

**Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE)**  
**and**  
**The Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP)**  
**Partnership Agreement**

Whereas, CAEP is a nongovernmental, voluntary association committed to the effective preparation of teachers and other P-12 professional educators; and

Whereas, CAEP, through an autonomous Accreditation Council, accredits educator preparation providers (EPPs) and advances excellent educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to strengthen P-12 student learning; and

Whereas, CAEP is a nationally recognized accreditor, having earned recognition by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), and may seek recognition by the United States Secretary of Education, and, therefore, develops policy and procedures aligned with all applicable requirements of CHEA and, to the extent practicable, the U.S. Department of Education; and

Whereas, the Alabama State Board of Education has the authority to approve programs and seeks continuous improvement in the quality of program completers; and

Whereas, CAEP, and the State hereby enter into this agreement detailing the State's preferences with regard to program review options and review team composition for accreditation site visits conducted by CAEP of EPPs operating within the State, and establishing the primary responsibilities each party has in supporting CAEP Accreditation activities involving all such EPPs.

**1. CAEP Standards and Scope of Accreditation**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 1.1. The CAEP Board of Directors (CAEP Board or Board) has adopted standards (CAEP Standards or Standards) that serve as the basis for all accreditation reviews undertaken by CAEP. The CAEP Standards reflect the voice of the education field – on what makes a quality educator. The Standards and their components flow from two principles:
  - 1.1.1. There must be solid evidence that the EPP's completers are competent and caring educators, and
  - 1.1.2. There must be solid evidence that the EPP's educator faculty and staff have the capacity to create a culture of evidence and use it to maintain and enhance the quality of the professional programs they offer.

- 1.2. As a result of the ongoing critical self-review that CAEP undertakes to maintain and improve the quality of CAEP Accreditation, the CAEP Board will undertake a comprehensive review and revision of the CAEP Standards on a schedule set by the Board and may, as needed, make interim amendments to the Standards. In making any such changes, CAEP will seek stakeholder and public input, including input from the State and its EPPs. It is the responsibility of the State and any EPPs seeking or continuing CAEP Accreditation to stay informed of any changes made to the CAEP Standards and the timeline(s) set by the Board for the implementation of or transition to new or revised Standards.
- 1.3. The CAEP scope of accreditation, defined in Accreditation Policy, provides for the review of Initial-Licensure Programs and Advanced-Level Programs. EPPs must include the following in their submission for CAEPs review: All licensure areas that prepare candidates to work in preschool through grade 12 settings at the initial and advanced level that lead to professional licensure, certification, or endorsement as defined by the state under which the EPP operates and for which the state has established program approval standards. In accordance with CAEP policy and procedures, the state considers the following to be within the scope. CAEP will confer with the state to resolve any questions regarding applicability of the policy and the provisions of this section and any decision to consider a program within the scope of accreditation. The State has defined initial and advanced level programs as follows and has established program approval standards for all programs meeting these criteria:
  - 1.3.1.1. Initial-Licensure Programs are programs at the baccalaureate, post-baccalaureate, or graduate level leading to the first Professional Educator Certificate in a teaching field or area of instructional support and that are designed to develop effective P-12 educators.
  - 1.3.1.2. Advanced-Licensure Programs are programs at the graduate level leading to a second or third certificate in a teaching field or area of instructional support. These programs are designed to develop P-12 educators who have already completed an initial-licensure program.

## **2. CAEP's Responsibility for Education Preparation Provider (EPP) Accreditation**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 2.1. CAEP, through the Accreditation Council, has sole responsibility for granting CAEP Accreditation to an EPP, and for supporting and overseeing NCATE- and TEAC- accredited EPPs through continuous accreditation and the CAEP eligibility processes described in CAEP policy.
- 2.2. The process required for national accreditation by CAEP is outlined in the policies and procedures of CAEP and the Accreditation Council, both of which may be revised from time to time. It is the responsibility of the State and any EPP seeking CAEP Accreditation to stay informed of any such changes as they may impact the CAEP Accreditation process from the time of their adoption or publication.

### 3. State's Responsibility for Program Approval

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 3.1. The State has sole responsibility for program approval. In granting program approval, the State will utilize information generated from CAEP's review of an EPP, including but not limited to an Accreditation Council decision on CAEP Accreditation and the assignment of any Areas for Improvement (AFIs) and Stipulations, as described in Accreditation Policy. Although the State may elect to have state-specific standards and/or requirements incorporated into the CAEP review, consistent with the program review options outlined below, information gathered on these standards and requirements will have no bearing on CAEP Accreditation.
- 3.2. The State will periodically review its program review requirements against the CAEP Standards and policies and will, in a timely manner, make CAEP aware of any conflicts or potential inconsistencies so that all parties to this agreement are aware of any such issues and can work constructively together to minimize any challenges that may arise from them.

