WVBE/WVHEPC—AAQEP COOPERATION AGREEMENT

between the
West Virginia Board of Education
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
and the
Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation

This agreement establishes a framework for cooperation among the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE), the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission (WVHEPC), and the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) with regards to quality assurance activities in support of educator preparation in the State of WV. The purpose of this agreement is to support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and innovation in educator preparation by entities approved by (WVHEPC) as they seek and maintain national accreditation through AAQEP.

AAQEP affirms WVBE and WVHEPC’s efforts to ensure quality preparation of educators to meet the needs of West Virginia’s children, families, schools, and communities and commits to ensuring quality educator preparation by providers approved by WVBE and WVHEPC. By entering this agreement, WVBE and WVHEPC affirm 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 WV will be guided 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 WVBE and WVHEPC AAQEP will require that all relevant WV standards 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.).

   All programs that lead to initial licensure through a baccalaureate, post baccalaureate, or master’s program must be submitted to the WV Content Area Program Approval (WV CAPA). A rating of ‘Fully Approved’ must be obtained to be considered an active program that leads to licensure.

2. Scope of Quality Assurance Reviews
   The scope of AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in WV must include all programs recognized and/or approved by the WVBE and WVHEPC that require continuous accreditation as specified in WVBE Policy 5100 and 5202. 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, educational 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 its program(s) is(are) aligned.

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. West Virginia EPPs will gain WVBE approval to begin working with AAQEP contingent on writing a proposal that is reviewed as ‘complete’ by AAQEP staff. A successful proposal will include, but not limited to, demonstration that appropriate data sources are available to address the standards and reliability and validity have been empirically investigated. After an EPP’s initial review with AAQEP, the proposal step is optional unless the provider ceases then returns to work with AAQEP.

All Quality Assurance Reviews include an off-site review two to three months prior to each site visit, conducted virtually, which WVBE and WVHEPC staff are welcome to attend as observers.

EPPs transitioning to AAQEP will maintain recommendation privileges by following the WVDE Transition Guidance Document with the following requirements:

1. Follow the WVDE guidance document, Link: Policy Resources, when terminating the current membership to pursue a new membership with another WVBE approved accreditor until full accreditation is received by the new accreditor.

   OR,

2. Maintain membership with both accrediting agencies, including submission of annual report to the current accreditor until the accreditation process is completed with the new accreditor.

4. Quality Assurance Review Team Composition

Quality Assurance Reviews will be joint reviews, including AAQEP-designated member(s) and WVBE /WVHEPC-designated member(s).

- Appointment of reviewers: Nominations for reviewers for each review case, as agreed to by AAQEP and the provider hosting the review, are to be made as follows:
  - AAQEP will appoint two Quality Assurance Review Team members. One of the nominated team members will serve as the team’s leader.
  - WVBE and WVHEPC will nominate one-state reviewer from a WV EPP to be part of the team and to participate in all the review activities including report writing.
  - The provider will nominate a local practitioner, who shall be a currently-serving or recently-retired P-20 educator, in keeping with the qualifications stated in the AAQEP Guide to Accreditation.
  - Thereafter, AAQEP, WVBE, and WVHEPC will alternatively nominate AAQEP-trained reviewers for the review team. AAQEP-nominated reviewers must be deemed acceptable to WVBE and WVHEPC.
  - The total number of reviewers assigned to the Quality Assurance Review team will be determined by AAQEP, WVBE, and WVHEPC based on the complexity of
the programs offered by the provider or for other unique circumstances. Examples: Separate leadership program or multiple campuses.

- WVBE and/or WVHEPC staff member will participate as a state consultant, at the state agencies’ discretion. The state consultant will serve as a liaison between AAQEP and the provider. The state consultant will be included in meetings and will serve as a resource to the team members.
- Other observers, including those seeking a better understanding of the AAQEP process, may participate as agreed to by AAQEP and the host provider.

