

RESEARCH REPORT

Do Novice Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers Feel Prepared to Address Student Absenteeism?

Evidence from a Statewide Survey

Michael Gottfried
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
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J. Jacob Kirksey
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

Ethan Hutt
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA CHAPEL HILL



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Executive Summary

Children in kindergarten and first grade are missing more school than at any other point during the elementary years. Some research has examined schoolwide policies and practices that might help reduce absences, but limited research has focused on the role of teachers. This is the first known study to examine the role teacher preparation programs play in teachers' perceptions of and knowledge about policy and practices to address absenteeism. We collected statewide data on elementary school teachers who graduated from teacher preparation programs in the 2017–18 year in California. Research on this topic is especially timely because the majority of states are using absenteeism as an indicator of school performance, and schools are feeling pressure to find ways to reduce student absences. However, to date, limited attention has been paid to how teachers might play a role in reducing students' absences.

Findings

- Novice teachers (defined in this study as the teachers surveyed in the summer months after graduating from their teacher preparation programs but before starting their classroom teaching assignments) who entered kindergarten or first grade classrooms reported greater knowledge of chronic absenteeism when they thought their licensure requirement and placements prepared them well to teach.
- Teachers felt better prepared to address absenteeism with specific practices when they reported receiving more support from their teacher preparation program supervisors.
- Novice second through fifth grade teachers do not report feeling better prepared to address absenteeism when they receive support from their teacher preparation program supervisors. This is meaningful given that teachers who feel the most prepared to address absenteeism are entering classrooms with greater absences.

Policy Implications

States' intentions to incorporate chronic absenteeism in their accountability plans reflect support for educational outcome measures considering a more holistic view of student success (beyond test scores), as well as support for adequate preparation of the teaching workforce to address inequities in students' learning opportunities. Considering that chronic absenteeism is most common in kindergarten

and first grade out of all elementary school years (Balfanz and Byrnes 2012), this study informs policymakers and practitioners about whether novice teachers are leaving their programs prepared to support equitable educational opportunities for students who are missing school. This study also offers motivation to consider how new teachers can be prepared to interface with parents of young children about state early education policies. Most relevant to this study, kindergarten is not mandatory across the US; for instance, in California (the site of the current study), school is not mandatory until age 6.¹ Therefore, as new teachers are being prepared for early elementary education, the question remains of how to best equip them with the necessary tools to impress upon parents the importance of school attendance in a policy context where school is not mandatory.

Do Novice Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers Feel Prepared to Address Student Absenteeism?

States are using absenteeism as an indicator of school performance, and schools are feeling pressure to find ways to reduce student absences (Gottfried and Hutt 2019). But there is little understanding about the role teachers can play to address absences. When we think about novice teachers who lack teaching experience, we must ask how we can support their readiness to address absenteeism. Novice teachers rely on their teacher preparation programs to prepare them for the classroom. Thus, our study delves into how these programs are positioned to help novice teachers address the rising educational policy issue of student absenteeism (Ehrlich and Johnson 2019).

Absenteeism in Early Education

Children in kindergarten and first grade miss more school than at any other point in elementary school (Balfanz and Byrnes 2012). Estimates suggest that approximately 10 percent of all kindergartners miss 18 or more days of school a year (Chang and Davis 2015)—or, on average, around 10 percent of the school year, which would label them chronically absent. The precise definitions of “chronic absenteeism” vary slightly from 10 to 15 days (Gottfried 2014) to 10 percent of the school year, which can be around 18 to 20 days depending on the district (Gottfried and Hutt 2019; Jordan and Miller 2017). Regardless of the definition, research shows that too many of our nation’s youngest students either fall into the chronic absence category or just shy of the classification (Romero and Lee 2007). More alarming, absence rates for kindergartners and first graders are the highest compared with any other point in elementary school (Balfanz and Byrnes 2012).

Policymakers, practitioners, and researchers are deeply concerned about these high rates of absenteeism because the consequences are multiple and serious (Ehrlich and Johnson 2019). Kindergartners with more absences have lower achievement scores and higher rates of repeating grades (Chang and Romero 2008; Connolly and Olson 2012; Ehrlich, Gwynne, and Allensworth 2018), as well as more antisocial behaviors and fewer instances of classroom engagement (Gottfried 2014). Early absenteeism also predicts future absenteeism (Chang and Davis 2015; Ehrlich, Gwynne, and Allensworth 2018; Gottfried 2019).

Given these negative consequences, researchers are exploring ways policymakers could improve attendance (Gottfried and Hutt 2019). The problem is especially critical to address given the majority of states are now holding schools accountable to reduce absenteeism (Gottfried and Hutt 2019). Federal legislation authorizing funding and supports for K–12 public education—the Every Student Succeeds Act—includes a provision that states will evaluate school performance by tracking absenteeism (Jordan and Miller 2017). Therefore, identifying practices that could reduce absenteeism is a priority (Gottfried and Hutt 2019).