### 4. Transition from NCATE to CAEP Accreditation

- 4.1. Beginning January 1, 2017, CAEP ceased operation of the NCATE Commission.
- 4.2. Unless the State requires CAEP Accreditation as a condition of State approval, EPPs holding NCATE accreditation and meeting CAEP's requirements for continuous accreditation will not be required to meet CAEP Standards until the expiration of their current term of accreditation. All such EPPs are subject to the transition provisions described in Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.6, below, and further defined in Accreditation Policy.
  - 4.2.1. **Annual Reports.** All NCATE-accredited EPPs are required to submit annual reports through the duration of their current term using the CAEP annual report template provided in the CAEP accreditation platform.
  - 4.2.2. **Good Standing.** An NCATE-accredited EPP in good standing is considered to be continuously accredited. Upon expiration of the EPP's NCATE term of accreditation, the EPP's next accreditation review must be based on CAEP Standards, policy, and handbook, and carried out using the uniform CAEP Accreditation process. Any such EPP is not required to complete the CAEP application process so long as continuous accreditation is maintained.
  - 4.2.3. **Extensions Granted for Reviews Taking Place After Fall 2019.** For any NCATE-accredited EPP that has been granted an extension, either by CAEP or the ARM (including the site visit and panel review) and any subsequent Accreditation Council decision stemming from the review, will be based on the CAEP Standards, policy, and handbook. CAEP will consult with the ALSDE regarding any requests from EPPs for delays in reviews or the date on which the Self-Study Report, Addendum, or any other documents are due to be submitted to CAEP.

- 4.3. Any accreditation review scheduled to take place during and after fall 2019, whether of a new applicant, for continuing accreditation, or following an approved extension, will be based on the CAEP Standards, policy, and handbook, and carried out using the uniform CAEP Accreditation process. CAEP will consult with the ALSDE regarding any requests from EPPs for delays in reviews or the date on which the Self-Study Report, Addendum, or any other documents are due to be submitted to CAEP.

## 5. CAEP Accreditation Cycle

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 5.1. The CAEP Accreditation cycle involves an EPP in continuous improvement and requires an EPP to demonstrate that it meets CAEP's high standards of quality required to improve P-12 student learning.
- 5.2. Subject to the provisions of Section 4.2, above, to merit full accreditation by CAEP, an EPP must meet all CAEP Standards on the basis of sufficient and accurate evidence.
- 5.3. An EPP seeking CAEP Accreditation, either as an initial applicant or through a renewal process (generally referred to as continuous accreditation), must complete a self-study process leading to an EPP's production of a Self-Study Report (SSR), a Formative Review, and a Site Visit. An EPP may elect to participate as designated in CAEP policy in the review panel deliberations. Additional details of the CAEP Accreditation process are included in Accreditation Policy.
- 5.4. A site visit, carried out by a site team, is an essential part of the accreditation process. Members of the assigned team investigate the quality of an EPP's evidence, including the accuracy and consistency of the evidence provided in relation to CAEP Standards. In accordance with Accreditation Policy, CAEP may utilize a virtual site visit.
- 5.5. The State elects that CAEP's reviews of EPPs in the State will be carried out using site teams composed as follows:
  - 5.5.1. **Joint Review Team.** The Joint Review Team in a standard visit which includes only an initial-level review includes four national site visitors appointed by CAEP and one (1) site visitor appointed by the State. In a standard visit which includes initial and advanced-level reviews, the team will include five (5) CAEP-appointed visitors and one (1) state-appointed site visitor. CAEP financial guidelines require that a joint team be composed completely of CAEP appointed site visitors, less one site visitor appointed by the state. The State shall provide CAEP with its recommended site visitor within any timelines established by CAEP in the Accreditation Policy and handbook. The team is led by a site team chair appointed by CAEP. Prior to assignment to any site team, an individual must have successfully completed CAEP site visitor training and must acknowledge understanding of, and agreement to, adhere to CAEP's code of conduct, including with regard to confidentiality and conflicts of interest. All site visit teams are supported by a state consultant.

