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MEMORANDUM

To: Massachusetts Sponsoring Organizations
From: DESE Office of Educator Effectiveness
Date: September 1, 2023
Subject: Final Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

In [February 2023](#), we shared a draft of the *Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval* for public comment. In this memo, we announce the release of the final Guidelines along with a statement on what guides our work, a summary of Winter 2023 public comment, key updates, additional resources and the SY2023-24 timeline, and opportunities to get involved.

What Guides Our Work

The Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) have made educator effectiveness a priority to ensure that all students in the state have access to excellent educators. Despite this, disparities in experiences and outcomes resulting from existing and historical policies and practices persist. Our statewide [data show](#) continued disparities in experiences and outcomes for Black, Hispanic and Latino, Asian, Indigenous, and/or Multiracial students, as well as English Learners and students with disabilities. This is especially true for students with intersecting underserved identities.

In accordance with [DESE's Educational Vision](#), DESE is committed to strengthening its expectations for educator preparation programs to ensure that **all educators are prepared to be effective, meaning they use evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, to effectively serve all students from day one.** Culturally and linguistically sustaining classroom and school practices will support students to thrive by creating affirming environments where students have a sense of belonging, engage in deeper learning, and are held to high expectations with targeted support. Together, we can make this vision a reality.

The *Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval* detail the standards for educator preparation that lead to endorsement for licensure in the Commonwealth. These Guidelines have been updated to set an expectation for deeper examination of evidence-based practices in individual programs within each Sponsoring Organization. This focus aligns with DESE's increased prioritization of evidence-based instructional practices as reflected in expectations for candidates' subject matter knowledge and pedagogical skills, particularly in the areas of early literacy, curriculum literacy, and administrator preparation.

Winter 2023 Public Comment

Summary of Feedback. On February 1, 2023, the Office of Educator Effectiveness released a draft of the revised *Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval* for public comment. The public comment period closed on March 26, 2023.

During this period, we received feedback from over 250 educator preparation personnel, preparation candidates, district and school leaders, current educators, and PK-12 students and families from across the Commonwealth through the public comment survey, individual emails, and a series of roundtable discussions. Their feedback, alongside that from state associations including the Commonwealth Teacher Education Consortium (COMTEC), Massachusetts Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (MACTE), and the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) directly informed revisions to the Guidelines.

Across stakeholder groups, demographic groups, organization types, and geographical regions, there was broad support for the evidence-based focus and integration of anti-racist practices throughout the Guidelines. Ninety percent of survey takers (n=43) agreed the Guidelines reflect a commitment to the preparation of anti-racist educators, and 75 percent (n=44) agreed they will ensure that preparation programs provide the knowledge and skills necessary to prepare educators for success in their licensure role for all PK-12 students. Comments from surveys and roundtables also emphasized these themes, with stakeholders sharing sentiments such as:

“This effectively captures the knowledge and skills I would hope candidates possess on day 1. Up to now, the language around anti-racist educators has felt like an add-on rather than something well-integrated into the process.” – Educator Preparation Program Representative

“I truly appreciate the level of detail written that explains just what is meant by “effective.” The breadth, the humanness, of what is contained in those descriptions is, I think, crucial.” – Educator Preparation Program Representative

“I appreciate the focus on anti-racist, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices across domains. [Our educators across the state don’t] represent the student body or their families. This sets up an uneven playing ground for students and families. Without [pre-service educators] doing pre-work to develop anti-racist practices, you are not going to be able to build successful relationships with families.” – Family Engagement Coordinator

Key Updates to the Guidelines. Most of the critical comments and questions shared by stakeholders sought clarity on key terms and processes. The following revisions to the Guidelines seek to clarify expectations, processes, and terminology:

- Updates to domain overviews, vision statements, and criteria, including:
 - Clearer emphasis on evidence-based practice expectations in the preparation of educators, inclusive of anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, particularly in the Instruction domain
 - Additional context provided in the Instruction domain overview regarding curriculum literacy
 - Revised Partnership domain overview and criteria to clarify the responsibilities of Sponsoring Organizations and PK-12 schools and districts

