



Oklahoma's Transition to a New Pedagogy Assessment: Survey Findings and Next Steps



OKLAHOMA
Educational Quality
and Accountability

The Praxis Performance Assessment for Teachers (PPAT), Oklahoma’s pedagogy assessment required for teacher certification, will soon be discontinued by its vendor, ETS. In response, OEQA has been tasked with selecting a new pedagogy assessment to gauge the teaching abilities of candidates for teacher certification starting with the 2025-2026 school year. In November 2024, a survey was distributed to Oklahoma education stakeholders to gather feedback to help in selecting this new exam. The active participation of Oklahoma’s education community provided valuable insights for this process.

Key Findings: Support for Change and Preference for New Assessment

The survey revealed that many educators are eager to move away from the PPAT, which they found unsatisfactory. Respondents expressed a clear preference for a more straightforward, event-based test (e.g. a one-time test taken at a test center) rather than a portfolio-style assessment built concurrently with teaching or student teaching like the PPAT. They also emphasized the importance of transparency in grading, affordability, and accessibility for any new exam. In response to this feedback, OEQA is now evaluating options for a new events-based teacher assessment that aligns with these priorities, emphasizing a rigorous exam to ensure that Oklahoma continues to certify high quality educators.

The survey received 2,304 responses from a variety of stakeholders including teachers, teacher candidates, non-teacher LEA staff, Educator Preparation Program (EPP) faculty, and community members. Among respondents, 79% were teachers and teacher candidates, 19% were non-teacher LEA staff, and 6% were EPP faculty and staff. In reaching such a broad audience for feedback, OEQA is confident that the PPAT transition can be implemented in a way that emphasizes the priorities and trust of Oklahoma’s education stakeholders.

Experience with PPAT

Most respondents (66%) reported having direct experience with the PPAT. Additionally, 20% indicated they had taken the assessment, while 11% were currently in the process of completing it. We asked respondents currently working to complete the PPAT or who had completed the PPAT in the last 5 years about the resources they used to prepare for the PPAT (Figure 1). Then, we asked the same respondents to rate how useful each resource category was to their completing the PPAT (Figure 2).

More than half of respondents who have worked on the PPAT utilized study materials (n = 642)

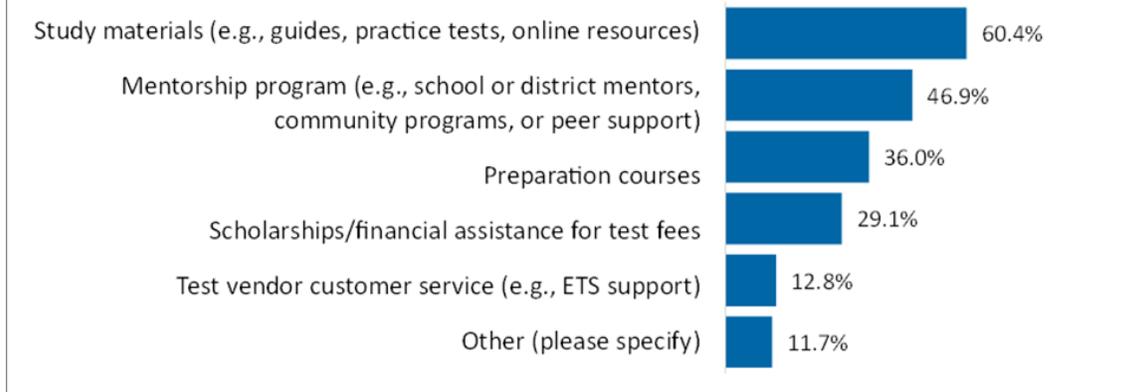


Figure 1: Which of the following resources have you utilized in preparation for the PPAT? (n = 642).

