REPORT BY THE REAUTHORIZATION SITE VISIT TEAM OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION AT METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER

REPORT SUBMITTED TO: METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER, July 17, 2020
Part I. Introduction
This report summarizes the findings of the state reauthorization team for Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) educator preparation programs by the Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) and the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

A. Introduction and Background

The educator preparation unit and programs at MSU Denver were reviewed for reauthorization in spring 2020 with a site visit February 19 – 21, 2020. The previous reauthorization review at MSU took place in February 2015. Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statute §23-1-121, institutions of higher education with approved educator preparation programs must be evaluated not more frequently than once every five years.

Educator Preparation Program Reauthorization Process

The following delineates the path of an educator preparation program submitted for reauthorization to CDHE and CDE:

- Endorsement matrices, syllabi, and accompanying documentation are due to CDE June 30 for fall reauthorization visits and October 31 for spring reauthorization visits. Content reviews are completed months prior to the visit and provide focus areas of content for the site visit team.
- Institutional reports are submitted to CDHE and CDE 60 days prior to the scheduled site visit. If the institution is pursuing national accreditation through a recognized accrediting agency, report submission for national accreditation may be substituted for state institutional reports.
- CDHE reviews the submitted evidence prior to the site visit to identify the unit and programs strengths and potential areas for review.
- CDHE compiles a list of missing information needed to document the performance criteria listed above and specific questions to clarify information submitted in the proposal.
- Reauthorization site visits are jointly conducted by CDHE and CDE. The site visit consists of an entrance interview, unit and program review including conversations with stakeholders, and an exit interview.
- CDHE and CDE jointly compile information from the institutional report and site visit reviews, including content review information from the educator quality standards. CDHE and CDE submit the draft report to the IHE.
- The IHE shall respond to the draft report in a rejoinder and provide additional information or address any concerns within 30 days of receiving the draft report.
- CDHE and CDE finalize the reauthorization report.
- CDE forwards the report and a recommendation to the State Board of Education (SBE) for their consideration.
- SBE forwards their recommendation on program content to the CDHE, which then forwards the recommendation to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) for their final determination of reauthorization.
- The CCHE determines reauthorization of educator preparation programs.

Reauthorization Site Team Members

The reauthorization site review team consisted of representatives from CDHE, CDE, one peer representative from an IHE, and one representative from a local school district. The members included:

Brittany Lane, Ph.D., Director of Educator Preparation, Colorado Department of Higher Education; Kim Poast, Ph.D., Chief Student Success and Academic Affairs Officer, Colorado Department of Higher Education;
Ben Boggs, Ph. D., Chief of Staff, Colorado Department of Higher Education;
Mary Bivens, Director of Educator Development, Colorado Department of Education;
Carolyn Haug, Ph.D., Director of Research and Impact, Colorado Department of Education;
Ellen Hunter, Literacy Specialist with ESSU, Colorado Department of Education;
Alex Frazier, Ed.S., Principal Literacy Consultant P-3 Office, Colorado Department of Education.
Travis Anderson, Ph.D., Senior Director of Planning and Academic Programs; and
Colleen O’Brien, Ph.D., Executive Director of Teacher Learning, Jefferson County School District

Site Visit Meetings and Protocol
The reauthorization review team received the institutional report in advance, prepared and submitted by the MSU. The site review occurred February 19-21, 2020, during which time the team members met with the following:

- School of Education Leadership (SoE):
  - Elizabeth Hinde, Ph.D., Dean, School of Education
  - Lisa Altemueller, Ed.D., Associate Dean
- Vicki Golich, Ph.D., Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Janine Davidson, Ph.D., President
- Advising and admissions staff
- Chairs, faculty, and field supervisors across all educator preparation programs in the School of Education and the College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences
- Current candidates and alumni in early childhood, elementary, K-12, secondary, and special education
- District partners including mentor teachers, principals, and Special Education and Human Resource Directors

The team reviewed MSU Denver’s institutional report, course syllabi, student records, field placement locations and operations, and a wide range of other data prior to, over the course of, and subsequent to the site visit.

