The Rise and Fall of Missouri's Performance Assessment of Student Teachers: A Policy Network Analysis of the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment

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Abstract: This article examines the adoption and abandonment of the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment (MoPTA). Our analysis draws on policy network theory to argue that the divergent rationales of Missouri's primary teacher education policy network actors led to confusion, conflict, and disagreement, which contributed to the abandonment of the MoPTA as a policy prescription. Charting the rise and fall of Missouri's high-stakes performance assessment provides important lessons for state education agencies, local school districts, and teacher education programs.
Keywords: preservice teacher education; student teaching; performance-based assessment; policy analysis

El ascenso y el declive de la evaluación del desempeño de los estudiantes de maestros en Missouri: Un análisis de la red de políticas de la evaluación de maestros antes del servicio de Missouri

Resumen: Este artículo examina la adopción y el abandono de la Evaluación de Maestros Pre-Servicio de Missouri (MoPTA). Nuestro análisis se basa en la teoría de la red de políticas para argumentar que los fundamentos divergentes de los actores de la red de políticas de educación docente primaria de Missouri llevaron a confusión, conflicto y desacuerdo, lo que contribuyó al abandono de la MoPTA como una receta de política. Trazar el ascenso y la caída de la evaluación de desempeño de alto riesgo de Missouri proporciona lecciones importantes para las agencias de educación estatales, los distritos escolares locales y los programas de formación de maestros.
Palabras-clave: formación del profesorado; enseñanza de estudiantes; evaluación basada en el desempeño; análisis de políticas

A ascensão e declínio da avaliação de desempenho de professores-alunos no Missouri: Uma análise de rede de políticas da Avaliação de Professores Pré-serviço de Missouri
Resumo: Este artigo examina a adoção e o abandono do Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment (MoPTA). Nossa análise baseia-se na teoria da rede de políticas para argumentar que os fundamentos divergentes dos atores da rede de formação de professores primários do Missouri levaram a confusão, conflito e desacordo, o que contribuiu para o abandono do MoPTA como uma prescrição de política. Traçar a ascensão e queda da avaliação de desempenho de alto risco do Missouri fornece lições importantes para agências de educação estaduais, distritos escolares locais e programas de formação de professores.
Palavras-chave: formação de professores; ensino do aluno; avaliação baseada em desempenho; análise de política

The Rise and Fall of Missouri's Performance Assessment of Student Teachers

In 2012, the Missouri State Board of Education and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) embarked on a multi-phase project to overhaul the accreditation and approval of teacher education programs. The first phase began with the development of the Missouri Standards for the Preparation of Educators (MoSPE), a set of six standards that detailed essential knowledge and skills that should be attained by candidates in educator preparation programs. Phase two focused on strengthening the suite of teacher licensure assessments. In addition to the "general knowledge" and "content area" multiple choice exams, the Missouri State Board of Education sought to add a performance assessment of student teachers to the battery of teacher licensure exams to "ensure that new teachers are ready and able to make a positive impact on student learning beginning their very first day" (MDESE, 2016a). In late 2012, Missouri awarded Educational Testing Services (ETS) with a contract to develop the Missouri Teacher Candidate Assessment, later changed to the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment (MoPTA). Over the course of the next year, a team of Missouri teachers, teacher educators, and ETS facilitators developed the performance assessment. The MoPTA consisted of one formative task and three summative tasks. Each task required students to respond to prompts about assessment, planning, or instruction, and submit written commentary and evidence from the student teaching experience. All teacher candidates applying for licensure during Fall 2015 were required to pass MoPTA. By Fall 2018, MoPTA was no longer required for initial licensure.

In this article, we describe the policy evolution of the MoPTA as a high-stakes performance assessment of student teaching. The use of a performance assessment of student teaching in Missouri in 2013 was commensurate with emerging policies in other states. By 2012, performance assessments of student teaching were becoming more widely accepted (Sato, 2014). Most notably, the edTPA, a performance assessment that relied on multiple measures such as classroom videos, student work, and teacher commentary gained considerable policy support from several states and teacher preparation programs. Like the edTPA, the MoPTA was designed as an effort to serve as an assurance of teacher quality of Missouri teacher candidates, provide programs with data for continuous program renewal, and serve as an additional metric for program accountability. However, the educational policy dynamics in the state of Missouri prevented the stable adoption of the MoPTA. In this respect, Missouri and the MoPTA serve as an illustrative study for the ways in which teacher education policy delivery is formed and implemented within a network of interdependent actors (Klijn & Skelcher, 2007). Below, we review the proliferation of high-stakes performance assessments of student teaching in the United States, describe the policy network that influences teacher education in Missouri, and then describe the chronological evolution of the use of the MoPTA for teacher licensure and program approval from development in 2013 through abandonment in 2018. Based on this narrative, we identify the features of the policy network that created the conditions for the abandonment of the MoPTA and prospective lessons for actors operating in state-level teacher education policy networks.

Literature Review: The Proliferation of High-Stakes Performance Assessments of Student Teaching

High-stakes performance assessments of student teaching are a relatively recent development in the landscape of teacher education policy. The idea of performance assessments to measure classroom readiness originated with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which used a performance assessment to determine Nationally Board-Certified Educators. The NBPTS was established in 1987 and utilizes a portfolio-based assessment to evaluate the quality of in-service teachers. Teachers seeking certification through NBPTS are evaluated based on their submission of a portfolio that includes artifacts such as recordings of student-teacher interactions, student-developed products, and self-reflections (Galluzzo, 2005).

After the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act placed a new emphasis on teacher quality, states were asked to demonstrate the quality of their teacher workforce. Many states responded to this new demand by broadening their accountability efforts including performance assessments as an additional measure of teacher quality (Margolis & Doring, 2013). In California, Senate Bills 2042 and 1209 required teacher preparation programs to implement high-stakes performance assessments aligned with California's Teacher Performance Expectations (California State Senate, 2007; California Commission on Teacher Credentialing, 2002). Initially, the state contracted with Educational Testing Service (ETS) to develop a standardized performance assessment. However, after teacher education programs raised concerns that the ETS instrument was too broad, a consortium of programs designed and implemented an alternative performance assessment instrument: the Performance Assessment for California's Teachers (PACT; Pecheone & Chung, 2006). PACT was modeled after the NBPTS portfolio assessment, requiring teacher candidates to submit artifacts and respond to standardized prompts related to their teaching (Wei & Pecheone, 2010). Using PACT as a model, the Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning, and Equity (SCALE) developed a nationally available performance assessment—edTPA—for beginning teachers that set general and subject-specific performance expectations. edTPA was first

implemented in 2013 to assess teacher candidates' abilities to promote student learning. The assessment requires candidates to prepare portfolios that demonstrate mastery in three or four tasks (depending on educational track), including lesson planning, execution of instructional methods, and student assessment techniques (Williams et al., 2018). By 2021, 19 states had policies that either required candidates to pass edTPA or allowed passing scores on edTPA to demonstrate evidence of pedagogical mastery. In response to the success of edTPA, ETS developed their own nationally available high-stakes performance assessment—the Praxis Performance Assessment of Teachers (PPAT)—to compete in the expanding high-stakes performance assessment market.

