February 8, 2021

MDE — AAQEP PROVISIONAL COOPERATION AGREEMENT

Between the Michigan Department of Education and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation

This agreement establishes a provisional framework for cooperation between the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) with regard to quality assurance activities in support of educator preparation in the State of Michigan. The purpose of this agreement is to support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and innovation in educator preparation by determining whether AAQEP will become an approved accrediting agency for Michigan educator preparation providers (EPPs) seeking or maintaining national accreditation.

This provisional agreement is contingent on AAQEP achieving formal recognition of accreditor status, either through the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) by January 1, 2022.

AAQEP affirms MDE’s efforts to ensure quality preparation of educators to meet the needs of Michigan’s children, families, schools, and communities and commits to ensuring quality educator preparation by providers approved by MDE. By entering this agreement, MDE affirms AAQEP’s mission of promoting and recognizing quality educator preparation that strengthens the education profession’s ability to serve all students, schools, and communities.

1. Standards Used in Quality Assurance Reviews in Michigan
   Quality Assurance Reviews conducted by AAQEP in Michigan will be guided and framed by the current version of the AAQEP standards (available at www.aaqep.org) and in keeping with AAQEP policy regarding the application of those standards. In conducting reviews of programs approved by MDE, AAQEP will ensure that providers address all relevant Michigan standards, administrative rules, and state regulations.

   In addition, providers are welcome to utilize to other relevant professional standards (for example, those from professional associations such as the National Council for Social Studies [NCSS], the International Literacy Association [ILA], the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], etc.).

2. Scope of Quality Assurance Reviews in Michigan
   The scope of AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in Michigan must include all programs recognized and/or approved by MDE that require continuous accreditation as specified in R 390.1151(3).

3. Quality Assurance Review Process
   All Quality Assurance Reviews conducted by AAQEP will be guided by AAQEP’s policies and procedures as specified in the Guide to Accreditation, available at www.aaqep.org. AAQEP’s process includes an optional proposal review stage two to three years prior to a
scheduled site visit. All Quality Assurance Reviews include an off-site review two months prior to each site visit, conducted virtually, and an on-site visit, the scope of which is determined by program size and complexity. MDE staff are welcome to attend both off-site and on-site visits.

4. Quality Assurance Review Team Composition
AAQEP will appoint a sufficient number of Quality Assurance Review Team members to each review case to ensure that the review is carried out thoroughly and efficiently. Each AAQEP review team will include at least one educational practitioner from Michigan nominated by the provider hosting the review; that practitioner will receive training and support from AAQEP. The local practitioner(s) will support the review team’s understanding of and respect for the local and state educational context.

In addition to the AAQEP-appointed members, one or more MDE staff member(s) may participate as non-writing members of the visit team. MDE participants provide contextual supports for both the visiting team and the provider, attend all visiting team meetings, including those between the team and the provider leadership, and have access to all visit materials.

Other observers, including those seeking a better understanding of the AAQEP process, may participate as agreed to by AAQEP and the host provider.

5. Reviewer Preparation and Qualifications
All review team members will meet AAQEP preparation and quality requirements. Reviewer training and professional learning opportunities will be made available to MDE staff at no cost (though AAQEP will not cover travel expenses); MDE observers need not have participated in the training as a condition for joining review teams as observers. With the exception of a local practitioner, team members shall not have a conflict of interest for an institution, defined as a substantive relationship with the institution or practicing within the state of Michigan. MDE has the right of last refusal for visiting team members.

6. Relation of Accreditation to Program Approval
Ongoing approval of educator preparation programs fully approved by MDE is determined through national accreditation reviews of disaggregated program data and/or statewide program review processes. MDE retains final authority for the continuing approval of all approved preparation programs.

7. Accreditation Decisions
AAQEP accreditation decisions are made by the AAQEP Accreditation Commission. Accreditation statuses and terms are detailed in AAQEP’s Guide and policy documents, available at www.aaqep.org. Full accreditation is for a term of 7 years. Observers from MDE are welcome to attend meetings of the Accreditation Commission at which cases of Michigan providers are considered (meetings are typically conducted via video conference). Accreditation decisions, including the reports on which decisions are based and the Accreditation Commission’s rationale for each decision, will be shared with the Office of Educator Excellence at MDE, which for purposes of this agreement is: electronic.

8. Communication and Logistics of Collaboration
Providers seeking AAQEP accreditation will ensure that MDE is apprised of the schedule of accreditation activities, particularly of target site visit dates; providers will also send
electronically a final copy of or links to the final version of their Quality Assurance Report (the self-study) to MDE at the same time they provide it to AAQEP.

