

TENNESSEE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TENNESSEE EDUCATOR PREPARATION POLICY

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I. Approval of Educator Preparation Providers and Specialty Area Programs

- (1) All educator preparation providers (EPPs) and the specialty area programs (SAPs) they offer must be approved by the State Board of Education (State Board).
- (2) Eligible entities seeking initial approval as an EPP shall submit a proposal to the Department of Education (Department) on the forms and timelines provided by the Department.
- (3) The proposal shall contain, at a minimum, the following:
 - (a) Evidence that the entity has the capacity to serve as an EPP and provide SAPs leading to licensure or endorsement;
 - (b) Evidence for how the applicant will address all applicable educator preparation standards approved by the State Board, including:
 - 1. Content and Pedagogical knowledge;
 - 2. Clinical partnerships and practice;
 - 3. Candidate quality, recruitment, and selectivity; and
 - 4. Provider quality assurance and continuous improvement.
 - (c) Geographic area to be served and documentation of the engagement of at least one (1) primary Local Education Agency (LEA) or Charter Management Organization (CMO) partner;
 - (d) Plan for curriculum offerings including delivery method and timeframe, clinical placements, and clinical supervision plans;
 - (e) A proposal for each SAP that, at a minimum, includes alignment to Tennessee academic standards, candidate assessment, relevant clinical experience(s), the

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- (f) professional education standards approved by the State Board, all applicable literacy standards, and applicable specialty area standards approved by the State Board.
- (g) Evidence that the faculty who teach courses or provide direct coaching to teacher or instructional leader candidates possess sufficient knowledge, skills, training, and expertise;
- (h) A description of admissions procedures, including the criteria which must be met in order for a candidate to be fully admitted to the licensure program;
- (i) Evidence of organizational and financial stability:
 - 1. If an Institution of Higher Education (IHE) applicant receives federal Title IV funds, the applicant must show evidence of regional or national accreditation by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - 2. Non-IHE applicants shall provide the following:
 - (i) Evidence of financial stability through one (1) of the following:
 - I. If a provider applicant has been in operation for three (3) or more years, clean independent audits of a full set of financial statements of the legal entity offering educator preparation programs for the three (3) most recent fiscal years. The audits must meet the standards of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants or other appropriate accounting standards generally accepted in the United States.
 - II. If a provider applicant has been in operation for fewer than three (3) years, evidence demonstrating financial viability to refund program costs incurred by candidates, districts, or schools for any candidate who is not provided the opportunity to complete preparation. The prospective EPP may comply with this requirement by filing a surety bond payable to the state from a surety, and in the amount equal to or greater than the aggregate amount of program costs expected to be incurred by candidates, district or schools. If the EPP receives initial approval, the approved EPP shall annually submit clean independent audits of a full set of financial statements of the legal entity offering educator preparation programs until full approval is achieved.

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- (ii) An IRS Form 990 if the applicant is a non-profit or corporate income tax returns and audit findings for the subsequent year.
 - (iii) A business plan on the template developed by the Department.
- (j) Applicable provider characteristics, such as governance, control (private or public), regional accreditation agency, and Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) authorization; and
- (k) If the provider is currently operating or has operated in Tennessee or any other state, data on program effectiveness, including but not limited to, completer effectiveness, quality of district partnerships, and performance on annual reports, if available.
- (4) Prior to submission of a proposal for initial approval, prospective EPPs or EPPs seeking conditional approval of a new SAP shall participate in a proposal development orientation conducted by the Department.
- (5) The Department shall review all proposals for initial approval of an EPP or conditional approval of a SAP and provide feedback within ninety (90) calendar days. Within the ninety (90) calendar day review, the Department may request additional information or revisions to a proposal. Applicants shall respond to requests for additional information or revisions within forty-five (45) calendar days. The Department may provide an additional opportunity for applicants to respond to a request for minor revisions. No more than sixty (60) days following the submission of required revisions to the proposal, the Department shall notify applicants of its recommendation of approval or denial of initial approval of an EPP to the State Board or approval or denial of conditional approval of a new SAP.
- (6) Applicants shall not publicize EPPs or SAPs as leading to licensure prior to receiving initial approval as an EPP.
- (7) Applicants that receive initial approval from the State Board may begin enrolling candidates and subsequently recommending eligible candidates and program completers for licensure.
- (8) Applicants that are denied initial approval by the State Board may submit a new proposal for consideration. Providers may submit a revised proposal for consideration during the next review period.
- (9) An EPP may seek full approval after three (3) years in operation under initial approval by requesting a state-managed full-approval review.

