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

The Background:

This item contains action recommendations for Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) and Specialty Area Programs (SAPs) (SAPs are the endorsement programs – e.g., Elementary Education K-5) for three existing EPPs (Tennessee State University, Johnson University, and Maryville College) and one prospective EPP (Hamilton County Schools).

Comprehensive Reviews of Existing EPPs and SAPs

In accordance with State Board rules governing Educator Preparation, the Department of Education is responsible for the review of EPPs and SAPs. Once an EPP receives initial approval from the State Board, 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 Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04.

Steps in the review process include:

- Reports prepared by the EPP that respond to the CAEP national accreditation standards and state specialty program area 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
- Department recommendation submitted to the State Board for approval.

The Department of Education recommendations for existing EPPs and SAPs may 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 Accreditation and State Specialty Area Program Comprehensive Reviews

Tennessee State University

TDOE Recommendation:

EPP: Probationary Approval, Major Stipulations

SAPs: Full Approval, Minor Stipulations

This joint CAEP/state review took place in spring 2023. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on CAEP standards 1-4 and does 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, minor stipulations 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.

State-Managed EPP and SAP Comprehensive Reviews

Johnson University

TDOE Recommendation:

EPP: Probationary Approval, Major Stipulations

SAPs: Full Approval

This state-managed full approval review took place in the spring of 2023. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on CAEP standards 1-3 and does not meet expectations on CAEP standards 4 and 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.

EPP Status Changes

Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04 states that, for EPPs with full approval, minor stipulations status, the Department may recommend to the State Board removal of the minor stipulations for the remainder of the approval period of the EPP if the EPP has adequately addressed the areas in need of improvement. To be eligible for the removal of the minor stipulations, the EPP must submit to the Department a plan for addressing the areas in need of improvement, which is subsequently reviewed and approved by the Department. The Department requires annual progress monitoring in which the EPP submits evidence to demonstrate that progress is being made toward the action plan goals.

Maryville College

TDOE Recommendation:

EPP: Full Approval

Department reviewers reviewed the EPP action plan and subsequent evidence provided during annual progress monitoring reviews since 2020. The Department concluded that the EPP meets expectations in the areas in need of improvement and recommends removal of the minor stipulations. The provider is **recommended for a status change to full approval**.

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 an 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.

Hamilton County Schools

TDOE Recommendation:

EPP: Initial Approval

SAP: Conditional Approval

The Department of Education reviewed the Hamilton 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 Hamilton 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.

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

Additional Updates

On August 29, 2023, LeMoyne-Owen College submitted a formal letter to the Department indicating they were voluntarily closing their EPP effective immediately. Upon receipt, the Department submitted to LeMoyne-Owen College an acknowledgment letter detailing the parameters for voluntary EPP closure.

LeMoyne-Owen College has indicated that they will be reapplying in a future cycle for initial approval as an EPP.. If LeMoyne-Owen College elects to reapply as an EPP, they will be required to submit a new EPP proposal in accordance with the State Board of Education Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04 and Educator Preparation Policy 5.504 to receive initial approval from the State Board.

Connection to the [Master Plan](#):

This item supports the State Board's strategic focus on Teachers and Leaders outlined in the Master Plan by ensuring EPPs are reviewed regularly and held to high standards in order to best prepare teacher candidates.

The Recommendation:

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