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
1. Program Entry Standards	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 21st Century and required to meet the needs of Connecticut students.	• 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. • 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). • Requirement that programs develop recruitment and admission policies that reflect the importance of: o High need and shortage areas, and o Diversity among our teachers. • 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. • 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.	• In Pennsylvania, prospective candidates are required to hold a 3.0 GPA upon entry.

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2. Staffing & Support of Clinical Experiences	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. 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.	• Establishment of standards for those educators supporting future teachers including the demonstrated effectiveness of cooperating teachers. • Exploration of incentives and job responsibility structures that encourage high performing teachers to take on a role of serving as cooperating teachers/mentors. • 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.	• 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. • 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.
3. Clinical Experience Requirements for Teacher Candidates	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. *Note: clinical experiences include field experiences, practica and student teaching.*	• 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. • Requirement that the duration of clinical experiences is sufficient to ensure that candidates demonstrate their developing effectiveness across the program.	• Recent legislation in Maine now requires all candidates to complete at least 15 weeks of student teaching to qualify for a provisional teacher certificate. • Massachusetts teacher candidates must now complete a pre-student teaching 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.

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4. District-Program Partnerships; Structures & Shared Responsibility	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. 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.	• 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. • 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. • 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. • 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.). • 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.	• 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.
5. Program Completion & Candidate Assessment Standards	Candidates will demonstrate competencies aligned with national and state standards by successfully completing rigorous performance-based assessments as part of clinical experiences. All teacher candidates will demonstrate dispositions and skills necessary to support students' academic and non-academic needs.	• 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. • 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. • Explore appropriate options within which clinical experience/performance-based assessment can completed. • Review of teacher preparation assessment systems through a rigorous program approval process.	• 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.

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6. Program Effectiveness & Accountability	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. 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.	• Development and implementation of annual reporting and data management systems to track preparation program effectiveness, candidate performance and teacher success including: ○ Aggregate teacher evaluation data, including classroom observation and pupil performance data, ○ Completer/graduation rates, ○ Completers' subject and grade-level, ○ Employment of completers in hard to staff or high-need schools and subjects, ○ Completer employment and retention rates, ○ Program use of rigorous pass rates for required tests, ○ Program compliance with admission criteria and goals, ○ Survey data, and other instruments regarding partner district, employer and graduate feedback, and ○ Student-teaching evaluations and pre-service assessments. • 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. • 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.	• 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. • Missouri now requires educator preparation programs to submit a performance report for annual accreditation. Missouri Standards for Preparation of Educators (MOSPE). • Ohio has issued new educator preparation program performance reports that include value-added data, candidate academic measures and satisfaction surveys. • 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.