While some states adopted nationally available assessments, other states such as New Hampshire, Kansas, and Missouri created performance assessments aligned to state-level educator evaluation systems or teacher education or educator standards. The development of these performance assessments was not a reaction against national assessments or edTPA, but instead an effort to create assurances that a performance assessment measured state specific indicators. Although the architecture of these state-specific performance assessments was similar to national counterparts, the discrete knowledge, skills, and competencies were determined by state educational objectives. For example, the Kansas Performance Teaching Portfolio was developed in 2009 to measure performance in six areas that aligned with the Kansas State Department of Education Professional Education Standards (Meyer et al., 2017). These areas include the analysis of contextual information, analysis of learning environment factors, instructional implementation, analysis of classroom learning environment, analysis of assessment procedures, and reflection & self-evaluation (Kansas State Department of Education, 2020).

Likewise, the New Hampshire Teacher Candidate Assessment Performance (NHTCAP) was developed based on on principles collaboratively determined by New Hampshire education stakeholders (McCurdy et al., 2018). The NHTCAP was adapted from the California PACT and requires teachers demonstrate how their instructional strategies impact student learning on five strands, which include contextualizing learners and learning; planning and preparing; instructing students and supporting learning; assessment of student learning; and reflecting and growing professionally. Typically, the rationale for developing state-specific performance assessments was related to either the political context within the state (Nichols & Cuenca, 2014) or the limited capacity of a state education agency to manage a national performance assessment (Meyer et al., 2017). Missouri joined the wave of states moving toward performance assessment with the development of the MoPTA. However, unlike Kansas and New Hampshire, Missouri abandoned performance assessments as a licensure requirement and measure of program quality. Consequently, the six-year lifespan of MoPTA serves as an intrinsic case study about the rationales that motivate high-stakes performance assessment policies that are now ubiquitous across the United States.

Conceptual Framework: Teacher Education and Policy Networks

According to Wilson and Tamir (2008) the social field of teacher education is a sprawling network where individuals, groups, and institutions "interact, work, and struggle over power" (p. 910). Within this network there is a "teacher education establishment" that consists primarily of the university-based education preparation programs located in higher education, the state and national agencies that regulate teacher licensure and accreditation (e.g., Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation), and the organizations and associations that advocate for educator preparation such as the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE). There also exists a heterodoxy within the social field of teacher education of actors that have strong opinions about teacher education and seek to challenge

the establishment. This group includes organizations that support alternative routes to traditional preparation (e.g., Teach for America, The New Teacher Project) and those that seek to question the monopoly of higher education on teacher preparation (e.g., National Council on Teacher Quality). Within the social field of teacher education, the boundaries between the establishment and heterodoxy are often in flux since the struggle for dominance is constant. These boundaries have also been blurred as teacher education has experienced a shift from centralized bureaucratic structures influencing policy toward more contextual relationships among policy actors and implementers. Increasingly, accountability has become the defining paradigm for the field of teacher education, dispersing expertise and the governance of teacher education.

To describe the policy environment involved in the rise and fall of a high-stakes performance assessment in Missouri, we turn to some of the core assumptions found in literature on policy networks. A policy network is characterized by interdependent structural relationships connected by resource dependencies (Rhodes, 1997). These networks "typically emerge where power is dispersed among agents in a policy field, but where cooperation is necessary for the sake of effectiveness" (Mayntz, 2003). Analyzing teacher education from a policy network perspective helps identify the contours of the interactions among the government agencies, private corporations, and intermediary organizations that work together to govern teacher education (Kretchmar et al., 2014; Zeichner & Pena-Sandoval, 2015). Three common features of policy networks are essential to our analysis. First, the actors within a policy network are dependent on each other's resources. In teacher education, state education agencies as the governmental teacher licensure bodies are dependent on teacher preparation programs to produce teachers to license. Likewise, K-12 schools are dependent on the human capital produced by teacher education programs and licensed by state education agencies to staff schools. Corporations that produce licensure exams such as the Educational Testing Service are dependent on state education agencies to develop policies that require licensure assessments of teacher candidates produced by teacher education programs for K-12 schools. This resource interdependence requires strategic action by each of these policy actors, which is what keeps the policy networks together.

Because strategic action is required in policy networks, a second common feature is coordination by two or more actors in pursuit of a common outcome. In the case of teacher education, state education agencies often coordinate with corporations to pursue accountability objectives. Aydarova (2021), drawing on policy anthropology methods, identified the role of the "shadow elite" in teacher education, intermediary groups that reinforced similar messages across different policymaking levels. These non-profits, think-tanks, and advocacy organizations worked together to "create consensus around several outcomes of professional preparation, such as teacher effectiveness, graduate classroom performance, as well as job placement and retention" (p. 27). The policy objectives of the shadow elite overlapped, and thus created an illusion of agreement which served to regulate the behaviors of teacher education programs by shaping teacher education legislation and state education agency policies and activities.

A third common feature of policy networks is pluralism. Within the policy networks of teacher education, the state holds a privileged position. Indeed, state education agencies often set the agenda for teacher education because they possess the right to determine the "house rules" (Cuenca, 2019) for teacher education programs through legal and organizational frameworks. Yet, state level actors must also play within the horizontal rules of these networks because policies are implemented by self-regulating actors with their own perceptions and frames of the world. Thus, these networks are also comprised of autonomous policy actors, that also push and pull against the state. For example, Kornfeld et al. (2007) described how their teacher education program considered a new policy requiring compliance with new state standards as an imposition, which resulted in faculty

making conscious decisions to not let the process "affect their teaching or the program that had been in place" (p. 1921). In this case, although the state was privileged, the independence of this program, and other programs like it, mean that the state must contend with the autonomy of a plurality of actors responding to governance. The constantly evolving nature of teacher education policy demands--of which high-stakes performance assessments is a recent iteration--evidences the cooperating necessary in co-existing in a plural policy network.

In this study, we examined the teacher education policy network that exists within the state of Missouri to understand the rise and fall of a high-stakes performance assessment of student teaching. More specifically, we focused on the policy network within the "establishment" and the actions of three primary policy actors: university-based teacher education programs; the state education agency that determines teacher licensure, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE); and K-12 school districts. These actors were operating within a broader policy environment that included secondary actors such as: Educational Testing Services (ETS), the corporation that led the development of MoPTA; advocacy organizations for the establishment such as the Missouri Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (MACTE); and related pseudo-governmental organizations that served in an advisory role such as the Missouri Advisory Board for Educator Preparation (MABEP) and the Missouri Advisory Council of Certification of Educators (MACCE). The three actors we focus on in this analysis were constantly seeking to assert their beliefs about the values, purposes, roles, and outcomes of teacher education. Within this establishment policy network, actors depended on each other's resources (interdependence) operated jointly, when necessary (coordination), and were self-regulating within a legal framework that favors state education agencies (pluralism). Although the teacher education landscape in Missouri also features heterodox policy actors such as Teach for America or the American Board for the Certification of Teacher Excellence that seek to challenge the status of the establishment, the undulations of the rise and fall of the MoPTA were located within Missouri's establishment teacher education policy network.

Table 1

Primary and Secondary Policy Network Actors

Primary Policy Actors	Secondary Policy Actors
Educator Preparation Programs Missouri has 40 traditional university-based teacher preparation programs.	*Educational Testing Services (ETS)* ETS is a private educational testing and measurement organization that has developed a range of national and state-level assessments for teacher licensure.
K-12 School Districts Missouri has 226 local education agencies that include K-12 public and charter schools.	
	Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE)
Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MDESE) MDESE is the state education agency responsible for K-12 education and teacher licensure. According to the Missouri Constitution, the work of MDESE is governed by the Missouri State Board of Education (SBE), which consists of eight members of the public	MACTE is the state-level chapter of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE). MACTE represents the 40 educator preparation programs in Missouri and advocates for policies that advance the interests of these programs.

