



Chad C. Nelson, Ph.D.

Licensed Psychologist

February 26, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Dr. Chad Nelson. I am a licensed psychologist in the state of Maryland, with more than 20 years of experience in the area of psychological assessment.

As a native North Dakotan, having been born in Minot, I am writing to discuss the issue of using performance on standardized assessments, such as the Praxis, to grant licensure to teachers in the State of North Dakota. As someone who has been involved in the process of assessment for more than 20 years, I am writing to voice my concern regarding the ongoing use of standardized assessments to grant professional licensure, including teaching licensure.

In several states, the impact of standardized testing results, including determining the efficacy of “passing scores,” for teaching licensure has been debated. Goldhaber (2007) reported that in the state of North Carolina, raising state required Praxis scores may eliminate potentially effective teachers from the workforce, due to the fact that standard scores are not perfect screens of teacher efficacy.

James Shuls (2016) examined the impact of Praxis performance on teacher efficacy in Arkansas. In his study, Shuls noted that those who scored lower on the Praxis were minorities and more likely to have fewer years of experience. In addition, these teachers were more likely to work in schools serving higher percentages of students from disadvantaged and minority backgrounds. The study by Shuls also finds that passing the Praxis I was not a significant indicator of teacher quality in the state of Arkansas.

In my experience as a clinician, I have seen many cognitively capable, personable, and driven students experience difficulty on the Praxis I examination, which has resulted in them choosing a different career path. This always saddens me, as the world of teaching is not better off by not allowing these students to become teachers.

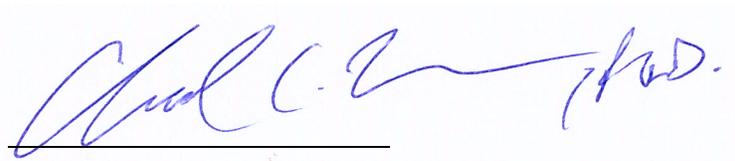
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As Shuls suggested, there are other ways of granting licensure for prospective teachers. Given concerns regarding the efficacy of the Praxis on predicting successful teachers, as well as the potential to exclude capable teachers of disadvantaged and minority backgrounds, I encourage the state to examine alternative means of identifying qualified educators for licensure.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chad C. Nelson, Ph.D.", written over a horizontal line.

Chad C. Nelson, Ph.D.
Licensed Psychologist
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References

- Goldhaber, D. 2007. "Everyone's Doing It, but What Does Teacher Testing Tell Us about Teacher Effectiveness?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 42(4): 765-94.
- Shuls, J. 2016. "Can We Simply Raise the Bar on Teacher Quality?"