During the on-site visit, current students, alumni, and K-12 district partners were interviewed regarding their experience with the educator preparation program at MSU Denver. Resulting comments and feedback have been incorporated into this report.

Historical Context: MSU Denver Educator Preparation Program
The following description is taken from MSU’s institutional report:

MSU Denver is a comprehensive, baccalaureate- and master's-degree granting urban university offering arts and sciences, professional, and business courses and programs to a diverse student population. MSU Denver has 11 undergraduate and post-baccalaureate licensure programs, five options leading to alternative licensure, and two concentrations for the Master of Arts in Teaching. In addition to the traditional campus-based programs, there is an Alternative Licensure Program. Please refer to the Alternative Licensure Programs (ALP) website. MSU Denver, Colorado’s urban land grant university, was created as an accessible, modified open enrollment, four-year baccalaureate granting institution by an act of the state legislature in 1965. At that time, members of the Colorado Legislature Task Force on Education Beyond High School
believed it important to have a College in downtown Denver that would meet the academic needs of non-traditional students as well as serving traditional students. The college later became known as Colorado's College of Opportunity. Fifty-three years later, MSU Denver has become one of the largest public undergraduate universities in the United States and continues to move towards being recognized as the preeminent public urban university in the nation. MSU Denver has grown to nearly 21,000 students including approximately 44% students of color and educates more undergraduate Coloradans than any other university in the state. Almost all of MSU Denver's students come from Colorado and a large majority are from the seven-county metro area. In April 2007, MSU Denver launched the goal of achieving the federal designation of Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI). The University recently met its goal of increasing its Latino student enrollment from 13% to 25% and is now recognized as an HSI. Students can choose from more than 85 Majors, 70 Minors, and a Custom Degree Option. The average class size is 21 with a student/faculty ratio is 18:1.

Part II. Reauthorization Findings:

A. Introduction

The reauthorization team was impressed overall, with:
- How dedicated faculty are to MSU Denver students.
- How faculty teach like they expect candidates to teach P-12 students.
- MSU Denver’s mission and vision and how clearly important it is to faculty, staff, and students alike.
- The sense of community.

Alumni and current students told the reauthorization team they appreciate:
- Being a MSU Denver graduate. They are clearly proud of their program and the university.
- The mission and focus on urban education and diversity.

Faculty appreciate:
- The content preparation is strong.
- The University, faculty, and students’ commitment to social justice.

District partners appreciate
- The levels of support available for candidates and mentors compared to years ago.
- Commitment for building district/university partnerships and opportunity to provide feedback on the preparation programs
- Focus on supporting districts outside of the Denver-metro region
- Expansion of the social justice focus.

B. Level of Proficiency

The following table is a summary of each indicator the site review team uses to review educator preparation programs, pursuant to C.R.S. §23-1-121(2). Based on the site review findings outlined in the following report, each measure is given an overall rating of: proficient, partially proficient, or not proficient. Table 1 shows the level of proficiency for each performance-based measure.

Table 1: MSU Denver’s Level of Proficiency
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educator Preparation Performance Measures</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Not Proficient</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A. Admissions Systems:</strong> The unit maintains a comprehensive admissions system that includes screening of a candidate’s dispositions for the field in which he or she is seeking licensure, consideration of a candidate’s academic preparation for entry into his or her desired endorsement area or areas, and preadmission advising for students who are considering becoming candidates.</td>
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<td><strong>B. Ongoing Advising and Screening of Candidates:</strong> The unit provides ongoing advising and screening of candidates by practicing educators or college and university faculty members.</td>
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<td><strong>C. Coursework and Field-Based Training Integrate Theory and Practice:</strong> The coursework and field-based training integrates theory and practice and educates candidates in methodologies, practices, and procedures of teaching standards-based education, specifically in teaching the content and skills defined in the Colorado Academic Standards.</td>
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<td><strong>D. Supervised Field-Based Experience:</strong> Each teacher candidate in an initial licensure program completes a minimum of 800 hours; each principal and administrator candidate completes a minimum of 300 hours; and each candidate for other advanced degrees or add-on endorsements completes appropriate supervised field-based experience that relates to predetermined learning standards and includes best practices and national norms, related to</td>
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<td><strong>E. Content and skills required for licensure:</strong> Demonstrate content skills required for licensure, as determined by the State Board of Education.</td>
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<td><strong>F Comprehensive, Ongoing Assessment:</strong> There is comprehensive and ongoing evaluation of each candidate’s subject matter and professional knowledge and ability to demonstrate skill in applying the professional knowledge.</td>
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**C. Recommendation**