- 5.5.2. In visits that are not standard, e.g. probationary or stipulation visits, teams will be constructed, and visits conducted in accordance with CAEP policy and as appropriate with consultation of the state.
- 5.6. Prior to assignment to any CAEP site team, an individual must have successfully completed CAEP training for site team members and must acknowledge understanding of, and agreement to, adhere to CAEP's code of conduct, including with regard to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.
- 5.7. Each site team shall include a P-12 practitioner, when possible. The State will make recommendations for P-12 practitioners through the CAEP accreditation platform.
- 5.8. At the discretion of the State, the State's teachers' association(s) may appoint one (1) representative per association to observe the site review. Any expenses associated with the attendance of an observer must be covered by the association(s) or State. Prior to participation, any observer must acknowledge understanding of an agreement to adhere to CAEP's policies and procedures regarding site visits and the CAEP code of conduct, including with regard to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.
- 5.9. All site visit activities undertaken by a CAEP site team will be conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures of CAEP and the Accreditation Council.
- 5.10. CAEP is not responsible for site visit expenses for state-assigned personnel.
- 5.11. An EPP that is subject to the jurisdiction of Alabama may choose from among any of the following program review options for CAEP Accreditation:
- 5.11.1. **Specialty Program Review with National Recognition.** The goal of the specialized professional association (SPA) Program Review with National Recognition is to align specialty licensure area data with national standards developed by SPAs in order to receive national recognition at the program level. The site team will consider the National Recognition decision available in SPA program level reports as evidence to meet the sufficiency criteria related to CAEP Standard 1.
- 5.11.2. **State Review by State Authority.** The State conducts program reviews for purposes of State approval and to inform CAEP Accreditation. An EPP selecting the State Review option will follow State guidelines. The State provides forms and instructions on how to meet all State standards for program approval. Upon an EPP's completion of the State authority forms, trained reviewers are selected and assigned within appropriate content areas. Reviewers make recommendations for further action and/or approval. The State makes the final decision on the approval of any program.
- 5.11.3. **CAEP Evidence Review of Standard 1.** Evidence for the CAEP Evidence Review of Standard 1 process is developed through the analysis of an EPP's outcome assessment data aligned to those standards delineated in CAEP Standard 1.3. CAEP's Evidence Review of Standard 1 provides information to the State on both the alignment of evidence with state

standards and the disaggregated results. The State will decide how to use this review of evidence in its decision making.

- 5.12. The specific timeline established for the review of an EPP, as well CAEP's consideration of any request for an extension, will be decided by CAEP and the Accreditation Council, as appropriate, and in consultation with the State, on a case by case basis and in accordance with CAEP and Accreditation Policies.
- 5.13. Once granted full CAEP Accreditation, an EPP's term of accreditation shall be seven (7) years. Shorter terms are granted with a decision of accreditation with stipulations or probationary accreditation. Throughout its term, to maintain accreditation, an EPP must comply with CAEP and Accreditation Policies, including policies regarding payment of annual dues and the submission of annual reports.
- 5.14. An EPP for which the Accreditation Council issues a decision to deny or revoke accreditation may have a right to petition for an appeal subject to Appeals Policy.
- 5.15. The State will provide to CAEP its policy leading to a "Change in State Status." The State will notify CAEP within thirty (30) days of action taken when a CAEP-accredited EPP has had a "Change in State Status" of a program as a result of a decision on specialized professional association (SPA) program status by the State or by action of the Alabama State Board of Education.
- 5.16. Accreditation-specific terminology and definitions used by CAEP as part of its EPP review and accreditation processes may vary from similar terms and definitions used by the State. Any definitions of key terms and glossaries created by CAEP are available on the CAEP website [<http://caepnet.org/glossary>]. The State should inquire with CAEP about the definition of any term if there is uncertainty regarding its meaning in the CAEP Accreditation context.

## **6. Opportunities for State Input**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 6.1. CAEP will afford the State multiple opportunities to provide CAEP, the site team, and members of the Accreditation Council with any information or data the State deems relevant to the accreditation of an EPP, as follows:
- 6.2. As described in Section 5.5.2, above, the State may elect to appoint members of the CAEP site team.
- 6.3. At least sixteen (16) weeks prior to any scheduled site visit, CAEP will give the State notice of the upcoming visit. At any time, up to six (6) weeks before the scheduled visit, the State may provide CAEP with comments and information on the EPP for consideration by the site team. EPPs will be given an opportunity to respond to any such comments prior to the site visit.

- 6.4. At any time, the State may file a complaint regarding an EPP with the Accreditation Council for investigation and consideration as part of the EPP's ongoing cycle of CAEP Accreditation. In accordance with Accreditation Policy, adverse action may result from any such investigation.
- 6.5. In the event an EPP within the State petitions for the appeal of an adverse action of the Accreditation Council, CAEP will notify the State that such petition has been received. Any notification of a decision made by an appeal panel will be made in accordance with Section 7, below, and the detailed notification provisions included in Accreditation Policy.

