
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 programs – e.g., Elementary Education K-5) for Carson Newman University, University of Tennessee at Martin, and Bethel College.

Comprehensive Reviews of Existing EPPs and SAPs

The Tennessee Department of Education (Department) is responsible for reviewing 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, AAQEP (Association for Advancing Quality in 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 Rules 0520-02-04.

Steps in the review process include:

- Reports prepared by the EPP that respond to the CAEP or AAQEP 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 or AAQEP 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 or AAQEP 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 or AAQEP accreditation, the initial accreditation status is translated to an EPP state approval recommendation by the Department and reviewed by the ACEP. CAEP or AAQEP 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:

Carson Newman University

This joint CAEP/state probationary review took place in fall 2025. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all CAEP standards. No critical deficiencies were cited. **The provider is recommended for full approval. All reviewed specialty area programs are recommended for full approval.**

University of Tennessee at Martin

This joint CAEP/state probationary review took place in fall 2025. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all CAEP standards. No critical deficiencies were cited. **The provider is recommended for full approval. All reviewed specialty area programs are recommended for full approval.**

Focused Reviews:

The Department of Education is responsible for the review of EPPs and SAPs. If an EPP receives a comprehensive review outcome of probationary approval, major stipulations, the EPP shall participate in a focused review within three (3) years of receiving probationary approval from the State Board.

Bethel College

This focused review took place in fall 2025. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all reviewed standards (standards 1, 2, 4, and 5). No specialty area programs were reviewed as part of this focused review. **The provider is recommended for full approval.**

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 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.