Participants who rated the resources they utilized as "useful" or "very useful"

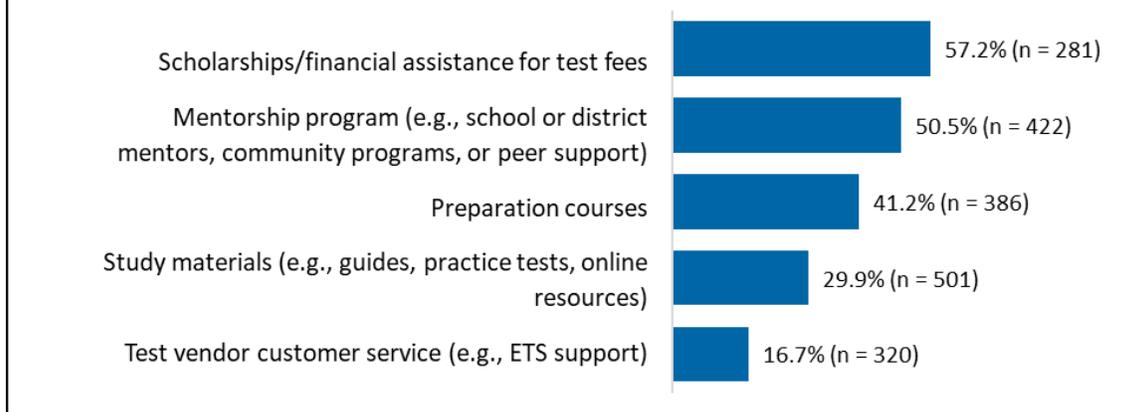


Figure 2: Please rate how useful each of the following resources has been in completing your PPAT.

Responses to these questions told us that resource support, including financial aid, are priorities in the implementation of a new pedagogy exam. This was echoed by a broader survey of what resources less directly involved stakeholders, such as EPPs and LEA staff, deemed priorities for teacher success on the PPAT. Mentorships programs ranked second in both of these groups, and open-ended responses to “Which of the following resources have you utilized in preparation for the PPAT?” supported the idea that close, personalized instruction in preparation for the PPAT is useful. Traditionally certified instructors seemed to find this through their comprehensive preparation and coursework, but mentorship

available to all teacher candidates seem to be a priority across respondent groups that could provide additional support for teachers entering the profession through alternative pathways.

“Whatever you decide to replace the PPAT with, should take that into consideration and make sure there are resources available for people who are taking the alternate certification routes.”

These findings highlight the need for robust support systems for teacher candidates completing their assessments. As OEQA selects a replacement for the PPAT, we will prioritize resources that ensure all candidates—regardless of their certification pathway—have the tools they need to succeed, such as mentorship programs and financial assistance opportunities. Addressing disparities in preparation support will be a key focus to ensure the new assessment is accessible and equitable for all teacher candidates.

