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Action

Educator Preparation Committee

Proposed Passing Score Standards for the New and Revised California Teaching Performance Assessments

Executive Summary: This agenda item presents recommended minimum passing standards for the revised 2025-26 California Teaching Performance Assessment Cycles 1 and 2 for Single Subject and World Languages and the newly developed 2025-26 Math Cycle for Multiple Subjects, and Education Specialist Mild/Moderate Support Needs and Extensive Support Needs. These new and revised assessments will become operational July 1, 2025.

Recommended Action: That the Commission adopt the recommended passing standard and secondary passing standard for the new and revised California Teaching Performance Assessments.

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Strategic Plan Goals

Educator Preparation and Advancement

- **Goal 1:** Educator preparation programs hold candidates to high standards and adequately prepare them to support all students by using culturally and linguistically responsive and sustaining practices in equitable, inclusive, and safe environments.
 - B. Develop educator performance assessments that are embedded in clinical preparation to ensure readiness to begin professional practice

Continuous Improvement

- **Goal 7.** The Commission's work is grounded in research, informed by the voices of practitioners and communities of interests, and supports continuous improvement in educator preparation and licensure.
 - Q. Use data to inform Commission and staff decision-making and continuous improvement.

Proposed Passing Score Standards for the New and Revised California Teaching Performance Assessments

Introduction

This item presents recommended minimum passing standards for the revised 2025-26 California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA) Cycles 1 and 2 for Single Subject (SS) and World Languages (WL) and the newly developed 2025-26 CalTPA Math Cycle for Multiple Subjects (MS) and Education Specialist (EdSp) Mild/Moderate Support Needs (MMSN) and Extensive Support Needs (ESN). These new and revised assessments will become operational effective July 1, 2025.

Background

[Education Code 44320.2](#) requires individuals seeking a California teaching credential to successfully complete a Teaching Performance Assessment (TPA), in addition to successfully completing coursework and clinical practice through a Commission-approved program. The TPA measures candidates' proficiency on Teaching Performance Expectation (TPE) elements observable through a performance assessment prior to being recommended for a preliminary credential.

Currently three TPA models have been approved by the Commission for Multiple Subject (MS), Single Subject (SS), and Education Specialist (EdSp) Mild to Moderate Support Needs (MMSN) and Extensive Support Needs (ESN) candidates: CalTPA, the Commission's TPA model; edTPA, operated by Evaluation Systems (ES); and the Fresno Assessment of Student Teachers (FAST), implemented by California State University, Fresno.

In 2021, Senate Bill 488 (Chap. 678, Stats. 2021) mandated significant reforms to literacy instruction and educator preparation. SB 488 required that teacher preparation programs include evidence-based instruction in reading aligned with the California Dyslexia Guidelines and English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework. This legislative shift prompted the redevelopment of the Multiple Subject and Education Specialist CalTPAs to assess candidates' competence in literacy and mathematics, in alignment with updated Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs).

Additionally, SB 1263, signed into law January 1, 2025, called for the critical review of the design and implementation of current TPAs.

In response to both SB 488 and SB 1263, staff began a comprehensive redevelopment effort which included:

- Creating a new Math Performance Assessment Cycle for Multiple Subject and Education Specialist (MMSN, ESN) to parallel the existing Literacy Performance Assessment (LPA) Cycle.
- Revising existing Cycle 1 and Cycle 2 tasks for Single Subject and World Languages to align with the changes made in the Math and Literacy Cycle.

This agenda item is organized into three parts:

- **Part I:** Overview of CalTPA redevelopment process, including the design and rubric development process
- **Part II:** History of preliminary passing standards
- **Part III:** Current Operational CalTPA Passing Standards & Proposed Passing Standards

Part I: The Process for Developing a CalTPA

The development of a new California Teaching Performance Assessment (CalTPA) is a comprehensive, multi-phase process that ensures each assessment is valid, reliable, fair, and aligned with the California Teaching Performance Expectations (TPEs). This process incorporates input from a diverse range of educational professionals, including practicing teachers, teacher educators, content experts, and stakeholders from across the state. The goal is to produce a performance-based assessment that authentically evaluates a candidate's readiness to teach in California classrooms.

Design Development

The first phase begins with the design and development of the assessment cycles. This phase is highly collaborative and involves multiple rounds of consultation with:

- Educators and faculty from teacher preparation programs
- Subject matter experts in fields such as literacy, mathematics, English language development, and early childhood education
- Stakeholders including representatives from state agencies, school districts, and professional organizations

Assessment tasks are intentionally designed to reflect real-world teaching responsibilities and to align with the California TPEs, which articulate what all beginning teachers should know and be able to do. The design ensures that tasks are feasible within the candidate's clinical placement, promote reflection, and represent key aspects of equitable, inclusive teaching practice.