## **7. Decisions of the Accreditation Council and Appeals Council**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 7.1. The Accreditation Council makes decisions regarding the accreditation of EPPs at meetings held not less than two (2) times each year.
- 7.2. Following any decision of the Accreditation Council to deny or revoke the accreditation of an EPP, the EPP is promptly informed of its option to file a petition for an appeal and the requirements for qualifying to have an appeal considered by CAEP's Appeals Council. Appeals criteria and process information are included in Appeals Policy.
- 7.3. CAEP provides written notice of each decision of the Accreditation Council and Appeals Council to the State and the following individuals and entities:
- United States Secretary of Education (only if required subsequent to CAEP achieving recognition by the U.S. Secretary of Education) or relevant government agency for international EPPs
  - Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA)
  - Other State licensing or authorizing agency representatives, as appropriate
  - Appropriate accrediting agencies, including national, regional, and specialized accrediting agencies
  - Relevant state affiliates of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- 7.4. In the event of a final decision to deny or revoke accreditation, CAEP's written notice will include a brief statement summarizing the reasons for the adverse action, along with the official comments, if any, that the affected EPP may wish to make with regard to the decision, or evidence that the affected EPP has been offered the opportunity to provide official comment.
- 7.5. The written notice CAEP provides regarding its accrediting decisions, made in accordance with the requirements of Federal regulations (34 CFR Part 602), includes notice to the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency which may be a party to this agreement. Specifically, such notice will be provided no later than thirty (30) days following a decision to award initial accreditation or to renew or continue accreditation. In the event of a final decision to place an EPP on probation, grant provisional accreditation, or to deny or terminate accreditation of an EPP, notice will be provided to the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency at the same time notice of the decision is given to the EPP, but no later than thirty (30) days after the decision is reached. Within

thirty (30) days of receiving notification from an EPP that the EPP has decided to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation or to let its accreditation lapse CAEP will provide the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency with written notice.

## **8. Data Sharing**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 8.1. The CAEP Standards and process for CAEP Accreditation require an EPP to collect and share data. To the extent that the State maintains data necessary for CAEP's review of an EPP, subject to any data sharing agreement that may exist between an EPP and the State, CAEP expects that the State will make the relevant data available to CAEP at no cost, in a timely manner, with all personally identifiable information removed or redacted, and with all appropriate permissions to use the data for CAEP Accreditation activities.
- 8.2. In order to facilitate the reviews necessary for CAEP Accreditation, CAEP will provide the State and each dues paying EPP in the State with access to the CAEP accreditation platform, CAEP's data and information management system. Should the State or any EPP fail to pay annual dues to CAEP in a timely manner, CAEP reserves the right to suspend access to the CAEP accreditation platform until any outstanding dues are paid.
- 8.3. CAEP policies and the CAEP accreditation platform include information on the confidential nature of information maintained within the CAEP accreditation platform. All CAEP accreditation platform users must acknowledge CAEP's confidentiality policy and agree to adhere to it.

## **9. Partnership Dues, State Benefits, and Fees for Additional Services**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 9.1. The State will be responsible for payment of annual State Partnership dues (See Appendix A). Dues may be reviewed and updated annually by CAEP. Should the amount of the State's annual State Partnership dues be changed during the term of this agreement, CAEP will notify the State of the new dues amount and the effective date.
- 9.2. CAEP will provide up to three (3) individuals employed by the State with access to the CAEP accreditation platform.
- 9.3. During each year covered by this agreement, CAEP will waive the CAEP Conference registration fee for one (1) designated State representative; however, the State or State representative must assume other expenses associated with attending the conference.
- 9.4. During each year covered by this agreement, CAEP will assume all expenses for one (1) designated State representative to attend the annual CAEP Clinic. A registration fee will be assessed for any additional State staff and they must assume other expenses associated with attending the clinic.
- 9.5. CAEP offers states access to CAEP National Training for up to five (5) site visitors a year,



including training and travel (additional participants may be added based on need and on a cost-recovery basis). CAEP may also offer supplemental training opportunities for state reviewers. Supplemental training events that are arranged, including events in the State, will be provided by CAEP on a cost-recovery basis and with specific arrangements negotiated according to CAEP's policies regarding fees and expenses for training.

- 9.6. The State will work with associations that represent P-12 educators (NEA, AFT, NBPTS), EPPs, 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 site visitors or program reviewers.

## **10. State and CAEP Contacts**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 10.1. The State will designate a liaison to serve as the primary contact for CAEP throughout the term of this agreement.
- 10.2. CAEP will designate a liaison to serve as the primary contact for the State through the term of this agreement.

## **11. Agreement Term and Amendments**

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 11.1. CAEP and the State enter into this partnership agreement for the five (5)-year period beginning September 1, 2020 and ending on August 30, 2025 .
- 11.2. The Parties will review this agreement at least annually and, as necessary, propose any amendment deemed appropriate and which may be adopted upon the agreement of the Parties.
- 11.3. Should any provision of this agreement be determined to be in conflict with CAEP policy, including the policies of the Accreditation Council and Appeals Council, CAEP policy will be the prevailing authority and this agreement will be required to be amended to resolve the conflict.
- 11.4. Notwithstanding the annual review described above, this agreement may be modified by consent of the Parties at any point.

9/23/2020

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Christopher Koch, President  
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

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DATE

