

## CONNECTICUT STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

### Interim Report of the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC): Recommended Principles for Reforming Teacher Preparation in Connecticut

April 1, 2013

#### Purpose

This report represents the interim recommendations of the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) for presentation to the State Board of Education in April 2013. The main purpose of this report is to delineate specific guiding principles for the development of a new system of educator preparation. These guiding principles will help EPAC as it continues to conduct further research and analysis of the possible aspects of system redesign.

#### State Context

Connecticut is committed to a vision for education in which every student is college- and/or career-ready, prepared to compete globally and actively participate in a democratic society. In order for all of our students to achieve this, every classroom must have an effective teacher and every school must have an effective leader. Among the many factors influencing student achievement, research supports that effective teaching is the single most important school-level factor impacting and improving student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). Similarly, research supports the link between effective school leadership and improved student achievement, second only to the influence of classroom instruction on student learning (Wallace Foundation, 2013; Seashore Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010).

Connecticut is not where we need to be in ensuring a high quality school experience for each and every student in the state. In our efforts to improve the quality of our state's schools and close the achievement gaps, the importance of well-trained and well-prepared educators cannot be overstated.

Therefore, it is time to reform pre-service preparation simultaneously with the reforms currently underway with respect to inducting, evaluating, and supporting educators in schools. The preparation of the next generation of teachers must respond and adapt to the needs of learners, rigorous student standards and student assessments. In addition, we must encourage innovation and foster greater collaboration and shared responsibility and accountability between preparation programs, school districts and the state.

The proposed new framework for educator preparation will result in:

- a system focused on a continuum of knowledge, skills and disposition development across a purposeful and coherent sequence of preparation, training and clinical experiences that are focused on meeting the needs of Connecticut's students;
- clear, high standards for teacher candidates with rigorous and meaningful pre-service assessments to measure competencies that every candidate needs to achieve success;
- incentives for innovation to achieve outcomes;
- data and feedback from the state, districts and practicing educators to support continuous program improvement; and
- new and strengthened partnerships between the preparation programs and school districts.

The EPAC framework is one of many policy levers in the educator talent management strategy that the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has developed. The ultimate goal of this talent management strategy is to contribute to developing and improving practices that *elevate* the education profession by making it more rewarding and respected. The CSDE also needs to create a system with *career ladder/lattice opportunities* designed to increase the *retention and advancement* of effective educators. Further, the CSDE will encourage multiple pathways into the profession, including new and more rigorous higher education programs, alternate routes to certification and other transition to teaching options, which will

be held to the same high standards regardless of the design in order to be approved by the State Board of Education.

## Background of EPAC

At the request of Governor Malloy and in response to Special Act 12-3, An Act Concerning Teacher Preparation, the formation of the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) was proposed by the Connecticut State Department of Education in order to study issues and make recommendations concerning educator preparation. EPAC was developed as a counterpart to the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC). Both the EPAC and the PEAC were intended to bring together key representatives of the education community to study and recommend standards and processes for a seamless system to ensure effectiveness across the educator continuum from pre-service to career.

On March 7, 2012, the Connecticut State Board of Education authorized the Commissioner of Education, working with the President of the Board of Regents for Higher Education (or their designees), to take necessary action to establish the EPAC. The EPAC's charge is to advise the State Board of Education about developing a system for the approval, quality, regulation, and oversight of preparation programs – including, but not be limited to, measures of performance in the classroom as determined by indicators such as teacher evaluations and student achievement data; retention, turnover, and dismissal rates; preparation for work in high-need districts; efficacy of recruitment of a diversity of candidates with strong qualifications and in shortage areas; and structured feedback from school districts on the readiness and effectiveness of preparation program graduates– with the goal of:

- More rigorous preparation of teachers and school leaders;
- Ensuring educator preparation programs are well-aligned with the needs of Connecticut's schools and districts;
- Establishing rigorous standards for admittance into teacher and administrator preparation programs; and
- Meeting objectives articulated in the materials presented to the State Board of Education.

