
Educator Preparation Providers (EPP) and Specialty Area Program (SAP) Approvals

The Background:

This item contains action recommendations for Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) and the Specialty Area Programs (SAPs) (SAPs are the endorsement program – e.g., Elementary Education K-5) for the following existing EPPs (Bethel University, Fisk University, Trevecca Nazarene University and prospective EPP (Sumner County Schools)).-

Comprehensive Reviews of Existing EPPs and SAPs

The Department of Education is responsible for the review of EPPs and SAPs. Once an EPP receives initial approval, the EPP must participate in a full-approval review process, managed by the Department, within three to five (3-5) years.

Once an EPP receives full approval status, the EPP may maintain its approval status through the national CAEP (Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation) accreditation pathway or through the state-managed comprehensive review process every seven (7) years. Action recommendations made by the Department must be approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-02-04.

Steps in the review process include:

- Reports prepared by the EPP that responds to the CAEP national accreditation standards and state specialty program standards;
- On-site review conducted by a state-selected and trained on-site review team using the Tennessee Comprehensive Review Handbook and, for EPPs seeking national accreditation, a nationally selected and trained CAEP on-site team;
- On-site review report submitted to the EPP;
- EPP response (rejoinder) to the on-site review report submitted to the Department;
- Evaluation of all reviews by the Tennessee Advisory Committee on Educator Preparation (ACEP); and
- CAEP accreditation/state approval comprehensive review occurs on a seven (7)-year cycle, which may include focused reviews during the interim period.

The Department of Education recommendations for existing EPPs and SAPs fall into one (1) of five (5) categories:

- Full Approval: Exemplary Status;
- Full Approval;
- Full Approval: Minor Stipulations;
- Probationary Approval: Major Stipulations; or
- Denial of Approval.

For EPPs seeking CAEP accreditation, the initial accreditation status is translated to an EPP state approval recommendation by the Department and reviewed by the ACEP. CAEP advanced accreditation decisions

are not considered in recommendations to the State Board as advanced-level programs are reviewed as SAPs and each receives a separate status recommendation.

Joint CAEP/State Accreditation and State SAP Comprehensive Reviews

Trevecca Nazarene University

This joint CAEP/state review took place in fall of 2022. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all CAEP standards. No critical deficiencies were cited. In accordance with State Board Rule 0520-02-04-.04, because the provider met expectations on all standards, the provider is recommended for **full approval, along with all specialty area programs.**

State-Managed EPP and SAP Comprehensive Reviews

Bethel University

This state-managed full approval review took place in the fall of 2022. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on CAEP standards 1-4 and did not meet expectations on CAEP standard 5. Some major stipulations were cited. Minor stipulations were also found within the standards. In accordance with State Board Rule 0520-02-04-.04, because the provider met expectations on three (3) or more standards but fell below expectations on one (1) or more standards, the provider is recommended for **probationary approval, major stipulations. The provider is recommended for full approval for all specialty area programs.** Pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-02-04-.04, An EPP that is issued probationary approval may recommend candidates for licensure but shall submit to the Department an improvement plan for addressing the areas in need of improvement within three (3) months of receiving probationary approval status from the State Board. Each year, the EPP shall present evidence that the provider is implementing the improvement plan and making progress toward meeting expectations. The EPP shall also participate in a focused review within three (3) years of receiving probationary approval from the State Board. Additionally, The EPP shall specifically report on the progress made in each area of deficiency on their annual report for the three (3) years following the issuance of probationary approval.

Fisk University

This state-managed full approval review took place in fall of 2022. The review team concluded that the EPP did not meet expectations on all CAEP standards. Critical deficiencies were cited. In accordance with State Board Rule 0520-02-04-.04, because the provider fell below expectations on two (2) or more standards, the provider is recommended for **denial of approval.** Fisk's specialty area programs were operational less than three (3) years at the time of the review and were not eligible to undergo a review. Pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-02-04-.04, an EPP that is issued denial of approval shall no longer enroll new candidates for licensure and shall notify all current candidates of the denial of approval status of its program. Denied EPPs may continue to serve candidates who can complete the program by the end of the semester that falls twelve (12) months after the date of the denial of approval. The EPP shall assist candidates who are unable to complete the program within this period in transferring to another degree program at the institution or to another approved EPP. The EPP may not re-apply for initial approval for at least three (3) years from the date of denial.

New EPPs and SAPs Seeking Initial Approval

In accordance with the Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04, after review of a proposal for initial approval of a new EPP, the Department shall recommend to the State Board 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. Providers may submit a revised proposal for consideration during the next review period.

Sumner County Schools

The Department of Education reviewed the Sumner County Schools proposal for a recommendation of initial approval as a new EPP and associated SAPs in multiple endorsement areas. The review considered key components of the State Board of Education Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04, Educator Preparation Policy 5.504, and Literacy and Specialty Area Standards Policy 5.505 related to initial EPP and SAP approval.

The Department review team concluded that Sumner County Schools meets expectations on the initial EPP proposal and should be granted initial approval to proceed with implementation of the new EPP and recommend eligible educator preparation candidates for endorsements in multiple program areas.

Sumner County Schools is therefore recommended for **initial approval**.

The Recommendation:

The Department of Education recommends approval of this item on first and final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.