

**Tennessee Department of Education  
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 is seeking 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 State Board of Education (SBE) has the sole responsibility for approving EPPs in Tennessee; and

Whereas, CAEP accreditation may be used in lieu of the state approval process, yet the status of accreditation does not guarantee state approval;

CAEP, and the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) (the Parties) hereby enter into this agreement detailing the TDOE's preferences with regard to Specialty Area Program (SAP) review options and review team composition for accreditation site review 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 graduates (completers) are competent and caring educators, and
  - 1.1.2. There must be solid evidence that the EPP's educator 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 TDOE and its EPPs.
- 1.3. At the time of this agreement's drafting, a review of the standards is taking place and draft standards have been released to states for comment. Final standards are anticipated to be approved by the Board in December of 2020. It is the responsibility of the TDOE 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.
- 1.4. The CAEP scope of accreditation, defined in Accreditation Policy, provides for the review of Initial-Licensure Programs and Advanced-Level Programs.
  - 1.4.1.1. Initial-Licensure Programs are programs at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate level leading to initial-licensure, certification, or endorsement, and that are designed to develop P-12 teachers.
  - 1.4.1.2. Advanced-Level Programs are programs at the post-baccalaureate or graduate level leading to licensure, certification, or endorsement. These programs are designed to develop P-12 teachers who have already completed an initial-licensure program, currently licensed administrators, other certificated (or similar SBE or TDOE language) school professionals for employment in P-12 schools/districts.

## **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 TDOE 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 SBE has sole responsibility for program approval. In recommending SAP approval decisions to the SBE, the TDOE 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 TDOE may elect to have state-specific standards and/or requirements incorporated into the CAEP review, consistent with the program review options outlined below, only information gathered on an EPP's compliance with CAEP Standards and requirements will be used by the Accreditation Council to make a decision.

- 3.2. The TDOE 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 and TEAC Accreditation to CAEP Accreditation**

- 4.1. Beginning January 1, 2017, CAEP ceased operation of the NCATE and TEAC Commissions.
- 4.2. Unless the State requires CAEP Accreditation as a condition of State approval, EPPs holding NCATE or TEAC 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- and TEAC-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- or TEAC-accredited EPP in good standing is considered to be continuously accredited. Upon expiration of the EPP's NCATE or TEAC 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.
- 4.3. 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.

#### **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. Any decision to revoke or deny CAEP accreditation will be made pursuant to CAEP Accreditation Council Policy and Procedures.
- 5.3. A site review, carried out by a review 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 review or may have one or more review team members participating using electronic means.
- 5.4. The State elects that CAEP's reviews of EPPs in the State will be carried out using review teams composed as follows:
  - 5.4.1. **Joint Site Review Team.** For any site review except one required in conjunction with an accreditation decision of Accreditation with Stipulations or Probationary Accreditation, the composition of the Review Team will be as follows:
    - 5.4.1.1. For a Site Review involving only one level of accreditation (i.e., initial or advanced), the Joint Site Review Team includes four national site reviewers appointed by CAEP and up to three site reviewers appointed by the TDOE.
    - 5.4.1.2. For a Site Review involving both levels of accreditation, initial and advanced-level, the team will include five CAEP-appointed reviewers and up to four TDOE-appointed site reviewers.
    - 5.4.1.3. For a Stipulation or Probation visit site teams are comprised of two persons. The TDOE may choose to add one reviewer for a total of a three-person team. The lead reviewer is appointed by CAEP.
    - 5.4.1.4. The TDOE shall provide CAEP with its recommended review team members within any timelines established by CAEP in the Accreditation Policy and handbook. All such teams are led by a review team chair appointed by CAEP. Prior to assignment to any site team, an individual must have successfully completed CAEP Review Team 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.
    - 5.4.1.5. Once assigned, the Joint Review Team will participate in formative and pre-site visit meetings. The TDOE facilitator and team lead will be a part of the pre-site visit meetings and will be allowed to provide additional background information on the TDOE accountability processes and review specific metrics put in place by the SBE and TDOE for individual EPPs.
- 5.5. Prior to assignment to any CAEP review team, an individual must have successfully completed CAEP training for review 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.
- 5.6. Each review team shall include a P-12 practitioner, when possible. The TDOE will make recommendations for P-12 practitioners through the CAEP accreditation platform.