The EPAC included representation from higher education and school districts as well as representatives from each of the following associations:

- Connecticut Association of Boards of Education
- Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents
- Connecticut Federation of School Administrators
- Connecticut Education Association
- American Federation of Teachers-Connecticut and
- Persons selected by the Co-Chairs including, but not limited to, representatives from teacher and administrator preparation programs in public and independent colleges and universities and from alternate route programs.

For a list of EPAC members, please refer to Appendix A.

The full council met five times between August 8, 2012 and March 2013, with many working sub-groups meeting in between to develop various aspects of the recommendations. Three meetings were dedicated to informing the EPAC members through national experts presenting perspectives regarding reforming teacher preparation. Panelists are noted below based on the date of their presentation.

EPAC Meeting Date	Focus of Meeting	Presenters
August 3, 2012	Outline of the charge and work of EPAC	Dr. Charles Coble, Co-Founder and Partner, Teacher Preparation Analytics; Formerly VP of Education Commission on the States, Dean of East Carolina University, NC and VP of Univ. of N. Carolina
September 18, 2012	Working session on clinical experience standards	
December 4, 2012	Discussion of clinical experience standards and competencies for teacher preparation programs	
January 15, 2013	Developing Competencies  Competencies Panel Presentation: <i>What are essential competencies of highly effective candidates and where is there effective collaboration between states, preparation programs and districts to ensure teacher candidates possess them?</i>	Kevin Basmadjian, Interim Dean of Education, Quinnipiac University  Francesca Forzani, Associate Director, TeachingWorks, School of Education, University of Michigan  Sandi Jacobs, Vice President and Managing Director, State Policy National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ)  Francine Lawrence, Executive VP, American Federation of Teachers  Ray Pecheone, Stanford University, Executive Dir., Stanford Center for Assessment, Learning and Equity, edTPA
January 30, 2013	Assessment approaches to measure competencies Candidate Assessment Panel	Kathleen Buzad, American Federation of Teachers  Irving Richardson, Program Director for Shared and Effective Leadership, CCSSO  Ariela Rozman, CEO, The New Teacher Project

### Discussion Points and Priorities of EPAC that Framed the Principles

Over the last nine months, the work of the EPAC focused on teacher preparation. As part of its larger charge, the council intended to develop specific principles for reforming school leadership preparation programs; however, time did not allow. Therefore, as the EPAC continues its work on the teacher preparation principles, it will also begin to develop parallel principles for reforming administrator preparation programs. Furthermore, the next iteration of recommendations for reforming teacher and administrator preparation programs will include research references and promising practices in other states to support the recommendations.

As part of the EPAC's discussions, the following expectations for teacher preparation reform emerged to increase the rigor of teacher and administrator preparation programs:

- Establish rigorous standards for selectivity and acceptance into preparation programs;
- Develop *recruitment* strategies to attract top tier and a diversity of candidates into teacher and administrator preparation programs versus reliance on self-selection;
- For administrator preparation programs, require *evidence of highly effective teaching performance and results* as a prerequisite of acceptance into administrator preparation programs;

- Develop a *competency-based* system that requires prospective teachers and administrators to *demonstrate and apply* knowledge and skills through more rigorous and meaningful standards-based tasks and outcome measures for entry into preparation programs and to the profession;
- Develop a system of *multiple indicators* to assess program performance and effectiveness that focus on *outcome measures* rather than inputs and other compliance-based mechanisms of oversight at both the *individual program level and institutional level*;
- Re-design the *clinical practice* component of preparation programs;
- Develop an *accountability system* that provides data from local education agencies back to the preparation program about their graduates' effectiveness in the field;
- Allow preparation programs to foster *innovative approaches* so long as they can demonstrate positive outcomes on assessments and other outcome-based measures of effectiveness;
- Increase the effectiveness of new educators by *linking the standards* for approval of preparation with standards for induction program and educator effectiveness;
- Include effectiveness data of in-service educators in program approval reviews and decisions;
- Develop a statewide data management system that both K-12 districts and educator preparation programs can access so that preparation programs can use the data to inform program developments and enhancements, as well as to track the effectiveness of their graduates in the classroom or as school level leaders;
- Analyze supply and demand data and focus recruitment and preparation of educators on identified shortage area needs of CT's public school districts;
- Develop more collaborative partnerships between educator preparation programs and K-12 school districts to ensure tighter alignment between these systems; and
- Ensure that all candidates consistently demonstrate meeting national and state standards across the preparation program and clinical experiences.

