a result, each of the sectors has reported strong, positive impacts from this work.

- clcu reports increased faculty involvement in certification work, such as faculty taking practice versions of the certification examinations, alignment of coursework and the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to successfully complete the assessments;
- CUNY reports that this work has made it possible to further develop its support of diverse teacher candidate populations by recruiting students with academic potential who are historically underrepresented and underserved into preparation programs; and
- SUNY has also expanded statewide initiatives, including the development of edTPA preparation workshops at SUNY Plattsburgh; realignment of all teacher preparation coursework to the Common Core State Standards at SUNY Albany; and the implementation by SUNY Geneseo of a teacher preparation service learning course at a local high school, which provides pre-service teacher candidates with early experience reviewing student writing.

Despite these supports and accommodations, some programs in this State continue to struggle. They have requested additional safety nets for the ALST and EAS analogous to the edTPA safety net, which was implemented through an emergency regulation at the April 2014 Board of Regents meeting and allows candidates who take and fail the edTPA to take and pass ATS-W.

At the March 2015 Board of Regents meeting, the Board requested that the Department propose safety net options for the ALST, EAS and the CSTs. In response to the Board's request, the Department proposes the following safety net options for each of the following certification examinations: ALST, EAS and the CSTs and an extension of the edTPA safety net to exist conterminously with any other safety nets covering the remainder of the teacher certification examinations.

### **Safety Net Options**

#### **Academic Literacy Skills Test ("ALST"):**

The ALST measures skills and competencies in reading and writing aligned to college and career readiness standards, including: (i) analyzing text structure; (ii) writing to sources; and (iii) using valid reasoning and relevant evidence to support claims. As directed by the Board of Regents, the Department proposes the following two safety net options for the ALST to be available to candidates who take and fail the ALST during (a specific time period):

- Option 1: Have the higher education program the candidate attend(ed) complete an attestation that the candidate has demonstrated comparable skills through course completion in their program (i.e., 3 semester hours of acceptable coursework in ELA and/or writing skills and the candidate must achieve a score of a B or better in the coursework); or
- Option 2: Convene a standard setting panel, much like the panel established to recommend the current ALST cut score, to establish a revised cut score that would meet the requirements for certification during the safety net period.

#### **Educating All Students Test (EAS):**

The EAS measures skills and competencies that address: (i) diverse student populations; (ii) English language learners; (iii) students with disabilities and other special learning needs; (iv) teacher responsibilities; and (v) school-home relationships. As directed by the Board of Regents, the Department proposes the following two safety net options for the EAS to be available to candidates who take and fail the EAS during (a specific time period):

- Option 1: Have the higher education program the candidate attend(ed) complete an attestation that the candidate has demonstrated comparable skills through course completion in their program (i.e., 3 semester hours of acceptable coursework in special education and 3 semester hours in English language learners and the candidate had a B or better in the coursework); or
- Option 2: Convene a standard setting panel, much like the panel established to recommend the current EAS cut score, to establish a revised cut score that would meet the requirements for certification during the safety net period. .

## **Redeveloped Content Specialty Tests**

The CSTs measure content knowledge in a particular subject area, and are aligned with the New York State learning standards. Currently, there are 41 CSTs, of which 17 have been redeveloped. The CST redevelopment schedule is set forth in Attachment A. As directed by the Board of Regents, the Department proposes the following three safety net options applicable only to the 17 redeveloped CSTs to be available to candidates who take and fail one of the redeveloped CSTs during (a specific time period):

- Option 1: Have the higher education program the candidate attend(ed) complete an attestation that the candidate has demonstrated comparable skills through course completion in their program (i.e., 3 semester hours of acceptable coursework in the content area and the candidate must achieve a score of a B or better in the coursework); or
- Option 2: Convene a standard setting panel, much like the panel established to recommend the current CST cut scores, to establish a revised cut score for each of the redeveloped CSTs that would meet the requirements for certification during the safety net period. .
- Option 3: Allow the candidate to take and pass the predecessor of the redeveloped CST currently required.

## **Extension of the Existing edTPA Safety Net**

At its April 2014 meeting, the Board of Regents provided a safety net option for candidates who take and fail the edTPA to either (i) take and pass the ATS-W; or (ii) submit evidence of having achieved a satisfactory passing score on the ATS-W on or before April 30, 2014, in lieu of retaking and achieving a passing score on edTPA through June 30, 2015. As initially implemented, the safety net required that candidates complete all other requirements for certification on or before June 30, 2015 to take advantage of the edTPA safety net.

At its January 2015 Board of Regents meeting, the Board proposed an amendment to the regulation to allow candidates an additional year, until June 30, 2016, to complete all other certification requirements so long as they (i) took and failed the edTPA and (ii) either took and passed the ATS-W; or submitted evidence of having achieved a satisfactory passing score on ATS-W on or before April 30, 2014. The Department recommends that, if the Board creates safety net(s) for the ALST, EAS or the CSTs, that the edTPA safety be extended until June 30, 2016; to be coterminous with the other examinations.

## **Recommendation**

Not applicable.

## **Timetable for Implementation**

If the Board of Regents decides to implement a safety net provision for one or more of the new teacher certification examinations, the Department anticipates coming back to the Board of the Regents at their May meeting with regulations to implement any new safety net provisions.

## **Attachment A**

### CST DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

Redeveloped CSTs currently operational:

English Language Arts	Physical Education
Health Education	Agriculture
Library Media Specialist	Business and Marketing
Literacy	Deaf and Hard of Hearing
Mathematics	Educational Technology Specialist
Multi-Subject Birth-Grade 2	Family and Consumer Sciences
Multi-Subject Grades 1-6	Gifted Education
Multi-Subject Grades 5-9	Students with Disabilities
Multi-Subject Grades 7-12	

CSTs under redevelopment:

<b>CST To Be Redeveloped</b>	<b>Anticipated Operational Date</b>
Blind and Visually Impaired	Fall 2015
Technology Education	Fall 2015
American Sign Language	Fall 2016
Cantonese	Fall 2016
French	Fall 2016
German	Fall 2016
Greek	Fall 2016
Hebrew	Fall 2016
Italian	Fall 2016
Japanese	Fall 2016
Latin	Fall 2016
Mandarin	Fall 2016
Russian	Fall 2016
Spanish	Fall 2016
English to Speakers of Other Languages	Fall 2016
Social Studies	Fall 2016
Biology	Fall 2017
Chemistry	Fall 2017
Dance	Fall 2017
Earth Science	Fall 2017
Music	Fall 2017
Physics	Fall 2017
Theater	Fall 2017
Visual Arts	Fall 2017