

Guidelines for Use of the Professional Behaviors and Dispositions Assessment (PBDA)

While education professionals commonly acknowledge that teacher candidates must demonstrate the values, attitudes, beliefs, and professional behaviors necessary for successful careers in teaching, the mandate to provide valid and reliable evidence poses certain challenges that are not associated with assessment of knowledge and skills. First, the assessment of professional behaviors is situational and subjective. For example, teacher educators agree that teacher candidates should maintain a professional appearance. However, expectations for personal appearance vary widely across school settings and raise questions about how an assessor makes evaluative decisions when assessing a candidate. How does an assessor select a rating for an indicator for professional appearance if the candidate wears jeans to the school or has visible tattoos, purple hair, or nose rings? Although the assessor may find the candidate's appearance objectionable, s/he is expected to make a fair and objective decision regarding the candidate's professional appearance in a specific school context.

Second, and even more problematic, is the assessment of characteristics that are strictly dispositional. It is, of course, impossible to directly assess personal traits such as "attitude" or "initiative." Internal dispositions can only be evaluated by observing the actions or inactions of the candidate and then inferring the underlying dispositions that led to the observable behaviors. Such inferences require sufficient observations and interactions with the candidate to develop a repertoire of observable behaviors from which the assessor can infer the nature of the underlying traits. In addition, as with the assessment of professional behaviors, the assessment of dispositions is also contextual and subjective. The same candidate who speaks up in a faculty meeting to challenge a proposed change in the schedule may be deemed as having superior initiative in one school setting but may be perceived as "pushy" or "insubordinate" in another.

Finally, the perception of personal traits is subject to interpretation by the assessor, whose own attitudes, beliefs, and values may influence his/her analysis of the dispositions underlying specific behaviors. These, and other challenges may be mitigated by adhering to the guidelines outlined below.

The PBDA was developed by a task force of Georgia educators and is meant to be shared. The amount of labor and research that went into creating this research-based, comprehensive, and rigorous instrument would be far too demanding for a single individual or institution. The PBDA task force members are happy to share the PBDA with others as they support teacher candidates in their developing understandings of their professional responsibilities. The assessment is based on the contributions of dozens of education experts who spent hundreds of hours in its development, and therefore, the task force cautions against changing any of the content of the rubric when using it to assess candidates. Institutions may, however, change the physical characteristics of the instrument. For example, columns for the levels may be rearranged. Some institutions may prefer that the ratings for the levels to proceed from left to right from "Exceeds Expectations" to "Does Not Meet Expectations" because a progression from high to low

is used for other rubrics at the institution. The rubric may be used in pencil/paper form, or the institution may choose to transfer the contents to an electronic platform. Such physical changes to the rubric are acceptable, as long as the content remains intact.

There are several advantages of using an electronic platform. As discussed earlier, the electronic format makes it simple to calculate interrater reliability. In addition, InTASC or other standards may be electronically linked to the rubric, facilitating the collection of aggregate data on how well the candidates are performing on each of the standards. Physical changes to the rubric may be accomplished easily without the need to recreate the entire document. At the time of this writing, the rubric has already been created in LiveText as an assessment document, complete with electronic links to InTASC standards. Institutions interested in piloting the PBDA may contact the authors of this article for access to the LiveText rubric.

The PBDA is designed for use in teacher preparation programs, although it may be easily adapted for in-service teachers at any point in their careers. Within teacher preparation programs, the PBDA is intended to be embedded in a longitudinal, comprehensive, and systematic plan for supporting preservice teachers. The following guidelines are recommended for each institution using the PBDA for assessing teacher candidates:

1. Provide explicit and systematic instruction for professional behaviors and dispositions throughout the program.
 - a. Examine existing curriculum to ensure that professional behaviors and dispositions are explicitly taught throughout the program.
 - b. If specific courses related to professional behaviors and dispositions are not included in the curriculum, add seminars or workshops that are explicitly dedicated to instructing candidates in expectations for professionalism.
 - c. Provide each candidate with a copy of the PBDA at the beginning of his/her program. Discuss each of the criteria (Outcome Statements) and the expectations for success on each element of the assessment. Ask candidates to assess themselves on each of the criteria on the rubric as a baseline for later use.
 - d. Ask candidates to assess themselves again on each of the criteria of the PBDA at or near the end of program; compare this assessment with the baseline assessment completed at the beginning of the program and reflect on their growth and increased understanding of the expectations for professional behaviors and dispositions. *Note: The beginning and ending self-assessments and reflective narratives could be included in requirements for a program portfolio.*