## The Guiding Principles

Resulting from the work of the EPAC, a set of guiding principles and a framework with illustrative examples of each principle have been developed. In addition to robust meeting discussions, experts who shared national perspectives further supported the knowledge base of the EPAC in synthesizing ideas around reforming teacher preparation. Nationally, several states have already adopted, or are considering, major policy reforms related to educator preparation including criteria for selectivity for admission to teacher preparation, improving preparedness of candidates entering the profession, and a new system of outcome measures to evaluate program efficacy.

The six guiding principles outlined in the following pages are recommended as a framework for the development of policies and regulations related to educator preparation reform. Along with the guiding principles are illustrative examples for further consideration of policies and practices related to each principle and references to other states that might serve as examples for the work yet to be done. These principles cover the full cycle of teacher preparation from program entry through exit and the role of the state, districts and schools in supporting the preparation of effective teachers.

As the guiding principles were developed and synthesized, the ideas were considered in the context of three beliefs:

- **Do No Harm.** The policies governing and requirements for teacher preparation programs must be based on practices that are demonstrated to have a positive impact on teacher effectiveness and student learning.
- **Encourage Innovation.** Where there is a reasonable expectation of positive outcomes but limited evidence or data exists, Connecticut should further explore the practice and encourage innovation by preparation programs, districts and other stakeholders.

- **Be Aspirational.** The CSDE should lead with high aspirations for the state's educator preparation programs, setting rigorous standards and expectations for all educators to ensure every student has an excellent teacher.

Furthermore, there was consensus that these reform principles and the future policy guidelines or regulations should establish parameters but not dictate specifically how preparation programs are designed. As well, there should be room for preparation programs to innovate and experiment so long as they attain the goal of producing high-quality graduates who enter the profession are able to demonstrate success as measured by Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system and other data-informed outcome measures. The re-designed system should ensure continuous improvement of preparation programs and be flexible enough to allow it to grow and change as needs arise or as program effectiveness data dictates.

## Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) Framework for Reforming Teacher Preparation in Connecticut

The following principles are related to initial teacher preparation programs including undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, graduate or alternate route. These principles were not developed for advanced degree or administration/educational leadership programs. The examples of items for further review and consideration are illustrative of the types of items or actions that are promising and merit further study but are not intended as an exhaustive list or to limit what policies, regulation, systems or studies will be undertaken in support of the corresponding principle. The council, consistent with the three core beliefs, is committed to exploring innovative practices in the effort to develop the next generation of teacher preparation programs.

### Underlying Assumptions:

All teacher candidates must be prepared through a rigorous and coordinated program of courses and clinical experiences that focus on research-based pedagogy in alignment with national and state teaching and student standards. Each program should ensure that teacher candidates recommended for certification have:

- Strong content knowledge aligned to national and state student standards (e.g. CCSS);
- Strong pedagogical content knowledge aligned to national and state teacher standards;
- Grade-level appropriate and culturally-relevant pedagogical knowledge;
- Knowledge and skills related to PK-12 student assessment; and
- Opportunities to develop and demonstrate the dispositions necessary for effective teaching.

Preparation competencies included in coursework and clinical experiences should represent the current and future needs of CT's schools including high-need schools and subjects, new student standards and changing class structures or environments.