Training: AAQEP will collaborate with WVBE and WVHEPC to plan, design, and implement a range of training opportunities for reviewers. Additional training events may be arranged, including events in West Virginia, on a cost-recovery basis, with arrangements negotiated according to AAQEP’s policies regarding expenses for training. Exceptions may be made by a mutual agreement of AAQEP, WVBE, and WVHEPC.

WVBE and WVHEPC state-specific standards: WVBE and WVHEPC reserve the right to have other state appointed individuals who may not have received the AAQEP training participate in the review of non-AAQEP state-specific standards if such standards are reviewed concurrently with the joint review team. AAQEP shall include West Virginia-specific standards in the accreditation process.

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 WVBE and WVHEPC staff at no cost (though AAQEP will not cover travel expenses); SEA observers need not have participated in the training as a condition for joining review teams as observers.

6. Relation of Accreditation to Program Approval
In granting program approval, WVBE and WVHEPC may utilize information generated from AAQEP’s review of a provider, including, but not limited to, an AAQEP decision on AAQEP accreditation and the assignment of any Concerns and Conditions, as described in AAQEP policy. WVBE and WVHEPC will use but is not bound to, information from AAQEP.

The AAQEP decision will be submitted to the Educator Preparation Program Review Board (EPPRB) for review and then a recommendation is made to the WVBE for final decision approval.

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 WVBE and WVHEPC are welcome to attend meetings of the Accreditation Commission at which cases of West Virginia 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 WVBE and WVHEPC, which for purposes of this agreement is:

All decisions for state provider approval are within the sole authority of WVBE and WVHEPC and the decision to approve or not approve a provider will be made independent of any AAQEP determinations regarding its accreditation of the provider. The parties agree that the
rules and standards for program and provider approval in West Virginia are subject to change at any time by the West Virginia Legislature or WVBE and WVHEPC, and such rules, as amended, would govern the decision for WVDE and WVHEPC's ultimate approval of providers.

Throughout the term of this agreement, in order to maintain accreditation, providers must comply with AAQEP policies, including submission of annual reports.

If the AAQEP Accreditation Committee issues a decision to deny or revoke accreditation, the provider will have a right to petition for an appeal, consistent with the AAQEP Appeals Policy (https://aaqep.org/appeals-policy).

If a West Virginia provider petitions for the appeal of a decision of the Accreditation Committee, AAQEP will notify WVBE and WVHEPC that such petition has been received.

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

AAQEP will communicate scheduled times of its on-site reviews with WVBE and WVHEPC staff six to twelve months prior to the event taking place. Where joint or concurrent visits are desired, AAQEP staff will coordinate logistics with designated SEA staff and the provider. AAQEP will also apprise designated WVBE and WVHEPC staff of the schedule of Accreditation Commission meetings at which cases from West Virginia providers will be considered. In addition, AAQEP will provide designated WVBE and WVHEPC staff with copies of all reports or official letters for West Virginia providers generated by the review team and by the Accreditation Commission.

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

- At WVBE and WVHEPC'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 WVDE and WVHEPC with a third-party review to inform a program approval decision. Such reviews will be designed and conducted in partnership with WVBE and WVHEPC 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 WVBE and WVHEPC 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 WVBE and WVHEPC and providers authorized by it in ensuring the
preparation of excellent and effective teachers and other professional educators. WVBE and WVHEPC agree 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 West Virginia at a reasonable cost. WVBE and WVHEPC staff may participate in any AAQEP activities offered within West Virginia at no cost (AAQEP cannot cover travel expenses, meals, or lodging). AAQEP will also provide one WVBE or WVHEPC staff member with a no-cost registration to its Annual Quality Assurance Symposium and provide any additional WVBE and WVHEPC staff registration at the reduced member rate. In addition, WVBE and WVHEPC 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 below through January 31, 2027, unless otherwise amended by mutual agreement of AAQEP, WVBE, and WVHEPC.

Mark LaCelle-Peterson
CEO and President,
AAQEP
1-19-2022

Dr. Sarah Armstrong Tucker
Date
Chancellor,
West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission
1-19-2022

Miller L. Hall
Date
President,
West Virginia Board of Education