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**Educator Preparation Providers (EPP) and Specialty Area Program (SAP) Approval Recommendations**

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**The Background:**

This item contains action recommendations for Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs) and the Specialty Area Programs (SAPs) [SAPs are the endorsement program – e.g., Elementary Education K-5] for the following EPPs.

**Comprehensive Reviews of Existing EPPs and SAPs**

The Department of Education is responsible for the review of EPPs and SAPs. Once an EPP receives initial approval, the EPP must participate in a full-approval review process, managed by the Department, within 3-5 years.

Once an EPP receives full approval status, the EPP may maintain its approval status through the national CAEP accreditation pathway or through the state-managed comprehensive review process every seven years. Action recommendations made by the Department must be approved by the State Board of Education pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-02-04.

Steps in the review process include:

- Reports prepared by the EPP that responds to the CAEP national accreditation standards and state specialty program standards;
- On-site review conducted by a state-selected and trained on-site review team using the Tennessee Comprehensive Review Handbook and, for EPPs seeking national accreditation, a nationally selected and trained CAEP on-site team;
- On-site review report submitted to the EPP;
- EPP response (rejoinder) to the on-site review report submitted to the Department
- Evaluation of all reviews by the Tennessee Advisory Committee on Educator Preparation (ACEP); and
- CAEP accreditation/state approval comprehensive review occurs on a seven-year cycle, which may include focused reviews during the interim period.

The Department of Education recommendations for existing EPPs and SAPS fall into one of five categories:

- Full Approval: Exemplary Status;
- Full Approval;
- Full Approval: Minor Stipulations;
- Probationary Approval: Major Stipulations; or
- Denial of Approval.

For EPPs seeking CAEP accreditation, the initial accreditation status is translated to an EPP state approval recommendation by the Department and reviewed by the ACEP. CAEP advanced accreditation decisions

are not considered in recommendations to the State Board as advanced-level programs are reviewed as SAPs and each receives a separate status recommendation.

### **Joint CAEP Accreditation and State Specialty Area Program Comprehensive Reviews**

#### *East Tennessee State University*

This joint CAEP/state review took place in fall of 2021. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all CAEP standards. No critical deficiencies were cited. The provider is recommended for **full approval, along with all specialty area programs.**

#### *Middle Tennessee State University*

This joint CAEP/state review took place in fall of 2021. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all CAEP standards. No critical deficiencies were cited. The provider is recommended for **full approval, along with all specialty area programs.**

#### *Milligan University*

This joint CAEP/state review took place in fall of 2021. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all CAEP standards. No critical deficiencies were cited. The provider is recommended for **full approval, along with all specialty area programs.**

### **State-Managed EPP and SAP Comprehensive Reviews**

#### *Rhodes College*

This state-managed full approval review took place in the winter of 2022. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on CAEP standards 1-3 and did not meet expectations on CAEP standards 4 and 5. Some major stipulations were cited. The provider is recommended for **probationary approval, major stipulations. For specialty area programs, the provider is recommended for full approval, minor stipulations.** Pursuant to State Board Rule 0520-02-04-.04, An EPP that is issued probationary approval may recommend candidates for licensure but shall submit to the Department an improvement plan for addressing the areas in need of improvement within three (3) months of receiving probationary approval status from the State Board. Each year, the EPP shall present evidence that the provider is implementing the improvement plan and making progress toward meeting expectations. The EPP shall also participate in a focused review within three (3) years of receiving probationary approval from the State Board. Additionally, The EPP shall specifically report on the progress made in each area of deficiency on their annual report for the three (3) years following the issuance of probationary approval.

#### *Nashville Teacher Residency*

This state-managed full approval review took place in fall of 2021. The review team concluded that the EPP meets expectations on all CAEP standards. No critical deficiencies were cited. The provider is recommended for **full approval, minor stipulations. All reviewed specialty area programs are recommended for full approval.**

### **Specialty Area Program Reviews – Instructional Leader Programs**

Instructional leader programs were originally reviewed and approved in 2015 with a validity date through 2022. All existing instructional leader programs were reviewed between spring of 2021 and spring of 2022 to maintain state approval. Some instructional leader programs were reviewed during regularly scheduled comprehensive reviews; others, outlined below, were reviewed off-cycle.

Review teams concluded the following instructional leader programs meet all requirements. No critical deficiencies were cited. The instructional leader programs are recommended for **full approval**.

*Bethel University*  
*Carson Newman University*  
*Cumberland University*  
*Freed-Hardeman University*  
*Lee University*  
*Lipscomb University*  
*Lincoln-Memorial University*  
*Tennessee State University*  
*Tennessee Tech University*  
*Union University*  
*University of Tennessee, Chattanooga*  
*University of Tennessee, Knoxville*

#### **New EPPs and SAPs Seeking Initial Approval**

In accordance with the Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04, after review of a proposal for initial approval of a new EPP, the Department shall recommend to the State Board one of the following:

- a) Initial approval. If initial approval is awarded, providers may begin enrolling and subsequently recommending candidates for licensure in approved specialty areas; or
- b) Denial of initial approval. If initial approval is denied, providers may not recommend candidates for licensure or identify programs as leading to licensure. Providers may submit a revised proposal for consideration during the next review period.

#### *Relay Graduate School of Education*

The Department of Education reviewed the Relay Graduate School of Education proposal for a recommendation of initial approval as a new EPP and associated SAPs in multiple endorsement areas. The review considered key components of the State Board of Education Educator Preparation Rule 0520-02-04, Educator Preparation Policy 5.504, and Literacy and Specialty Area Standards Policy 5.505 related to initial EPP and SAP approval.

The Department review team concluded that Relay Graduate School of Education meets expectations on the initial EPP proposal and should be granted initial approval to proceed with implementation of the new EPP and recommend eligible educator preparation candidates for endorsements in multiple program areas.

Relay Graduate School of Education is therefore recommended for **initial approval**.

#### **The Recommendation:**

The Department of Education recommends approval of this item on first and final reading. The SBE staff concurs with this recommendation.