Primary Policy Actors	Secondary Policy Actors
appointed by the governor. The SBE selects and appoints the commissioner of education as the chief administrative officer of MDESE.	*Missouri Advisory Board for Educator Preparation (MABEP)* MABEP is a state-level advisory board that includes members appointed by MDESE and the Missouri Department of Higher Education (MDHE) to foster meaningful and substantial collaboration and transparency among all stakeholders in the interest of improving the quality of teacher preparation in Missouri. Missouri Advisory Council of Certification of Educators (MACCE) MACCE is a state-level advisory board on issues of teacher licensure that includes members from various organizations such as MACTE, Missouri chapters of National Education Association and American Federation of Teachers, and elementary and secondary school administrator organizations.

Method

To detail the development and abandonment of the high-stakes performance assessment in Missouri we examined the narratives created around the development, refinement, adoption, and abandonment of the MoPTA in Missouri. Through this study, we sought to identify the role and central arguments leveraged by the three primary policy actors with the establishment teacher education policy network between 2013, when ETS (Educational Testing Services) was awarded the MoPTA development contract and 2018 when MoPTA was abandoned as a requirement for teacher certification in Missouri.

According to Laver, et al. (2003) "political texts are the concrete by-product of strategic political activity and have widely recognized potential to reveal important information about the policy positions of their authors" (p. 311). As such, our analysis relied on publicly available documents found on the MDESE website about MoPTA (e.g., memoranda, contracts), including meeting minutes and agendas of policymaking bodies such as MABEP, MACCE, and the Missouri State Board of Education where MoPTA was a topic of discussion; and archives of MoPTA materials kept by the two researchers in this study who were faculty in teacher education programs in Missouri between 2013 and 2018 such as communications between MDESE and teacher education programs, emails from ETS to teacher education programs, and internal communications about MoPTA between university faculty in Missouri. Moreover, we searched for documents that were publicly available on the internet that dealt with MoPTA such as job descriptions for scorers, and minutes from meetings of educator preparation programs. For the purposes of this study, we selected documents that captured discussions between and among state education agencies, teacher education programs, and/or K-12 school districts directly relating to the existence of MoPTA between 2013 and 2018. In total, over 150 documents were analyzed for this study.

We began our analysis by organizing our documents by primary and secondary policy actors, reading through each document, and creating a timeline of events that charted the policy evolution of MoPTA (Table 2). After this initial read of the documents, we sorted the documents into four phases (development, refinement, adoption, and abandonment) that we believed accurately captured the narrative of the rise and fall of the MoPTA as a policy prescription. Because our study is descriptive in nature, we applied conventional content analysis methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994) to analyze the documents. Therefore, for each document, we isolated phrases or utterances that communicated the ideas that each of the relevant policy actors were deploying about that moment. After this first cycle of coding, we used our code list and our notes to look across the data we isolated from our documents for relationships, categories and themes within the timeline phase. For example, Table 3 illustrates the sample codes that we generated during the first coding phase of one of the documents with the "Development" phase of the timeline. The codes from this document were then combined with codes from other documents within that same phase to create the narrative architecture for each section (see Table 4). Clustering our codes allowed us to identify emergent themes, configurations, and explanations of the relationships between the policy actors and the competing agendas within the establishment teacher education network in Missouri.

Table 2

MoPTA Timeline, 2013-2018

Spring 2013	MDESE developed MoPTA
Fall 2013	MoPTA pre-pilot with selected institutions
Spring 2014	MoPTA piloted and field tested across the state
May 2014	MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that although the MoPTA was set to launch September 2014, "an additional alternative is being added to the MoPTA, based on recent discussions regarding district policies limiting videotaping in classrooms, a requirement of Task 4. This alternative is being developed and will require further piloting before being included in the overall design of the MoPTA. As a result, we will now be launching the MoPTA in the fall of 2015."
July 2014	MDESE at a MABEP meeting identified that the "core issue is with videotaping teacher candidates. When the recording leaves the district, there is concern that it is unprotected. Is it possible that keeping the videotape in the district could help with this issue?"
September 2014	MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that a "Development Committee will be established consisting of educators from the original MoPTA development effort, along with educators who participated in the piloting and scoring events. The Development Committee, consisting of approximately 20 participants, will begin meeting in September 2014.
November 2014	Commissioner of Education Margie Vandeven informed MABEP that "the video issue is not only a Missouri issue but nationwide. The emphasis is that it is a performance event, and it is critical to remain focused on that. Administrators

	concerned about one more thing on their plate. What if they are not the one to rate the teacher candidate? How does that work? One additional idea presented was the use of the Avatar, although this is likely to be one-two years before being fully developed."
January 2015-April 2015	MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that "piloting of the new assessment will occur between January and April 2015. The Department, working with all educator preparation programs and their partnership school districts, will recruit students from each preparation program to participate in the pilot. There will be no cost to students for their participation in the pilot."
May 2015	MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that a "scoring session based on the pilot will occur in May 2015. Training on the non-video component of MoPTA will be offered to all preparation programs."
June 2015	MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that "statistical Analysis of surveys and scoring data will occur in June 2015."
September 2015	MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that "the official launch of the MoPTA will occur in fall 2015."
2015-2016	Implementation Period without Cut Score for Certification MDESE shared with the State Board of Education that "1,021 candidates submitted video option; 2,480 submitted non-video option." MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that "for those who complete their clinical experience after August 31, 2015, candidates must successfully complete the Missouri Pre-Service Assessment (MoPTA)."
June 2016	MABEP recommend unanimously that the panel-based passing score of 37 for the Video and Non-Video version of the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment.
August 2016	State Board of Education adopted the qualifying score of 37 for the Missouri Pre-Service Teachers Assessment (Video & Non-Video) beginning on August 29, 2016.
January 2018	MABEP recommended that MDESE "Discontinue the MoPTA and replace it with an assessment aligned to the MEES".
March 2018	MDESE via memorandum communicated to teacher education programs that "passing scores on the following Missouri Performance Assessments will no longer be required for students seeking certification after September 1, 2018"

As researchers intimately involved in the history of MoPTA as faculty members in the Missouri teacher education policy network, we recognize our own positionality as we conducted our analysis. However, we also recognize that our subjectivities as teacher educators conducting teacher education research will never disappear. Consequently, we used Barone's (1992) standard that research must be evaluated on its capacity to be critically persuasive and provide useful insights into addressing practical problems. As such, during the selection of relevant documents and data analysis,

we sought to provide a rich and detailed analysis of the ways that the different policy actors operated around MoPTA between 2013 and 2018. For example, when determining certain codes, we often reverted to the original documents to ensure that our codes captured the perspective and essence of the text, and not our recollection of the experience.