Our study helps advance the conversation on how education might begin to address absenteeism. We focus on teacher workforce preparation in the earliest grades of the elementary school pipeline and address the following research questions:

1. For novice kindergarten and first grade teachers, what qualities of teacher preparation programs are associated with teachers' perceptions that they have sufficient knowledge about chronic absenteeism?
2. For novice kindergarten and first grade teachers, what qualities of teacher preparation programs are associated with teachers' perceptions that they are prepared to use specific practices to address chronic absenteeism?
3. For novice second through fifth grade teachers' perceptions, what qualities of teacher preparation programs are associated with teachers' perceptions that they have sufficient knowledge about chronic absenteeism?
4. For novice second through fifth grade teachers, what qualities of teacher preparation programs are associated with teachers' perceptions that they are prepared to use specific practices to address chronic absenteeism?
5. Given the highest rates of elementary absences are in kindergarten and first grade, do novice kindergarten and first grade teachers and novice second through fifth grade teachers perceptions vary?

Why Focus on Novice Teachers?

Teachers play a critical role in students' success (Chetty, Friedman, and Rockhoff 2011). Yet little is known about how teachers influence student absenteeism. What we do know is that years of experience play an important role; teachers with more years of teaching experience have students with

fewer absences (Gershenson 2016; Ladd and Sorenson 2017). So we must ask what can be done for teachers who are novice and entering the profession so they are better prepared to address student absenteeism.

For novice teachers without any experience—especially novice kindergarten and first grade teachers—our previous research suggests that teachers’ awareness and understanding of how to address chronic absenteeism is important (Gottfried and Hutt 2019). Prior research also found that teachers with a strong understanding of an issue and who saw their role as able to affect change were more likely to take specific actions (Dombkowski 2001). So we focused our absenteeism research on teachers’ awareness and understanding of absenteeism.

We focused on teacher preparation programs given the important role they play for novice teachers. We examined specific characteristics of the teacher preparation programs including coursework, fieldwork, and licensure experiences that we hypothesized are more or less likely correlated with perceptions of preparedness to address students’ absenteeism.

Data, Sample, and Methods

Where Did the Data Come from?

As part of a larger study, we surveyed the 2017–18 graduating cohort of teacher candidates from the eight University of California (UC) graduate teacher preparation programs, where we collected valid and reliable data on numerous topics of interest to education policymakers. This study focuses on the 246 teacher candidates who were pursuing an elementary credential in a graduate program,² 69 of whom would teach in kindergarten or first grade classrooms and the remainder in grades 2 to 5.

California teachers warrant special consideration from policymakers. California educates the largest number of students in K–12 and is one of the most demographically diverse states in the country. Further, it is one of many states that has explicitly drawn attention to teachers’ roles in affecting student attendance, given that the former California Attorney General, now Vice President Kamala Harris, established the annual *In School + On Track Report*.³ California is a majority-minority state in the US responsible for educating more than 6 million students in public schools, and such responsibility coincides with increased scrutiny placed on novice teachers to address policy priorities incorporated in accountability metrics. In fact, California is one of 37 states to adopt chronic

absenteeism in its school district accountability plans under the Every Student Succeeds Act (Jordan and Miller 2017), and the state has made school-level chronic absenteeism rates publicly available.⁴

Survey Sample

In our survey, we asked teacher candidates to report their demographic and background characteristics, listed in table 1. Among respondents, 9 percent of candidates were male and 91 percent were female. Based on reported race/ethnicity, 14 percent of candidates were Asian, 1 percent Black, 25 percent Latinx, 45 percent White, and 15 percent other race. The average undergraduate GPA was 3.49. When asked to report their parents' highest education level, approximately 41 percent of candidates indicated they had a parent who attained a four-year college degree, 14 percent had a parent who attended some college, and 9 percent had a parent with a high school diploma. Moreover, 89 percent of candidates reported they attended public schools for all of grades K–12. As part of our larger study, we found our entire sample of teacher candidates is demographically representative of the overall number of teachers issued credentials in California (see appendix table A.1).

TABLE 1
Demographic and Background Characteristics of Novice Kindergarten and First Grade Teachers

Demographic and background characteristics	% or #
Male	9%
Female	91%
Asian	14%
Black	1%
Latinx	25%
White	45%
Other race	15%
Undergraduate GPA (4-point scale)	3.49
Highest parent education: high school diploma	9%
Highest parent education: some college	14%
Highest parent education: college or more	41%
Attended public K–12 schools	89%
Number of candidates	246

Key Measures

Candidates were asked about several topics regarding their teacher preparation program training as well as their beliefs about their preparedness to address chronic absenteeism once inservice. All questions solicited responses from candidates on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. These topics are described below. Note that several survey items refer to edTPA,

which is a performance-based, subject-specific assessment and support system used by teacher preparation programs throughout the United States to emphasize, measure, and support the skills and knowledge that all teachers need for their first day in the classroom. A summary of topics, including sample survey items, can be found in table 2. Appendix table 2 presents the full list of survey questions.