- Revised expectations related to seeking racial and ethnic diversity in accordance with decisions in *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* and the companion case, *Students for Fair Admissions v. University of North Carolina*
- Clarification of the review processes, ratings, and implications of determinations, including:
 - New appendix outlining how to demonstrate progress towards addressing conditions
 - New appendix outlining expectations associated with early literacy program criteria and review implications
 - Revisions to the interim review section to clarify its purpose
- Expansion of the glossary of terms and addition of callout boxes for key terms, including:
 - An expanded definition of effective educator
 - Clarification of the use of terms such as personnel, state-collected data, and equitable experiences and outcomes

Additional Resources and Timeline

As the Guidelines provide a high-level description of expectations and processes, stakeholders also requested resources to strengthen their understanding of the shifts and how they align with expectations for PK-12 schools and districts. We will continue to provide more detail through a variety of resources, updates, and communications, including:

- Information Sessions – In Spring 2023, we hosted a series of live webinars to provide an overview of each domain as well as the formal review process. In the Partnerships, Field-Based Experiences, and Instruction domain sessions, we also discussed the alignment of culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, early literacy, and curriculum literacy with ongoing work to support PK-12 schools and districts. Recordings and FAQs for each webinar can be accessed [here](#).
- Advisories – We are updating several [existing advisories](#) (e.g., MTEL Use Advisory, Needs Assessment Advisory, Partnerships Advisory) and creating additional resources (e.g., advisories on candidate supports, field-based experience placements, and Supervising Practitioners) to provide more detailed guidance and examples for key expectations articulated in the Guidelines.
- Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs) – In September 2023, we will release draft language for the revised Professional Standards for Teachers (PSTs) that aligns with the draft [Classroom Teacher Model Educator Evaluation Rubric](#). A full draft of the revised PST Guidelines and CAP Guidelines will be shared for public comment in Spring 2024.
- Communities of Practice – Through the 2023-24 school year, DESE will be hosting regular, open-door sessions for colleagues across Sponsoring Organizations to brainstorm, problem-solve, and share best practices on key topics elevated through public comment. Information about the sessions will be released in the coming weeks.

SY2023-24 Timeline

	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024
Revisions to PST/CAP Guidelines	- PST Draft Released - PST Feedback Survey	- Formal Public Comment	- Final PST/CAP Guidelines Released
	- PST/CAP Working Group		
Early Literacy Expectations & Supports	- Formative Feedback Reviews - Observation Form Partial Implementation - Program Supervisor Community of Practice		
	- Early Literacy Criteria: Formal Public Comment	- Early Literacy Criteria Released	
Communities of Practice	- Candidate Supports - Continuous Improvement - Curriculum Literacy - Early Literacy - Partnerships to Support Field-Based Experiences		- Toolkits Released
Formal Reviews	- Ed Prep Advisory Group		
	- Updated Guidelines Released - Informal Reviews Paused	- Reviewer Recruitment & Application - Cohort A-1 Launches - Informal Reviews Resume	

Opportunities to Get Involved

In the coming months, we will be building out, refining, and sharing resources that detail each step of the program approval process. We will also be developing recruitment, training, and support resources for external reviewers and materials for organizations undergoing review. Throughout this work, we will rely on collaboration with key advisory groups, including:

- Ed Prep Advisory Group – Members will inform resources for each step of the program approval process, including recruitment, selection, and support for external reviewers.
- PST/CAP Working Group – Members will inform updates to the PST Guidelines and aligned revisions to the CAP Guidelines. *Additional information and an application for the PST/CAP Working Group will be released this month.*

We have immense gratitude for all who shared their perspectives through focus groups, interviews, town halls, roundtables, and the public comment survey over the last two years. We also appreciate the members of the [Educational Personnel Advisory Council](#), [Educator Preparation Advisory Group](#), and [Principal and Teacher Advisory Cabinet](#) who provided ongoing collaboration and feedback throughout the revision process to ensure the Guidelines center

evidence-based practices, including anti-racist and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, as foundational components of effective educator preparation.

With the release of these Guidelines, we commit to working alongside you to make the systemic changes necessary to improve the experiences and outcomes of PK-12 students, current educators, and future educators of Massachusetts.

In partnership,

The Office of Educator Effectiveness