Table 3

Sample Initial Code List

Grouping	Reflection of MDESE Rationales	Design of Assessment	Implementation of Assessment
Initial Codes (page number)	"MDESE seeking consensus" (Cover-1) "educator continuum" (Cover-1) "rigor through standards-based performance assessment" (Cover-2) "alignment" (D-31) "relevance to Missouri standards" (D-31) "status quo not serving student achievement" (D-31) "continuum of educator practice" (D-31) "assessments demonstrate performance in content coursework and clinical experience" (D-33) " MDESE not interested in status quo" (D-48) "specific alignment to Missouri Standards for Professional Educators" (D-48) "educators selected by MDESE" (D-51) "working with Missouri educators (D-51)	"evidence centered design" (D-34; D-50) "field test of items" (D-34) "scenario-based items will be written by the development committee" (D-34) "careful inspection of each test item" (D-34) "written commentary responding to prompts and related artifacts" (D-36) "one task focused on a subject specific unit" (D-36) "task 1 focus on knowledge of students" (D-37) "task 2 assessment" (D-37; D-62) "task 3 instruction and technology" (D-38; D-62) "task 4 culminating activity" (D-39; D-62) "diversity and fairness" (D-51) "working with Missouri educators" (D-51) "'unpacking standards'" (D-51) "characteristics of design standards (D-52) "understanding whom the assessment is measuring" (D-52) "designing tasks to generate evidence" (D-54) "activities during the development" (D-54-60) "task 1 formative in nature" (D-62)	"four tasks during 14-week clinical trial" (D-35) "addressed specifically to Missouri standards/quality indicators" (D-35) "faculty workshops" (D-44) "formative observations by EPP supervisors" (D-62) "scoring by trained Missouri educators" (D-66) "combining scores to produce MO-TCA score" (D-66) "scoring will be continuous" (D-66) "ETS employs scorers drawn from Missouri" (D-68)

Grouping	Reflection of MDESE Rationales	Design of Assessment	Implementation of Assessment
		"task 1 environmental" (D-62) "task 4 video" (D-62) "task 4 use research-based strategies" (D-62) "formative observations by EPP supervisors" (D-62) "self-assessment and improvement" (D-65)	

Table 4

Initial Code Grouping by Themes: Development

Theme	Desire for Alignment	Design of Assessment	Performance Expectations
Initial Code (page number) (document reference)	"uniformity of educator preparation" (1) (Missouri Board of Education, Agenda Item, October, 2014) "relevance to Missouri standards" (D-31) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12) "specific alignment to Missouri Standards for Professional Educators" (D-48) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12) "aligned to Missouri Model Teacher Standards" (2) (MDESE Memo, 7.13.15) "performance benchmarks" (Missouri Board of Education Agenda Item (7), October, 2014)	"one task focused on a subject specific unit" (D-36) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12) "task 1 focus on knowledge of students" (D-37) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12) "task 2 assessment" (D-37; D-62) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12) "task 3 instruction and technology" (D-38; D-62) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12) "task 4 culminating activity" (D-39; D-62) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12)	"measurement of performance" (5) (RFP, 9.19.12) "evidence centered design" (D-34; D-50) (ETS Proposal, 10.5.12) "public access to MoPTA" (2) (MDESE Memo, 7.13.15) "instructional strategies" (2) (MDESE Memo, 7.13.15) "learning activities" (2) (MDESE Memo, 7.13.15)

In what follows, we describe the evolution of Missouri's high-stakes performance assessment and identify four phases: development, refinement, adoption, and abandonment. For each phase, we use the results of our analysis to describe the nature and conditions of the actions that existed within the establishment teacher education policy network in Missouri. This descriptive analysis helped us identify the underlying impetus for the ultimate abandonment of the MoPTA as a high-stakes performance assessment of student teaching. An analysis that we believe is critically persuasive and offers practical insights into the lifespan of a high-stakes performance assessment policy.

Findings: The Policy Evolution of the Missouri's High-Stakes Performance Assessment

Development

As noted in the introduction, a high-stakes performance assessment of student teaching was part of a comprehensive suite of new assessments that were designed to align to new teaching and teacher preparation standards in Missouri. The "Top 10 by 20 Plan" sought to make Missouri one of the top 10 states in education by 2020. One of the objectives of the "Top 10 by 20" was that by 2020 "all preparation programs will be highly effective at preparing teacher candidates as designed by a uniform set of performance data points" (Missouri State Board of Education, 2014). Some of the data points that would guide the approval and continuous improvement process for teacher education were four new assessments: a general education assessment, a dispositions profile, a content specialty assessment, and a standards-based performance assessment, which would "measure performance in content, coursework, and clinical experiences" (MDESE, 2013). In its request for proposals for a performance assessment during clinical and field experiences, Missouri stipulated that the assessment must include the following measures of performance:

- Focus on a subject-specific unit of instruction;
- Capture the decision-making processes a teacher uses in the development of lesson plans including the differentiation of instruction for the entire unit;
- Demonstrate the development of instructional practice, student artifacts, and assessments that teacher uses to measure student learning;
- Analyze the ability of the teacher to adjust instruction to meet the needs of students;
- Observe and/or capture through video the teacher's ability to implement and use the research-based instructional strategies that are indicative of the potential the teacher has in positively impacting the learning of each student. (Missouri Division of Purchasing and Materials Management, 2012a).

Educational Testing Services (ETS): Winning Bidder to Develop the Exit Assessment for Missouri

ETS proposed a four-task performance assessment. The first task was formative in nature and focused "on the knowledge of the students with whom the teacher candidate is interacting during the clinical experience assignment" (Missouri Division of Purchasing and Materials Management, 2012b, p. 37). Scoring the first task was left to the teacher education programs in order to "give the institutions of higher education an opportunity to introduce the teacher candidate to the evidence collecting/analyzing process that he or she will follow for succeeding tasks" (Missouri Division of Purchasing and Materials Management, 2012b, p. 37). This locally scored task would not be used to determine the final score for the assessment. The second and third tasks focused on "assessment and data collection to measure student learning" and "instruction and technology" respectively. Candidates would complete both tasks "within the parameters of a current subject-specific unit of teaching" and "prepare and submit task commentaries and artifacts" (Missouri Division of Purchasing and Materials Management, 2012b, p. 37). The fourth and final task was a "culminating activity" which required submission of a fifteen-minute video recording of instruction in addition to task commentary and artifacts. Tasks two through four would be scored by Missouri educators trained by ETS and create a cumulative score. The four-task performance assessment proposed by ETS would be developed by Missouri educators and aligned to Missouri's educator standards and quality indicators. ETS committed to training scorers, creating software systems to capture and report scores, and other development and quality assurance activities. The

price for the assessment was initially set at $295 and later reduced to $275 per candidate during contract negotiations between ETS and MDESE (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education).

During the spring of 2013, MDESE invited 11 faculty, nine educators, and two representatives from professional associations to join several ETS consultants to develop the proposed performance assessment. This development team followed the design process laid out by ETS in its proposal. First, the nine Missouri Model Teacher Standards and 36 quality indicators were sorted across all four tasks to identify which task type of the four that were initially proposed would be most appropriate for each standard. The Model Missouri Teacher Standards were developed by MDESE in response to legislation that required them to develop model teacher standards for school districts to use upon request (MDESE, 2011). Then, individual teams worked on developing activities and prompts, guided by the sorted standards that reasonably generate evidence of mastery.