TABLE 2
Summary of Scales from Survey Items

Key measure	Summary	Example question
Helpfulness	Candidates' perceptions of how useful edTPA was in their preparation for becoming a teacher	edTPA helped me become a stronger teacher
Alignment	Candidates' perceptions of whether edTPA aligned with the other preparation they were receiving (i.e., coursework, placement)	My instructors mentioned edTPA in course discussions
University supervisor	Candidates' perceived support from their university supervisor	My supervisor gave me useful feedback on my teaching
Programmatic coherence	Candidates' perceptions of whether their teacher education program was cohesive in its goals, mission, and expectations	My program articulates a clear vision of teaching and learning
Placement (i.e., student teaching)	Candidates' perceptions of whether their placement was in line with their expectations and desires for future classroom placements	My student teaching placement was consistent with my career teaching plans in terms of students' academic performance
Sufficient knowledge	Candidates' perceptions of their knowledge of policies and factors relating to chronic absenteeism	I have sufficient knowledge of California's truancy and absenteeism policies and procedures
Practices	Candidates' perceptions of their ability to use specific practices to promote student attendance and support students who are absent from school	I feel prepared to effectively engage students who are chronically absent from school

Sources: Authors' survey. Note that items related to sufficient knowledge and practices were written and validated by the authors. Other survey items were taken directly from surveys validated by Cohen and colleagues (2018).

PERCEIVED QUALITIES OF TEACHER PREPARATION

We asked candidates about their program experiences, including coursework, field placements, and the teacher performance assessment. Our questions were derived from surveys previously used by Cohen and colleagues (2018), except for the questions related to addressing student absenteeism. We have validated these attendance scales in our prior work (Gottfried, Kirksey, and Hutt forthcoming). Additional details on questions and surveys can be found in the appendix.

In our analysis, we focus on five qualities of teacher preparation based on candidates' responses, including the following:

- *Helpfulness* of the teacher performance assessment⁵ in preparation to become a teacher—that is, whether candidates viewed their preparation for the teacher performance assessment as useful or beneficial for becoming a classroom teacher
- *Alignment* between the teacher performance assessment and other program requirements—whether candidates believed the teacher performance assessment was associated with other aspects of their preparation (i.e., teaching placement, coursework)
- *University supervisor support* in field placements, based on a scale assessing support candidates felt from their supervisors in the program
- *Program coherence*, or candidates' perceptions of whether their teacher preparation program was unified in its goals, mission, and expectations
- *Placement*, or candidates' perceptions of whether their placement was in line with their expectations and desires for future classroom placements

Candidates' reports on these five qualities of preparation allow us to examine the connection between teacher preparation program components and reports of preparedness to address chronic absenteeism.

PREPAREDNESS TO ADDRESS CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

In addition to asking candidates about their program experiences, we asked them a series of questions regarding their preparedness to address chronic absenteeism. Our questions focused on two key areas:

- *Knowledge of absenteeism*, defined as candidates' understanding of chronic absenteeism in policy and as an issue that impacts their students
- *Practices*, defined as candidates' perceived abilities to address absenteeism in practice

Analysis

To explore the relationship between candidates' experiences in their teacher preparation programs and their perceptions of their preparedness to address chronic absenteeism, we used predictive analysis with a technique known as ordinary least squares regression. This analytic technique allows us to examine the relationship between teacher preparation qualities and preparedness to address

absenteeism, while also accounting for candidates' background characteristics, which, if not controlled for, would bias reported findings.

We also add “program fixed effects” to the regression analysis to control for all possible program-specific factors that could bias the relationship between qualities of teacher preparation and preparedness to address absenteeism. For example, certain types of candidates might choose to attend certain teacher preparation programs based on proclivity for a particular university in our sample, preference for an area of residence within the state, history of types of placements, and so forth. Accounting for all possible program-specific factors is important to control for characteristics that may misconstrue the relationship between qualities of teacher preparation and preparedness to address chronic absenteeism. Thus, in a program fixed-effects analysis, we limit our comparisons to candidates in the same program, which allows us to determine the relationship between qualities of teacher preparation and preparedness to address absenteeism regardless of program characteristics.