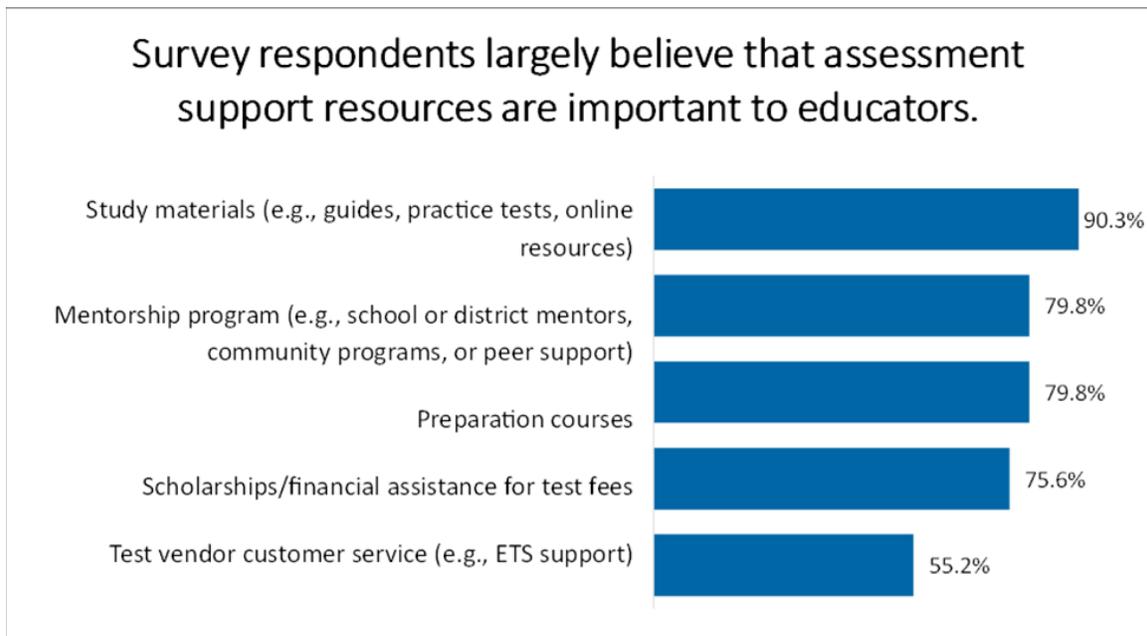


Figure 3: How important are the following resources in helping educators succeed with the new PPAT replacement? (n = 2050)

Perceptions of the PPAT's Effectiveness

Survey responses raised several concerns about the performance and effectiveness of the PPAT. When asked to rate statements about the PPAT, respondents generally expressed dissatisfaction, with the weighted average score falling between “Disagree” and “Neither Agree nor Disagree”. Complete response rates are displayed below in Table 1. Notably, teacher candidates (38%) more often strongly disagreed with the statement, “The PPAT accurately measures educators' abilities to perform job duties in the classroom,” compared to other groups such as teachers (27%), principals (15%).

EPPs were notably more critical of the PPAT scoring process. EPP faculty strongly disagreed with the statement, "The PPAT Scoring Process provides useful feedback," at a rate significantly greater than teachers. This highlights a key area of concern regarding the perceived utility of the feedback educators receive through the assessment process. Open-ended feedback collected at the end of the survey was largely dedicated to addressing respondent frustrations and pain points with the PPAT, such as the amount of time it took teachers who were occupied with teaching in the classroom. Multiple respondents that identified themselves as traditionally certified teachers or EPP faculty/staff suggested that testing requirements for alternative and emergency certified teachers ought to be more stringent than requirements for traditionally certified teachers. In contrast, other respondents, some of whom identified as alternatively certified, believe that any assessment requirement ought to be the same for both alternative and traditional pathways. What both groups seem to agree on is that completing the PPAT frequently felt like a significant challenge to be completed at the same time as a candidate's other duties, be it coursework/student teaching or teaching in a full capacity.

