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

Whereas, CAEP is a nongovernmental, voluntary membership organization 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, and

Whereas, the Alabama State Department of Education, herein referred to as the State, supports continuous improvement in educator preparation.

CAEP and the State hereby enter into this agreement detailing the State's preferences regarding program review options and review team composition for accreditation Site Reviews conducted by CAEP of EPPs operating within the State and establishing the primary responsibilities each party has in supporting CAEP's accreditation activities involving all such EPPs.

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

   The Parties understand and agree that:

   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.

   1.1. 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.

   1.2. 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 policy, distinguishes between two levels of educator preparation:

      1.3.1. Initial-Licensure Preparation is provided through programs at the baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate levels leading to initial-licensure, certification, or endorsement that

are designed to develop P-12 teachers. All Initial-Licensure Preparation programs within the Scope of Accreditation will be reviewed under CAEP Standards for Initial-Licensure.

1.3.2. Advanced-Level Preparation is provided through programs at the post-baccalaureate or graduate level leading to licensure, certification, or endorsement. Advanced-Level Programs are designed to develop P-12 teachers who have already completed an initial-licensure program, currently licensed administrators, and other certificated (or similar state language) school professionals for employment in P-12 schools/districts. All Advanced-Level programs within the Scope of Accreditation will be reviewed under CAEP Standards for Advanced-Level Preparation.

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 accredited EPPs through continuous accreditation and the CAEP eligibility processes described in CAEP policy.

2.2. The process required for accreditation by CAEP is outlined in policies and procedures. Policies and procedures 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 responsibility for program approval. In granting program approval, the State will utilize information generated from CAEP's review(s) 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 CAEP 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, only information gathered on an EPP's compliance with CAEP Standards and requirements will be used by the Accreditation Council to decide.

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. **CAEP Accreditation Cycle**

The Parties understand and agree that:

4.1. 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.

4.2. To merit full accreditation by CAEP, an EPP must meet all CAEP Standards based on sufficient and accurate evidence.

4.3. A Site Review, carried out by an Evaluation 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 CAEP policy, CAEP may utilize a virtual site review or may have one or more Evaluation Team members participating using electronic means.

4.4. The State elects that CAEP's reviews of EPPs in the State will be carried out using Evaluation Teams composed as follows:

4.4.1. **Joint Review Team**. For any review except one required in conjunction with an accreditation decision of Accreditation with Stipulations or Probationary Accreditation, the composition of the Evaluation Team will be as follows:

4.4.1.1.1. For a Review involving only one level of accreditation (i.e., initial or advanced), the Joint Review Team includes four national reviewers appointed by CAEP and one reviewer appointed by the State.

4.4.1.1.2. For a Review involving both levels of accreditation, initial and advanced-level, the Evaluation Team will include five CAEP-appointed reviewers and one state-appointed reviewer.

4.4.1.1.3. For a Stipulation or Probation review, the Evaluation Team is comprised of two CAEP-appointed reviewers. The State may choose to add one reviewer for a total of a three-person team. The lead reviewer is appointed by CAEP.

4.4.1.1.4. The State shall provide CAEP with its recommended Evaluation Team members within any timelines established by CAEP. If the State is unable to appoint members, CAEP will appoint from its pool of volunteers trained to serve as Evaluation Team members a CAEP-only team. All such teams are led by an Evaluation Team chair (or Evaluation Team leader) appointed by CAEP.

4.5. Prior to assignment to any CAEP Evaluation 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 regarding confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

4.6. Each Evaluation Team shall include a P-12 practitioner, when possible. The State will make recommendations for P-12 practitioners through the CAEP accreditation platform.

4.7. 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 Reviews and the CAEP code of conduct, including regarding confidentiality and conflicts of interest.

4.8. All Site Review activities undertaken by a CAEP Evaluation Team will be conducted in accordance with CAEP policies and procedures.

4.9. CAEP is not responsible for Site Review expenses for state-assigned personnel.

4.10. An EPP that is subject to the jurisdiction of the State may choose from among any of the following program review options for CAEP accreditation:

4.10.1. **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 Evaluation Team will consider evidence that the EPP presents as gathered from the National Recognition decision-making process and made available in SPA program level reports to meet the sufficiency criteria related to CAEP Standard R1, Component R1.2 (Initial) and/or Standard RA.1, and Component RA1.2 (Advanced). For program areas in which a Specialized Professional Association (SPA) is not available, the EPP must select and complete one of the other approved options for program approval.

4.10.2. **State Review by State Authority**. The State conducts program reviews for purposes of State approval and to inform CAEP accreditation. An EPP undergoing the State Review option will follow State guidelines. The State provides forms and instructions on how to meet all State standards for licensure/certificate 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. The CAEP Evaluation Team will consider evidence that the EPP presents as gathered from the State Review process to meet the sufficiency criteria related to CAEP Standard R1, Component RA1.2 (Initial) and/or Standard RA1, and Component RA1.2 (Advanced).

