

South Carolina Department of Education
and the
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation
Partnership Agreement

In order to promote excellence in educator preparation by coordinating state approval and national accreditation reviews of educator preparation providers (EPPs), and to eliminate duplication of effort and reporting, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) enter into this partnership agreement. The agreement describes the partnership and delineates the processes and policies for CAEP accreditation in South Carolina.

- I. Standards for National Accreditation of EPPs
 - a. CAEP EPP standards must be met on the basis of sufficient and accurate evidence to merit national accreditation by CAEP.
 - b. State standards and institutional standards also may be applied in the CAEP accreditation process.

- II. Process of National Accreditation for EPPs
 - a. The process required for national accreditation by CAEP is outlined in CAEP Policies. EPPs seeking CAEP accreditation must satisfy eligibility requirements, submit a self-study in a CAEP-approved format for formative feedback through off-site review, facilitate the posting of a call for public comment and distribution of third-party surveys to stakeholders, host a site visit, and complete an approved program review process for all programs of study leading to professional practice in a school setting.
 - b. Terms of accreditation shall be for seven years. Eligibility status terms shall be for five years. EPP accreditation status is subject to CAEP policies, including annual payment of dues and submission of an annual report as required.

- III. Standards and Processes for Program Review
 - a. The EPP may choose from among any of the two program review options listed in III(d) below that have been approved by the State in this partnership agreement. EPPs will submit program reports following the instructions for the selected program review process.
 - b. The SCDE has sole responsibility for program approval. The SCDE will utilize information generated from the two program review options to make decisions regarding South Carolina program approval.
 - c. As evidence of quality, CAEP accepts the decisions of national accrediting organizations for specialized professional program areas that are recognized by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. Proper documentation of current accreditation must be presented by the EPP.
 - d. For purposes of state program approval, the state of South Carolina recognizes the following program review options:
 - i. CAEP Program Review with National Recognition:
CAEP Program Review with National Recognition applies Specialized Professional Associations' (SPAs) standards in the SPA review process and can result in National Recognition. The SCDE will review the program review report and will make a decision on continued state approval. This review option is

available to all programs, including low enrollment programs (five or fewer completers in the last three years), that meet the application of assessments criteria for SPA program review.

ii. **State Program Review by State Authority:**

Programs with gaps in candidate enrollment and data (less than two applications of the assessments for an initial report or less than one application from new or revised assessments for revised or response to conditions reports) or do not have a SPA or accrediting organization will have their programs reviewed by the state authority. The state authority will select state-trained reviewers to conduct program review for purposes of state approval and to inform CAEP accreditation. State-trained reviewers are selected and assigned within appropriate content areas. Reviewers make recommendations for further action and/or approval. The state authority makes the final decision on approval of all programs. **This review option is only available to programs that meet the above conditions.**

IV. **Accreditation Review Team Composition**

Joint Review Teams:

Joint teams consist of members appointed by CAEP and the state authority to conduct reviews. The team is led by co-chairs (one appointed by state authority, one by CAEP). CAEP-appointed members make up more than 50 percent of the team.

The following conditions apply to the Joint CAEP-SCDE Accreditation Review Team:

- a. All members of Review Teams must have successfully completed CAEP Review Team Member training.
- b. State team members and state consultants will have undergone a training session on CAEP and SCDE unit standards and processes. This training is conducted jointly by CAEP and SCDE.
- c. All review team members will have responsibility for data collection, discussion, and writing of the team report. SCDE-appointed team members have the same responsibility as members appointed by CAEP.
- d. A state team member will be appointed co-chair of the joint team. The state and CAEP co-chairs will share equally in all leadership responsibilities.
- e. SCDE rules applying to conflict of interest will apply to the appointment of SCDE-appointed team members.
- f. The SCDE will designate a state consultant who will participate in all activities of the accreditation process. The state consultant advises the accreditation review team regarding state policies and participates in team activities (data collection, interviews, discussions), but does not have any report-writing responsibilities.
- g. A P-12 practitioner shall be a member of the CAEP-appointed *team*, when available.
- h. The EPP will assume all accreditation-related expenses-including travel, lodging, and meals-for CAEP and SCDE-appointed team members, as well as the accreditation fee and annual dues. Expenses may be incurred during the pre-visit conference, the on-site visit, or during a focused visit.
- i. Onsite team activities will be conducted according to CAEP Policy.

- j. To assure EPPs and the public that CAEP reviews are impartial and objective, to avoid conflicts of interest, and to promote equity and high ethical standards in the accreditation system, Accreditation Review Team members will adhere to CAEP's Code of Conduct.
- k. The review team will produce one report which will be shared with SCDE and CAEP. Final EPP decisions will be presented to the Professional Review Committee (PRC) for recommendation to the Education Professions Committee (EPC) for final approval by the South Carolina State Board of Education.

V. Other Terms and Conditions

- a. CAEP will collaborate with the SCDE to plan, design, and implement a range of training opportunities for reviewers. As part of this agreement, SCDE contact(s) may participate in all web trainings. The registration fee for one SCDE consultant will be waived for one CAEP conference a year; however, the state consultant must assume other expenses. CAEP will assume all expenses for one SCDE consultant to attend the annual CAEP Clinic, with additional state staff welcome at their own expense, including a registration fee. Additional training events may be arranged, including events in the state, on a cost-recovery basis with arrangements negotiated according to CAEP's policies regarding fees and expenses for training.
- b. The SCDE will receive copies of all pertinent accreditation and specialized program area approval documents and reports through access to the Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS); agency personnel will be supplied with login information, passwords, and technical support.
- c. The SCDE will provide to CAEP its policy leading to a "Change in State Status." The SCDE will notify CAEP within 30 days of action taken when a CAEP-accredited EPP has had a "Change in State Status" as a result of a decision on specialized professional program status by the SCDE.
- d. Responses to the final reports by the EPP and/or the SCDE will follow procedures and timelines established in CAEP policy.
- e. EPPs that are seeking CAEP accreditation or hold CAEP accreditation status will pay annual CAEP dues.
- f. The SCDE will be responsible for annual CAEP membership dues.
- g. Final accreditation decisions are posted on CAEP's website. CAEP sends the State Superintendent of Education of the SCDE a letter with the official accreditation decision. Additionally, CAEP provides written notice of all accreditation decisions to the U.S. Department of Education, the appropriate state licensing or authorizing agency, all accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, and the public (via the CAEP website).
- h. The partnership agreement shall be for an initial period of seven years (2015 through 2022) and may be modified and/or terminated by the two parties during that time, if deemed to be necessary, with a 30-day notice.
- i. The SCDE will work with associations that represent P-12 educators (NEA, AFT, NBPTS), education preparation providers, and education administrators to establish credit toward continuing education units or professional development requirements at the local district level in return for the state's P-12 educators' professional contributions to the work of CAEP as visiting team members or program reviewers.

- j. The terms of this agreement have been reached by mutual consent and have been read and understood by the persons whose signatures appear below. The parties agree to comply with the terms and conditions of the plan as set forth herein.

Christopher Koch, Interim President
Council for the Accreditation of Educator
Preparation

Molly M. Spearman
South Carolina State Superintendent of Education