

VII.A.

Connecticut State Board of Education Hartford

To Be Proposed:

January 3, 2024

Resolved, That the State Board of Education, pursuant to Section 10-145d-9(g)(3)(A) of the Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies, grants full approval for the period January 3, 2024, through March 31, 2026, to Sacred Heart University (SHU), with annual progress monitoring conducted using Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) annual report data in conjunction with the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) Review Committee until Sacred Heart University's Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) spring 2025 site visit, for the purpose of certifying graduates from Sacred Heart University in the following new certification area and directs the Commissioner to take the necessary action:

Program	Grades	Certification	Program Type
Comprehensive Special Education	PK-12	Initial	Graduate

Approved by a vote of _____ this third day of January, Two Thousand Twenty-Four.

Signed: _____

Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Secretary
State Board of Education

**Connecticut State Board of Education
Hartford**

To: State Board of Education

From: Charlene M. Russell-Tucker, Commissioner of Education

Date: January 3, 2024

Subject: Approval of New Educator Preparation Program: Sacred Heart University,
Comprehensive Special Education PK-12

Executive Summary

Introduction

Connecticut educator preparation providers (EPPs) and other organizations must be approved for new educator preparation programs through the Connecticut State Board of Education (CSBE). Those seeking approval for new programs are required to participate in a Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) evaluation process designed to guide and support new program proposals. The proposal then moves forward to the CSDE Review Committee (Attachment A), which makes recommendations to the Commissioner of Education regarding new program approval based on evaluation findings. This report presents a summary of the evaluation process for the Sacred Heart University (SHU) proposal for an educator preparation program for comprehensive special education certification and includes the Commissioner of Education's recommendation for approval.

History/Background

Located in Fairfield, Connecticut, SHU is a private, coeducational university serving approximately 5,600 full- and part-time undergraduate students and 3,000 graduate students through 70 undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, and certificate programs across five colleges. SHU is regionally accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

The SHU Isabelle Farrington College of Education offers initial certification programs in elementary education and various secondary subject areas, including English language arts, social studies/history, science (biology, chemistry, and general science), mathematics, music and Spanish. Additionally, SHU offers advanced certification programs in reading, special education, speech/language pathology, school counseling, intermediate administration, and superintendent of schools. SHU also offers multiple non-certification programs leading to a Master of Education degree and a Master of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling. SHU educator preparation programs are currently fully approved by the CSBE and nationally accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

SHU is now seeking approval through the CSBE for an initial educator preparation program for comprehensive special education, PreK-12. The proposed program is a 39-credit track within SHU's existing Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT), leading to institutional recommendation for initial Connecticut certification in comprehensive special education PK-12. The program is designed to exemplify the distinguishing features of SHU's clinically rich teacher preparation, while simultaneously addressing special education-specific competencies. The proposed program incorporates the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCT) competencies, initial preparation standards for special educators as outlined by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC),

CAEP, and Interstate Assessment and Support Consortium (InTasc) standards, in addition to meeting the Connecticut regulations and statues that govern the initial educator certificate in comprehensive special education. The proposed track was designed in response to a direct need from partnering districts in SHU's residency program to recruit and retain a diverse workforce of highly effective special educators.

During fall 2023, SHU submitted to the CSDE a proposal describing the comprehensive special education program, including program syllabi, key assessments, and faculty vitae and resumes. A CSDE-trained evaluation team consisting of content area experts reviewed the proposal to evaluate the quality of the program in the following areas:

- (1) design, scope and sequence, including coursework and fieldwork/clinical experiences;
- (2) candidate assessments, including data collection, analysis, and reporting methods;
- (3) faculty and instructor qualifications; and
- (4) program resources.

CSDE consultants also reviewed the proposal for compliance with Connecticut statutory and regulatory requirements.

The evaluation team identified some areas for improvement (AFI) for the SHU proposal and was unanimous in its decision that the proposal move forward to the CSDE Review Committee for consideration, with the requirement that the AFIs be addressed before the committee meeting. SHU submitted all required revisions to the CSDE during November 2023, to the satisfaction of the evaluation team, with the Review Committee recommending full approval for the program.

Recommendation and Justification

Based upon evaluation team findings and the recommendation of the CSDE Review Committee, I recommend that the SHU educator preparation program for comprehensive special education, PK-12 be granted full approval for the period January 3, 2024, through March 31, 2026. If approved by the CSBE, the program will begin implementation during summer 2024 and be reviewed during SHU's next Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) visit during spring 2025. In the interim, the CAEP annual report will provide data on an annual basis for all SHU educator preparation programs, including this new comprehensive special education program.

Follow-up Activity

If granted full approval by the CSBE, the Dean of the SHU College of Education will be notified immediately so that SHU may start recruiting candidates for summer 2024.

Prepared by: Lauren Tafrate, EPP Program Approval Coordinator, Talent Office

Approved by: Shuana K. Tucker, Ph.D., Chief Talent Officer, Talent Office

**Connecticut State Department of Education
Educator Preparation Program Approval Review Committee**

Name	Affiliation	Representation	Term Ending
1. Dorothea Anagnostopolous	University of Connecticut	Higher Education	September 5, 2026
2. Mel Horton	Sacred Heart University	Higher Education	March 31, 2025
3. Megan Mackey	Central Connecticut State University	Higher Education	March 31, 2025
4. Catherine O'Callaghan	Western Connecticut State University	Higher Education	September 5, 2026
5. Julie Sochacki	University of Hartford	Higher Education	September 5, 2026
6. Joseph Bonillo	Hartford Public Schools	K-12	September 5, 2026
7. Thomas Danehy	Area Cooperative Educational Services	K-12	September 5, 2026
8. Stacy McCann	Middletown Public Schools	K-12	September 5, 2026
9. Kevin Walston	Danbury Public Schools	K-12	September 5, 2026
10. Paul Whyte	New Haven Public Schools	K-12	September 5, 2026
11. Camille Cooper	Yale Child Study Center	Community	March 31, 2025
12. Shannon Marimón	ReadyCT	Community	March 31, 2025

Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies for Educator Preparation Program Approval**Section 10-145d-9(g)****Board action**

After reviewing the recommendation of the Review Committee, the Commissioner shall make one or more recommendations to the Board. Based on the Commissioner's recommendation, the Board shall take one of the following actions.

(1) For programs requesting continuing approval:

- (A) Grant full program approval for seven years, or for a period of time to bring the program into alignment with the seven year approval cycle. The Board may require that an interim report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (B) Grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (C) Grant probationary approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Deny approval.

(2) For new programs in institutions which have current approved programs:

- (A) Grant full program approval for a period of time to bring the new program into the five year approval cycle of all other programs offered by the institution. The Board may require that a written report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (B) Grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.

- (C) Grant probationary approval not to exceed three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Deny approval.

(3) For new programs starting in institutions without other approved programs:

- (A) Grant program approval for two years. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, after two semester of operation a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in implementing the new program. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (B) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant full program approval for three years. The Board may require that a written report be submitted to the Department, on a date set by the Board, prior to the end of the approval period.
- (C) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant provisional approval for a time period not to exceed three years, if substantial non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board may require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (D) Following the on-site visit after two years of operation, grant probationary approval for up to three years, if significant and far-reaching non-compliance with current standards is identified. The institution shall submit to the Review Committee, on a date set by the Board, a written report which addresses the professional education unit's progress in meeting the standards which were not fully met. The Board shall require an on-site visit in addition to this report.
- (E) Deny approval.