Findings

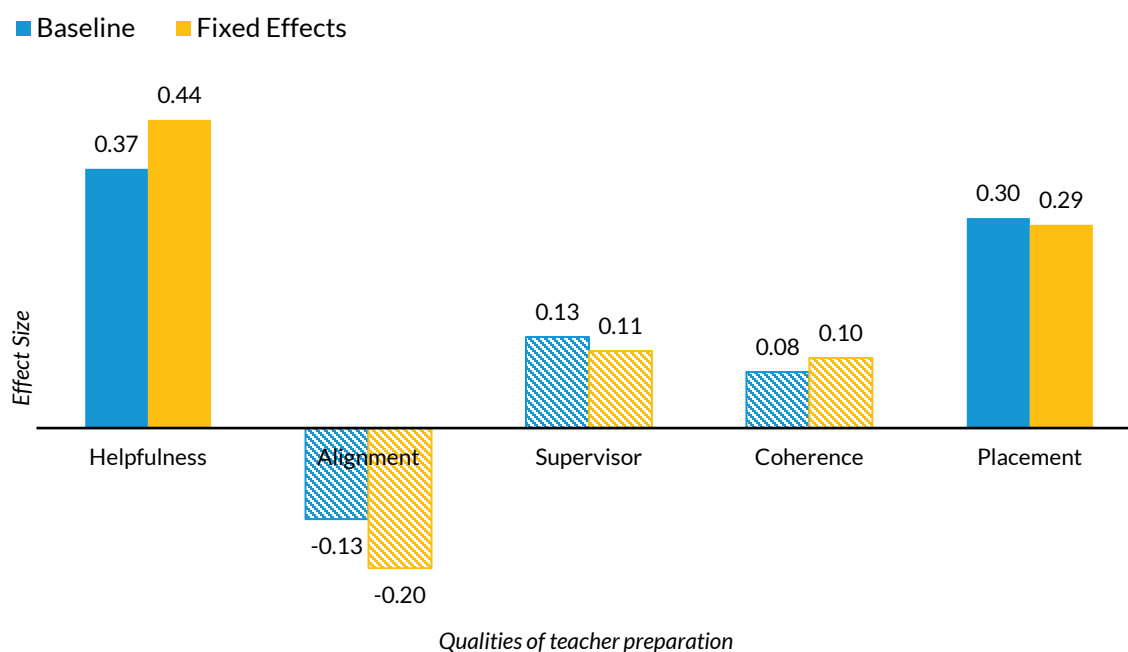
We had several major findings for our key sample in this study—novice kindergarten and first grade teachers. Teachers reported having more knowledge about chronic absenteeism in two instances: first, when they also believed their teacher performance assessment helped prepare them to teach; and second, when their field placements matched their future expectations. As for feeling prepared to address chronic absenteeism, teachers felt more ready to do so when they also felt more supported by their university supervisors.

We present our estimates of the relationships between qualities of teacher preparation and preparedness to address chronic absenteeism from both regression models described above. All results are presented in effect sizes, so we can compare the relationships with respect to their magnitudes. The figures discussed below illustrate the primary results of interest, and table 3 shows full results from each regression model employed in the study.

Novice teachers who believed the teacher performance assessment was helpful reported having greater knowledge about chronic absenteeism compared with teachers who believed it was less helpful. Two aspects of teacher preparation programs are related to knowledge of chronic absenteeism, as shown in figure 1 below. First, teaching candidates planning to teach kindergarten or first grade who believed the teacher performance assessment was helpful in preparing them to become a teacher reported, on average, having higher knowledge of chronic absenteeism. Moreover, this was true in all of

our empirical models. The magnitude of this relationship was slightly higher in the program fixed-effects model, meaning perceived helpfulness of the assessment is perhaps even more strongly related to knowledge of chronic absenteeism when accounting for all the ways in which programs differ from each other. Overall, these effect sizes are considered moderate and meaningful effect sizes in educational research (Keith 2006).