The reauthorization team recommends reauthorization of the educator preparation programs at Metropolitan State University of Denver and includes the endorsement areas listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Approved Endorsement Areas for MSU Denver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturally &amp; Linguistically Diverse Education (4.22)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elementary Education (4.02)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early Childhood Education (4.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Arts (4.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics (4.14)</td>
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</tbody>
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Part III. Report by Reauthorization Site Review Team

A. Statutory Performance Measures

Statutory Performance Measure A: Admissions Systems: The unit maintains a comprehensive admissions system that includes screening of a candidate’s dispositions for the field in which he or she is seeking licensure, consideration of a candidate’s academic preparation for entry into his or her desired endorsement area or areas, and preadmission advising for students who are considering becoming candidates.

Summary finding: The reauthorization team finds MSU Denver’s educator preparation programs are proficient on Performance Measure A. Performance indicators: A1, A2, A3; C.R.S. 23-1-121(a).

MSU Denver has a comprehensive admissions system that attracts diverse candidates, pre-screens prospective candidates for relevant dispositions, and utilizes efficient transfer policies.

The year 2014 marked the first period in Colorado when most K-12 students were black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, or other non-white ethnicity, yet teachers are still overwhelmingly white. Consistent with the mission and vision of the university, however, MSU Denver’s SoE admits some of the most diverse candidates in the metro area. To attract a diverse student body, MSU understands that you must have diversity faculty. MSU has two programs program to support diverse faculty: Faculty Recruitment Incentive Programs (FRIP) and Target of Opportunity Program (TOP).

The FRIP program is designed to increase diversity at MSU Denver by encouraging MSU Denver academic departments currently engaged in the screening and selection of faculty to aggressively seek/invite applications from and hire faculty from classes underrepresented in the department, the school or University as a whole for such positions.” “The TOP has been designed to increase the number of qualified diverse faculty/administrators and to attract outstanding teaching faculty to MSU Denver. This will be done by providing extra resources and flexible recruiting/hiring procedures.

Prospective candidates personal and professional dispositions are screened prior to admission and are coached and re-assessed through the program to ensure that candidates are a good fit for the profession. Probationary candidates, for example those that may not quite have the requisite GPA, are allowed to take SoE coursework, though not those that require field experiences. MSU Denver utilizes flexible policies that promote the recruitment of effective faculty and candidates.

MSU has a system for admitting transfer students into the School of Education. The site visit team met with students who had entered through multiple pathways to include 2-year institutions, other 4-year IHEs, as well as other departments from within MSU Denver and all report nearly seamless transfer. MSU Denver also participates in the statewide transfer agreements for both Early Childhood Teacher Education and
Elementary Teacher Education and have committed to exploring other education agreements.

**Recommendations and Areas for Improvement for A: Admissions Systems:**

Recommendation: Continue to examine and formalize existing and additional SoE specific supports to offer current students to promote retention.

**Statutory Performance Measure B: Ongoing Advising and Screening of Candidates:** The unit provides ongoing advising and screening of candidates by practicing educators or college and university faculty members.

**Summary finding:** The reauthorization team finds MSU Denver’s educator preparation programs proficient on Performance Measure B. *Performance indicators: B1; C.R.S. 23-1-121(b)*

The MSU Denver SoE has systems in place to position candidates to be successful. There are professional advisors for those who are considering entering the SoE. Once candidates are admitted they are assigned to a faculty advisor. Current students and alumni report that they receive timely and consistent advising from their faculty advisers. Faculty, across content areas, spoke about this being a primary function of their roles. Additionally, alumni spoke often about being able to rely on faculty for professional advice even after they have completed their programs.

The SoE has a sufficient process for identifying and supporting struggling candidates. Candidates and faculty both use the dispositions survey and have ongoing conversations about candidate’s results. Mentors and principles feel comfortable talking with faculty about candidates who are not meeting expectations and report that university supervisors are very responsive. There is a struggling candidate protocol that begins with early supports and then a process for a more formal support plan.

**Recommendations and Areas for Improvement for B: Advising, Ongoing Screening and Counseling:**

Recommendation: Examine benchmarks for candidate progression through the program to formalize a system of supports.

**Statutory Performance Measure C: Coursework and Field-Based Training Integrate Theory and Practice:** Coursework and field-based training integrates theory and practice and educates candidates in methodologies, practices, and procedures of teaching standards-based education, specifically in teaching the content and skills defined in the Colorado Academic Standards.

**Summary finding:** The reauthorization team finds MSU Denver proficient on Performance Measure C: Coursework and Field-Based Training Integrates Theory and Practice. *Performance indicators: C1, C2, C.R.S. 23-1-121(c),*

The integration of theory into practice and responsiveness to the community’s needs are strengths of MSU Denver’s educator preparation programs. MSU Denver offers numerous field placements prior to their final student teaching or residency placement to allow opportunities to put theory into practice and apply skills. Candidates, faculty, and mentors all shared the same appreciation for the alignment of coursework and fieldwork. Candidates demonstrate a good understanding of the Teacher Quality Standards, as well as Colorado Academic Standards (CAS). Mentor teachers report candidates use CAS to plan at the unit and lesson level. The lesson plan template candidates use is scaffolded with new components being added as candidates are introduced to them. This brings coherence to the courses within the education department,
though it is not used in the methods courses outside the SoE.

MSU Denver’s SoE is well known for meeting the communities urban and suburban educator workforce needs. Responsiveness to diversity is valued in the mission of the University and a significant reason that both current candidates and alumni state they chose MSU Denver. Candidates are responsive to differences based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity, and geographical area. In particular the State appreciates MSU has embedded the opportunity for the Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) endorsements in numerous initial licensure areas.

Special education candidates report that most of their coursework was relevant and applicable. Specifically, candidates indicate that faculty emphasize Response to Intervention (RTI) and that they felt well-prepared to use that tool. However, candidates and mentors alike said that candidates were not prepare for the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process. Both felt that more instruction and opportunities for practice were necessary. Mentors suggested that candidates know the 504 language but not the practical application.

**Recommendations and Areas for Improvement for C: Coursework and Field-Based Training Integrate Theory and Practice:**

Recommendation: Examine data regarding special education courses that address the IEP process to determine in which areas more depth can be explored.

Recommendation: Consider including candidates as MSU Denver plans, prepares or conducts audits to ensure alignment to the 2020 CAS.

**Statutory Performance Measure D: Supervised Field-Based Experience:** Each teacher candidate in an initial licensure program completes a minimum of 800 hours; each principal and administrator candidate complete a minimum of 300 hours; and each other advanced degree or add-on endorsement candidate completes appropriate supervised field-based experience that relates to predetermined learning standards and includes best practices and national norms related to the candidate’s endorsement.

