

CAEP ACCREDITATION STANDARDS AND EVIDENCE:

Aspirations for Educator Preparation

Recommendations from the
CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting
to the CAEP Board of Directors
June 11, 2013

CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting

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December 2012.

Designees at the June meeting

Jarrold Bolte for Andres Alonso
Andy Coons for Haydee Rodriguez
Honor Fede for Gail Connelly

Dick Flanary for Joanne Bartoletti
Heather Harding for Annie Lewis O'Donnell
Mariana Haynes for Bob Wise

Charles Lenth for Paul Lingenfelter
Joan Baratz Snowden for Randi Weingarten
Jolanda Westerhof for Deborah Ford

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Organization of the Commission Report to the CAEP Board of Directors

The Commission’s recommendations are contained in four sections:

1. The **standards**, organized within five large topics, as well as additional recommendations. Each group of standards is supported by a rationale that presents the knowledge from research and practice supporting the standard and that includes endnote citations for each reference source.
2. **Cross-cutting themes**, describing an overarching emphasis on diversity and technology. These themes are threaded throughout the standards, reflecting the Commission’s perspective that they need to be integrated *throughout* preparation experiences.
3. The Commission’s cumulative recommendations about **use of evidence** and responsibilities of both educator preparation providers and CAEP itself. The related Appendix displays the Commission’s examples of evidence that providers might use in their accreditation self studies, as well as in their own quality assurance systems.
4. The **scope** of the Commission recommendations in regard to other school personnel, as well as U. S. Department of Education regulations.

Executive Summary

The Charge to the Commission

The Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation (CAEP) is poised to raise the bar for preparation of educators in our nation. CAEP will serve as a model accreditor with rigorous standards, demanding sound evidence and establishing a platform to drive continuous improvement and innovation. As its first initiative to achieve those goals, the CAEP Board of Directors created the CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting and charged it with transforming the preparation of teachers by creating a rigorous system of accreditation that demands excellence and produces educators who raise student achievement.

Consensus on Rigorous Standards

The Commission brought together prominent critics of educator preparation, as well as deans of schools of education; content experts in mathematics and reading; P-12 teacher, principal, and school superintendent leadership; alternative provider/charter leadership; state policymakers; representatives of education policy/advocacy organizations; and public members in order to develop – for all preparation providers – the next generation of accreditation standards based on evidence, continuous improvement, innovation, and clinical practice. Ultimately, the Commission agreed on the following consensus recommendations for submission to the CAEP Board of Directors, reflecting a historic coming together of diverse education stakeholders around a common vision for what quality educator preparation should include.

Leveraging Reform

CAEP accreditation is about leveraging other reform efforts to transform educator preparation in our nation. The CAEP Commission aligned its work with a variety of other efforts, including college- and career-ready standards, the new INTASC standards, the 2012 report by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) Task Force on Education Preparation and Entry into the Profession, and other national reports related to education reform. Leverage points within the standards include the following:

- **Build partnerships and strong clinical experiences**—Education preparation providers and collaborating schools and school districts bring complementary experiences that, joined together, promise far stronger preparation programs. (See Standard 2.)
- **Raise and assure candidate quality**—From recruitment and admission, through preparation and at exit, educator preparation providers must take responsibility to build an educator workforce that is more able and also more representative of America’s diverse population. (See Standard 3, including minimum admissions criteria of a 3.0 grade point average and a group average performance on nationally normed admissions assessments in the top third of national pools.)
- **Include all providers**—Accreditation must encourage innovations in preparation by welcoming all of the varied providers that seek accreditation and meet challenging levels of performance.
- **And surmounting all others, insist that preparation be judged by outcomes and impact on P-12 student learning and development**—Results matter; “effort” is not enough. (See Standard 4 and annual reporting recommendations.)

Cross-cutting Themes: Diversity and Technology

Throughout its deliberations, the Commission faced the twin challenges of developing cohorts of new educators who can lift the performance of the full diversity of P-12 students while taking advantage of the digital age’s new opportunities. Diversity and technology are two critical areas that require new

learning and substantial innovation by preparation providers; the significant demographic and technological changes that impact their programs also influence the skills their completers must master to be effective. Because these two elements are imbedded in every aspect of educator preparation, the Commission chose to recognize them throughout the recommended standards.

Diversity must be a pervasive characteristic of any quality preparation program. The Commission expects responsible providers to ensure that candidates develop proficiencies in specific aspects of diversity that appear in the Commission's recommended standards and to embed diversity issues throughout all aspects of preparation courses and experiences.