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II. Provider and Program Reviews

- (1) All EPPs with initial approval must pursue full approval through a state-managed full-approval review.
- (2) EPPs with full approval must pursue ongoing full approval through a state-managed comprehensive review or a comprehensive review managed by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) or the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), educator preparation accrediting agencies recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) or the United States Department of Education (USDOE).
- (3) All reviews will be conducted by a trained review team.
 - (a) The Department shall select the review team for state-managed reviews.
 - (b) The Department and the appropriate educator preparation accrediting agency shall jointly select the review team for educator preparation accrediting agency reviews.
 - (c) If the EPP is approved for the preparation of instructional leaders, at least one (1) member of the review team shall be trained to assess alignment to the standards and expectations for instructional leader preparation programs.
- (4) CAEP or AAQEP-managed reviews shall be conducted in accordance with the CAEP- or AAQEP-Department partnership agreement.
- (5) Each state-managed full-approval review and comprehensive review shall include:
 - (a) Pre-visit documentation review. Each EPP shall submit to the Department evidence demonstrating alignment to and high-quality implementation of the CAEP or AAQEP standards, InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards developed by the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC standards), and Tennessee-specific provider and program requirements.
 - (b) On-site visit. The review team shall conduct an on-site visit to evaluate EPP performance. The on-site visit may include the following activities:
 1. Interviews with various stakeholders, leadership;
 2. Additional review of evidence or documentation;
 3. Engagement with partner LEAs or CMOs and schools where the EPP is placing candidates for clinical practice; and

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4. Classroom observations.
 - (c) Post-visit report. The review team shall prepare a final post-visit report based on the findings from the self-study and the on-site visit. EPPs may submit a rejoinder to the post-visit report.
 - (d) ACEP review. The Department shall convene an Advisory Committee on Educator Preparation (ACEP). The ACEP shall review the post-visit report and the EPP rejoinder if submitted and shall provide preliminary recommendations for approval status to the Department.
 - (e) The Department shall review the information from the EPP review team and the ACEP recommendations and shall make the final approval status recommendation to the State Board.
- (6) The Department shall manage a focused review process for EPPs or SAPs that receive probationary approval, major stipulations. The focused review shall include:
 - (a) Appointment of review team. The Department shall appoint a review team responsible for reviewing the EPP's progress on implementation of the required improvement plan. The focused review team shall be composed of trained reviewers, including but not limited to, Department staff, K-12 practitioners, EPP personnel, and content experts.
 - (b) Assessment of progress. The focused review team shall assess progress made in correcting major stipulations and any standard identified as falling below expectations during a comprehensive review.
 - (c) Focused review report. The focused review team shall prepare a final report based on the findings of the assessment of progress. EPPs may submit a rejoinder to the focused-review report.
 - (d) ACEP review. The Department shall convene an Advisory Committee on Educator Preparation (ACEP). The ACEP shall review the focused-review report and the EPP rejoinder, if submitted, and shall provide preliminary recommendations to the Department.
 - (e) The Department shall review the information from the EPP review and the ACEP recommendations and may make an approval status change recommendation, including denial of approval, to the State Board.
- (7) The Department shall conduct a state-managed interim review for EPPs that perform below expectations on the annual report for two (2) consecutive years. The Department may conduct a state-managed interim review for EPPs with full approval minor

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stipulations or for EPPs with initial approval that perform below expectations as reported on the annual report at any point during the initial approval period.

- (a) The EPP shall develop a root cause analysis of the identified deficiencies and shall submit a proposed improvement plan to the Department for approval.
 - (b) The Department shall monitor the EPP's progress on the approved improvement plan.
 - (c) If an EPP does not make sufficient progress on implementation of the improvement plan, the Department may make a recommendation for approval status change, including denial of approval, to the State Board.
- (8) If an EPP refuses to participate in any required review, the Department may make a recommendation for approval status change, including denial of approval, to the State Board.

III. Program Requirements

- (1) Through delivery of instruction and clinical experiences, EPPs shall provide the candidate with the knowledge and skills to effectively teach all students, including students at-risk, students with disabilities, English learners, students who are economically disadvantaged, highly mobile students, intellectually gifted students, and students from different racial, cultural, and ethnic backgrounds.
- (2) EPPs shall ensure candidates are prepared to implement the Tennessee state academic standards in each relevant content area. EPPs shall ensure instructional leadership candidates have the knowledge and skills necessary to lead successful implementation of the academic standards.
- (3) EPPs shall include training to support candidates' understanding of the Tennessee educator evaluation system.
- (4) EPPs shall provide candidates training on the teacher code of ethics outlined in T.C.A. §§ 49-5-1001 through 49-5-1005 and the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification's (NASDTEC) Model Code of Ethics for Educators.
- (5) EPPs shall implement all applicable specialty area standards and literacy standards outlined in the Literacy and Specialty Area Standards for Educator Preparation Policy. All EPPs shall require that candidates demonstrate content knowledge in the specialty area program.
- (6) EPPs shall implement the InTASC Standards in all programs leading to a teaching license.