2. Administer the PBDA a minimum of three times during each candidate's program by multiple assessors at each of three transition points. Assessors should include faculty members, supervisors, and/or mentor teachers who have extensive knowledge of the candidate's performance and have been carefully trained in the use of the PBDA. Administer the assessment at the following transition points:
 - a. During the first semester after admittance to teacher education. Note that some items may need to be marked N/A at this point if no field experiences have been observed.
 - b. During field experiences (approximately midpoint of program)
 - c. At or near the end of student teaching
3. If concerns are identified and documented for a candidate at any point in the program, s/he should be counseled, provided a written plan for improvement, monitored, and assessed more frequently. The institution should clearly define consequences for any candidate not meeting expectations and provide a plan of remediation to the candidate. If improved performance is not demonstrated within a reasonable time (e.g., one semester), the faculty should consider dismissing the candidate from the program.
4. Program completers should pass the assessment with a minimum score of "Meets Expectations" on each of the 14 indicators. Individual EPPs should develop plans of consequences for students who fail to achieve minimum expectations on the PBDA.
5. Aggregate data from the assessments should be analyzed for each point of administration, shared with program faculty, and used to identify areas in the program where additional instruction and support for candidates may be needed.

Careful adherence to these guidelines will help to ensure that teacher candidates are aware of the expectations for the behaviors and dispositions they will need for success as beginning teachers.

Notes on Scoring the PBDA

The PBDA contains 14 criteria, in the form of Outcome Statements that have been carefully selected by the task force. The score for each item is designated as follows:

Does Not Meet Expectations	0 points
Developing	1 point
Meets Expectations	2 points
Exceeds Expectations	3 points

Indicators are included for each outcome statement to describe the level of performance expected at each scoring level. Assessors should read each of the indicators carefully, being careful to avoid the tendency to always rate good students at the highest level. A criterion should only be scored as “Exceeds Expectations” when the candidate demonstrates behaviors or dispositions that identify them as significantly advanced beyond the expectations for their first year of teaching. In most cases, this level indicates a candidate who is proactive in helping or encouraging others toward success or who demonstrates exceptional initiative in the teaching environment.

Many of the indicators also include *examples*, noted in italics, which provide supplementary information to help assessors make informed decisions on their selection of ratings.

Students who are in the early stages of their programs are not expected to score “Meets Expectations” on all criteria. It is expected that students will develop their professional behaviors and dispositions throughout the program.

Assessors should enter evidence in the column “Evidence that Supports Assessor Rating” for each criterion. This evidence will help others to understand the assessor’s rationale for the rating.

By the end of program, each candidate should be expected to score at the level of “Meets Expectations” or higher on each criterion. Therefore, the target total is 28 points for 14 items (14 X 2 points = 28).

In some cases, it is not possible for the assessor to score an item because they have not observed the teacher candidate’s behaviors or dispositions related to that item. The score for that item should not be entered as a zero, which would have a detrimental effect on the overall score. Therefore, when calculating a score on the rubric, the assessor should first note the number of items that can be scored. That is, if two criteria have been marked as “Not Observed,” the total number of scorable items will be 12. The table below is based on an expectation that the candidate will score, on average, at the level of “Meets Expectations” (2 points) on all criteria. Therefore, the target total will be the number of scorable items times 2. The total points earned, divided by the target score, should equal to 1.0 or higher for the final score. It is possible for a candidate to score higher if s/he scores at the level of “Exceeds Expectations,” on some items and therefore, the final score may exceed 1.0.

Steps for determining the final score:

- a. Select the number of scorable items (14 minus the number of “Not Observed” items).
- b. Enter the total number of points the candidate earned.
- c. Check to see the target total for the appropriate scorable items.
- d. Calculate the final score: $(b \div c)$

Scorable Items (a)	Total points scored on rubric (b)	Target Total (c) <i>(meets expectations on all scorable items)</i>	Final Score (b ÷ c) <i>End of program score should be 1.0 or higher.</i> (d)
14		28	
13		26	
12		24	
11		22	
10		20	
9		18	

Important note: *If an assessor marks more than 5 items as “Not Observed,” it should be assumed that the assessor has insufficient knowledge of the candidate and should not be used to complete the assessment.*