**Summary finding:** The reauthorization team finds MSU Denver partially proficient on Performance Measure D. *Performance Indicators: D1, C.R.S. 23-1-121(d).*

There has been a lot of growth in the clinical field experiences offered at MSU Denver. The State appreciates the residency model used with elementary education students and the commitment shown by the SoE with the support provided to the Office of Clinical Experiences and Partnerships (OCEP). One mentor teacher went so far as to say that he had a MSU Denver student teacher several years ago and has had other EPP student teachers since, but that working with the MSU Denver student teacher he had this year was the first time that he’s felt he could work with a candidate as a “practitioner partner.” District partners also noted the positive impact that the OCEP has shown in the last year or two. Communication and expectations are clearer and timelier as they partner with MSU Denver for clinical placements within their districts.

There continues to be opportunities to strengthen partnerships and internal placement processes. For example, several teacher candidates and alumni reported they did not feel prepared to work with students in extremely high-needs areas. Some of these same respondents stated that they completed most of their field experiences in the same school setting. Several candidates the site-visit team spoke with indicated that they found their own placements for field experiences and the majority said they found their own
student teaching placements. This does not appear to be the procedure with all programs or the policy of the OCEP, however as the State heard different experiences based on different endorsement areas.

MSU Denver offers candidates about 100 hours of experience in the field each year as early as their sophomore year. Ensuring candidates are in the field early and often affords candidates deep meaningful opportunities for practice that are consistent with best practice and in complete alignment with the philosophy of the SoE, priorities of President Davidson, and expectations of the State. OCEP should continue to establish clear procedures for determining candidate placements and supports as well as training and supporting mentors that are consistent across all SoE and CLAS educator programs.

The State recognizes the sheer number of candidates that MSU Denver places in K-12 schools across the metro area for both field and culminating clinical experiences each semester. And, that finding strong mentors for each that are not over utilized is no small feat. The district partnerships that have been established have certainly made this possible. Candidate mentors need to be thoughtfully selected and matched based on student and school district needs. Strong, mutually beneficial relationships with district partners will allow MSU Denver to utilize expertise at the school level and to cultivate the shared sense of responsibility for candidate development. One example of MSU faculty and staff developing such relationships is with Westminster in which the district asked for help with curriculum and creating opportunities to support ECE candidates. Mentors suggest that they would like to find ways to cooperate even more.

In addition to providing strong clinical experiences, MSU Denver leadership also recognizes the importance of having those be paid experiences for candidates. Dr. Hinde works extensively to secure donations to the SoE to support scholarships. The Noyce program is also extremely helpful to students – one mentioned that they would have had to drop out of the program as they would not have been able to afford it otherwise. MSU Denver also collaborates with district partners to find creative ways to divert funds to pay residents. It is important that education preparation providers continue to find opportunities to make programs affordable for candidates. MSU Denver leadership recognizes that doing so is the only way to recruit a diverse educator workforce into a field with such high social value but low economic return.

Mentors and faculty describe a collaborative process for communicating about candidate progress, but even more is requested by K-12 partners. Mentors appreciate time on campus to learn about expectations and co-teaching. Some mentors mentioned that they would like to see MSU host even more opportunities to meet in a Professional Learning Community (PLC) to connect their learning as candidates and mentors as a cohort.

Mentors said that the student teaching handbook was helpful, and some suggested something similar for fields would be helpful to increase impact as well. Mentors would like a checklist of expectations, timelines, meetings, and assignments. Mentors also asked for a scope and sequence of courses so that they would know what candidates have and have not learned. Mentors suggest they have sufficient opportunities to provide feedback on candidates, but they would like more immediate feedback on their skills as well.

**Recommendations and Areas for Improvement for D: Supervised Field-Based Experience**

Area for improvement: Placements need to be more structured to include process of going through OCEP and school district procedures to include mentor and site selection, fingerprinting, district entrance requirements and ensure good lines of communication. A more consistent and systematized process will allow candidates to experience diverse placements.

Recommendation: Clearly identify candidate outcomes with your school partners and communicate those to all mentor teachers.
Recommendation: Continue to examine opportunities for all education candidates to have paid residency experiences.

**Statutory Performance Measure E: Content and Skills Required for Licensure:** Each candidate, prior to graduation, must demonstrate the skills required for licensure, as determined by the State Board of Education.