- 5.7. At the discretion of the TDOE, 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 TDOE. Prior to participation, any observer must acknowledge understanding of an agreement to adhere to CAEP’s policies and procedures regarding site reviews and the CAEP code of conduct, including with regard to confidentiality and conflicts of interest.
- 5.8. All site review activities undertaken by a CAEP review team will be conducted in accordance with the policies and procedures of CAEP, and in a manner that supports TDOE provider and program reviews using the Tennessee Educator Preparation rule (0520-02-04), and Tennessee Educator Preparation policy (5.504).
- 5.9. CAEP is not responsible for site review expenses for state-assigned personnel.
- 5.10. An EPP that is subject to the jurisdiction of Tennessee may choose from among any of the following program review options for CAEP Accreditation:
- 5.10.1. **State Review by State Authority.** The TDOE conducts program reviews for purposes of State approval and to inform CAEP Accreditation. An EPP selecting the State Review option will follow TDOE guidelines. The TDOE provides forms and instructions on how to meet all State standards for licensure program approval. Upon an EPP’s completion of the TDOE authority forms, trained reviewers are selected and assigned within appropriate content areas. Reviewers make recommendations for further action and/or approval through an iterative process facilitated by the TDOE. The TDOE takes into account the reviewers’ recommendations and annual reports data to make action recommendations to the Advisory Committee on Educator Preparation (ACEP). The ACEP reviews all final outcomes and makes a recommendation to TDOE. The SBE makes the final decision on the approval of any program.
- 5.11. The specific timeline established for the review of an EPP, as well CAEP’s consideration of any request for an extension, which originates from the EPP with documented support from TDOE, will be decided by CAEP and the Accreditation Council, as appropriate, on a case by case basis and in accordance with CAEP and Accreditation Policies.
- 5.12. 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.
- 5.13. 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.
- 5.14. The TDOE will provide to CAEP its policy leading to a “Change in State Status.” The TDOE

will notify CAEP within thirty (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 association (SPA) program status by the SBE.

5.15. 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 TDOE and SBE. Any definitions of key terms and glossaries created by CAEP are available on the CAEP website [<http://caepnet.org/glossary>]. The TDOE 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 TDOE multiple opportunities to provide CAEP, the site team, and members of the Accreditation Council with any information or data the TDOE 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 joint CAEP review team.
- 6.3. At least sixteen (16) weeks prior to any scheduled site review, CAEP will give the TDOE notice of the upcoming site review. At any time, up to six (6) weeks before the scheduled site review, the TDOE 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 review.
- 6.4. At any time, the TDOE 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 petitions for the appeal of an adverse action of the Accreditation Council, CAEP will notify the TDOE that such petition has been received. Any notification of a decision made by an ad-hoc 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 appeal requirements.

Appeals criteria and process information are included in Appeals Policy.

- 7.3. CAEP provides written notice of each decision of the Accreditation Council and an Ad-hoc Appeal Panel in accordance with CAEP policies.
- 7.4. The written notice CAEP provides regarding its accrediting decisions, includes notice to TDOE, 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 TDOE 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 TDOE maintains data necessary for CAEP's review of an EPP, subject to any data sharing agreement that may exist between an EPP and the TDOE, CAEP expects that the TDOE 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 TDOE and each dues paying EPP in the State with access to the CAEP accreditation platform, CAEP's data and information management system. Should the TDOE 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 TDOE 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 TDOE's annual State Partnership dues be changed during the term of this agreement, CAEP will notify the TDOE of the new dues amount and the effective date.
- 9.2. CAEP will provide up to three (3) individuals employed by the TDOE 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 TDOE representative; however, the TDOE or TDOE 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 TDOE representative to attend the annual CAEP Clinic. A registration fee will be assessed for any additional TDOE 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 reviewers 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 TDOE 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 review team members

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

The Parties understand and agree that:

- 10.1. The TDOE 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 TDOE 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 24, 2020 and ending on September 24, 2025. The State may terminate this agreement for convenience without cause and for any reason with written notice to CAEP.
- 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 written and signed amendment between the Parties at any point.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Christopher Koch, President  
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

By signing this agreement, the undersigned agrees to be bound by the terms outlined above, and affirms that he or she has the authority to enter into this agreement on behalf of the State.

\_\_\_\_\_  
State Authority - Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

### **Appendix A: State Dues Structure**

Beginning in FY18 (July 1, 2017), a new State Partnerships dues structure\* takes effect. The new structure more fairly aligns and delineates (1) the collective resources required to service state partners in conjunction with their respective EPPs (fixed and proportional amounts), and (2) the variable resources required to administer the CAEP-State joint reviews for States that choose to participate in the joint CAEP Accreditation processes (variable amount).

Annual costs for supporting activities associated with State Partnerships have both fixed and proportional components which include costs associated with the CAEP Clinic, fall and spring CAEP Conferences, staff time, technology costs for maintaining workspaces within CAEP's accreditation platform, and other indirect expenses.

For the fixed and proportional amounts, states would be assessed \$3,000 annually to cover expenses for the spring convening and conference registration plus a portion of indirect expenses which are based on the actual percentage of CAEP member EPPs within each state.

For example:

State A has 20 CAEP member EPPs, or 2.2% of total CAEP EPPs. The proportional amount will be set at 2.2% of \$315,000 (current total), or \$6,900. Therefore, the total fees for State A will be: \$3,000 (fixed) + \$6,900 (variable) = \$9,900.

\* This represents the dues structure in effect at the time this agreement is entered into by the Parties. CAEP reviews the dues structure annually and reserves the right to adjust the State's annual dues as needed to ensure that all costs of CAEP's accreditation activities are adequately covered. CAEP will notify the State upon the adoption of any changes to this structure and the data on which any new dues structure will take effect.