The final version of the performance assessment—the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment—consisted of four tasks aligned to Missouri's educator standards requiring candidates to engage in distinct activities, develop written responses to prompts, and submit a variety of artifacts such as instructional materials and a fifteen-minute video recording. Task 1 required teacher candidates to "provide evidence with regard to their specific students, school, district, and community, and to identify implications of these factors for instruction and student learning" (MDESE, 2015a, p. 19). Task 1 would be scored locally by educator preparation program faculty to help "build teacher candidates' comfort with the computer-based MoPTA format and online submission system" (MDESE, 2015a, p. 9). Task 2, Assessment and Data Collection to Measure and Inform Student Learning focused on candidates' "understanding, analysis, and application of assessment and data collection to measure and inform student learning (MDESE, 2015a, p. 15). Task 3, Designing Instruction for Student Learning focused on the ability of candidates to "develop instruction, including the use of technology to facilitate student learning" (MDESE, 2015a, p. 16). Both tasks required written commentary, student work samples, instructional artifacts, and representative pages from a lesson plan. Task 4, Implementing and Analyzing Instruction to Promote Student Learning focused on the ability of candidates to "plan and implement a lesson that uses standards-based instruction...adjust instruction for the whole class as well as for individual students" and "demonstrate an understanding of reflective practice" (MDESE, 2015a, p. 18). Task 4 required a fifteen-minute video, written commentary, student works samples, and representative pages of a standards-based lesson plan. Overall, the performance assessment proposed by ETS closely matched the MoPTA. Over the next few months, ETS created supplementary materials such as rubrics and handbooks to prepare for statewide pilot of the assessment.

Piloting

During the Fall 2013 semester, select teacher education programs piloted the MoPTA. After the completion of the pilot, MDESE (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) learned in the spring of 2014 that several K-12 school districts were concerned with the videorecording requirement of Task 4. Administrators were worried about the privacy implications of recording students within their schools. According to MDESE, "the core issue is with videotaping teacher candidates...when the recording leaves the district, there is a concern that it is unprotected" (MABEP, 2014). Because the political culture in Missouri prioritizes local control over state control of education (Cuenca, 2019; Gangon et al., 2017), MDESE did not have the legal authority to mandate that school districts allow student teachers to videotape in their classrooms. Thus, this objection by school districts created a dilemma for the use of a statewide high-stakes performance assessment.

Moreover, after the fall 2013 pilot, many of Missouri's teacher preparation programs questioned both the assessment design and the timeline. According to the original timeline proposed by ETS, the development of a Missouri-aligned performance assessment, software systems, pilot, training of a pool of scorers, and standard setting activities would all occur in approximately 18 months (between spring 2013 and fall 2014). As both MDESE and ETS tried to meet the goal of having a high-stakes performance assessment of student teaching, teacher education programs continued to object. On March 26, 2014, the Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE) sent a letter to MDESE identifying several concerns with the MoPTA such as the fact that there was no information about the research base that grounded the development of the assessment; insufficient information about the scoring and validity procedures; and a lack of information at the time about the procedures to be used with a locally scored Task 1. In the estimation of MACTE, MoPTA was "not ready to be used as either a formative or a summative tool for teacher candidates" (MACTE, 2014). Moreover, teacher education programs objected to the use of a high-stakes performance assessment for teacher licensure and program approval that had no publicly available technical details and outstanding questions about the validity and reliability of the assessment and scoring procedures.

On May 24, 2014, MDESE announced that based on "recent discussions regarding district policies limiting videotaping in classrooms, a requirement of Task 4" that an alternative would be developed but would require "further piloting before being included in the overall design of MoPTA" (MDESE, 2014a). The full launch of the MoPTA was delayed until the fall of 2015 and would not be a state requirement for licensure for the 2014-2015 academic year as originally scheduled. In September 2014, a development committee was established "consisting of educators from the original MoPTA development effort, along with educators who participated in the piloting and scoring events" (MDESE, 2014a). With the help of ETS consultants the development committee created an "alternative" Task 4, which did not require a video submission. Unlike Task 4 that required a 15-minute videorecording, the alternative task (Task 4-NV) focused on the development of a unit plan and the submission of 14 different artifacts including three assessments or assignments that were developmentally appropriate for students (MDESE, 2015a, p. 20). Although the non-video option of Task 4 was designed to assess similar kinds of quality indicators, ultimately, without the same submission artifacts and different response prompts, the alternative Task 4 measured different kinds of indicators. Figure 1 illustrates the occasional overlap between the standards and indicators that the original Task 4 was designed to assess.

Figure 1

Missouri Model Teacher Standards Indicator Overlap of Task 4 Versions

Quality Indicator	Task 4-Video	Task 4-Non-Video
Standard 1: Content Knowledge Aligned with Appropriate Instruction The teacher understands the central concepts, structures, and tools of inquiry of the discipline(s) and creates learning experiences that make these aspects of subject matter meaningful and engaging for all students.		
Quality Indicator 1 Content knowledge and academic language.	X	X
Quality Indicator 2 Student engagement in subject matter.	X	X

Standard 2: Student Learning, Growth and Development The teacher understands how students learn, develop and differ in their approaches to learning. The teacher provides learning opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners and support the intellectual, social, and personal development of all students.		
Quality Indicator 1 Cognitive, social, emotional and physical development.		X
Quality Indicator 2 Student goals.		X
Quality Indicator 4 Differentiated lesson design.	X	X
Quality Indicator 5 Prior experiences, multiple intelligences, strengths and needs.	X	X
Quality Indicator 6 Language, culture, family and knowledge of community values.	X	
Standard 3: Curriculum Implementation The teacher recognizes the importance of long-range planning and curriculum development. The teacher develops, implements, and evaluates curriculum based upon student, district and state standards data.		
Quality Indicator 1 Implementation of curriculum standards.		X
Quality Indicator 2 Lessons for diverse learners.	X	X
Standard 4: Critical Thinking The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies and resources to encourage students' critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills.		
Quality Indicator 1 Instructional strategies leading to student engagement in problem-solving and critical thinking.	X	X
Quality Indicator 3 Cooperative, small group and independent learning.	X	
Standard 5: Positive Classroom Environment The teacher uses an understanding of individual/group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages active engagement in learning, positive social interaction, and self-motivation.		

Quality Indicator 1 Classroom management techniques.	X	
Quality Indicator 2 Management of time, space, transitions, and activities.	X	
Standard 6: Effective Communication The teacher models effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques with students, colleagues and families to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.		
Quality Indicator 1 Verbal and nonverbal communication.	X	
Quality Indicator 2 Sensitivity to culture, gender, intellectual and physical differences.	X	
Standard 7: Student Assessment and Data Analysis The teacher understands and uses formative and summative assessment strategies to assess the learner's progress and uses both classroom and standardized assessment data to plan ongoing instruction. The teacher monitors the performance of each student, and devises instruction to enable students to grow and develop, making adequate academic progress.		
Quality Indicator 1 Effective use of assessments.	X	X
Quality Indicator 2 Assessment data to improve learning.	X	X
Quality Indicator 3 Student-led assessment strategies.	X	X
Standard 8: Professionalism The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually assesses the effects of choices and actions on others. The teacher actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally in order to improve learning for all students.		
Quality Indicator 1 Self-assessment and improvement.	X	X

During the Spring 2015 semester, 314 participants piloted the MoPTA with two versions of Task 4. 276 candidates selected the video version of Task 4, 38 candidates selected the non-video version of Task 4 (MACCE, 2015). The information from this second pilot was used to help train scorers and develop sample materials for the creation of several handbooks. In response to the concerns raised by MACTE, ETS ensured that the assessments would be scored by individuals certified in the subject area of the candidates. However, no other technical details were released about either the 2013 or 2015 pilot.

In September 2015, MoPTA was launched with two versions of Task 4. Candidates seeking certification after September 1, 2015 were asked to pay for one of the two versions. Because the spring pilot was limited, no cut score was officially set. Candidates needed to score 1 out of a possible 4 points on each of the rubrics within each task. Because there were 11 total rubrics, the minimum passing score was set at 11. With the stakes so low, the 2015-2016 implementation effectively served as a pilot year. Earlier in the year, when educator preparation programs learned that the implementation year would essentially be inconsequential, MACTE sent a letter expressing their displeasure with the financial burden being placed on teacher candidates. In particular, with an assessment that continued to be troubled by reliability and validity after developing two different versions of the same assessment that did not evaluate the same standards or criteria. MACTE argued that:

> ...because teacher licensure will be contingent on students scoring a "1" on an assessment that has no valid or reliable evidence that it measures the quality of teacher candidates, parents and college students in Missouri are paying Educational Testing Services to develop and test a product (B. Kania-Gosche, personal communication)

These concerns were dismissed, and by the end of the 2015-2016 academic year, 1,021 candidates opted for the video version of MoPTA while 2,480 candidates opted for the non-video version of MoPTA (State Board of Education, 2016a). In the summer of 2016, a score setting panel of 24 PK-12 and teacher preparation faculty reviewed responses to Tasks 2 and 3; and two panels of 12 PK-12 and teacher preparation faculty reviewed Task 4-V and Task 4-NV respectively. After reviewing each of the steps within the tasks and the scoring rubrics, these panels of educators identified the score for the "just qualified candidate" and recommended a passing score of 37 out of a possible 60 points (MABEP, 2016). The State Board of Education adopted this panel-based score, and starting September 1, 2016, the qualifying score for the MoPTA was 37.

Adoption

Two versions of a high-stakes performance assessment created increasingly logistical challenges for teacher education programs. For example, at a large state institution, a partner school district "did not tell the Office of Field Experiences that videotaping would not be allowed when placing student teachers...some administrators are not aware of the requirement and have allowed videotaping, and others have not" (Missouri State University, 2015). This scenario repeated itself across the state, leaving teacher education programs and candidates scrambling to figure out which districts would allow videotaping candidates. In some cases, teacher education programs in metropolitan regions with partnerships with multiple districts created lists to help candidates identify the different video recording policies of different districts (see Figure 2). Other programs made the decision to restrict the options available to candidates and just implement the non-video option for all candidates (Rockhurst University, n.d.). Ostensibly, the resolution to the "privacy problem" raised by K-12 school districts—the creation of a high stakes assessment of student teaching with two distinct completion options (video and non-video)—rendered MoPTA untenable for teacher education programs. Indeed, as MDESE (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) acknowledged in a memo sent to all teacher preparation programs capturing the sentiments expressed by candidates in a town hall session at the fall MACTE (Missouri Association of Colleges for Teacher Education) conference, the "video is much easier for candidates than non-video portion" (MDESE, 2015b).

Figure 2

Sample Document Provided to Student Teachers by Missouri Baptist University

School Districts Which Allow Video

School/District	MoPTA with Video	MoPTA Non-Video
Affton	X	
Bismarck	X	
Boncl	X	
Bowling Green	X	
Central R-III		X
Chaminade College Preparatory School	X	
Christian High School	X	
Crawford Co. R-II (Cuba)		X
DeSoto		X
Dunklin R-V	X *(with permission from building principal)*	
Elsberry (Clarence Cannon Elem.)	X	
Farmington	X	
Ferguson-Florissant	X	
Festus	X	
Fox	X	
Francis Howell	X	
Fredericktown R-I		X
Ft. Zumwalt	X	
Hancock Place		X
Hazelwood	X	
Hillsboro R-III	X *(within district parameters & guidelines)*	
Jefferson R-VII	X	
Kingston K-14	X	
Kirk Day School	X	
Kirkwood R-VII (Keysor Elementary)	X	
Kirkwood R-VII (Tillman Elementary)	X	
Lindbergh	X	
Louisiana	X	
Mehlville		X
Meramec Valley	X	
North St. Francois		X
Nothwest R-I		X
Parkway	X	
Pattonville	X	
Potosi		X

In addition to the logistical challenges for teacher education programs, ETS faced their own challenges hiring scorers. Early in 2015, MACTE raised concerns about the original plan for ETS to hire Missouri educators to score the MoPTA without considering what subject area these teachers were certified to teach (MACTE, 2015). In response, ETS promised that MoPTA would be scored by teachers certified in the areas that matched candidates' certification areas. This change required ETS to expand the scorer pool beyond Missouri, which created delays in scoring reports being returned to candidates, especially in the more niched certification areas such as Spanish or Art. An archive of the website FlexJobs.com features ETS seeking certified teachers in the areas of

Agriculture, Spanish, Science, Performing Arts, and Music willing to engage in the online scoring for the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment (https://www.flexjobs.com/jobs/telecommuting-jobs-at-ets-educational_testing_service). Other challenges during the adoption phase of the MoPTA included typical problems with high-stakes performance assessments such as "complaints from cooperating teachers regarding time spent away from teaching to complete MoPTA tasks" (State Board of Education, 2016b).

Despite these obstacles, the MoPTA with two versions of Task 4 continued to be used by MDESE as a high-stakes assessment of student teaching and began to be integrated into as a metric for the annual performance review of teacher education programs. The percentage of program completers passing the MoPTA between September 1, 2016 through August 31, 2017 was used to determine the effectiveness of clinical experiences and approval of educator preparation programs (MDESE, 2017). By the following year, the MoPTA would be discontinued, and no longer was no longer used as a metric for program approval.

Abandonment

On January 10, 2018, MABEP voted unanimously to recommend that MDESE (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) "discontinue the MoPTA and replace it with an assessment aligned to the MEES" (MABEP Minutes, 2018). The Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES) was developed by MDESE in response to Senate Bill 291, which required all 226 school districts to "develop standards for teaching" (Missouri Revised Statute 161.380) and directed MDESE to develop model standards and an evaluation system for school districts to use upon request (MDESE, 2011). After MDESE developed the Missouri Model Teacher Standards in 2011--which also served as the standards that guided the development of the MoPTA tasks--they created the MEES, an evaluation sequence for school administrators that consists of several steps: identifying specific indicators; observing performance, providing meaningful feedback, determining a rating, observing a follow up performance; and reflecting on teacher and student growth (MDESE, n.d.).

Although the MEES was designed for in-service teacher professional development, as early as 2014, MDESE intended on requiring teacher education programs to train cooperating educators and university supervisors on the MEES process to evaluate and provide rubric-guided scores on certain Missouri Model Teacher Standards. MEES scores would be submitted in addition to the MoPTA scores to determine program approval (MDESE, 2016b). However, with the accumulating logistical and conceptual problems accumulating throughout the development and adoption phases of the MoPTA, the MEES served as a fallback metric to determine program approval for MDESE, which was still a requirement, not because MEES was a superior option. In a state-level meeting between representatives of MDESE, MDHE, and teacher preparation programs in early January, they discussed:

> ...the advantages of keeping the MoPTA in the RFP process and attempting to
> revise it so that it addresses the concerns that were shared with that instrument. The
> other option is to work on the MEES and set it up in a way that meets the
> requirements of serving as the state's performance assessment. The general
> feedback received was that working on the MEES would likely be a better use of
> our time and energy (Missouri Transforming Educator Preparation Initiative,
> January 19, 2018).