**Summary finding:** The reauthorization team finds the educator preparation programs at MSU Denver partially proficient on Performance Measure E. *Performance Indicators: EI, C.R.S. 23-1-121(e)*.

All program endorsement matrices aligning to state standards, syllabi and accompanying documentation was submitted to CDE during the summer and early fall of 2019. CDE had all materials peer reviewed from late fall 2019 through winter of 2020. This peer review process helped the state site team members be prepared to learn more from various stakeholder conversations as well as providing feedback for the institution. As a result of the peer reviews, most of MSU Denver’s endorsements were found to be aligned to and meeting state standards, but two areas of focus were problematic. One issue ultimately turned out to be primarily due to poor preparation for the content submission, but not a substantive teacher training problem, and the other issue remains as an area of concern, as discussed below:

- The Special Education Endorsement Standards alignment evidence initially submitted by MSU Denver was incomplete or lacking enough description for review. MSU Denver leadership and faculty worked to resubmit these documents. The peer review process occurred after the resubmission and the reviewers had concerns about the breadth and depth of several areas in Special Education programs aligned to state standards. Based on this review, the state site team identified an additional team member to join the site visit to help support a detailed focus on Special Education endorsement programs. The state site team conducted numerous stakeholder conversations, including thorough conversations with Special Education faculty, addressing the concerns raised from reviewers. This process showed a clear alignment to state standards for all the Special Education programming at MSU Denver and faculty and leadership acknowledged that their submissions to CDE for Special Education were not done sufficiently to properly reflect the depth of these programs. In conclusion, CDE found no concerns that warrant any areas for improvement for Special Education courses.

- The second area that arose during the peer review was in reference to reading standards in the Elementary and Early Childhood programs. Specific concerns arose around the lack of focus on the science of teaching reading. In courses that MSU Denver identified as aligned to the emergent reading standards, reviewers had concerns that:
  - Identified primary texts often aligned to balanced literacy or whole language with little or no sources for the scientifically based reading research called for in state standards
  - Limited reference around the Colorado READ Act in any course that would allude to exposure to this statute nor the depth of what teachers need to understand or demonstrate within Colorado context.
  - Based on review of submitted evidence, the science of reading may be presented to teacher candidates more as intervention strategies rather than the one way to teach primary students reading strategies.
  - One required reading course that was not aligned to any of Colorado’s reading endorsement standards which brought to question the time and depth needed in other areas not being prioritized in program course development.
CDE’s commitment to ensuring quality preparation for reading instruction, as well as the feedback from the peer reviews, resulted in a revision to the site visit schedule. An additional focus for review of Early Childhood and Elementary Education’s reading courses and instruction were added to the site visit schedule. In addition to the six site team members, there were two reading specialists from CDE who conducted a secondary review process meeting with reading faculty members and current candidates, as well as a deep dive into the primary texts from identified reading courses. During visits with stakeholders, all members of the state review team asked intentional questions to gauge depth and quality of readiness for candidates in the area of reading instruction.

Based on comprehensive discussions with K-12 stakeholders, faculty, current and former Elementary and Early Childhood candidates, the reauthorization team finds the Elementary and Early Childhood teacher preparation programs at MSU Denver have not met the state requirements on reading instruction, clinical practice opportunities, and preparedness of candidates in those programs around the science of reading skills. Concerns about a lack of focus on the science of teaching reading in both the Elementary and Early Childhood programs that the state review team had based on document review conducted prior to the visit were confirmed by conversations with current candidates, former alumni, principals, and district leaders during the site visit.

