Design Rationale for Educator Preparation Program Reviews

The design of MSDE-led program reviews, informed by national partnerships and scholarly research

Division of Educator Effectiveness

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DOCUMENT HISTORY

Document Version	Date	Summary of Change
1.0	April 2024	Initial Document

Purpose

This document is intended to inform Maryland Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) stakeholders on the intended design, implementation, and management of the MSDE formal program review processes, as informed by national partner organizations within the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification (NASDTEC) and scholarly research.

In December 2023, the Maryland State Board of Education (SBOE) and the Professional Standards for Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) adopted a repealed and replaced COMAR 13A.07.06, *Programs for Professionally Licensed Personnel.* Since January 2024, MSDE has fully-staffed a team charged with designing, implementing, and managing the periodic review of EPPs to ensure compliance with the newly adopted regulation.

MSDE's Educator Preparation Program Approval team collaborated with NASDTEC partners on the design and development of the approval and review process for EPPs, gleaning insights into best review design models, noted areas of concern, and common practices within EPP review and approval processes conducted by state departments of education across the country and specifically within the Northeastern region.

Since 1928, NASDTEC has served as a professional membership organization representing state departments of education and professional standards boards and commissions that are responsible for the preparation, licensure, and discipline of P-12 education personnel. Jurisdiction members include all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense Education Activity, Guam, and the Canadian province of Ontario. Associate members include constituent organizations with an interest in the preparation, continuing development, employment, and certification of educational personnel. The information shared with MSDE from NASDTEC was vital in ensuring that EPP program approval and review processes were in-line with standard practices conducted across the nation.

This document provides insight into what MSDE has determined to be the appropriate EPP program approval and review processes and explains how these processes are in alignment with our NASDTEC partners and informed by scholarly research.

Our Philosophy

MSDE's Educator Preparation Program Approval team has developed a guiding philosophy to inform decision making when designing, implementing, and managing State formal reviews, informed by scholarly research, national partnerships, Pillar 2 of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (high quality and diverse teachers and leaders), and MSDE's Strategic Plan.

While our mission is to ensure EPP compliance with statutes and regulations, our vision includes a close and continuing partnership with all EPPs as we work together to overcome challenges across the educator preparation landscape and to ensure every Maryland preK-12 student has a highly qualified, effective, and culturally competent teacher prepared to deliver instruction in their area of expertise. We envision regular engagements where both our staff and EPP personnel can collaborate and learn from one another, oftentimes outside the framework of a formal review.

We believe formal reviews should not be done solely to ensure EPP compliance with regulations, but as a catalyst for deep, rich conversations about the state of educator preparation programs. EPP stakeholders should be able to openly communicate throughout the course of a review, with review team members and MSDE staff poised to provide feedback and problem-solve with EPPs before, during, and after the review process. To this end, we have built multiple opportunities for EPPs to tell their story during the formal review process and have purposefully crafted a scoring system that encourages reviewers, MSDE staff, and EPP leaders and faculty to intentionally discuss aspects of the program(s) under review.

Background and Research

NASDTEC PARTNERS

MSDE's Educator Preparation team leveraged partnerships within NASDTEC to design a State formal review process that includes best practices and recognizes established norms while meeting the unique needs of the Maryland constituency.

To gain insights into how state review processes manifest and learn about best practices and expected roadblocks to success, the team collaborated regularly with NASDTEC partners in region-wide meetings, emails, phone calls, and face-to-face engagements. Additionally, the team conducted a review of artifacts that govern each state's EPP review processes. See the table below for a sample of artifacts reviewed by the team.

Combined, these communications and artifact reviews were vital to the creation of a State review process for EPPs Maryland-wide.