Rubric Development and Scoring

Each CalTPA cycle consists of four steps and is assessed by eight analytic rubrics, each aligned to one or more credential-specific TPEs. The rubrics are crafted to ensure consistent interpretation and application by assessors. They support transparency and clarity for candidates and preparation programs. Each rubric includes five performance levels (1–5), with Level 3 representing the expected standard for a beginning teacher.

During the scoring process, assessors begin scoring at Level 3 and move up or down the levels based on the evidence submitted by the candidate. Current scoring practices stipulate that if a candidate falls into a Level 1 or 2 in any area of a rubric, the candidate cannot score above that level on that rubric.

Part II: Historical Use of Preliminary Passing Standard and Implementation of Secondary Passing Standard

The Commission has a history of setting a preliminary passing standard for the first year of operation for its assessments. Following the revision of the CalTPA MS, SS, and WL models in 2018-2019, the Commission established a preliminary minimum passing standard for all models for the first year of operation ([June 2019, Agenda Item 2D](#)). Similarly, after the development of the TPAs for Education Specialist, the Commission established preliminary minimum passing standards for the first year of operation of the EdSp CalTPA MMSN and ESN ([June 2023, Agenda Item 3E](#)). In both cases, the approved preliminary passing standard aligned with the passing standard that was established for the field test of the assessments. Additionally, in both cases, following the first year of implementation, standard setting studies were conducted to establish final passing standards. Each standard setting study utilized data collected from the first year of operation.

In December 2023, the Commission approved the creation of a secondary passing standard for all TPAs. At the time of its approval, the secondary passing standard called for candidates who score within one Standard Error of Measurement (-1 SEM) below the adopted CalTPA passing standard to be considered for a preliminary credential, provided they have demonstrated competence across all TPEs and meet all other credential requirements. With the passage of SB 1263 (Newman) in 2024, Education Code section 44320.2(e)(2) was revised to require the Commission to maintain the secondary passing standard, though no specifications were provided for what the secondary passing standard must be.

Part III: Current Operational CalTPA Passing Standards and Proposed Passing Standards

For all operational assessments except ESN, there is a side condition that limits the number of rubric scores of one (1) a candidate can receive. A candidate may receive at most one rubric score of 1. If a candidate receives two or more rubric scores of 1, they do not pass the assessment, regardless of whether their overall score meets the passing standard. In that case, the candidate would need to revise and resubmit their assessment.

The current operational approved passing standards for the CalTPA are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1: Current Operational CalTPA Cycle 1 and 2 Passing Standards (MS, SS, WL)

CalTPA Credential Type	Version 7 (V7) 8/2024-7/2025	2024-25 Approved Passing Standard	# Rubrics/Maximum Points
MS – Cycle 1	V7	19 (max 1 of 1)*	8 Rubrics/40 points
SS – Cycle 1	V7	19 (max 1 of 1)*	8 Rubrics/40 points
SS – Cycle 2	V7	21 (max 1 of 1)*	9 Rubrics/45 points
WL – Cycle 1	V7	19 (max 1 of 1)*	8 Rubrics/40 points
WL – Cycle 2	V7	21 (max 1 of 1)*	9 Rubrics/45 points

*Secondary Passing Standard (-1 SEM) applicable

Table 2: Current Operational EdSp CalTPA Cycle 1 Passing Standards (MMSN, ESN)

EdSp CalTPA Credential Type	Version 3 (V3) 8/2024-7/2025	2024-25 Approved Passing Standard	# Rubrics/Maximum Points
MMSN – Cycle 1	V3	17 (max 1 of 1)*	8 Rubrics/40 points
ESN – Cycle 1	V3	15*	8 Rubrics/40 points

**Secondary Passing Standard (-1 SEM) applicable*

To align with the proposed passing standard for the CalTPA Literacy Cycle and ensure consistency across assessments, staff recommends a temporary passing standard of 16 points with no side conditions for all new and revised models, which would equate to an average score of 2 on each 5-point rubric. Additionally, a score of 16, which is 40% of the total possible points, provides space to recognize candidates who have not fully met expectations but are showing developing competency. A passing standard of 16 out of a maximum of 40 points with no side conditions:

- Reflects a developmental or provisional standard while the assessment is being refined.
- Allows for compensatory scoring – meaning higher performance on some rubrics can balance lower performance on others.
- Consistent with educational assessment practices that prioritize fairness, potential, and growth – especially for beginning teachers or in early implementation phases.

The proposed minimum passing standards for the CalTPA are shown in Tables 3 and 4 below.

