PROGRAM REPORT FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY OF DENVER AS A DESIGNATED AGENCY

REAUTHORIZATION SITE VISIT DATE

FEBRUARY 18-20, 2020

Submitted to:
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By:
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July 17, 2020

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This report summarizes the findings of the state reauthorization team for Metropolitan State University of Denver’s alternative educator preparation program by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

**Educator Preparation Program Reauthorization Process**

The following delineates the path of an educator preparation program submitted for reauthorization to the CDE Educator Development Unit:

- Endorsement matrices were submitted in October and Program Report and supporting documents were submitted to CDE six weeks prior to the scheduled site visit.
- CDE, external expert reviewers, and site visit team review the submitted evidence prior to the site visit to identify the programs’ strengths and areas for improvement.
- CDE 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 led by CDE and consist of a team of experts in the field of education. Components of the site visit include interviews with: alternative program staff, advisory council, current and former teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and school and district administration.
- CDE completes a draft report based on an analysis of the program report and additional documents submitted by the designated agency, as well as information gained through the site visit review.
- The designated agency shall respond to the draft report in a rejoinder and provide additional information or address any concerns within 15 days of receiving the draft report.
- CDE finalizes the reauthorization report.
- CDE makes a recommendation to the State Board of Education.
- The State Board of Education makes a final determination: a) full approval, b) probation, or c) termination of the program.

**Introduction and Background**

Pursuant to Colorado Rules and Regulations 12.00(3), alternative educator preparation programs may be approved for up to five years, after which an onsite evaluation shall be conducted in order to review and evaluate the program for evidence of effectiveness of administration and preparation of alternatively licensed educators. CDE policy permits four possible outcomes of a review: a) full reauthorization, b) conditionally reauthorization, c) probation, or d) termination of the program.

Metropolitan State University of Denver was last reauthorized in April 2013. In preparation for the site visit, materials were submitted in fall of 2019. The State Review Team conducted a site visit February 19-20, 2020.

In February 2018, the State Board of Education approved Metropolitan State University of Denver to place candidates in non-public settings.
Recommendation

The reauthorization team recommends full reauthorization of most of the institution’s alternative educator preparation as a one/two-year program. This recommendation applies to the following endorsement areas: Special Education Generalist (5-21), Dance (K-12), Drama Theater Arts (K-12), World Languages (K-12), Comprehensive Health (K-12), Instructional Technology (K-12), Music (K-12), Physical Education (K-12), Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources (7-12), Business/Marketing (7-12), English Language Arts (7-12), Family and Consumer Studies (7-12), Mathematics (7-12), Science (7-12), