

Rutherford County Schools *Called to Educate* New EPP and Occupational SAP Proposal Summary

According to State Board of Education (SBE) Rule [0520-02-04](#), eligible organizations, including Tennessee public school districts, seeking initial approval as an educator preparation provider (EPP) to recommend candidates for licensure, shall participate in the initial approval process by submitting a proposal for review by the department. After review of the proposal for initial approval, the department shall recommend to the SBE one of the following: (a) Initial Approval. If Initial Approval is awarded, providers may begin enrolling and subsequently recommending candidates for licensure in approved specialty areas; or (b) Denial of Initial Approval. If Initial Approval is denied, providers may not recommend candidates for licensure or identify programs as leading to licensure.

Proposal Development and Submission

During the 2017-18 academic year, Rutherford County Schools (RCS) expressed interest in pursuing approval to operate an EPP to recruit, prepare through an occupational educator Specialty Area Program (SAP), recommend for licensure, and hire qualified individuals to teach Career and Technical Education (CTE) occupational courses. The interest was expressed primarily through emails, phone calls, and direct discussions among staff of the CTE division and, to a lesser extent, staff of the office of educator licensure and preparation (OELP). Based on the support from an EPIC grant (see page 2) in June 2018, an EPP coordinator was hired by RCS to develop a new EPP and SAP proposal. On June 26, 2018, OELP staff conducted an in-person orientation for RCS personnel, including the incoming director of schools, who had major responsibilities in developing the proposal. The orientation focused on the required components of the proposal and the review process. On September 28, 2018, RCS submitted to the OELP a proposal titled *Called to Educate*.

Review Process

The *Called to Educate* proposal provided responses and evidence related to the required major components as follows:

- Organizational eligibility criteria;
- EPP framework (responses to four of the five Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) EPP standards);
- Primary partnership agreement; and
- Occupational SAP proposal that aligns to InTASC standards, literacy standards, and job-embedded clinical practice requirements.

The proposal was reviewed by the executive director of educator licensure and preparation, senior director of educator preparation, and the director of educator preparation and accreditation.

On February 22, 2019, OELP provided feedback to RCS related to the outcome of the review which indicated revisions, as stated in "Action Steps," were necessary for continued consideration of the proposal. On March 15, 2019, RCS submitted the requested proposal revisions. On May 15, 2019, OELP completed the review of the proposal revisions.

Recommendation

As a result of the outcome of the review of the original proposal and subsequent proposal revisions, OELP submits, to department leadership, the recommendation of Initial Approval of the Rutherford County Schools *Called to Educate* new EPP and occupational SAP. Further, it is suggested the recommendation for Initial Approval be submitted as the department recommendation for SBE consideration during the July 26, 2019 meeting. If the department recommendation is accepted by the SBE, Rutherford County Schools would be the first Tennessee school district granted Initial Approval to operate an EPP.

Experienced Professionals in the Classroom (EPIC) Grant

In summer 2017, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education launched the High School Career and Technical Education Teacher Pathway Initiative (CTE-TPI). This initiative, funded out of Perkins National Programs dollars, was launched in response to numerous states reporting to OCTAE that they were experiencing a shortage of teachers in key CTE areas. A grant competition was opened to help increase the supply of high school CTE teachers available to teach students in CTE programs that align to in-demand industry sectors or occupations in States and communities where shortages of such teachers exist. Tennessee was one of five awardees with our proposal "Experienced Professionals in the Classroom" (EPIC) and began work in fall 2017 on the following priorities:

EPIC Grant Focus Areas:

Review the program requirements for occupational educator preparation providers and align existing funding

This area includes a full review of existing programs which traditionally operated outside the formal EPP structure, new annual report procedures, and requirement of a standardized assessment for aspiring educators. While the department's first budget proposal to support using Reconnect funds for occupational licenses was unsuccessful, Governor Lee's Occupational License Teacher Loan Forgiveness program presented in early 2019 is a promising development in our efforts to reduce costs for occupational teachers.

Pilot a district-led occupational educator preparation provider to better meet local demand for effective high school CTE teachers

This focus area hinges on the development and approval of Rutherford County Schools' application to become the first Tennessee school district to operate as an occupational EPP. Grant funds through a sub-grant to RCS support an EPP coordinator, who was hired in June 2018, and the development of their proposal, which was submitted September 2018. Rutherford County is poised to begin its first cohort this fall. A significant component to the district-led EPP is the ability to offer services to Rutherford County's neighboring, rural districts. The outcome of this objective will produce twenty-five occupational CTE teachers annually.

Partner with a community college to pilot a cost-effective associate's degree-level occupational educator preparation provider

This strand is focused on a sub-grant awarded to Motlow State Community College in July 2018 with the aim of starting a community college EPP program, for individuals in industry who would like to pursue teaching could participate in at no cost to them through the Tennessee Reconnect program. The outcome of this objective will produce fifteen occupational CTE teachers annually.

Next Steps

Initially, the EPIC grant contained an objective to pilot the co-teaching model. After stakeholder engagement to develop this strand determined it was not a priority for districts, the department is currently working with US Ed to revise our grant to expand the focus on district partnerships, particularly in Knox County Schools. Additionally, we are presently gathering research around a mentorship strategy for the development of a community of occupational practitioners.