Because Education Code section 44320.2(e)(2) requires the inclusion of a secondary passing standard, staff recommends setting a passing score of 16, with a score of 14 (reflecting application of a -1 SEM) serving as the secondary passing standard for the first year of operation. As has been done in the past, staff anticipates that a standard setting study for each model, as described in Appendix A, would be held in spring 2026, meaning the proposed standards would be in place for one year and subject to adjustment based on the outcomes of the standard setting study.

Table 3: Proposed CalTPA Math Cycle and Cycle 1 Passing Standards (MS, SS, WL)

CalTPA Credential Type	Version 1 8/2025-7/2026	Proposed Passing Standard 2025-26	Proposed Secondary Passing Standard 2025-26	# Rubrics/Maximum Points
MS – Math Cycle (New)	V1	16	14	8 Rubrics/40 points
SS – Cycle 1 (Revised)	V1	16	14	8 Rubrics/40 points
SS – Cycle 2 (Revised)	V1	16	14	8 Rubrics/40 points
WL – Cycle 1 (Revised)	V1	16	14	8 Rubrics/40 points
WL – Cycle 2 (Revised)	V1	16	14	8 Rubrics/40 points

Table 4: Proposed EdSp CalTPA Math Cycle Passing Standards (MMSN, ESN)

EdSp CalTPA Credential Type	Version 1 8/2025- 7/2026	Proposed Passing Standard 2025-26	Proposed Secondary Passing Standard 2025-26	# Rubrics/Maximum Points
MMSN – Math Cycle (New)	V1	16	14	8 Rubrics/40 points
ESN – Math Cycle (New)	V1	16	14	8 Rubrics/40 points

Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt a minimum passing standard of 16 points across 8 rubrics, with no side condition, for the CalTPA assessments listed above, effective July 1, 2025. This score represents an average passing score of 2 points per rubric. The removal of a side condition allows a candidate to earn more than one score of Level 1 across the 8 rubrics, provided the total score still meets or exceeds the passing standard or the secondary passing standard. Additionally, staff recommends the adoption of a secondary passing standard of 14 points across all 8 rubrics, with no side conditions, for all assessments. These recommendations will remain in effect until the standard setting study is conducted in the spring 2026.

Next Steps

Upon adoption of the new passing standards, the following will occur:

- Notification will be posted on the Evaluation Systems website and distributed to preparation programs statewide.
- A standard setting study will be conducted during the 2025-26 academic year.

A comprehensive standard setting study is scheduled for spring 2026 and will include all nine CalTPA assessments: PK-3 ECE, Multiple Subject, Single Subject, World Languages, and Education Specialist Mild/Moderate Support Needs, Extensive Support Needs, Early Childhood Special Education, Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and Visual Impairments. Details about the standard setting process are provided in [Appendix A](#).

Appendix A

The Standard Setting Process

“Standard setting” is the common term used to describe the process of determining a minimum passing score, or cut score, for new or revised examinations. The term “standard” as it is used in standard setting refers to a performance standard or minimum level of acceptable performance on an assessment. The specific standard setting process used for the CalTPA is described more fully below.

Developers of TPA models are required by the Assessment Design Standards (ADS) to conduct a standard setting study to establish the requirements for successful completion of the assessment. “Standard setting” is the common term used in the large-scale assessment industry to describe the process of determining a minimum passing score for new or revised assessments. The term “standard” as it is used in “standard setting” refers to a performance standard, or minimum level of acceptable performance on an assessment.

Standard setting is a common and established process for determining valid and defensible minimum passing scores for standardized assessments. Standard setting allows an authoritative body, in this case the Commission, to make an informed decision when establishing passing standards instead of arbitrarily selecting a minimum passing standard.

For criterion-referenced assessments, such as the CalTPA, standard setting is a content-focused, structured process in which a panel of content area experts reviews the content of an assessment, carefully considers the performance expectations being measured, relevant data and potential pass rates at various scores to make an informed judgment about the minimum performance level that candidates would need to demonstrate to “pass” the assessment. The standard setting process is conducted by ES and results in a recommended passing score from each expert panel to the Commission for each of the two instructional cycles.

There have been many different methods for standard setting published and researched in the field of large-scale assessment over the last 50 years. These standard setting methods are in use today for various types of assessments all over the world. However, all the most common standard setting methods for educational assessments involve the informed judgments of qualified “raters,” or content-specific pedagogical experts.

As with the standard setting study method used for all other Commission assessments (e.g., CalTPA, CalAPA, CPACE, edTPA), the process that will be employed for the 2026 standard settings will be consistent with recognized psychometric principles and procedures.