After almost 36 months of implementation, and more than 48 months since its development, the MoPTA was abandoned.

In a March 15, 2018 memo distributed to all teacher programs, MDESE announced the discontinuation of MoPTA. Six reasons were provided for this decision:

(1) The revelation that educator preparation programs believed that the MoPTA does not "effectively evaluate competencies, skills, and abilities as clearly as defined through the active involvement during their student teaching."

(2) "validity and reliability questions"

(3) The MEES provided student teachers with more immediate feedback, "which will provide performance data as the candidate progresses through the student teaching/internship experience.

(4) The timeliness of "the performance assessment results does not align with school district hiring practices."

(5) The "tweaks" to the MoPTA "could not solve issues related to the assessments."

(6) The elimination of the redundancy of having "two performance assessments."

The same memo announced that students recognized for certification beginning September 1, 2018 "will be required to have a minimum composite score on their summative evaluation in the Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES)." Like the MoPTA, after a one-year pilot of the MEES for student teachers, a passing score was established for teacher licensure and performance on the MEES was used to determine educator program approval.

Looking Back: Divergent Rationales for Policy Action

Ultimately, MoPTA as a high-stakes performance assessment failed because of the divergent rationales of actors involved in the teacher education policy network in Missouri. In hindsight, many of the reasons that MDESE (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) cited for abandoning MoPTA were raised by policy network actors. The lack of full stakeholder participation during the contracting and development phases did not allow administrators an opportunity to voice displeasure with a video recording requirement. Design and technical problems identified during the development phase by teacher education programs were ignored by MDESE. The decision by MDESE to develop two non-equivalent options for the final task of MoPTA created communication issues between schools and teacher education programs during the implementation phase and raised more questions about the validity and reliability of the assessment. Taken together, the MoPTA narrative demonstrates an establishment teacher education policy network in Missouri unable to engage in the coordination and strategic action that characterizes functional policy networks. In the case of this particular high-stakes performance assessment policy, we attribute the dysfunction in the narrative to the divergent rationales that each of the policy actors assumed about MoPTA

According to MDESE, the MoPTA was an opportunity to "measure an educator candidate's ability to apply what he or she has learned to real teaching environments with K-12 students." (MDESE Press Release, 8.12.16). This seemingly benign public statement was in fact coercion through its obviousness. Much like the discourse of accountability in the United States, the MoPTA was framed through the logic of educational commonsense, which possesses a seductive quality based on sentiments and arguments that are difficult to refute (Cuenca, 2019; Kumashiro, 2008). MoPTA was positioned as a tool to help determine the quality of future educators. Who would argue against a tool that would improve the quality of future educators? Who would argue against a tool that could improve student learning? Yet, as impermeable as commonsense may be, its deployment by MDESE to use MoPTA to determine "if teacher candidates can effectively help students learn" or to ensure that new teachers are "ready and able to make a positive impact on

student learning beginning their very first day" (MDESE Press Release, 8.12.16) created a variety of rationales about the value and utility of the MoPTA. In fact, for MDESE, the "learner" framing was a veiled effort to coerce accountability. Thus, when the rationale for the MoPTA is viewed purely as a tool for accountability, what MDESE decided to ignore at specific moments come into sharper view. For example, the lack of full stakeholders is not necessary for an accountability tool for the state, nor are the validity and reliability concerns of teacher education programs at the initial development phase or when objections were raised about two non-equivalent Task 4 assessments.

Of course, the "learner ready" rationale is what MDESE led many K-12 schools to believe was the benefit of a high-stakes performance assessment. Operating from the perspective that the central purpose of teacher preparation is to serve as a human capital pipeline, MDESE framed MoPTA to signal to prospective employers (K-12 schools) that graduates of teacher preparation programs were ready to begin teaching in classrooms immediately. As Sarah Potter, the MDESE Communication Coordinator noted after the State Board of Education established a cut score for MoPTA, "We have a more standard measure to show whether or not those student teachers can actually go into their first-year teaching and actually be able to successfully impart that knowledge to students" (Brown, 2016). Part of this framing to prospective employers included embedding the Missouri Model Teacher Standards into the tasks and activities of MoPTA. Embedding these standards and indicators into the MoPTA tasks and activities signaled to K-12 schools that candidates who passed MoPTA not only met or exceeded the performance expectations of a teacher entering the profession, but also could continue to be measured and evaluated along the same continuum throughout their teaching career. Yet, for K-12 school districts, this rationale was insufficient, mostly because the Missouri Model Teacher Standards were discretionary. Many school districts in Missouri have their own set of teacher standards, which weakens the rationale for MoPTA as an assurance of teacher quality across the state.

For teacher education programs, the rationale provided for MoPTA by MDESE was not directly related to learners, but rather as an opportunity to understand the growth and development of teacher candidates. MDESE framed MoPTA as a tool to provide "a deeper and more complete view of a teacher candidate's performance and growth throughout the student teaching experience" (MDESE, 2014). Opportunities for "collaborative learning with cooperating teachers" and the promotion of "reflective practice" were justifications for a high-stakes performance assessment (MDESE Memo, 7.13.15). Accordingly, teacher education programs embarked in professional development activities with cooperating teachers and university supervisors related to MoPTA (e.g., Missouri State University, 2017), included MoPTA as part of long-range continuous improvement plans (e.g., Wall et al., 2015), added language to memorandum of understandings with districts to ensure that cooperating teachers would assist candidates with the completion of MoPTA (e.g., Center School District, 2017), and developed courses during student teaching that helped students reflect on the MoPTA processes (e.g., Missouri Baptist University, 2018).

Further promulgating the rationale that MoPTA as an opportunity for formative growth was the production of handbooks by MDESE and ETS to assist university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and student teachers with the implementation of MoPTA during student teaching. One example was the *MoPTA Reflective Practice Handbook*, a guide to help student teachers "reflect methodically throughout the clinical experience on their work as a student teacher, their students, on the Missouri teacher standards, on MoPTA and on the formative observations the EPP instructor and cooperating teacher conduct of their teaching" (p. 4, MDESE, 2014b). This handbook included rationales that directly linked MoPTA with the reflective competencies of professional educators and provided suggestions for how to incorporate the reflection generated through MoPTA during student teaching seminars. Implicitly, the message to educator preparation programs from MDESE

through memoranda and support materials was that MoPTA would assist in the mission of teacher education. Yet, regardless of the justifications shared with K-12 schools or educator preparation programs for MoPTA, as a state agency, MDESE sought to develop MoPTA to establish a performance-based accountability data metric. As noted earlier, MoPTA was developed as part of a "comprehensive approach to assess the preprofessional development of students working for educator certification in Missouri" (MDESE, 2014a). Following the national trend of adopting high-stakes performance assessments during student teaching, passing the MoPTA was a requirement for licensure and the continuing accreditation of preparation programs. Once a cut score was set for the MoPTA by the State Board of Education, MDESE included the MoPTA pass rate as part of its annual performance review of educator preparation programs. MoPTA rate served as one-fifth of the total possible score used in an accreditation decision of a certification program. (MDESE, 2017).