Respondents are largely critical of the PPAT

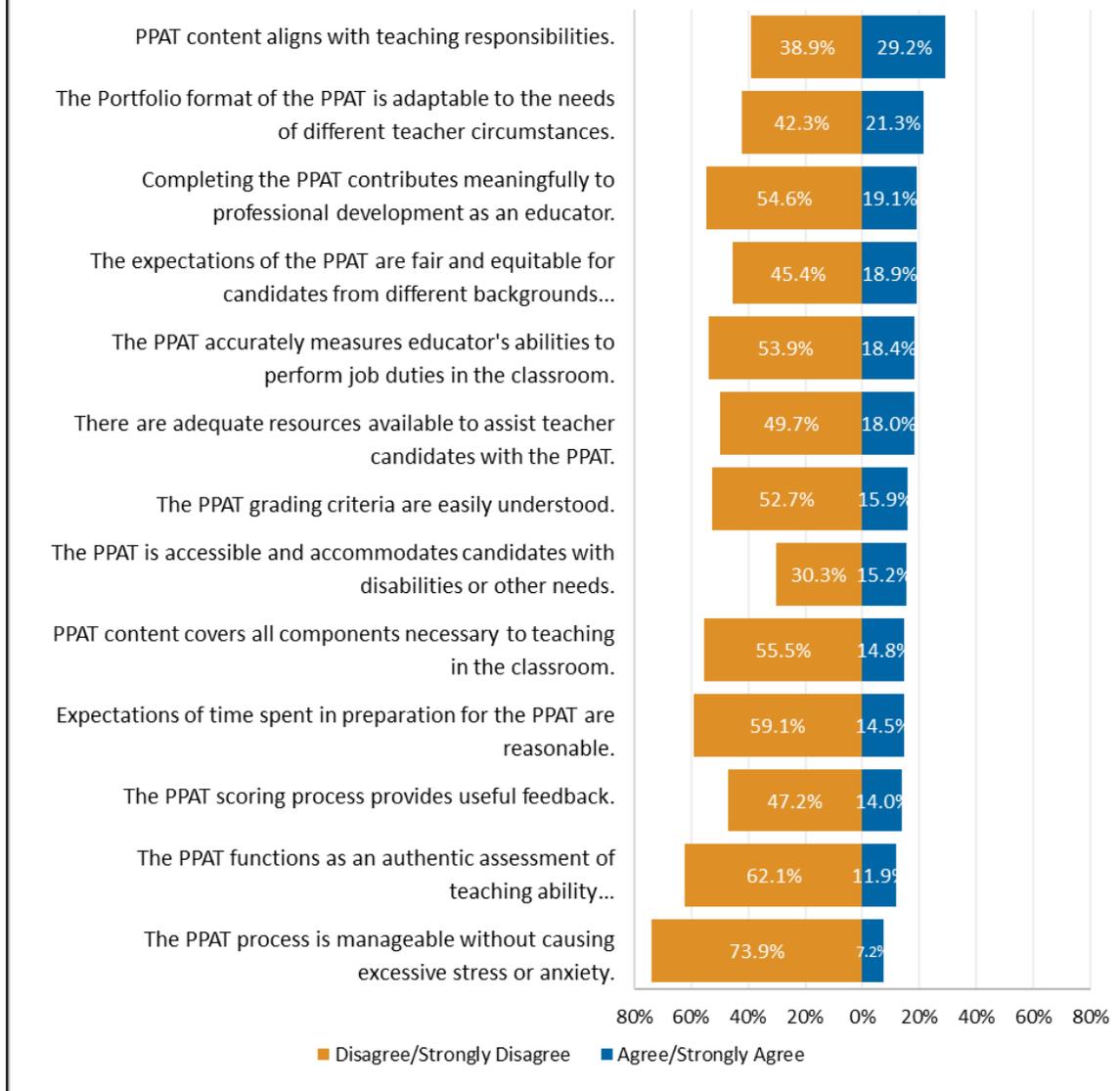


Figure 4: Please rate your agreement with the following statements about the PPAT (n = 1778).

“As a candidate, I worked endless hours on each of the pieces and found this one of the most difficult tasks in my career. I can see why candidates likely give up the battle in the end. Without proper guidance and cost effectiveness, a candidate loses the will to progress further in the program.”

The challenges presented by the PPAT give OEQA context about the concerns that teachers, teacher candidates, and other stakeholders might have about any assessment that is selected. The new assessment is going to have to support the needs of all teacher candidates in the state, which makes understanding the ways in which different candidates struggled with the PPAT incredibly important in selecting an exam to ensure that all candidates have an opportunity to prove themselves to be quality educators. A rigorous assessment should be able to accurately evaluate a candidate’s ability, but does not need to be overly burdensome or require redundant efforts to complete, a point being taken into consideration not only as OEQA selects the PPAT’s direct replacement, but as OEQA considers the future of teacher assessment in the state.

“[PPAT] is very stressful especially for someone that does not come from a teacher prep program. Working a full-time job and hav[ing] a family, the PPAT takes away from other responsibilities and duties we have.”

Preferences for Future Assessment Formats

With the above challenges in mind, stakeholders were asked to identify priorities for a replacement assessment. Transparent grading criteria was the number one priority for a new assessment, followed by affordability for candidates (Figure 4). EPP respondents (60%) were more likely to rate the priority “The assessment provides an authentic measure of teaching performance” as “absolutely essential” compared to teachers (42%) or

teacher candidates (34%), reflecting the priorities that EPPs place on measures that are believed to reflect or predict a teacher’s performance in the classroom. The top five priorities below were shared by most respondents, regardless of occupation or affiliation.