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- (7) EPPs shall implement the Tennessee Instructional Leader Standards (TILS) in all instructional leader preparation programs.
- (8) EPPs shall provide training to support candidates' readiness to deliver or lead instruction informed by Response to Instruction and Intervention Framework (RTI²). EPPs shall ensure educator candidates understand the RTI² data-based decision-making procedures, with a specific focus on Tier I core instruction. EPPs shall ensure all candidates, not only those seeking endorsement in Special Education, understand the purpose of Tiers II and III and how they are designed to provide instruction that is different from, but supportive of, Tier I instruction.
- (9) Pursuant to T.C.A. § 49-5-513, EPPs shall provide candidates with instruction on what is constitutionally permissible with teaching religious content and strategies for dealing with religious content in curriculum that are educationally sound, fair, neutral, and objective.

IV. Annual Reports

- (1) Annual reports are used to demonstrate evidence that EPPs and the SAPs they offer are meeting expectations of the State Board.
- (2) Annual EPP reports shall include the following information:
 - (a) Candidate recruitment and selection as demonstrated by:
 - 1. Candidate scores on the ACT, SAT, or Praxis Core;
 - 2. Candidate GPA at the point of admission;
 - 3. Recruitment of candidates from underrepresented groups; and
 - 4. Candidates completing programs in high needs endorsement areas;
 - (b) Completer and job-embedded candidate employment and retention;
 - (c) Completer and job-embedded candidate performance on required pedagogical, literacy, and specialty area assessments;
 - (d) Results from a program completer satisfaction survey;
 - (e) Results from an employer satisfaction survey; and
 - (f) Completer and job-embedded candidate impact as measured by:

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1. Overall evaluation scores;
 2. Observation scores; and
 3. Individual growth scores; and
- (g) Results of the Department's review of implementation of instruction aligned with foundational literacy skills standards.
- (3) Annual EPP reports for instructional leader programs shall include the following information:
- (a) Candidate recruitment and selection as demonstrated by:
 1. Recruitment of candidates from underrepresented groups; and
 2. Demonstration of leadership potential;
 - (b) Completer employment and retention in a qualifying instructional leadership position;
 - (c) Results from a program completer satisfaction survey;
 - (d) Results from an employer satisfaction survey;
 - (e) Pass rates on required assessments;
 - (f) Completer and job-embedded candidate impact, as measured by:
 1. Overall evaluation ratings;
 2. Observation ratings;
 3. School-wide growth ratings for candidates employed and retained in a school for no fewer than three (3) years; and
 4. Additional growth measures that may be specific to the school context (e.g., growth on ACT for candidates employed in a secondary school).
 - (g) Results of the Department's review of implementation of instruction aligned with foundational literacy skills standards.
- (4) EPPs will be given the opportunity to review and verify data generated by the Department prior to the release of the annual report.

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V. Admission Requirements

- (1) All candidates for admission to an educator preparation program must supply a fingerprint sample and submit to a criminal history records check to be conducted by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in accordance with T.C.A. § 49-5- 5610.
- (2) Candidates for admission to a baccalaureate level educator preparation program shall, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:
 - (a) A minimum postsecondary grade point average (GPA) of 2.75 at the time of admission to the EPP;
 - (b) A qualifying score on the ACT, SAT, or all 3 subtests of the Praxis Core:

Accepted through August 31, 2020:

Test Name	Test Code	Qualifying Score
Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators		
Reading	5712	156
Writing	5722	162
Math	5732	150
ACT	N/A	21
SAT	N/A	1080

Accepted beginning September 1, 2019:

Test Name	Test Code	Qualifying Score
Praxis Core Academic Skills for Educators		
Reading	5713	156
Writing	5723	162
Math	5733	150
ACT	N/A	21
SAT	N/A	1080

- (3) Candidates for admission to a post-baccalaureate educator preparation program shall, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:
 - (a) Evidence of a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited IHE.
 - (b) A minimum overall GPA of 2.75 from a completed baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate degree program or a GPA of 3.00 in the most recent sixty (60) credit hours earned at a regionally accredited IHE.
 - (c) For admission to programs that include job-embedded clinical practice, a degree with a major in the specialty area or qualifying scores on the required content

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assessment as defined in the State Board's Professional Assessments for Tennessee Educators Policy.