The state site team was very pleased to see the acknowledgement of the leadership and faculty that as part of the process of aligning their courses to state standards for required submission for this reauthorization process, they had self-identified this as an area for improvement. During the summer of 2019 after completing the submission, but prior to the state site visit, the Elementary faculty spent time focusing on revision and identifying needs for their programs to come into alignment with state reading standards. This example provided state site team members the opportunity to already see a shift in understanding and some instruction and focus in reading courses. The state would like to commend MSU Denver for these efforts prior to, during, and after the site visit. Leadership and faculty have asked for continued support from the state to ensure full alignment to the depth and breadth that needs to be embedded in their reading courses and continued refinement efforts during the spring and summer of 2020. Although some changes were already being implemented prior to the state site visit, the state finds them not to be comprehensive enough yet to be in compliance with state standards.

During the site visit a concern arose from district leaders who were surprised to learn that student teachers from the Elementary program were not passing the required licensure content exam prior to coming to their district. One district Human Resource Director informed CDE and MSU Denver’s program leadership that he may no longer accept MSU Denver Elementary student teachers if they have not passed the required Elementary Praxis licensure exam prior to starting student teaching in his district. He made this decision after hiring two MSU Denver elementary student teachers for the 2019-20 school year to only learn, after they accepted the positions, that they had not yet passed the required licensure exam. The district was required to obtain Emergency Licenses for both teachers while they were attempting to pass the required exams. Other members of the district leadership stakeholder group who were interviewed during the site visit were surprised to learn that this is not a requirement by the state or MSU Denver to ensure the required licensure exam is passed before starting student teaching.

MSU Denver acknowledges this practice but expressed to CDE that they allow this as some teaching candidates are not planning on obtaining Colorado licensure because they plan on being in a private school or to teach out of state. The site team asked current Elementary candidates in their final semester of student teaching about this and found that none of them had passed the exam and only one had even registered to take the exam. When asked by the state team, all of those candidates said they planned to take the exam in the summer of 2020, after completion of their Elementary Education program, and all were seeking employment in a public school in Colorado. The practice of not requiring or highly encouraging the passing of the content exam prior to student teaching was not found in any of the other programs at MSU Denver, only in the Elementary program.

Graduates from the MSU Denver Elementary preparation program may be put at a disadvantage because they are not ready to be hired in our Colorado public schools in a timely manner, requiring
districts use of the Emergency licensure process. This practice also does not allow the time for MSU Denver to provide additional support to candidates who struggle to pass all or one of the licensure exams because they finished the program before attempting the exam. Although there is no state regulation that requires the passing of content exams prior to student teaching, this is a common practice in all of Colorado’s preparation programs, including all other endorsement areas at MSU Denver. CDE is concerned that students in the Elementary teacher preparation program could be completing MSU Denver’s Elementary licensure program without the ability to obtain an initial Colorado teaching license.

CDE will recommend to the State Board of Education conditional reauthorization of MSU Denver’s Elementary and Early Childhood endorsement programs with the requirement that the areas of improvement identified below be addressed with continued support and review by CDE in the 2020-21 academic year. All other MSU Denver endorsement programs are recommended for full reauthorization.

Recommendations and Areas for Improvement for E: Content and Skills Required for Licensure

Recommendation: Although CDE cannot require MSU Denver to ensure all Elementary candidates pass the required licensure exam prior to student teaching, we are strongly encouraging this practice to be the norm with exceptions for unique cases as needed. Support for these candidates to pass the licensure exam should happen while they are in their final year of the program, which provides time and access to extra support for any candidates struggling to pass the content exams.

Areas for Improvement:

*Pursuant to C.R.S. 23-1-121 (2)(c)(5) all reading course work and field practice opportunities must ensure the science of reading skills including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency including oral skills, and reading comprehension are a significant focus for teachers preparing in all elementary, Early Childhood or Special Education endorsement programs.*