Periodic review and evaluation of program curricula syllabi and candidate assessments, including fieldwork and clinical experience requirements must ensure (1) Skill acquisition described by national and state (CCT) teaching standards, and (2) rigorous training of candidates aligned with national and state student standards (e.g., CCSS).

Principle Title	Principle Description	Examples for Further Review and Consideration	National Perspective
<b>1. Program Entry Standards</b>	Connecticut teacher preparation programs must actively recruit, admit, develop and retain only those teacher candidates with strong knowledge, skills, dispositions that are indicative of those expected of teachers for the 21 <sup>st</sup> Century and required to meet the needs of Connecticut students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirements that program use a more rigorous overall GPA (and provide waiver options for exemplary candidates) and/or results of other cognitive/academic assessments such as SAT, ACT, GRE, GMAT.</li> <li>• Requirement of program policies for the assessment of content knowledge by exam, transcript review or other means as appropriate for program type (undergraduate, post-baccalaureate, alternate route).</li> <li>• Requirement that programs develop recruitment and admission policies that reflect the importance of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ High need and shortage areas, and</li> <li>○ Diversity among our teachers.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Establishment by programs of dispositional entry requirement through such methods as rigorous interviews, consideration of professional standards and skills, recommendations and recent experience in schools.</li> <li>• CSDE to conduct a statewide supply and demand study of Connecticut's current and future teacher needs and student population to inform recruitment strategies and considerations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Pennsylvania, prospective candidates are required to hold a 3.0 GPA upon entry.</li> </ul>

Principle Title	Principle Description	Examples for Further Review and Consideration	National Perspective
<p><b>2. Staffing &amp; Support of Clinical Experiences</b></p>	<p>The staffing, structures and program support policies of preparation programs, school districts and CSDE must be coordinated to provide effective clinical experiences that represent the current and future needs of Connecticut's schools and children.</p> <p>Clinical faculty (supervisors) and school based educators have a significant impact on candidate clinical experiences and must be effective educators who understand and apply national and state teaching and student standards.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of standards for those educators supporting future teachers including the demonstrated effectiveness of cooperating teachers.</li> <li>Exploration of incentives and job responsibility structures that encourage high performing teachers to take on a role of serving as cooperating teachers/mentors.</li> <li>Innovation by preparation programs and partner districts in a variety of clinical experience structures that are shown to have a positive impact on future teachers' effectiveness and skill development including, without limitation, co-teaching models.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In Florida, mentor teachers may receive an annual bonus equal to 10% of the prior fiscal year's statewide average salary if they provide 12 workdays of mentoring or related services.</li> <li>In Delaware, state policy provides for annual stipends to mentor teachers subject to annual appropriations and lead mentors (one per school) may earn an extra responsibility salary supplement annually for satisfactory fulfillment of responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Clinical Experience Requirements for Teacher Candidates</b></p>	<p>All candidates must have a sequence of varied, structured, intensive and purposefully supported clinical school experiences that are appropriately staffed by qualified educators to ensure support for success. Experiences must be across the program, coordinated and support the continuum of content and skill development to become an effective educator.</p> <p><i>Note: clinical experiences include field experiences, practica and student teaching.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirement that preparation programs develop, in collaboration with their school partners, a coherent and varied sequence of clinical experiences that are aligned with coursework and scaffold candidate skills based on national and state teaching standards.</li> <li>Requirement that the duration of clinical experiences is sufficient to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness across the program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recent legislation in Maine now requires all candidates to complete at least 15 weeks of student teaching to qualify for a provisional teacher certificate.</li> <li>Massachusetts teacher candidates must now complete a <u>pre-student teaching</u> practicum or practicum equivalent of at least 300 hours. Candidates must assume full responsibility of a classroom for a minimum of 100 hours. In addition, practicum/practicum equivalents must be completed within a public school, approved private special school, Department of Early Education Care approved preschools, educational collaboratives or a school that requires Massachusetts educator licensure. Requirements also apply to alternate route candidates.</li> </ul>