AAQEP will communicate scheduled times of its on-site reviews with MDE staff six to twelve months prior to the event taking place. AAQEP will also apprise designated MDE staff of the schedule of Accreditation Commission meetings at which cases from Michigan providers will be considered. In addition, AAQEP will provide designated MDE staff with copies of all reports or official letters for Michigan providers generated by the review team and by the Accreditation Commission.

9. **AAQEP Capacity Review and Formative Support Options**

AAQEP will make available to Michigan providers, in cooperation with and at the discretion of MDE, two additional services:

- At MDE’s request, AAQEP will conduct capacity reviews of entities seeking first-time approval as an educator preparation provider. Such reviews will be conducted prior to the operation of the provider to provide MDE with a third-party review to inform a provider approval decision. Such reviews will be designed and conducted in partnership with MDE using the AAQEP standards as the framework.

- AAQEP also facilitates program and provider improvement for entities that have identified specific shortcomings in their work, including cases where shortcomings have been identified through external evaluations such as state or accreditation reviews. AAQEP will enter into an agreement with the provider and MDE to establish a timeline, priorities, and outcomes for such reviews.

10. **Scope of Pilot Partnership Agreement**

MDE enters into this agreement with AAQEP as a limited pilot. The requirements for provider participation in this pilot are as follows:

- Pilot participation is limited to three (3) providers
- Eligibility for participation in the pilot is dependent on:
  - Available space within MDE’s Accreditation Timeline, not to exceed three accreditation visits per semester.
  - Full Accreditation status (non-legacy, non-Probationary, non-Accredited with Stipulations) and good standing with both their current accreditor and MDE. Provider must maintain current accreditation until AAQEP accreditation has been achieved. AAQEP accreditation must be finalized prior to the expiration of current accreditation.

Assurances for Provider use of AAQEP:

1. AAQEP must obtain Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) approval to meet R 390.1151(3) no later than January 1, 2022.
2. AAQEP accreditation process should be completed in collaboration with the Office of Educator Excellence (OEE) and should utilize the AAQEP 2021 (or later) Guide to Accreditation.
3. The provider must address the following areas of value through the accreditation process:
   - Maintenance of a quality assurance system of multiple measures that allow the EPP to determine program and provider effectiveness over time and provide data to a functional continuous improvement process
b. Tracking of candidate progress from entrance through certification through multiple measures administered at multiple points
c. Support provided those candidates
d. Determination of candidate quality and diversity
e. Demonstration of mutually beneficial clinical partnerships-mentor training-clinical experiences across candidate programs
f. Candidate access to/successful experiences in diverse educational environments with diverse students
g. Demonstration of completer quality and satisfaction
h. How the provider addresses issues of equity in educator preparation as well as in educator demographics

MDE will make a determination of pilot success based on the following criteria:
1. Pilot accreditation processes provide clear, consistent review of provider operations and effectiveness, identifying areas of strength as well as processes needing address.
2. Data from pilot accreditation visits, including feedback from providers, indicate stakeholder support and value for the AAQEP accreditation process.
3. Accreditation visit results provide a unit level assessment of quality comparable to existing national accrediting organization determinations. This unit level assessment should include continuity from the previous accreditation determination, and a demonstration of continuous improvement for areas identified as needing improvement in the most recent accreditation determination.

11. Membership
AAQEP views cooperation among accreditors, educator preparation providers, and MDE as essential to effective quality assurance. It enters into this agreement with the intent of supporting both MDE and providers authorized by it in ensuring the preparation of excellent and effective teachers and other professional educators. MDE agrees to join AAQEP as a state member at no cost in support of these goals during the pilot period. This agreement can be modified by either party at any time and MDE reserves the right to withdraw from the agreement if pilot objectives are not met.

In support of shared goals, AAQEP will provide supportive services including workshops and webinars to providers in Michigan at reasonable cost. MDE staff may participate in any AAQEP activities offered within Michigan at no cost (AAQEP cannot cover travel expenses, meals, or lodging). AAQEP will also provide one MDE staff member with a no-cost registration to its Annual Quality Assurance Symposium and provide any additional MDE staff registration at the reduced member rate. In addition, MDE staff may participate in AAQEP professional learning events, including reviewer training, at no cost (travel, etc., excepted, as above).
CEO and President, AAQEP

Director, Office of Educator Excellence MDE