State	Artifacts Reviewed
Colorado	• [Educator Preparation Standards Matrices](#) • [Authorization, Adding an Endorsement, and Reauthorization Guidance](#)
Connecticut	• [Laws and Regulations Governing Program Approval](#) • [Program Approval Documents and Forms](#) • [Program Approval Overview and Steps](#)
Delaware	• [Approval of Educator Preparation Programs](#)
District of Columbia	• [Office of the State Superintendent of Education](#) • [State Educator Preparation Provider And Subject Area Program Approval Handbook](#) • [State Educator Preparation Provider or Subject Area Program Approval Application](#)
Louisiana	• [Bulletin 996 - Standards for Approval of Teacher Education Programs](#)
Maine	• [Initial and Renewal Educator Preparation Program Approval](#) • [Rule Chapters for the Department of Education and the State Board of Education](#)
Massachusetts	• [Ed Prep Review and Approval Process](#) • [Educator Licensure and Preparation Program Approval Regulations](#) • [Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval](#)
Mississippi	• [Guidelines For Process And Performance Review Educator Preparation Providers](#)
New Hampshire	• [Educator Preparation Program Rules, Administrative Guidelines, Reviewer Training, and Manuals](#) • [Approval of Educator Preparation Programs](#) • [Matrices for Institutions of Higher Education during the Program Approval Process](#)

State	Artifacts Reviewed
New Jersey	• [Educator Preparation Program Approval Process](#)
Pennsylvania	• [Professional Educator Program Approval Major Review Handbook](#) • [Professional Educator Program Approval Initial Review Rubric](#)
Rhode Island	• [PREP-RI: Performance Review for Educator Preparation - Rhode Island](#) • [PREP-RI Process Guide](#) • [Rhode Island Standards for Educator Preparation](#) • [PREP-RI Performance Rubric](#)

PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH

The Educator Preparation Program Approval team studied peer-reviewed research on EPP evaluation practices published within scholarly journals and/or released by professional associations. These data further informed decisions on how to best design and implement State reviews of EPPs within Maryland. Research was reviewed from the following publications and associations:

- Journal of Teacher Education
- Action in Teacher Education
- Teaching and Teacher Education
- National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality
- American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
- National Academy of Education
- Louisiana Board of Regents
- Education Schools Project
- U.S. Department of Education
- American Psychological Association

Complete citations are in the [References](#) section at the end of this document.

INPUT FROM EPP PARTNERS

MSDE obtained input from EPPs when designing the formal review and annual reporting processes. Inputs were obtained via surveys, meetings, phone calls, and email, and were crucial in developing processes that would best meet the needs of MSDE and EPPs. Feedback from EPP partners included identifying areas of concern in meeting regulatory requirements and insight into how to best streamline data collection efforts during annual reporting. MSDE will continue to solicit EPP feedback on the formal review and approval processes after implementation and refine our processes as required.

Formal Review Design

For program approval and review, MSDE has established five essential components that align to statutes and regulations that govern educator preparation programs in Maryland:

- Literacy and the Science of Reading,
- Comprehensive Instruction,
- Cultural Competence,
- Partner Schools and Practicum, and
- Accountability and Compliance.

Essential Component	Subcomponents
Literacy and the Science of Reading	• The Learner and Learning • Literacy Processes • Literacy Content Knowledge • Literacy Instruction in a Diverse Classroom • Effective Literacy Instruction • Effective Literacy Assessment • Professional Responsibilities • Evidence-Based Practices
Comprehensive Instruction	• Evidence-Based Practices • Pedagogy • Mathematics Competencies
Cultural Responsiveness	• Culturally Responsive Instruction • Cultural Competence
Partner Schools and Clinical Experiences	• Clinical Experience Guidelines • Action Research • Clinical Experience Placements • Mentor Teachers • Partner School Requirements
Accountability and Compliance	• Entrance Requirements • Administrator and Specialist Requirements • Standards and Competencies • Exit Requirements • Assessment System

FORMAL REVIEW PROCESS

Formal reviews for EPPs who are not nationally accredited will take approximately 24 months to complete. While not all-inclusive, the order of operations for formal reviews includes:

- A notification to an EPP that a review will commence
- Assigning volunteer reviewers on State review teams
- A self-assessment conducted by EPPs and submitted to MSDE, identifying where aspects of their program align to applicable governance
- An asynchronous off-site assessment conducted by a State review team, coordinated by MSDE, identifying where EPPs do or do not align to state standards, regulations, statutes, and national standards
- Surveys sent to EPPs for faculty, staff, teacher mentors, and candidates to complete
- A virtual or in-person site review conducted by a State review team and coordinated by MSDE. This review will consist of interviews and observations that will be used as further evidence of a program's compliance or noncompliance with applicable governance
- A final opportunity for EPPs to submit additional evidence to State reviewers
- Scoring by the State review team
- Determination sent to the EPP

Technical assistance to EPPs will be provided throughout the review process. A more detailed explanation of the formal review process can be found in the EPP Review and Approval Handbook.

At the conclusion of the formal review process, MSDE will render a decision on the approval status of the EPP based on evidence collected during the review process. The determination status will dictate if any further action is needed from the EPP after the formal review concludes.

Status	Term of Approval	Implications	Must Notify Candidates	Outcomes
Approved	5 years	Full-term approval and program may endorse candidates to the state for licensure	No	Full approval
Conditionally Approved	2 years	Program may continue to enroll and endorse candidates but must make progress towards correcting deficiencies	No	Leads to approval, probation, or revocation
Probation	1 year	Program may not enroll new candidates but may continue to endorse candidates to the state for licensure. Must make progress towards correcting deficiencies	Yes	Leads to approval, conditional approval, or revocation
Revocation	N/A	Program must cease operations and may not recruit new candidates. Cannot apply for approval for at least two years	Yes	Closure of program

REVIEWERS FROM ACROSS THE STATE

MSDE will build and coordinate review teams composed of members from various organizations from across the state, including:

- Staff and faculty from EPPs
- MSDE staff
- LEA educators, including teachers, specialists, and administrators
- Subject matter experts

The benefits of forming State review teams comprised of members with diverse experiences are multifold:

- Members of review teams will learn firsthand about the review process and be able to glean insights into best practices and areas of improvement that they can use to improve their own programs
- EPPs will have the ability to not only learn about the State review process but become key, influential members of its implementation by serving on review teams
- Partnerships between MSDE, EPPs, and subject matter experts across Maryland will be strengthened as review team members work in tandem in program reviews
- Reviews will have increased objectivity as team members from around the state bring a variety of perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences
- EPPs, subject matter experts, LEAs, and other review team members will have a chance to provide MSDE feedback on the review process itself, allowing the Educator Preparation Program Approval team to modify the process as needed

Priority participation on formal review teams will be given to individuals from organizations that are scheduled for upcoming formal reviews.

Recruitment for volunteers to participate in formal reviews will be continuous, while reviewer training will be conducted as part of the State review and approval process.

TRANSPARENCY ONLINE

MSDE is committed to providing a sense of transparency to the Maryland constituency wherever possible. Therefore, where feasible, documentation relating to State approval and review of EPPs that can be publicly released will be hosted online for easy access by users. This documentation can include (but is not limited to) statutes, regulations, handbooks, self-review rubrics and templates, reviewer guidelines and training materials, site visit documents, and manuals.

The goal of making these items available as publicly as possible is to instill a sense of transparency and accountability to Maryland constituents, and to ensure EPPs have easy access to all required documentation they need to traverse the State program approval and review processes in a well-informed manner.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

MSDE will regularly provide technical assistance to EPPs to ensure clarity on expectations for formal reviews. Technical assistance will include (but is not limited to):

- Exposure to source documentation that drive formal reviews (e.g., statutes, regulations, and policies)
- An overview of State review processes and timelines
- Expectations for an accountability system utilized throughout a program
- Instructions on how to accurately complete documentation within the formal review process (e.g., templates, matrices, rubrics)
- An explanation of review activities such as documentation submittal, off-site reviews, on-site visits, and appeals
- Expectations for EPPs who are not compliant with applicable governance

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