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Information/Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Teaching Performance Assessment Pass Rate Identification Framework: Measures, Performance Bands, and Continuous Improvement Cycle

Executive Summary: Senate Bill 1263 (Newman, Chap. 889, Stats. 2024) requires the Commission to report the number of teacher preparation programs with low Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) pass rates and to assist those programs in using evidence-based strategies to support candidates to pass the assessment, with such instructional supports provided at no cost to candidates. In response, this item presents a proposed statewide TPA Pass Rate Identification Framework.

Recommended Action: Staff recommend that the Commission: (1) Review and provide direction and feedback on the proposed TPA Pass Rate Identification Framework, including the proposed measures, performance bands, and annual identification and continuous improvement cycle; and (2) Direct staff to return to the Commission with a refined proposal in the form of draft regulations for further Commission consideration and/or adoption.

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Strategic Plan Goal

Continuous Improvement

- **Goal 7.** The Commission's work is grounded in research, informed by the voices of practitioners and communities of interest, and supports continuous improvement in educator preparation and licensure.

Teaching Performance Assessment Pass Rate Identification Framework: Measures, Performance Bands, and Continuous Improvement Cycle

Introduction

Senate Bill 1263 (Newman, Chap. 889, Stats. 2024) requires the Commission to report the number of teacher preparation programs with low Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA) pass rates and to assist those programs in using evidence-based strategies to support candidates in passing the assessment, with such instructional supports provided at no cost to candidates. This statutory direction reflects the Legislature's intent that the Commission move beyond general monitoring of TPA outcomes by establishing a clear, statewide process for identifying low TPA pass rates and for ensuring that preparation programs engage in structured, evidence-based continuous improvement.

This item initiates that work. It presents a proposed TPA Pass Rate Identification Framework, including recommended performance bands and the use of first-attempt, second-attempt, and cumulative pass rate measures. It also describes an annual identification and continuous improvement cycle and the respective roles of preparation programs and Commission staff in data analysis, planning, support, and monitoring. Together, these elements are intended to inform the development of regulations that will formalize reporting, identification, and continuous improvement processes.

The identification of programs based on candidate TPA pass rate performance under this proposed framework is intended solely to initiate structured analysis, technical assistance, and continuous improvement in response to the statutory reporting and support requirements in Education Code section 44320.2(d)(9). Identification under this framework is not intended to function as a sanction or adverse finding.

Background

The TPA was established as a required component of educator preparation to ensure that candidates demonstrate readiness to teach prior to being recommended for a preliminary credential. Senate Bill 2042 (Alpert, Chapter 548, Statutes of 1998) required all teacher preparation programs to include a teaching performance assessment aligned with the California Standards for the Teaching Profession and state content and performance standards for pupils. Passage of Senate Bill 1209 (Scott, Chapter 548, Statutes of 2006) made successful completion of a TPA a requirement for recommendation for a preliminary Multiple Subject and Single Subject credential beginning in 2008. The requirement was later extended to preliminary Education Specialist credentials, beginning with candidates enrolled on or after July 1, 2022. Together, these actions established the TPA as a central, statewide expectation for demonstrating candidates are prepared to enter the classroom.

From the outset, statute made clear the TPA was intended to be embedded within preparation programs and integrated into coursework and clinical practice, rather than treated as a stand-

alone or externally supported requirement. Education Code section 44320.2(e) explicitly requires that, “To the maximum extent, each performance assessment shall be ongoing and blended into the preparation program,” and section 44320.2(c) further requires that candidates be assessed during the normal term and duration of their preparation. These provisions underscore that preparation programs are responsible for providing a coherent sequence of instruction and clinical experience that develops candidate readiness for practice, with assessment integrated as part of that broader preparation.

Within the accreditation system, TPA data have long been situated within a broader framework of continuous improvement. Prior to 2015, accreditation standards and processes emphasized that institutions and their credential programs must systematically collect, analyze, and act upon multiple sources of outcome data, including performance assessment results, as part of an institution’s assessment system.

This emphasis on continuous improvement carried forward in the current accreditation system, adopted in 2015, through [Common Standard 4](#), which requires institutions to identify key data sources, engage in regular analysis, and document programmatic changes resulting from that analysis. [Program Standard 5](#) and related standards further establish specific, programmatic expectations for how the TPA is administered and supported, including requirements related to candidate support, assessor qualifications, and scoring reliability. While these standards have not defined specific performance thresholds or pass rate benchmarks, TPA outcomes have been an important source of evidence within accreditation for examining the coherence and effectiveness of program design, clinical practice, and instructional support. To date, however, pass rates themselves have not been used as formal indicators calling for identification or structured follow-up with programs demonstrating persistently low candidate outcomes, and no common definition of “low” pass rates has existed for statewide reporting or action.

“The commission shall report the number of programs with low pass rates and assist these programs to use evidence-based strategies to support candidates to pass the assessment for all administrations of the assessment. There shall be no fees to candidates for these instructional supports.”

-Education Code section 44320.2(d)(9)

Senate Bill 1263 (Newman, Chap. 889, Stats. 2024) amends Education Code section 44320.2 to explicitly require the Commission to report on programs with low TPA pass rates and to assist those programs in using evidence-based strategies to support candidate success on all administrations of the assessment at no additional cost. In doing so, the Legislature established a clear expectation that the Commission move beyond general monitoring of outcomes and put in place a more defined, statewide process for identifying low pass rates and ensuring that programs engage in meaningful improvement efforts.

Consistent with the Commission’s role in accreditation and continuous improvement, implementation of the TPA Pass Rate Identification Framework would be carried out through the establishment and oversight of a structured improvement process rather than through prescription of specific instructional solutions. Under this proposed framework, preparation programs are expected to review multiple sources of data; engage faculty, mentors, and

candidates to identify root causes contributing to low pass rates; and implement evidence-based improvement strategies. The Commission's role is to set these expectations, monitor program progress over time, and provide oversight and technical assistance to support sustained, equitable improvement. This item focuses on the initial elements of this responsibility by proposing an integrated framework consisting of identification measures, performance bands, and a broad continuous improvement cycle. Staff will bring forward additional support strategies, implementation guidance, and a roadmap for alignment with the accreditation system for subsequent Commission consideration and action.

Considerations

In developing this framework, staff considered which pass rate measures most appropriately reflect program effectiveness, candidate experience, and the statutory expectation that preparation programs embed the TPA and support candidate readiness as demonstrated through the TPA.

Historically, TPA outcomes are reported using both overall (or cumulative) pass rates and first-attempt pass rates. Cumulative pass rates describe the percentage of candidates who ultimately complete and pass the assessment, regardless of the number of attempts, and therefore tend to be high for most programs over time. First-attempt pass rates, in contrast, reflect the percentage of candidates who meet the standard on their initial submission and provide a more immediate indicator of how well coursework and clinical practice are aligned to support readiness at the point when candidates are expected to demonstrate competence.

First-attempt pass rates offer important advantages for purposes of identification and continuous improvement. Because they are tied to initial submission, they provide a timely signal of the effectiveness of embedded preparation and reduce the time lag that can accompany cumulative outcomes. In this respect, first-attempt rates most directly reflect the expectation in Education Code section 44320.2(e) that the TPA be embedded within preparation and completed during the normal course of the program. At the same time, first-attempt rates do not, on their own, describe what occurs for candidates who require additional attempts and may be less stable as an indicator for programs that enroll small cohorts, which is why minimum n-size and statistical reliability rules are applied.

Second-attempt pass rates, when examined within a defined academic-year window, provide a complementary perspective. These data reflect how effectively programs and the broader system support candidates who do not meet the standard on the first attempt and whether timely, structured, and evidence-based assistance is in place to enable successful resubmission. By focusing on outcomes within the same academic year, this measure emphasizes the importance of timely support so that candidates are not unnecessarily delayed in progressing to program completion and entry into the profession. Second-attempt outcomes provide a clear indicator of whether the statutory requirement in Education Code section 44320.2(d)(9) to ensure access to no-cost, evidence-based instructional supports for all administrations of the assessment is being implemented in practice.

Cumulative pass rates, by comparison, reflect eventual completion of the licensure requirement and are familiar to the field as a traditional outcome indicator. They capture the combined

effects of initial preparation, follow-up support, and candidate persistence over time. However, because they aggregate outcomes across multiple attempts and administrations, cumulative pass rates can mask weaknesses in first-attempt readiness, complicate attribution of responsibility between preparation and remediation, and obscure differences in candidate burden, time to completion, and equity of access to effective supports.

Staff recognize that a common concern associated with reliance on a single assessment outcome is the risk that programs may perceive pressure to “teach to the test.” For this reason, the proposed framework situates TPA pass rates within a broader multiple-measures context and explicitly treats them as indicators for inquiry rather than as stand-alone judgments of program quality. Commission staff are concurrently developing a multiple-measures data dashboard that will provide programs with a more comprehensive picture of preparation, including indicators related to candidate progression, clinical practice, supervision, and completer outcomes. Within this system, TPA results are intended to function as an early signal that prompts deeper examination, root cause analysis, and continuous improvement, rather than as a narrow compliance metric.

Data quality and statistical stability are also critical considerations. To ensure fair and stable identification, staff will apply minimum n-size and statistical reliability rules consistent with Commission data practices when calculating and applying first-attempt and second-attempt pass rates. Where cohort sizes are small or results are not statistically reliable, programs continue to receive their data for transparency and local improvement but are not identified for Commission-supported continuous improvement based solely on an unstable estimate. Staff also review multi-year patterns and the stability of subgroup results, consistent with Commission privacy and reporting practices, to avoid identification driven by single-year or statistically unreliable fluctuations.

Given that the TPA system is expected to continue evolving in response to Commission-adopted recommendations from the SB 1263 workgroup, the proposed performance bands are intended as initial benchmarks to support early implementation of the statutory reporting and continuous improvement requirements. Staff will further validate and refine the proposed thresholds using multi-year statewide distributions, subgroup stability analyses, and consultation with psychometric and program experts. As the assessment system and supporting evidence base evolve, the Commission will periodically review and, as appropriate, recalibrate the performance bands. Based on these considerations, staff recommend the following three integrated components of a statewide TPA pass rate identification and continuous improvement framework.

RECOMMENDATION 1: TPA PASS RATE IDENTIFICATION MEASURES

To address these considerations in a coherent and administratively feasible manner, staff recommend a framework that differentiates the purposes served by first-attempt, second-attempt, and cumulative pass rate measures and assigns each a distinct role in identification, transparency, and continuous improvement. Under this framework, first-attempt TPA pass rates serve as the primary indicator for performance identification because they most directly reflect the effectiveness of embedded preparation at the point when candidates are expected to demonstrate readiness. Second-attempt pass rates, examined within the same academic

year, serve as a complementary diagnostic indicator of program follow-through and the effectiveness of timely, structured, and evidence-based remediation and resubmission supports for candidates who do not meet the standard on the first attempt. Cumulative pass rates continue to be reported for transparency, providing context regarding eventual completion, but are not used for performance designation or formal identification given the time lag and attribution limitations inherent in that measure.

Table 1: Recommended Uses of TPA Pass Rate Measures for Identification and Continuous Improvement

Measure	Primary Purpose	Use in Framework	Role in Continuous Improvement
First-Attempt Pass Rate	Early signal of embedded preparation effectiveness	Primary indicator for identification and placement within performance bands	Triggers structured self-study, root cause analysis, and Commission-supported improvement when in lower band
Second-Attempt Pass Rate	Indicator of timely remediation and resubmission effectiveness	Complementary diagnostic measure used with first-attempt rates	Informs analysis of program follow-through, support quality, and equity of access to evidence-based supports
Cumulative Pass Rate	Indicator of eventual completion of the licensure requirement	Reported for transparency and public information only	Provides contextual information and is not used for identification or performance banding

Staff further recommend that performance bands are adopted for both first-attempt and second-attempt pass rates to establish a common statewide understanding of levels of alignment, emerging concern, and the need for structured improvement support. The bands are intended to support clear public reporting and consistent interpretation across programs and sponsors, and to provide a continuous improvement approach that differentiates among programs demonstrating strong embedded preparation, those for which focused self-study and refinement are warranted, and those for which Commission-supported improvement is necessary. The bands are applied at the credential program level and, where numerically significant and statistically reliable, to candidate subgroups, consistent with Commission data and privacy practices, to illuminate patterns that may warrant targeted attention.

RECOMMENDATION 2: TPA PASS RATE PERFORMANCE LEVELS, BANDS, AND DESCRIPTORS

First-attempt Pass Rates

Under the proposed TPA Pass Rate Identification Framework, first-attempt pass rate performance levels and bands are used to determine whether a program is identified for entry into the continuous improvement cycle and to indicate the degree of concern regarding the effectiveness of embedded preparation at the point of initial assessment. For purposes of statewide consistency and transparency, first-attempt pass rates are calculated using Commission-approved data definitions and reporting windows, applied at the credential program level, and interpreted with consideration of cohort size and statistical reliability. For purposes of calculating first-attempt pass rates, candidates who meet the Commission-adopted secondary passing standard and whose proficiency in the Teaching Performance Expectations is

confirmed by the preparation program on their initial submission are counted as passing on the first attempt for program-level reporting and identification.

Table 2: Recommended First-attempt TPA Pass Rate Levels, Bands, and Descriptors

Level	Band	Short Descriptor
Meets Standard	≥ 85%	Consistent embedded preparation
Approaching Standard	70–84%	Variability in preparation; self-study needed
Below Standard	< 70%	Systemic preparation gaps; Commission support required

Meets Standard (≥85 percent)

This level reflects strong and consistent alignment among program coursework, clinical practice, and the expectations of the TPA. Most candidates demonstrate readiness at the point of first submission, indicating that assessment preparation is effectively embedded across the program and that instructional, supervisory, and coaching practices are coherently supporting candidates to meet the standard during the normal course of preparation.

Approaching Standard (70–84 percent)

This level indicates that while most candidates are meeting the standard on the first attempt, a substantial number are not. The pattern suggests variability in alignment or consistency of preparation and support. Programs in this range engage in focused self-study to examine curriculum sequencing, clinical experiences, supervision and coaching structures, and assessment preparation practices to identify and address areas where greater coherence and reliability are needed to strengthen first-attempt readiness. Programs in this band are not subject to formal identification for Commission-supported improvement but are encouraged to use the data as part of ongoing continuous improvement and accreditation-related self-study.

Below Standard (<70 percent)

This level indicates that first-attempt success is not being achieved consistently across candidates, and it points to systemic weaknesses in how candidate readiness is being developed and supported. Performance in this range warrants entry into a Commission-supported continuous improvement process, including required analysis of contributing factors, development and implementation of a structured improvement plan, and provision of targeted technical assistance and evidence-based supports to strengthen program design, instructional coherence, and candidate preparation.

Second-Attempt Pass Rates

Second-attempt pass rate levels are used only for programs identified based on first-attempt pass rate performance. As such, they serve to inform the nature, scope, and intensity of the continuous improvement response. Second-attempt pass rates are calculated within the same academic-year window as the initial attempt, consistent with the statutory expectation that candidates receive timely, no-cost instructional supports for all administrations of the assessment. For purposes of calculating second-attempt pass rates, candidates who meet the Commission-adopted secondary passing standard and whose proficiency in the Teaching Performance Expectations is confirmed by the preparation program on their subsequent

submission are counted as passing on the second attempt for program-level reporting and continuous improvement analysis.

Table 3: Recommended Second-Attempt TPA Pass Rate Levels, Bands, and Descriptors

Level	Band	Short Descriptor
Meets Standard	≥ 90%	Highly effective follow-through supports
Approaching Standard	80–89%	Follow-through systems need strengthening
Below Standard	< 80%	Support system gaps; Commission support required

Meets Standard (≥90 percent)

For programs identified through first-attempt performance, this level indicates highly effective and well-coordinated follow-through. Timely, structured, and evidence-based remediation and resubmission supports are in place, with nearly all candidates who do not pass on the first attempt successfully demonstrating competence on the subsequent administration, consistent with statutory expectations for no-cost instructional assistance.

Approaching Standard (80–89 percent)

For identified programs, this level indicates that remediation and resubmission supports are generally available and effective, but not yet consistently sufficient for all candidates. Results in this range suggest the need for focused self-study and targeted refinement of advising, coaching, instructional supports, and resubmission processes to ensure that follow-through systems operate reliably and equitably for candidates who require additional attempts. Programs in this band typically receive targeted technical assistance focused on strengthening the coherence, accessibility, and timeliness of follow-up supports.

Below Standard (<80 percent)

For identified programs, this level indicates that a significant proportion of candidates who do not meet the standard on the first attempt are not successfully supported on the subsequent administration. The pattern reflects gaps in the structure, intensity, and/or coordination of follow-up supports and signals the need for enhanced Commission-supported continuous improvement, including strengthened technical assistance, closer monitoring, and targeted development of program-level remediation and candidate support systems.

Entry into Continuous Improvement Cycle

Under the proposed framework, entry into the continuous improvement cycle is based solely on first-attempt TPA pass rate performance. Programs whose first-attempt pass rates fall within the “Below Standard” band are identified for structured improvement and support. Second-attempt pass rate performance is used to diagnose the effectiveness of follow-through systems and to guide the design and intensity of Commission-supported assistance, ensuring that improvement efforts address both embedded preparation and the quality of support provided to candidates who require additional opportunities to demonstrate competence. Cumulative pass rates continue to be reported for transparency and public information to provide context regarding eventual completion of the licensure requirement, but they are not used for

performance banding or entry into the continuous improvement cycle, given the time lag and attribution limitations inherent in that measure.

This framework aligns identification with the statutory expectation for embedded preparation under Education Code section 44320.2(e) and aligns the scope and intensity of support with the statutory requirement in section 44320.2(d)(9) to provide timely, evidence-based, and no-cost instructional assistance for all administrations of the assessment.

RECOMMENDATION 3: ANNUAL TPA IDENTIFICATION AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

Under the proposed three-part identification, performance band, and continuous improvement framework, staff recommend the establishment of an annual identification and continuous improvement cycle. Programs are identified annually for entry into the cycle when their first-attempt TPA pass rate falls within the “Below Standard” performance band, subject to minimum n-size and statistical reliability rules. Each year, Commission staff apply the adopted performance bands to first-attempt pass rate results from the prior academic year (July through June) to identify programs whose performance falls below the established threshold, with second-attempt pass rate results reviewed concurrently to inform the general scope and intensity of follow-up support.

Identified programs receive formal notification and a program-level performance profile to support local analysis and improvement planning. The purpose of the annual identification process is to establish a predictable and transparent entry point into a continuous improvement cycle that supports timely reflection, learning, and access to technical assistance, rather than to function as a sanctioning or enforcement mechanism. The overall structure of this cycle is illustrated in Table 4 (Improvement Initiation and Systems Learning Cycle, 2026–27) and Table 5 (Improvement Cycle, 2027–28 and Beyond).