4.10.3. **CAEP Evidence Review of Standard 1/A.1.** Evidence for the CAEP Evidence Review of Standard 1/A.1 process is developed through the analysis of an EPP's outcome assessment data aligned to specialty licensure area standards delineated in CAEP Standard R1, Component RA1.2 (Initial) and/or Standard A1, and Component RA1.2 (Advanced). Evidence from the EPP's internal assessment may be used by the State to determine its alignment with state required standards in the respective area(s) of

licensure to demonstrate candidates' ability to apply content and pedagogical knowledge in the area of licensure.

4.10.4. The specific timeline established for the review of an EPP, as well as CAEP's consideration of any request for an extension, will be decided by CAEP or the Accreditation Council, as appropriate, on a case-by-case basis and in accordance with CAEP policies.

4.11. Once granted full accreditation by CAEP, 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 policies, including policies regarding payment of annual dues and the submission of annual reports.

4.12. 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 CAEP's policy on appeals.

4.13. 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" as a result of a decision on specialized professional association (SPA) program status by the State.

4.14. 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.

5. Opportunities for State Input

The Parties understand and agree that:

5.1. CAEP will afford the State multiple opportunities to provide CAEP, the Evaluation Team, and members of the Accreditation Council with any information or data the State deems relevant to the accreditation of an EPP, as follows:

5.2. At least sixteen (16) weeks prior to any scheduled Site Review, CAEP will give the State notice of the upcoming Site Review. At any time, up to six (6) weeks before the scheduled Site Review, the State may provide CAEP with comments and information on the EPP for consideration by the Evaluation Team. EPPs will be given an opportunity to respond to any such comments prior to the Site Review.

5.3. 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 CAEP policy, adverse action may result from any such investigation.

5.4. 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 ad-hoc appeal panel will be made in accordance with Section 7, below, and the detailed notification provisions included in CAEP policy.

6. **Decisions of the Accreditation Council and an Ad-Hoc Appeals Council**

The Parties understand and agree that:

6.1. The Accreditation Council makes decisions regarding the accreditation of EPP's at meetings held not less than two (2) times each year.

6.2. 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 CAEP's policies on appeals.

6.3. CAEP provides written notice of each decision of the Accreditation Council and an Ad-hoc Appeal Panel in accordance with CAEP policies.

6.4. The written notice CAEP provides regarding its accrediting decisions, includes notice to the appropriate State licensing or authorizing agency which may be a party to this agreement. CAEP's policies regarding notices specify the parties to which notice must be provided and the respective timelines for each.

7. **Data Sharing**

The Parties understand and agree that:

7.1. 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 EPP's 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.

7.2. 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.

7.3. 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.

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

The Parties understand and agree that:

8.1. 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.

8.2. CAEP will provide up to three (3) individuals employed by the State with access to the CAEP accreditation platform.

8.3. During each year covered by this agreement, CAEP will waive the CAEP State Clinic and CAEP Conference registration fee for one (1) designated State representative; however, the State or State representative must assume other expenses associated with conference participation.

8.4. 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.

8.5. 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 review team members.

9. **State and CAEP Contacts**

The Parties understand and agree that:

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

9.2. CAEP will designate a liaison to serve as the primary contact for the State through the term of this agreement.

10. **Agreement Term and Amendments**

The Parties understand and agree that:

10.1. CAEP and the State enter into this partnership agreement for the five (5)-year period beginning December 1, 2026, and ending on November 30, 2031.

10.2. The Parties will review this agreement at least annually and, as necessary, propose any amendment deemed appropriate which may be adopted upon the agreement of the Parties.

10.3. Should any provision of this agreement be determined to conflict with CAEP policy, CAEP policy will be the prevailing authority, and this agreement will be required to be amended to resolve the conflict.

10.4. Notwithstanding the annual review described above, this agreement may be modified by consent of the Parties at any point.

Christopher Koch, President
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

10/26/2026
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.

Signatory
State Authority

October 21, 2026
DATE

Appendix A: State Dues Structure

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 $1,500 annually (reviewed on an annual basis) 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.

Example 1: **State A (Joint Reviews)**
State B has 25 CAEP member EPPs, or 3.99% of total CAEP EPPs.

- The fixed amount is set at $1,500 per state.
- The proportional amount is set at 3.99% of $325,000 (current total=services to all states) = $12,967.50.
- The variable joint review fee (for 25 joint reviews) is 25 x $2,500 = $62,500/7years = $8,930.

Therefore, the total fees for State B will be:
$1,500 (fixed) + $12,967.50 (proportional) + $8,930 (variable joint review fee) = $23,397.50.