FIGURE 1
Qualities of Teacher Preparation and Knowledge of Chronic Absenteeism



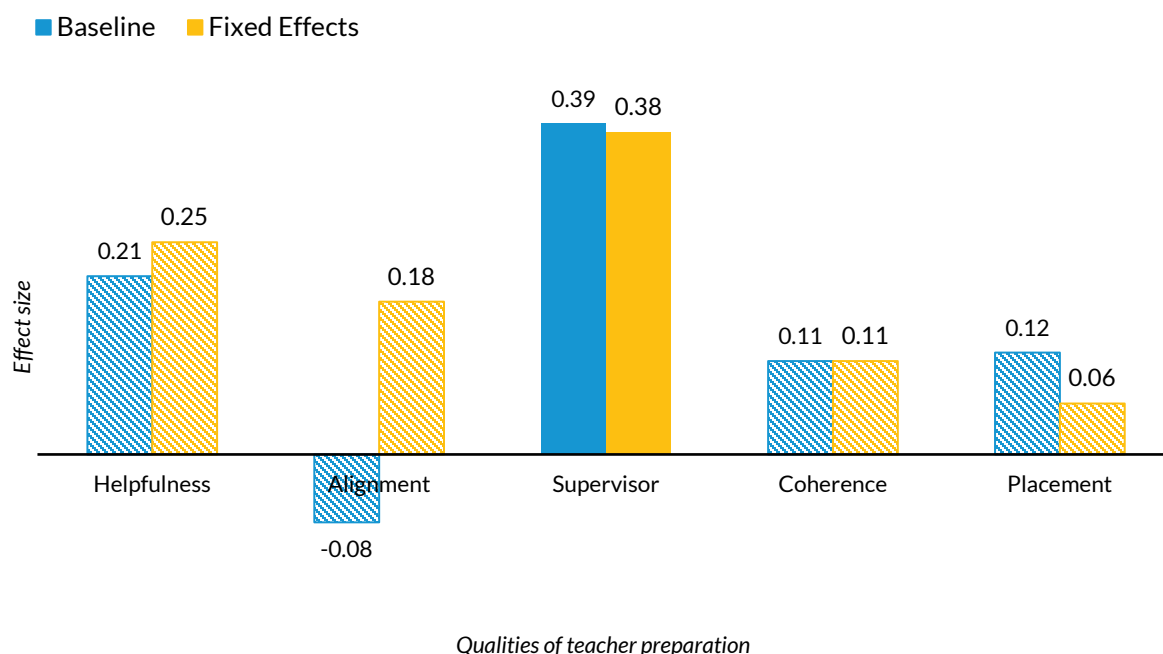
Note: Solid-colored bars indicate statistically significant findings, whereas striped bars indicate nonstatistically significant findings. Numbers above the bars represent effect size estimates from OLS regression models. Alpha reliability coefficients for each construct were 0.95 (Helpfulness), 0.86 (Alignment), 0.84 (Supervisor), 0.71 (Coherence), and 0.87 (Placement).

Novice teachers who more strongly believed that their field placements matched their expectations and desires for future placements reported having greater knowledge of chronic absenteeism compared with teachers who did not feel as strongly. Additionally, candidates whose field placements matched their expectations and desires for future placements also tended to report that they felt as if they had sufficient knowledge of chronic absenteeism. Note the effect sizes presented for both the baseline and program fixed-effects models are similar in magnitude and considered small and meaningful effect sizes in educational research (Keith 2006).

Novice teachers who felt strongly supported by their university supervisors reported being better prepared to use practices to address chronic absenteeism compared with teachers who felt

less supported. As seen in figure 2, perceived quality of teacher preparation relates to candidates' perceived abilities to address chronic absenteeism using specific practices. For those who will teach in kindergarten and first grade classrooms, candidates who perceived themselves as having stronger support from their university supervisors tended to report being better prepared to use practices to address chronic absenteeism once they entered the classroom. The estimates from each model are comparable and considered moderate and meaningful in educational research (Keith 2006).

FIGURE 2
Qualities of Teacher Preparation and Practices to Address Chronic Absenteeism



Note: Solid-colored bars indicate statistically significant findings, whereas striped bars indicate nonstatistically significant findings.

Although perceptions of teacher prep programs were found to have moderate effects on chronic absenteeism outcomes for K-1 teachers, the same associations were not found for older elementary teachers. In other words, there was a statistically significant relationship between qualities of teacher preparation and absenteeism outcomes for teachers entering kindergarten and first grade. Yet the same was not true for teachers in grades 2 to 5: there was no statistical significance for the qualities of teacher preparation and absenteeism outcomes in our models. This then implies that the patterns we observed only emerged for kindergarten and first grade teachers.

After examining associations between perceived qualities of teacher preparation programs and chronic absenteeism outcomes for candidates expected to teach in kindergarten or first grade classrooms, we turned our attention to the other elementary candidates. We employed the exact same models used to evaluate associations for kindergarten and first grade teachers to evaluate associations for the other elementary candidates. Full results and comparisons are illustrated in appendix table 3.

In sum, we found no significant association between any the five qualities of perceived teacher preparation and knowledge of or preparedness to address chronic absenteeism for teachers in second grade through fifth grade, nor any associations with these candidates' demographic characteristics. So, for example, teacher gender did not predict greater knowledge or awareness about chronic absenteeism. These findings suggest that associations of certain qualities of teacher preparation with kindergarten and first grade candidates' knowledge of and abilities to address chronic absenteeism do not exist for candidates expected to teach second grade or above in this study. Of course, absenteeism is an important issue across all elementary school grades (Balfanz and Byrnes 2012), and attention must be focused on how to reduce absenteeism across these years of education. However, regarding the qualities of teacher preparation examined in this study, links only emerged for teachers educating students in kindergarten and first grade. Further research must examine ways to best prepare teachers in grades 2 to 5, or alternative ways to explore the measures in examined in this study to best identify how to support all elementary school teachers as they graduate from their teacher training programs and enter the classroom.

Discussion

The goal of this inquiry was to understand the extent to which incoming kindergarten and first grade teachers felt prepared to address students' disproportionately high absence rates during the first years of school. We asked whether there were clear associations between the following two ideas: knowledge of chronic absenteeism and specific characteristics of teacher preparation programs. Our results suggest such links do exist:

- **Perceived helpfulness of teacher performance assessments matters.** Our findings suggest that to the extent teacher candidates perceive their teacher performance assessments as improving their preparation as a preservice teacher, this helpfulness extends to how prepared they feel to address absenteeism. This should be welcome news to the advocates of novice teacher performance assessments and policymakers who have embraced them (currently 22 states have policies concerning edTPA use).

- **Views of professionalism matter.** Our findings suggest these new assessments that explicitly aim to be “more authentic” measures of professional practice (Hutt, Gottlieb, and Cohen 2018; Darling-Hammond and Hyler 2013) are reducing the traditional gap teachers see between their training and the “real work” of being a teacher (Zeichner 2010).
- **Student teaching matters.** Teacher candidates whose expectations matched their student teaching experiences were also associated with greater perceived knowledge of chronic absenteeism (figure 1). This is consistent with a growing literature indicating the strong influence of field experience in shaping future educators (Ronfeldt 2012, 2015; Ronfeldt and Reininger 2012). More research is needed to examine what aspects of the experience helped produce this result (e.g., explicit conversations with mentor teachers, organic “discovery,” etc.). But given the scope and importance of the problem of chronic absenteeism, teacher preparation programs would benefit from encouraging their candidates to initiate questions about attendance as an explicit point of discussion during field placement experiences.
- **University supervisors play a strong role.** In particular, our findings about the singular importance of university supervisors (figure 2) suggest that issues and discussions around chronic absenteeism should be raised during some of these interactions. As with our other results, we are not able to examine the content of these exchanges or what strategies or advice supervisors provide in these moments. Future research will hopefully answer these questions.
- **Exposure to students’ absence issues matters in teacher preparation.** We think the implications for teacher preparation programs are clear: field placements are where teacher candidates are first likely to encounter the challenge of chronic absenteeism explicitly and directly. Helping teacher candidates think about the nature of this problem (i.e., the multiple causes of absenteeism), its effects on student outcomes, and the available strategies to minimize chronic absenteeism and support chronically absent students—both inside and outside the classroom—is an important responsibility. University supervisors and mentor teachers, those who are most proximate to these encounters, are likely in an ideal position to help teacher candidates process the challenge and provide information about how best to address it.
- **Early elementary educators are a key focus.** Our final analysis sought to examine whether there were any differences between kindergarten and first grade teacher candidates compared with other second through fifth grade elementary teachers. Though a clear difference exists in patterns of chronic absenteeism between the first years of elementary school and the later years, we want to emphasize that absenteeism in all elementary school grades is important to

address. Given the scope of the problem, it would be best if all prospective teachers were aware of and well equipped to address the challenge of chronic absenteeism in their elementary classrooms. However, given how acute the problem can be in kindergarten and how early patterns of attendance predict future patterns of attendance, teacher preparation programs would benefit from explicitly preparing kindergarten and first grade teachers to address this issue. Time is, of course, very limited in teacher preparation programs, but the potential long-term value of kindergarten and first grade teachers addressing this issue and putting their students on the path to regular attendance could be enormous.

Limitations and Future Research

First and foremost, our data are limited to *perceptions* of knowledge about chronic absenteeism rather than a specific articulation of this knowledge or effectiveness in handling absenteeism. We focused on perceptions intentionally, as we wanted to capture teachers' thoughts right before entering the classroom to determine if teacher preparation programs could be useful ways to address absences. In future work, we hope to longitudinally track teacher candidates' perceptions of their ability to produce actual results in the classroom. Even so, perceptions of preparedness are a prerequisite to addressing the issue of chronic absenteeism and certainly speak to views about personal efficacy in addressing them—a factor research suggests is important in teachers' professional identities (Jennings and DiPrete 2010).

A second limitation is that the results here are descriptive rather than causal. It was not possible to randomize all the components of the sample teachers' preparation program experiences. Therefore, although we can make associations linking perceptions of teacher preparation program experiences to perceptions about addressing absenteeism, we cannot say for certain that those teacher preparation program components caused the differences we observed. Future research could consider a randomized intervention at the teacher preparation program level that might include curricula on ways to address absenteeism. In this way, the findings in this present study could be corroborated with causal research.

Appendix. Supplementary Data Tables

TABLE A.1
Teacher Candidate Demographics

	Study sample	California
Male	22%	29%
Female	78%	71%
Black	1%	5%
Hispanic	23%	29%
White	59%	46%
Asian	18%	7%
Other race	14%	9%
<i>N</i>	473	23,766

Source: Data provided by the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing Annual Report Card 2017–18.

TABLE A.2
Summary of Scales from Survey Items

Scale	Summary	Items
Helpfulness ($\alpha = .96$)	Candidates' perceptions of how useful edTPA was in their preparation for becoming a teacher.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ edTPA helped me become a stronger teacher ■ On the whole, edTPA was worthwhile in my development as a teacher ■ edTPA helped me make connections between educational theory and my experience student teaching ■ edTPA helped me reflect upon my own understanding of student learning ■ edTPA better prepared me to teach diverse students ■ edTPA better prepared me to plan and teach lessons ■ edTPA provided an opportunity for my personal professional development ■ edTPA provided an opportunity to reflect upon my own teaching practice ■ edTPA helped me become a stronger teacher ■ edTPA helped me design assessments and use information from assessments in instructional planning

Scale	Summary	Items
Alignment ($\alpha = .90$)	Candidates' perceptions of whether edTPA aligned with the other preparation they were receiving (i.e., coursework, placement)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ edTPA was a focus of my coursework throughout my teacher preparation program ■ My program emphasized edTPA as a valuable tool for my development as a teacher ■ My program emphasized edTPA as a necessary requirement for graduation ■ I had the support needed to complete edTPA successfully ■ My program focused heavily on edTPA during the semester ■ My program mentioned edTPA in course discussions ■ My program gave course assignments related to edTPA ■ My program was helpful in supporting my completion of edTPA ■ My instructors were knowledgeable about what I was required to do in edTPA ■ My program valued edTPA as a worthwhile part of teacher preparation ■ My instructors mentioned edTPA in course discussions
University supervisor ($\alpha = .86$)	Candidates' perceived support from their university Supervisor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ My supervisor gave me useful feedback on my teaching ■ My supervisor was available to talk with me when I had questions or concerns about teaching ■ My supervisor observed me on a regular basis ■ My supervisor provided useful feedback on components of my edTPA
Programmatic coherence ($\alpha = .73$)	Candidates' perceptions of whether their teacher education program was cohesive in its goals, mission, and expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ My program articulates a clear vision of teaching and learning ■ I hear similar views about teaching and learning across courses ■ What I learn in methods courses reflects what I observe in my student teaching placement ■ The criteria by which I am evaluated as a student teacher are consistent with what I am taught in my methods courses

Scale	Summary	Items
Placement ($\alpha = .85$)	Candidates' perceptions of whether their placement was in line with their expectations and desires for future classroom placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student teaching placement consistent with your career teaching plans in terms of students' academic performance ▪ Student teaching placement consistent with your career teaching plans in terms of students' race/ethnicity ▪ Student teaching placement consistent with your career teaching plans in terms of students' socioeconomic status
Sufficient knowledge ($\alpha = .87$)	Candidates' perceptions of their knowledge of policies and factors relating to chronic absenteeism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I have sufficient knowledge of California's truancy and absenteeism policies and procedures ▪ I know California's definition of chronic absenteeism ▪ I have sufficient knowledge of the effects of chronic absenteeism for students ▪ I feel comfortable using attendance data to address the needs of students in my classroom ▪ I have sufficient knowledge of the home factors relating to chronic absenteeism ▪ I have sufficient knowledge of the school factors relating to chronic absenteeism
Practices ($\alpha = .85$)	Candidates' perceptions of their ability to use specific practices to promote student attendance and support students who are absent from school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I feel prepared to assist families in ensuring their children get to school ▪ I feel comfortable collaborating with school study teams, guidance teams, school attendance review teams, or other intervention-related groups to assess student attendance problems ▪ I feel prepared to effectively engage students who are chronically absent from school ▪ I feel prepared to help chronically absent students value learning

TABLE A.3

Estimates of the Associations between Qualities of Teacher Preparation and Chronic Absenteeism Outcomes