- (d) EPPs shall report all admitted candidates to the Department. EPPs shall also report to the Department any candidate who holds a practitioner license who is no longer enrolled in the preparation program or who has failed to make adequate progress towards completion of the program.
- (4) Candidates for admission to an Instructional Leadership Preparation Program (ILPP) shall, at a minimum, meet the following criteria:
 - (a) Have successfully completed an educator preparation program and hold a valid educator license from Tennessee or from a state other than Tennessee;
 - (b) Have at least two (2) years of qualifying education experience as defined by the Department;
 - (c) Have demonstrated effectiveness as an educator in the most recent two (2) years as evidenced by a state-approved evaluation model or similar measure for educators employed in schools that do not utilize a state-approved evaluation model;

VI. Partnerships

- (1) All EPPs shall have a partnership with each LEA or CMO where enrolled candidates are placed for clinical experiences.
- (2) Each Tennessee-based EPP shall have at least one (1) primary partnership with an LEA or CMO in which both parties collaborate to establish an explicit process for identifying and responding to LEA or CMO-identified areas of need, developing candidate selection criteria, and designing and implementing high-quality, needs-based clinical experiences. The primary partnership shall also establish the roles and responsibilities of EPP faculty and LEA or CMO staff, including clinical mentors and supervisors and establish clear expectations regarding the delivery of candidate support and evaluation.
- (3) Primary partnerships involving the preparation of instructional leaders shall address the expectations outlined in item (2) above as they relate to preparing instructional leaders.
- (4) Tennessee-based EPPs that meet the following requirements may request to establish a primary partnership with an alternate entity that oversees or manages two (2) or more schools in Tennessee:

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- (a) The most recent completer cohort has ten (10) or fewer educators employed in a Tennessee public school; and
 - (b) The EPP provides a description of how the partnership will comply with the requirements of Paragraph VI(2).
- (5) All EPPs shall establish state-recognized partnerships with LEAs or CMOs with which they do not have a primary partnership, but where enrolled candidates are placed for clinical experiences. State-recognized partnerships, at a minimum, shall establish the roles and responsibilities of EPP faculty and LEA or CMO staff, including clinical mentors and supervisors and establish clear expectations regarding the delivery of candidate support and evaluation.
- (6) Out-of-state and online EPPs that place candidates in Tennessee LEAs or CMOs for clinical experiences shall have formal state-recognized partnership agreements with the LEAs or CMOs hosting their candidates. This includes placement of candidates who are employed as teachers-of-record while completing preparation programs through the job-embedded clinical practice option. Out-of-state and online EPPs must submit LEA or CMO partnership agreements to the Department in order to receive partnership recognition from the state.
- (7) Regionally-accredited IHEs or EPPs approved by a state other than Tennessee for educator preparation may establish state-recognized partnerships with Tennessee LEAs or CMOs.

VII. Clinical Experiences

- (1) Each EPP shall provide candidates clinical experiences that include organized and sequenced engagement of candidates in school settings and provide them with opportunities to observe, practice, and demonstrate content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge.
- (2) Clinical experiences shall include field experience and clinical practice that provides feedback and support for each candidate and provides candidates with opportunities to demonstrate the ability to positively impact student learning and shall be designed and implemented cooperatively with LEA or CMO partners.
- (3) Field experiences shall provide early and ongoing practice opportunities to apply content and pedagogical knowledge in settings reflective of the grade span and specialty area in which the candidate is being prepared.
- (4) Clinical practice shall provide candidates with intensive and extensive school-based responsibilities, assignments, tasks, and assessments that demonstrate a candidate's progressive development of the professional knowledge, skills, and disposition to be effective educators.

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- (5) For candidates enrolled in programs leading to more than one (1) endorsement, the field experiences and clinical practice shall be divided among the content areas.
- (6) For candidates enrolled in programs leading to licensure and endorsement in an area covering multiple grades (e.g., 6-12 or K-12), clinical experiences shall provide opportunities across different grade spans.
- (7) Candidates shall complete one (1) of the following types of clinical practice in order to successfully complete an educator preparation program:
 - (a) Student Teaching.
 - 1. Candidates in a student teaching clinical practice shall complete at least fifteen (15) weeks of full-time student teaching during one (1) semester in the grade span and content area of preparation.
 - 2. Candidates completing a student teaching clinical practice shall not serve as a teacher of record unless serving on an approved Clinical Practice Permit.
 - 3. No other courses may be taken by candidates during the student teaching clinical practice. In exceptional cases, candidates may seek the approval of the EPP head administrator to take one (1) additional course during student teaching clinical practice provided the course does not interfere with the candidate's full participation in the clinical practice and there is no other opportunity for the candidate to take the course before completion of the educator preparation program.
 - (b) Internship
 - 1. The internship clinical practice shall be for one (1) full school year. At least 100 days of the internship shall include direct teaching experiences.
 - 2. Candidates completing an internship clinical practice shall not serve as a teacher of record unless serving on an approved Clinical Practice Permit.
 - 3. LEAs may consider successful completion of an internship clinical practice as one (1) year of teaching experience for the purposes of the local salary schedule.
 - (c) Job Embedded
 - 1. The job-embedded clinical practice shall be for the full school year following completion of a baccalaureate degree whereby candidates