- Identify faculty needs and ensure professional development around Colorado READ Act requirements and research-based science of teaching reading instruction to increase their capacity and understanding about the importance of and skills to teach scientifically based reading research strategies as core instructional practices, not just intervention practices, to their candidates.
- Review and revise Elementary and Early Childhood Education literacy courses, including identification of primary texts that align with state standards, and increasing the time for and depth of teaching research-based science of teaching reading instruction.
  - Embed research-based science of teaching reading instruction across courses and clinical practice opportunities to engage theory into practice throughout the endorsement program including a coherent course sequencing to show how this content is introduced, built upon and embedded throughout different courses.
  - Ensure primary textbooks, reading assignments and course instruction don’t contradict or dismiss research-based science of teaching reading instruction that would lead to teacher candidate confusion or lack of focus on this as the foundational approach to teaching early reading instruction for all students.
- Resubmit all Elementary and Early Childhood literacy courses, program sequencing schedules for each pathway, all syllabi including primary texts, and any additional documentation that MSU Denver leaders and faculty would like to share with the state for consideration as part of the follow-up visit no later than December 1, 2020.
MSU Denver’s reauthorization of their Elementary and Early Childhood endorsements are contingent on implementation of the previous areas for improvement which will be assessed at a March 2021 follow-up reauthorization site visit.

**Statutory Performance Measure F: Comprehensive, Ongoing Assessment:** Comprehensive and ongoing evaluation of each candidate’s subject matter and professional knowledge and ability to demonstrate skill in applying the professional knowledge base.

**Summary finding:** The reauthorization team finds the educator preparation programs at MSU Denver partially proficient on Performance Measure F. *Performance Indicators: F1, F2, F3, C.R.S. 23-1-121(f).*

The SoE collects and reviews data. One clear example is in how the elementary education faculty collaborated with those in the math department and changed the program based on Praxis data that lead to significant improvements. Further improvements in the area of comprehensive, ongoing assessment can be made. Leadership described a “culture of data” where faculty and staff are regularly examining data to include Praxis scores teacher work samples, and candidate dispositional and observation data. Such an examination can help the SoE determine candidate strengths and areas of growth, but also the program level changes and supports necessary.

Mentors and building principals indicate that there are often opportunities to provide informal feedback on programs to the SoE when supervisors or faculty are in their schools. They also state that they feel that feedback is accepted, however, few can describe a formal process for doing so.

Mentor teachers reported that candidates plan for instruction effectively, but that the tool for providing candidate feedback is on teacher behaviors rather than student impact. One wondering of the site visit team is how are candidates assessing student learning and making adjustments and how are they coached to do so?

**Recommendations and Areas for Improvement for F: Comprehensive, Ongoing Assessment:**

**Area for Improvement:** Collect data annually to use for continuous improvement in evaluating candidates, as well as the programs that prepare them. Continue to participate in professional development opportunities for prep programs to deeply examine data as a team.

**Recommendation:** Identify performance indicators that can be used to determine both candidate and program effectiveness.

**Recommendation:** Re-examine the Data Collection and Use for Continuous Improvement Rubric to self-assess and prioritize needs.

**Part IV: Rejoinder and Next Steps**

- MSU Denver shall note any errors of fact in this report and respond in a rejoinder with any supplemental information requested within 30 days, pursuant to Colorado Department of Higher Education Policy I-P: Educator Preparation, subsection 6.01.05.01.
  - Please send all correspondence regarding areas A, B, C, D, and F to Dr. Brittany Lane, Director of Educator Preparation, DHE, Brittany.lane@dhe.state.co.us.
  - Materials and questions related to the CDE content review (Performance Measure E) should be sent to Mary Bivens, Director of Educator Development, CDE, bivens_m@cde.state.co.us.
• CDHE and CDE will finalize the reauthorization report.
• CDE will forward the report and a recommendation to the State Board of Education (SBE) for their consideration.
• SBE will decide upon a recommendation and forward that recommendation to the DHE, which will then forward the recommendation to the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) for their final determination of reauthorization.
• The CCHE will determine reauthorization of educator preparation programs.

The reauthorization team thanks MSU Denver, the administration, faculty, staff, and students for participating in the reauthorization review and site visit. We look forward to working with the college to address the identified areas of improvement and other needs of the educator preparation programs now and in the future.

End Notes