“The largest issue with the PPAT and tests like it is grading is not consistent. You can turn the exact same material in... and one will pass it and the other will fail it.”

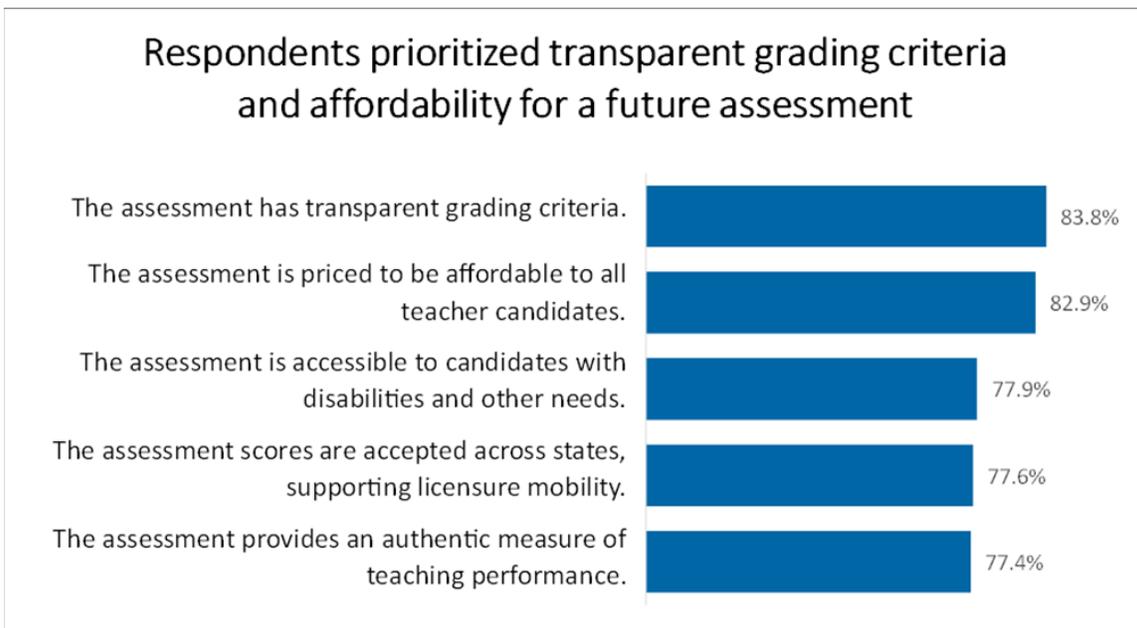


Figure 5: Top 5 qualities of a teacher performance assessment rated most important by respondents (n = 1626).

Survey respondents strongly preferred not to choose another portfolio-based assessment. (Figure 5). Teacher candidates showed a notably stronger preference for event-based assessments compared to teachers, principals, and superintendents, whose preference for an event-based assessment were not as strong. The same teacher candidates, however, were less inclined to support practicum-based assessments than teachers and principals, perhaps owing to a perception that practicum-based assessments would have similar drawbacks to a portfolio-based assessment, based on open-ended responses from those teacher candidates.

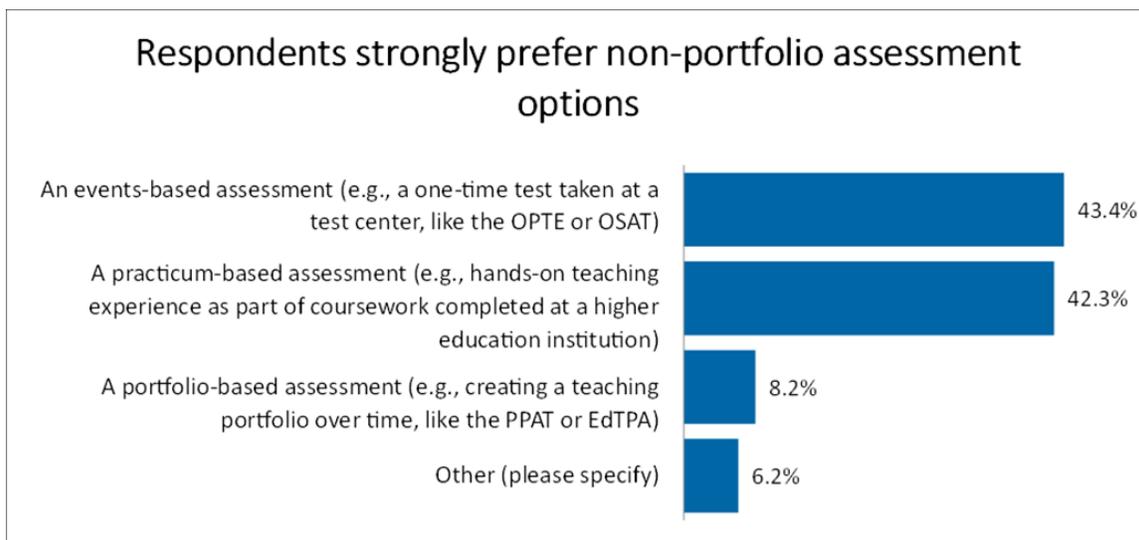


Figure 6: What format would you prefer a future pedagogical assessment to be delivered in? (n = 1626).

Respondents in the open-ended questions also suggested the possibility of blending assessment types or providing multiple assessment types going forward, including the possibility of maintaining some of PPAT’s rigor by integrating parts of it into a homegrown assessment. Other responses included calls for reducing the emphasis on formal assessments, with some respondents advocating for more employer-driven observation and recommendation processes—although such a shift would not meet current legislative requirements.

The priorities and preferences shared by respondents here resulted in OEQA’s choice to pursue an events-based exam to replace the PPAT. The feedback on assessment priorities creates an excellent framework for OEQA to weigh the options that will be presented by vendors with the concerns everyone involved in mind, including EPPs, LEAs, and ultimately, students.

Additional Insights and Suggestions

Respondents were given the opportunity to share additional thoughts and suggestions on the transition. A vast majority of these responses supported the transition away from the PPAT, but also raised concerns about the future performance assessment for our state. Several EPPs especially stressed the point that whatever replaces the PPAT ought to maintain a level of rigor that ensures that teacher candidates are prepared to teach and empowered to stay in the profession. Teachers and teacher candidates shared their experiences of facing significant difficulty completing the PPAT, while feeling it did not adequately reflect their teaching abilities in hindsight. District administration and principals also saw the PPAT as a barrier to adequately staffing their schools with qualified

candidates, but understood the need for rigor, despite the teacher shortage impacting Oklahoma schools.

With ETS's sunset of the PPAT, OEQA is presented with an opportunity to find an exam that better suits the situations faced in Oklahoma's education landscape. As the state continues to evaluate its approach to teacher certification, the feedback from educators and other stakeholders will play a pivotal role in shaping a more effective and supportive assessment system.

Based on the survey results, OEQA will be pursuing a one-time, events-based assessment for teacher certification to begin use in 2025. While a practicum format may offer advantages, developing a robust practicum assessment for our state is not possible before the end of PPAT support. Our priorities in selecting an event-based test will reflect those highlighted by our survey respondents, including accessibility, affordability, and accuracy in measuring teacher effectiveness and preparedness. OEQA stands committed to ensuring that the assessment supports the goal of having well prepared, high-quality teachers entering Oklahoma's classrooms by ensuring any test selected is rigorous and promotes the use of evidence-based practices in teaching.

OEQA is currently in the process of selecting an events-based assessment. A vendor and exam should be selected by Spring 2025, to be implemented before the start of the 2025-2026 school year. In Fall 2025, we intend to investigate the possibility of developing a practicum assessment option for the future for some or all teacher pathways in the state. Throughout this process, we will communicate with EPPs and support providers to ensure that they can plan to be able to support Oklahoma's teacher candidates throughout this transition.

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