	Grades K-1				Grades 2-5			
	Sufficient knowledge of chronic absenteeism		Practices to alleviate chronic absenteeism		Sufficient knowledge		Practices	
Demographic characteristics								
Male	0.28 (0.45)	0.37 (0.65)	1.13** (0.33)	0.81 (0.57)	0.14 (0.28)	-0.06 (0.33)	0.12 (0.27)	0.04 (0.30)
Asian	-0.12 (0.39)	0.00 (0.44)	-0.19 (0.34)	-0.03 (0.41)	-0.32 (0.27)	-0.27 (0.25)	-0.39 (0.24)	-0.40 (0.23)
Latinx	-0.03 (0.32)	-0.07 (0.37)	0.36 (0.32)	0.37 (0.35)	0.38 (0.23)	0.26 (0.22)	0.03 (0.23)	-0.05 (0.21)
Other race [^]	-0.35 (0.30)	-0.24 (0.31)	-0.15 (0.30)	-0.06 (0.34)	-0.23 (0.26)	-0.22 (0.27)	-0.23 (0.28)	-0.21 (0.27)
Undergraduate GPA	-0.06 (0.13)	-0.12 (0.14)	-0.09 (0.13)	-0.08 (0.15)	-0.03 (0.09)	-0.09 (0.09)	-0.14 (0.09)	-0.18 (0.10)
Highest parent education: high school diploma	-0.09 (0.56)	-0.13 (0.54)	0.42 (0.63)	0.34 (0.58)	0.27 (0.35)	0.39 (0.36)	0.14 (0.33)	0.20 (0.34)
Highest parent education: some college	0.08 (0.44)	0.15 (0.40)	0.07 (0.40)	0.03 (0.43)	-0.07 (0.26)	0.02 (0.26)	0.05 (0.24)	0.12 (0.24)
Highest parent education: college degree or more	0.09 (0.32)	0.15 (0.38)	0.17 (0.33)	0.13 (0.38)	-0.03 (0.18)	-0.05 (0.17)	-0.14 (0.18)	-0.14 (0.18)
Attended public K-12 schools	-0.03 (0.41)	-0.07 (0.45)	-0.38 (0.35)	-0.31 (0.43)	0.11 (0.22)	0.09 (0.23)	0.00 (0.23)	0.04 (0.23)
Qualities of preparation								
Helpfulness of TPA	0.37* (0.16)	0.44* (0.19)	0.21 (0.17)	0.25 (0.18)	0.07 (0.12)	0.13 (0.12)	0.09 (0.12)	0.13 (0.12)
Alignment	-0.13 (0.20)	-0.20 (0.27)	-0.08 (0.18)	-0.03 (0.26)	0.11 (0.11)	0.06 (0.12)	0.13 (0.10)	0.10 (0.11)
University supervisor support	0.13 (0.19)	0.11 (0.21)	0.39* (0.18)	0.38* (0.018)	0.15 (0.10)	0.12 (0.10)	0.18 (0.10)	0.15 (0.10)
Program coherence	0.08 (0.18)	0.10 (0.19)	0.11 (0.17)	0.11 (0.18)	-0.04 (0.10)	0.04 (0.10)	0.12 (0.09)	0.17 (0.10)
Placement expectations	0.30* (0.15)	0.29* (0.14)	0.12 (0.16)	0.06 (0.18)	0.11 (0.09)	0.08 (0.09)	0.12 (0.08)	0.09 (0.08)
Constant	0.19 (0.45)	-0.80 (0.59)	-0.17 (0.38)	0.78 (0.57)	-0.11 (0.21)	1.03** (0.34)	0.11 (0.20)	0.76* (0.36)
Observations	69	69	69	69	177	177	177	177
Program FE	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$. [^]Note that the race variable Black could not be included as a control variable given the limited share of respondents. In the models, Black teacher candidates are grouped into the Other race category.

Notes

- ¹ “School Attendance Review Boards,” California Department of Education, accessed June 24, 2021, <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ai/sb/>.
- ² Elementary credentials are referred to as multiple subject teaching credentials.
- ³ In raising awareness of the extent of chronic absenteeism and its consequences across the state, these reports routinely mention the role of teachers in recommendations to school districts, such as developing “parent-teacher manuals that explain truancy laws and requirements” (Office of the Attorney General 2013, 101), “an establishment of parent-teacher lines of communication to promote positive attendance behaviors” (Office of the Attorney General 2015), and a general message to schools was that communicating the importance of student attendance was “most powerful” when the message came from school officials, including teachers (Office of the Attorney General 2013, 95).
- ⁴ The state recently incorporated the chronic absenteeism metric in the “California School Dashboard,” California Department of Education, accessed February 1, 2021, https://www.cnusd.k12.ca.us/our_departments/educational_services/california_school_dashboard. The Dashboard “provides parents and educators with meaningful information on school and district progress so they can participate in decisions to improve student learning.” Thus, in the next year, parents and stakeholders will be able to easily access school performance and progress based on chronic absenteeism rates.
- ⁵ The teacher performance assessment is a licensure examination required by the state’s credentialing board, and the assessment is also used by the teacher preparation program as a program requirement for degree completion. In contrast with an earlier generation of teacher licensure examinations, teacher performance assessments replace multiple-choice questions with different measures of teachers’ practices, including lesson plans, classroom artifacts, video-taped lessons, and written reflections on classroom practice (Darling-Hammond et al. 2012).

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About the Authors

Michael Gottfried, PhD, is an associate professor in the Graduate School of Education at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Gottfried is a nationally and internationally recognized expert in absenteeism. He has numerous grants and publications in this area, and he served as the guest coeditor for the first-ever special issue on absenteeism for a peer reviewed academic journal (*Journal of Education for Students Placed at Risk—JESPAR*).

J. Jacob Kirksey, PhD, is an assistant professor in the Educational Leadership Policy program in the College of Education at Texas Tech University. Dr. Kirksey's research is concerned with promoting equitable educational outcomes by drawing attention to unintended consequences in policy. He has published extensively in the areas of teacher preparation and absenteeism in both academic and policy outlets.

Ethan Hutt, PhD, is an assistant professor in the School of Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Hutt's research examines the history, design, and use of accountability systems in American schools. He has published extensively in the areas of accountability, teacher licensure, and absenteeism in both academic and policy outlets.

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