

**Montana Board of Public Education,
Montana State Superintendent of Public Instruction,
and the
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation**

Partnership Agreement

November 14, 2014

In order to promote excellence in educator preparation by coordinating Montana 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), the Board of Public Education (BPE), and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction (SSPI) enter into this partnership agreement. The agreement describes the partnership and delineates the processes and policies for CAEP accreditation in Montana.

I. Standards for National Accreditation of Educator Preparation Providers

- A. CAEP educator preparation provider standards must be met on the basis of sufficient and accurate evidence to merit national accreditation by CAEP.
- B. Montana Professional Educator Preparation Program standards play a central role in the CAEP/Montana accreditation process.

II. Process of National Accreditation for Educator Preparation Providers

- A. The process required for national accreditation by CAEP is outlined in the 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 joint CAEP/Montana site visit, and complete an approved program review process for all programs of study leading to professional practice in an accredited school setting.
- B. Terms of accreditation shall be for seven years. EPP accreditation status is subject to CAEP/Montana policies, including the CAEP annual payment of fees 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 three program review options listed in 111.0 below that have been approved by the BPE upon recommendation of the SSPI. In this partnership agreement, EPPs will submit a self-study following the instructions for the selected program review process, including disaggregated data by content area.
- B. The BPE is authorized to approve all programs making the final decision by using information provided as part of the accreditation and program review process and recommendation from the state superintendent.

- 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. EPPs will choose from among the following program review options for each licensure/endorsement area and may choose different options for different licenses/endorsements, e.g., Educational Leadership; Teacher Education, Alternative Routes.
- E. For purposes of the BPE program approval, the BPE and the SSPI recognize the following program review options:

1. **CAEP Program Review with National Recognition:**

CAEP Program Review with National Recognition applies SPA standards in the review process and can result in national recognition. The SSPI's staff on behalf of the BPE will examine the program review report and will provide a recommendation to the BPE for the final decision on continued Montana approval.

Link to websites of the CAEP and of particular SPAs for more information:
<http://caepnet.org/about/governance/memberorgs/>

2. **CAEP Program Review with Feedback:**

CAEP Program Review with Feedback, based on disaggregated data reported in the Self-Study, provides information to EPPs, OPI, states, and accreditation teams.

3. **Montana Program Review by the BPE:**

The SSPI conducts program reviews for purposes of making recommendations to the BPE. The SSPI provides procedures, forms, and instructions on the program review process that leads to final program approval by the Montana BPE.

Link to Montana Educator Preparation Web page:
http://opi.mt.gov/Programs/Accred/#gpm1_5

IV. Accreditation Review Team Composition

The Accreditation Review Team is appointed by CAEP, in consultation with the OPI, according to the guidelines and policies for each selected accreditation pathway. EPPs may select a single pathway for all programs or select different pathways for each program an EPP offers. The accreditation pathways include the Continuous Improvement Pathway, Inquiry Brief Pathway, or Transformation Initiative Pathway. The SSPI and CAEP will conduct a joint CAEP/Montana site review.

The following conditions apply to all teams:

- All members of review teams must have successfully completed CAEP/Montana review team member training.
- A P-12 practitioner shall be a member of each CAEP/Montana team.
- MEA-MFT may appoint an observer for the joint CAEP/Montana site visit review at MEA-MFT's expense.
- The EPP will assume all expenses – including travel, lodging and meals – for CAEP/Montana team members, as well as the periodic evaluation fee. Joint CAEP/Montana site team activities will be conducted according to the CAEP and the BPE protocols.
- The OPI will assume all expenses- including travel, lodging and meals- for the state consultant and other OPI support staff to facilitate the joint CAEP/Montana site review.
- The joint CAEP/Montana site team operates as a single team with shared responsibilities and equal roles in all aspects of the review, which might include co-chairs or CAEP chairperson.
- The joint CAEP/Montana team report will be shared with the BPE and the SSPI.
- To assure EPPs and the public that joint CAEP/Montana site 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 the CAEP's Code of Conduct.

V. Other Terms and Conditions

- A. CAEP will collaborate with the SSPI to plan, design and implement a range of training opportunities for reviewers. As part of this agreement, the SSPI and the BPE contact(s) may participate in all Web trainings. The registration fee for one SSPI/BPE contact will be waived for one annual CAEP Conference; however the Montana contact must assume other expenses. CAEP will assume all expenses for one SSPI/BPE contact to attend the annual CAEP Clinic, with additional Montana 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 the CAEP's policies regarding fees and expenses for training.
- B. The SSPI will receive copies of all pertinent accreditation and specialized program area approval documents and reports through access to the Accreditation Information Management System (AIMS); the SSPI agency personnel will be supplied with login information, passwords and technical support.
- C. The SSPI will notify CAEP of a "Change in Status-/" within 30 days of action taken by the BPE, or a CAEP-accredited EPP.
- D. Montana EPPs seeking CAEP accreditation or holding CAEP accreditation status will pay annual CAEP dues.
- E. The OPI is responsible for annual CAEP membership dues. Final accreditation decisions are posted on the three websites: CAEP, OPI, and BPE. CAEP sends a

letter with the official accreditation decision to the BPE and the state superintendent. Additionally, CAEP provides written notice of all accreditation decisions to the U.S. Department of Education, all accrediting agencies recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, and the public (via the websites).

- F. The partnership agreement shall be for an initial period of seven years (November 14, 2014, through June 30, 2021) and may be modified by the three parties during that time, if deemed to be necessary.
- G. The SSPI will work with associations that represent P-12 educators (i.e., MEA-MFT, MTSBA, SAM, 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/Montana joint review as visiting team members.
- H. 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.

James G. Cibulka, President
Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation

Sharon Carroll, Chairperson
Board of Public Education

Denise Juneau
State Superintendent of Public Instruction