These distinct rationales advanced by MDESE for MoPTA not only created confusion between the principal stakeholders of a high-stakes performance assessment, but also led to conflict. Most notably, the "accountability" and "candidate growth" rationales impeded the seamless adoption of MoPTA for teacher education programs. The source of this conflict were the competing rationales that existed between teacher education programs and MDESE. As a tool for "personal growth" and "reflection" the reliability of the MoPTA would be important, but not critical. However, as a gatekeeper for teacher licensure and program accreditation, an instrument without a published theory of action, technical manual, or pilot study became untenable.

Similarly, the "accountability" and "learner ready" rationales collided when local school districts were unwilling to allow candidates to record videos to submit to MoPTA. For school districts, the "learners" in their classrooms were not being used to help prepare candidates, but instead to hold teacher preparation accountable. Consequently, when several local school districts raised objections over the use of MoPTA in their classrooms by not allowing teacher education programs to record lessons in their schools, an alternative fourth task was produced, which ultimately made the assessment and its rationale fatalistically unreliable and invalid and untenable for all the actors within the policy network.

Discussion

The logic that guided the rapid proliferation of high-stakes performance assessment policies in the United States has been that these assessments not only help determine teacher effectiveness, but also establish a standard of expected practice for novice educators (Darling-Hammond, 2010). As such, high-stakes performance assessments ostensibly provide teacher education programs, state education agencies, and future employers (K-12 schools) with assurances about the competencies of prospective educators. However, as Missouri's 48-month experience with a high-stakes performance assessment policy illustrates, without mutually reinforcing rationales recognized by each of the actors within a policy network the interdependence, cooperation, and pluralism that defines these networks creates an unstable policy environment. As such, the policy evolution of MoPTA in Missouri offers overlapping, yet distinct lessons for the traditional actors that exist within traditional state-level establishment teacher education policy networks.

For state education agencies, the privileged position they hold allows them to set the rules where networking takes place (Mayntz, 2003). In the case of Missouri, MDESE had an opportunity to set common rationales and expectations among and between the various actors including ETS, K-12, and teacher education programs. Yet, they approached the high-stakes performance assessment policy based on their own interests of developing accountability metrics. Consequently, when troubles about the assessment were raised by different sets of actors, they did not seek the

coordination that was necessary to compromise, align, or negotiate the other kinds of goals that other policy actors were bringing to this policy prescription. Indeed, MDESE used its privileged position within the network to take advantage and not created dependence among the resources that were necessary to advance MoPTA as a high-stakes performance assessment. As other state education agencies attempt to raise policy prescriptions for teacher education policy networks, ensuring rationale interdependence and cooperation must be featured to produce envisioned outcomes.

The policy evolution of MoPTA in Missouri also features lessons for school districts as network actors in the deployment of teacher education policies. What school districts in Missouri were able to leverage against the MoPTA was the assertion of local control. Although there is scant literature on the role of local control in state policymaking (Wei, 2012), Gagnon et al. (2017) explored the degree of local control afforded to school districts by states seeking Race to the Top funding. More specifically, they looked at how states described the discretion that local school districts were given to create their own teacher evaluation systems. Their analysis revealed that most state education agencies in the United States value local control. Missouri, according to their analysis--and also anecdotally confirmed by this research--features a high degree of control to determine outcomes. Therefore, when faced with a teacher education policy that did not match its objectives, local school districts rejected the implementation of the policy. The local control-based objection to the video recording portion of MoPTA by school districts was the inflection point that led to the abandonment of the MoPTA as a high-stakes performance assessment. For the majority of school districts in the United States where local control is valued, because teacher education is interdependent with K-12 schooling outcomes, the exertion of local control can empower school districts to leverage more meaningful teacher education policies.

Ironically however, in Missouri, school district local control and not the constant objections raised by teacher education over validity, reliability, and assessment construction contributed to the abandonment of MoPTA. Although the many problems raised by teacher education programs were ultimately listed as justifications for the abandonment of the policy, at the time when the problems were raised, they were mostly ignored by MDESE. The ability to dismiss many of the legitimate concerns raised by teacher education programs, but reflexively respond to school districts is due in part to the inverse relationship that exists between local control and teacher education policy in Missouri. For example, the Missouri Teacher Standards and the Missouri Educator Evaluation System (MEES) were developed as model and/or optional tools for school districts to adopt. Yet, the MTS were embedded in the development of the MoPTA and the MEES was an additional performance-based requirement for teacher education program approval and teacher licensure. Because teacher education programs did not acknowledge this inverse relationship, organizations like MACTE were constantly attempting to persuade MDESE with enough evidentiary warrants to establish the "linguistic high ground" (Cochran-Smith & Fries, 2001) about the use of a performance assessment to ensure teacher quality. However, because of the centralized nature of teacher education policy in Missouri, perhaps a more effective route for change would be to create a "flex net" (Aydarova, 2020) among policy actors such as school districts within a network that would have worked together to accomplish a common agenda of abandoning the MoPTA as a high-stakes performance assessment. Given the situation in Missouri, a lesson for teacher education programs and state-level organizations that advocate for teacher education such as MACTE is that in addition to staking evidentiary warrants about the problems with policies, they should also invest in pooling together resources among other policy network actors that are also pursuing a common outcome.

Implications and Conclusion

Admittedly, the story of the rise and fall of the Missouri Pre-Service Teacher Assessment is unique to Missouri's teacher education establishment policy network. However, we believe that this analysis demonstrates how state agencies can avoid future policy failures by providing rationales that work with, not against a policy, how school districts can leverage local control to shape teacher education policy, and how teacher education programs must develop networks of resistance to shape and influence policy prescriptions. Within the broader policy landscape of high-stakes performance assessments of student teaching across the United States, the implications of this study are most directly applicable for teacher education programs required to adopt high-stakes assessments such as MoPTA or edTPA. Despite the harm of a hastily constructed and invalid performance assessment being hoisted on prospective teachers in Missouri, the frustration for teacher education programs occurred mostly within the black box of this policy network. Teacher education programs did not have the privileged position of being a state education agency that produces press releases or memorandum. As such, to effect change, teacher education programs in Missouri had to work within the policy network to achieve their goals. However, the evidentiary arguments produced by teacher education programs alone were not enough within this network. What ultimately mattered was the convergence between K-12 and teacher education programs.

Surfacing this coincidental coalition, which was invisible to the public, is what we believe is the most instructive lesson for teacher education policy actors in other states looking to challenge high-stakes performance assessments of student teaching or other problematic policy description. Like other network policy analyses have surfaced, policies change when vast networks of organizations present the same characterization (Kretchmar, et al., 2014). If teacher education is to compel a change in its outcomes, perhaps teacher education programs must present its evidentiary rationales to other policy network actors who might be more sympathetic to those claims than state education agencies. Using this analysis as an example, perhaps teacher education programs could have reached out to representative K-12 associations in Missouri to directly challenge the ways that MoPTA was not a "learner ready" assessment instead of spending its time challenging MDESE with claims of the validity and reliability of the assessment. Perhaps, teacher education programs can even take a page from the education reform playbook and establish a network of organizations that enter policy network spaces and echo the evidentiary and ideological claims that work toward the benefit teacher education programs.

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