COOPERATION AGREEMENT

between the
Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation
and
Nevada Department of Education

This agreement establishes a framework for cooperation between the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), P.O. Box 7511, Fairfax, VA 22039, and Nevada Department of Education (NV DOE), 700 E. Fifth Street, Carson City, NV 89701, with regard to quality assurance activities in support of educator preparation in the State of Nevada. The purpose of this agreement is to support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and innovation in educator preparation by entities approved by NV DOE as they seek and maintain national accreditation through AAQEP.

The term of this agreement shall begin December 1, 2021, and end June 30, 2026. The agreement may be modified whenever NV DOE and AAQEP find it appropriate during this term.

AAQEP affirms NV DOE’s efforts to ensure quality preparation of educators to meet the needs of Nevada’s children, families, schools, and communities and commits to ensuring quality educator preparation by AAQEP member-providers in NV. By entering this agreement, NV DOE 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

Quality assurance reviews conducted by AAQEP in NV will be guided by the current version of the AAQEP standards (available at https://aaqep.org) and in keeping with AAQEP policy regarding the application of those standards. Providers approved by NV DOE must meet all relevant NV standards set forth in Nevada State laws, rules, or regulations, and other relevant regulations.

In addition, providers are welcome to orient their quality assurance review to other relevant professional standards (for example, those from professional associations such as the National Council for Social Studies, the International Literacy Association, the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, etc.).
2. Scope of Quality Assurance Reviews

The scope of AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in NV must include all programs registered with or recognized by the state education authority that require continuous accreditation as specified in relevant reference to Nevada State law or policy. In addition to programs specified above, the provider may, at its discretion, choose to include additional programs of study leading to a degree or certificate designed for those intending to work as, or already working as, education professionals. For such programs of study, where no state standards are specified, the provider shall identify any standards in addition to the AAQEP standards to which the programs are aligned.

The provider will clearly identify which aspects of its work are and are not accredited in all public displays that make note of accreditation.

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 AAQEP Accreditation, available at https://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, which NV DOE staff are welcome to attend, and an on-site visit, the scope of which is determined by program size and complexity.

4. Quality Review Team Composition

AAQEP will appoint a sufficient number of Quality 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 Nevada 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 NV DOE staff members may participate as observers. Other observers, including those seeking a better understanding of the AAQEP process, may participate as agreed to by AAQEP and the hosting 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 NV DOE staff at no cost (though AAQEP will not cover travel expenses); NV DOE observers are invited to participate in training prior to joining review teams as observers. Training is not a condition for participation as observers.
6. Relation of Accreditation to Program Approval

All decisions for state approval of education preparation programs for each content or specialty area are within the sole authority of the NV DOE. State decisions to approve or not approve provider programs are made independent of AAQEP determinations regarding accreditation of the provider. AAQEP acknowledges that the rules and standards that govern state approval of a provider and its programs in Nevada are subject to change at any time by the state authority.

AAQEP’s process requires disaggregation of evidence by licensure, certificate, or endorsement area as well as by program site and/or mode of delivery. This allows for quality judgments to be made regarding each licensure, certificate, or endorsement area program under the scope of accreditation. Quality assurance at the program level provides evidence for how AAQEP standards on candidate and completer performance are being met and facilitates comprehensive judgment of the provider as a whole.

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 https://aaqep.org. Full accreditation is for a term of 7 years. Observers from NV DOE are welcome to attend meetings of the Accreditation Commission at which cases of Nevada 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 NV DOE.

8. Communication and Logistics of Collaboration

Providers seeking AAQEP accreditation will ensure that NV DOE is apprised of the schedule of accreditation activities, including scheduled site visit dates. Providers will also send a copy of or links to the final version of their Quality Assurance Report (the self-study) electronically to NV DOE at the same time they provide it to AAQEP. AAQEP will inform NV DOE of the Accreditation Commission meeting(s) at which a provider’s case will be considered.

AAQEP will send copies of all reports or official letters generated by the review team and the Accreditation Commission to NV DOE.

In addition, NV DOE and AAQEP agree to share information regarding any changes to state approval and national accreditation status.

9. AAQEP Capacity Review and Formative Support Options

AAQEP will make available to Nevada providers, in cooperation with and at the discretion of NV DOE, two additional services:
At NV DOE’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 program to provide NV DOE with a third-party review to inform a program approval decision. Such reviews will be designed and conducted in partnership with NV DOE 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 NV DOE to establish a timeline, priorities, and outcomes for such reviews.

10. Membership

AAQEP views cooperation among accreditors, educator preparation providers, and SEAs as essential to effective quality assurance. It enters into this agreement with the intent of supporting both NV DOE and providers authorized by it in ensuring the preparation of excellent and effective teachers and other professional educators. NV DOE agrees to join AAQEP as a state member at no cost in support of these goals.

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

Signatures:

Mark LaCelle-Peterson, President and CEO, AAQEP

Name of SEA Representative, SEA