Utah — AAQEP COOPERATION AGREEMENT
between the Utah State Board of Education
and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation

This agreement establishes a framework for cooperation between the Utah State Board of Education (USBE) 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 Utah. The purpose of this agreement is to support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and innovation in educator preparation by entities approved by USBE as they seek and maintain national accreditation through AAQEP.

AAQEP affirms USBE’s efforts to ensure quality preparation of educators to meet the needs of children, families, schools, and communities and commits to ensuring quality educator preparation by providers approved by USBE. By entering this agreement, USBE 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 Utah
   Quality Assurance Reviews conducted by AAQEP in Utah 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. In conducting reviews of programs approved by USBE AAQEP will require that all relevant Utah standards and Board Rules be addressed.

   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 [NCSS], the International Literacy Association [ILA], the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics [NCTM], etc.).

2. Scope of Quality Assurance Reviews in Utah
   The scope of the AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in Utah will be determined by the provider in consultation with AAQEP. 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 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 USBE staff are welcome to attend, and anon-site visit, the scope of which is determined by program size and complexity.

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 Utah 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 USBE staff member(s) 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 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 USBE staff at no cost (though AAQEP will not cover travel expenses); USBE observers need not have participated in the training as a condition for joining review teams as observers.

6. Relation of Accreditation to Program Approval
All USBE-approved educator preparation programs in Utah are required to meet or exceed national standards (Utah State Code 53E-6-302). AAQEP accreditation demonstrates that educator preparation programs have met these national standards.

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 USBE are welcome to attend meetings of the Accreditation Commission at which cases of Utah 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 designated office at USBE, which for purposes of this agreement is the USBE Educator Preparation Program Approval Specialist.

8. Communication and Logistics of Collaboration
Providers seeking AAQEP accreditation will ensure that USBE 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 USBE at the same time they provide it to AAQEP.

AAQEP will communicate scheduled times of its off-site and on-site reviews with USBE staff as specified in the agreement. In addition, AAQEP will provide designated USBE staff with copies of all reports or official letters for Utah providers generated by the review team and by the Accreditation Commission.

9. AAQEP Capacity Review and Formative Support Options
AAQEP will make available to Utah providers, in cooperation with and at the discretion of USBE, two additional services:

- At USBE’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 USBE with a third-party review to inform a program approval decision. Such reviews will be designed and conducted in partnership with USBE 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 USBE 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 USBE and providers authorized by it in ensuring the preparation of excellent and effective teachers and other professional educators. USBE 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 Utah at reasonable cost. USBE staff may participate in any AAQEP activities offered within Utah at no cost (AAQEP cannot cover travel expenses, meals, or lodging). AAQEP will also provide one USBE staff member with a no-cost registration to its annual Quality Assurance Symposium and provide any additional USBE staff registration at the reduced member rate. In addition, USBE staff may participate in AAQEP professional learning events, including reviewer training, at no cost (travel, etc., excepted, as above).

This agreement is valid from the date of the latest signature through June 30, 2026.

Mark LaCelle-Peterson
CEO and President,
AAQEP

Patty Norman
Deputy Superintendent
Utah State Board of Education