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serve as a teacher of record. At least 100 days of the job-embedded clinical practice shall include direct teaching experiences.

2. Prior to beginning a job-embedded clinical practice, candidates shall have a valid Tennessee teaching license with the appropriate endorsement(s) and shall complete a pre-service orientation approved by the Department.

(d) Instructional Leader Internship

1. Candidates seeking licensure as an instructional leader shall have a sustained clinical practice that provides the candidate with the opportunity to apply the knowledge and skills attained throughout preparation in a practical setting. EPPs preparing instructional leaders shall work with their primary partners to identify options for release time to ensure currently employed educators are able to complete a high-quality, sustained set of clinical experiences.

- (8) Each clinical practice shall provide candidates direct teaching experience with a variety of student populations, including students with diverse learning needs and from diverse backgrounds.

- (9) EPPs shall hold regular seminars with candidates completing a clinical practice to reflect on the application and analysis of teaching knowledge in the classroom.

- (10) EPPs shall ensure all candidates participating in a clinical practice have a school-based clinical mentor.

(a) Clinical mentors shall:

1. Hold an active Tennessee license with an endorsement in the area or a closely related area where they will be supervising the candidate;
2. Have a level of overall effectiveness of above expectations or significantly above expectations for the prior school year; and
3. Have a minimum of three (3) years of experience as a teacher, school services personnel, or instructional leader as applicable.

- (b) Clinical mentors shall be selected jointly by the EPP and the partner LEA or CMO.

- (c) Clinical mentors shall, in cooperation with the EPP clinical supervisor, direct the activities of the candidate in the classroom.

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- (d) EPPs shall coordinate with LEAs or CMOs to ensure clinical mentors are provided release time for counseling, observation, evaluation, or other activities related to the clinical practice that occur during the school day.
- (11) EPPs shall ensure all candidates participating in a clinical practice have an EPP clinical supervisor. EPP clinical supervisors shall have experience in a pre-K–12 school setting.
- (12) EPPs shall require formal observations and feedback opportunities for candidates completing clinical practice from the EPP clinical supervisor and the clinical mentor.
- (13) Beginning on July 1, 2026, clinical mentors and supervisors shall formally observe candidates a minimum of four (4) times during clinical practice using an observation tool selected by the EPP and approved for use in the Educator Evaluation Policy 5.201 or reviewed and approved for use by the Department.
- (14) EPPs and LEA partners may use data obtained through formal evaluations conducted by a school-based evaluator for candidates completing a job-embedded clinical practice to satisfy the requirement set forth in Paragraph VII(13):
 - (a) The EPP and LEA must have a formal data sharing agreement, or the candidate must provide written consent to share evaluation data with the EPP; and
 - (b) Data must be shared at the indicator level to allow for actionable feedback.
- (15) EPPs shall determine the most appropriate structure of observations, including individual observations conducted by the clinical mentor or supervisor or joint observations conducted by both the clinical mentor and supervisor at the same time.
- (16) EPPs shall determine the appropriate pacing of formal observations conducted by clinical mentors or supervisors during clinical practice.
- (17) Data obtained from clinical mentor or supervisor observations or school-based evaluations, if being used for candidates completing a job-embedded clinical practice, shall be used to support candidate growth, development, and determinations made regarding progression through and completion of the program.
- (18) EPPs shall ensure clinical supervisors are appropriately trained in the use of observation tool(s) used during formal observations.
- (19) Clinical practice sites may include Tennessee public schools, including public charter schools and Tennessee state special schools, or Category 1, 2, or 3 non-public schools. Category 4 and 5 schools shall not be used as placement sites. If extraordinary circumstances arise that prevent a candidate from completing the clinical practice in Tennessee, the EPP may request permission for the candidate to complete the clinical practice in another state, provided the candidate has completed all course requirements

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of the preparation program with the exception of the clinical practice. Information on candidates who complete the clinical practice outside of Tennessee shall be included on the annual report.