Principle Title	Principle Description	Examples for Further Review and Consideration	National Perspective
<p><b>4. District-Program Partnerships; Structures &amp; Shared Responsibility</b></p>	<p>Teacher preparation programs and schools/districts must have well-defined, high-quality, collaborative partnerships to ensure the quality of clinical experiences for teacher candidates while addressing the needs of and benefits to all involved.</p> <p>Teacher preparation programs and school districts will develop strategic partnerships to support clinical and school-based training for which they share responsibility, authority, and accountability including program development and implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requirement for the use of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to clearly outline respective roles and responsibilities of the preparation program and district with a model MOU developed by the CSDE in collaboration with stakeholders and made available to all parties.</li> <li>• Requirement that preparation programs and partner districts establish structures and practices for regular and meaningful two-way feedback that can be acted upon to improve the preparation of future teachers.</li> <li>• Establishment of a policy that it is the responsibility of both the teacher preparation programs and partner districts to create a clinical experience program that meets the needs of CT's students and school districts based on national and state standards.</li> <li>• Requirement that preparation programs provide partner districts with data projections by school year of clinical experience placements needed based on content area, grade-level, specific types (e.g., special education, ELL, etc.).</li> <li>• Establishment of a clearly articulated model and set of standards (such as professional development school, PDS) to construct, assess, and improve partnerships between preparation programs and school districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connecticut would be a leader in the nation if district/institution partnership agreements were implemented widely across the state and standards for partnership models were established.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Program Completion &amp; Candidate Assessment Standards</b></p>	<p>Candidates will demonstrate competencies aligned with national and state standards by successfully completing rigorous performance-based assessments as part of clinical experiences.</p> <p>All teacher candidates will demonstrate dispositions and skills necessary to support students' academic and non-academic needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review available options for performance-based assessments that measure competency of candidates. The assessments must be aligned with the established criteria for evaluating teachers in Connecticut.</li> <li>• Development and use by programs of a statewide clinical experience evaluation instrument aligned with criteria for Connecticut's educator evaluation and support system for in-service teachers that is used developmentally throughout the program, provides feedback across the sequence and is consistent with the continuum of learning expected of new teachers.</li> <li>• Explore appropriate options within which clinical experience/performance-based assessment can be completed.</li> <li>• Review of teacher preparation assessment systems through a rigorous program approval process.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beginning September 1, 2015, all Illinois teacher candidates must pass an evidence-based assessment of teacher effectiveness. Institutions must begin phasing in this approved teacher performance assessment no later than July 1, 2013.</li> </ul>



Principle Title	Principle Description	Examples for Further Review and Consideration	National Perspective
<b>6. Program Effectiveness &amp; Accountability</b>	<p>Preparing a teacher to be successful and effective in the field is the shared responsibility of preparation program and partner districts. Preparation programs must ultimately be responsible for ensuring completers enter the profession with the skills, knowledge and dispositions to be effective in the classroom.</p> <p>Preparation programs must have access to data about their completers' performance in the classroom and should be held accountable for their programs' effectiveness in preparing teachers to enter and remain in the profession.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and implementation of annual reporting and data management systems to track preparation program effectiveness, candidate performance and teacher success including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Aggregate teacher evaluation data, including classroom observation and pupil performance data,</li> <li>○ Completer/graduation rates,</li> <li>○ Completers' subject and grade-level,</li> <li>○ Employment of completers in hard to staff or high-need schools and subjects,</li> <li>○ Completer employment and retention rates,</li> <li>○ Program use of rigorous pass rates for required tests,</li> <li>○ Program compliance with admission criteria and goals,</li> <li>○ Survey data, and other instruments regarding partner district, employer and graduate feedback, and</li> <li>○ Student-teaching evaluations and pre-service assessments.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Development of policies and processes to provide teacher preparation institutions, districts and the public access to or provide annual reports of relevant aggregate information and data.</li> <li>• Establishment of policies and standards for accountability at the individual program level (e.g., elementary education, secondary education) including program approval status that considers aggregate data of each program's effectiveness as measured by candidate performance during the program and during their initial years of employment as well as district feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A data dashboard is now available on Kentucky's website, providing information on each institution's selectivity, the performance of candidates on required new teacher assessments, the percentage of candidates who achieve full certification, and the results of surveys of candidates and their supervisors regarding the effectiveness of the candidate's preparation.</li> <li>• Missouri now requires educator preparation programs to submit a performance report for annual accreditation. Missouri Standards for Preparation of Educators (MOSPE).</li> <li>• Ohio has issued new educator preparation program performance reports that include value-added data, candidate academic measures and satisfaction surveys.</li> <li>• Each Massachusetts preparation program seeking approval must provide evidence addressing educator effectiveness, which includes the analysis and use of aggregate evaluation ratings of program completers, employment data on program completers employed in the state, results of survey data, and other available data to improve program effectiveness.</li> </ul>

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**Appendix A**

**Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) Co-Chairs and Members**

Stefan	Pryor, Co-Chair	Commissioner State Department of Education
Phillip	Austin, Co-Chair	Interim President, Board of Regents for Higher Education
Anthony	Bivona	Superintendent, Brookfield Public Schools
Linette	Branham	Director of Policy, Professional Practice, & Research, Connecticut Education Association
Kathleen	Butler	University of Saint Joseph, Dean, School of Education
Carole	Clifford	Professional Development Coordinator, Connecticut American Federation of Teachers
Thomas	Danehy	Superintendent Winchester Public Schools
Tom	DeFranco	University of Connecticut, Dean, Neag School of Education
Kenneth	DiPietro	Superintendent, Plainfield Public Schools
Abby	Dolliver	Superintendent, Norwich Public Schools
Monica	Filppu	Managing Director for Academic Affairs, Teach for America - Connecticut
Susan	Franzosa	Fairfield University, Dean, School of Education
Sandy	Grande	Connecticut College, Chair, Education Department
Jess	House	Western Connecticut State University, Dean, School of Prof. Studies
Rae Ann	Knopf	Executive Director, Connecticut Council for Education Reform
Mary	Kolek	Superintendent, New Canaan Public Schools
Andrew	Lachman	Executive Director, Connecticut Center for School Change
Greg	Little	Dean, Alternate Route to Certification, Office of Higher Education
Sonia	Manjon	Wesleyan University
Gary	Maynard	President, CT Federation of School Administrators
Reginald	Mayo	Superintendent, New Haven Public Schools
Sal	Menzo	Superintendent, Wallingford Public Schools
Jack	Miller	President, Central Connecticut State University
Karissa	Neihoff	Executive Director, CT Association of Schools
Colleen	Palmer	Superintendent, Weston Public Schools
Sharon	Palmer	Commissioner, Department of Labor
Joan	Parris	Norwalk Community College, Program Director of Early Childhood Prog.
Frances	Rabinowitz	Superintendent, Hamden Public Schools
Robert	Rader	Executive Director, CT Association of Boards of Education
Larry	Schaefer	Education Associate, CT Association of Public School Superintendents
Allan	Taylor	Chair, State Board of Education
Danuta	Thibodeau	Education Connection
Robert	Villanova	University of Connecticut, Director of the Executive Leadership Program, Neag School of Education
Sarah	Barzee	CSDE Staff
Nancy	Pugliese	CSDE Staff
Georgette	Nemr	CSDE Staff
Diane	Ullman	CSDE Staff
Elsa	Nunez	Board of Regents Staff
Malia	Sieve	Board of Regents Staff
Richard	Lemons	Facilitator
Gary	Chesley	Advisor