The Standards and Recommendations

The Commission's work was organized in part around the three areas of teacher preparation identified by the National Academy of Sciences 2010 report, *Preparing Teachers: Building Evidence for Sound Policy*, as "likely to have the strongest effects" on outcomes for students – content knowledge, clinical experience, and the quality of teacher candidates.¹ The Commission drafted the following three standards related to these areas:

Standard 1: CONTENT AND PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

The provider ensures that candidates develop a deep understanding of the critical concepts and principles of their discipline and, by completion, are able to use discipline-specific practices flexibly to advance the learning of all students toward attainment of college- and career-readiness standards.

Standard 2: CLINICAL PARTNERSHIPS AND PRACTICE

The provider ensures that effective partnerships and high-quality clinical practice are central to preparation so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and professional dispositions necessary to demonstrate positive impact on all P-12 students' learning and development.

Standard 3: CANDIDATE QUALITY, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTIVITY

The provider demonstrates that the quality of candidates is a continuing and purposeful part of its responsibility from recruitment, at admission, through the progression of courses and clinical experiences, and to decisions that completers are prepared to teach effectively and are recommended for certification. The provider demonstrates that development of candidate quality is the goal of educator preparation in all phases of the program. This process is ultimately determined by a program's meeting of Standard 4.

The ultimate goal of educator preparation is the impact of program completers on P-12 student learning and development, as framed by the Commission in the following standard:

Standard 4: PROGRAM IMPACT

The provider demonstrates the impact of its completers on P-12 student learning and development, classroom instruction, and schools, and the satisfaction of its completers with the relevance and effectiveness of their preparation.

In keeping with CAEP's strategic goals to be both a model accrediting body and a model learning organization, the Commission also explored attributes of high-performing education organizations. Key

concepts for such organizations are a relentless focus on results and a systematic and purposeful use of evidence for continuous improvement. The fifth standard is built upon these concepts:

Standard 5: PROVIDER QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

The provider maintains a quality assurance system comprised of valid data from multiple measures, including evidence of candidates' and completers' positive impact on P-12 student learning and development. The provider supports continuous improvement that is sustained and evidence-based, and that evaluates the effectiveness of its completers. The provider uses the results of inquiry and data collection to establish priorities, enhance program elements and capacity, and test innovations to improve completers' impact on P-12 student learning and development.

The Commission also offered recommendations to the CAEP Board of Directors related to Annual Reporting and CAEP Monitoring, as well as Levels of Accreditation Decisions. The annual reporting recommendations involve gathering and monitoring measures related to program impact, program outcomes, and consumer information, and also CAEP identification of both levels of performance and significant amounts of change in any of these indicators that would prompt further examination. These data would be published as a recurring feature in CAEP's annual report. The recommended levels of accreditation decisions include denial of accreditation; probationary accreditation; full accreditation; and—after a design and piloting period—an exemplary or “gold” accreditation as a capstone measure.

Evidence and Accountability

The charge to the Commission gave equal weight to “essential standards” and “accompanying evidence” indicating that standards are met. The Commission integrated issues of data and evidence into its conversations throughout its deliberations and identified six aspects of evidence that summarize its perspectives:

1. Decisions are informed by multiple measures.
2. Preparation is judged by the impact that completers have on P-12 student learning and development.
3. Educator preparation providers are responsible for the validity and reliability of evidence they offer to demonstrate that CAEP standards are met.
4. Educator preparation providers maintain quality assurance systems that support continuous monitoring of a wide range of conditions and outcomes of preparation, and they use data to reach toward and surpass challenging goals.
5. CAEP must take responsible implementation steps that acknowledge providers begin in different places. To be fully accredited, however, providers must be on a certain path to reach CAEP's more rigorous standards and evidence expectations.
6. CAEP can, and must, play a prominent role to advance evidence-informed accreditation as one of its professional responsibilities.

CAEP accreditation will strengthen the quality of evidence measuring whether programs prepare effective teachers. It supports multiple measures. It judges programs by the impact that completers have on P-12 student learning and development. It requires providers to report their performance, discuss it with stakeholders, and use data to continuously monitor and improve their performance.

Commissioners are optimistic that advances in the quality of evidence are at hand, and CAEP must undertake substantial continuing responsibilities to upgrade the currently available data on which

educator preparation providers and accreditation rely. These involve several related activities to both *develop better data* and to *use data better*.

The Commission has set a high bar, ensuring that attaining accreditation status is a meaningful achievement providing a mark of distinction for educator preparation providers, and one that ultimately ensures that educators enter the classroom ready to have a positive impact on the learning of *all* students and prepare them to compete in today's global economy.