Table 4: Improvement Initiation and Systems Learning Cycle (2026-2027)

Phase	Time Frame	Actions
Identification	Fall 2026	Programs with low pass rates are identified
Notification	By August 1, 2026	Programs with low pass rates are notified
Inquiry	August to December 2026	Programs review multiple measures and local evidence and engage staff, candidates, and mentors
Continuous Improvement (CI) Plan Development	August to December 2026	Root causes for low pass rates are identified; aligned actions and improvement indicators are planned and submitted to the Commission
CI Plan Feedback and Approval	By March 1, 2027	Commission provides feedback and approves plans for programs with low pass rates

Phase	Time Frame	Actions
Implementation, Monitoring, and Refinement	Ongoing	Programs implement CI plans, track progress, continue to review data and engage partners, with support from the Commission
Implementation, Monitoring, and Refinement	Ongoing	Commission refines CI processes and supports based on feedback from program partners, including faculty and candidates

As reflected in Table 4, the initial year of implementation (2026–27) is intended to function as a systems learning cycle for both preparation programs and the Commission. For programs, this first cycle initiates structured inquiry, root cause analysis, and development of time-limited continuous improvement (CI) plans informed by multiple sources of evidence and engagement of program leadership, faculty, supervisors, clinical partners, mentors, and candidates. For the Commission, the first cycle provides an opportunity to calibrate the application of performance bands, data profiles, technical assistance strategies, timelines, and feedback processes, and to learn from early implementation in partnership with the field. Commission staff provide data, technical assistance, review, and feedback on CI plans prior to implementation.

Table 5: Improvement Cycle 2027-2028 and Beyond

Phase	Time Frame	Actions
Identification	Fall 2027	Updated identification of programs with low pass rates to inform ongoing continuous improvement, without resetting existing improvement cycles
Notification	August 1, 2027	Programs are notified of updated pass rate results and implications for their current CI plans
Inquiry	August to December 2027	Programs review updated multiple measures and local evidence, and re-engage staff, candidates, and mentors to assess progress and emerging needs
Continuous Improvement (CI) Plan Development	August to December 2027	Programs update and refine existing CI plans based on new data and progress and submit to the Commission; adjust analyses, actions, and improvement indicators as needed
Plan Feedback and Approval	By March 1, 2028	Commission reviews and approves refinements to ongoing CI plans and provides targeted feedback
Implementation, Monitoring, and Refinement	Ongoing	Programs continue implementation, monitor longitudinal progress, and make mid-course adjustments
Implementation, Monitoring, and Refinement	Ongoing	Commission continues to monitor longitudinal progress and make targeted adjustments as needed, while maintaining continuity of core process

As reflected in Table 5, in 2027–28 and in subsequent years, annual identification continues, but functions to inform and refine ongoing improvement efforts rather than to restart the

process. Updated performance data are used to assess progress, support continued inquiry by program leadership, faculty, clinical partners, mentors, and candidates, and guide targeted adjustments to existing CI plans, while maintaining continuity of core improvement strategies. Commission review and support similarly focus on longitudinal progress and systems learning across cycles, with refinements to supports and processes informed by evidence and partner feedback.

Consistent with statutory requirements, the annual identification and continuous improvement cycle is intended to be established in regulation at a high level, setting forth the core structure and sequencing of identification, notification, inquiry, planning, implementation, and monitoring. The purpose of the regulatory framework is to define a stable and transparent improvement cycle, not to codify detailed procedures or prescriptive program actions. The specific technical methodologies, performance measures, analytic tools, timelines, plan elements, and forms of technical assistance are operational in nature and are developed, refined, and updated through ongoing Commission action, informed by implementation experience and engagement with the field.

Over time, implementation of the cycle is also expected to inform refinements to accreditation review processes, with the aim of deepening alignment with evidence-informed, improvement-focused inquiry and longitudinal program learning, while building on the strengths of the existing accreditation system and supporting more streamlined and integrated review expectations for programs.

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommend that the Commission:

- (1) Review and provide direction and feedback on the proposed TPA Pass Rate Identification Framework, including the proposed measures, performance bands, and annual identification and continuous improvement cycle.
- (2) Direct staff to return to the Commission with a refined plan, in the form of draft regulations, for further Commission consideration and/or adoption.

Next Steps

If the recommended action is adopted, staff will synthesize Commission direction and input from the field and return to the Commission with a refined plan in the form of draft regulations for further consideration and/or adoption.