Research for EDucator Equity & Excellence

Policy Brief

Texas Pedagogy & Professional Responsibility Exam Positively Predicts
Teacher Quality & Student Achievement

Current Context

To become a teacher in Texas, teacher candidates must pass a Pedagogy and Professional Responsibility (PPR) licensure exam, in addition to content-focused exams (e.g., Math). Of the 223,202 teacher candidates who took the PPR exam since 2010, 91% passed on the first attempt. The PPR results are also used for Educator Preparation Program (EPP) accountability; 85% of the teacher candidates must pass the PPR on the first or second attempt.

Research Findings

Extensive research by Texas State University's Research for EDucator Equity & Excellence (REDEE) Center shows that the PPR exam scores are positively correlated with meaningful and important teacher and student outcomes. Using the state's education data from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC), our research shows the following:

- A first-year teacher's score on the PPR exam positively predicts their principal's evaluation of their teaching quality and effectiveness. The PPR exam score is the second strongest predictor of the principal's evaluation, second only to the type of teacher preparation they completed. The results are based on over 76,000 principal evaluations of new teachers.

- A teacher's score on the PPR exam positively predicts the amount of learning experienced by their students in Grade 7 Mathematics, Grade 8 Mathematics, and Algebra I. The higher a teacher scores on the PPR, the more their students learn. The results are based on 1.4 to 1.8 million students per subject.

- A teacher's score on the PPR exam positively predicts the amount of learning experienced by their students in Grade 7 English-language arts/Reading, Grade 8 English-language arts/Reading, English I, and English II. The higher a teacher scores on the PPR, the more their students learn. The results are based on 1.3 to 2.0 million students per subject.

Policy & Educational Implications

- The PPR positively predicts employer evaluation scores. People with higher PPR scores are rated as higher quality and more effective teachers by their principal's.

- The PPR positively predicts student learning. Students learn more in Math and English/Reading when taught by teachers with higher PPR scores.

- The PPR exam is a good predictor of which people will be effective educators and therefore does not need to be replaced. Adding high-quality constructed-response items would increase the predictive quality of the PPR.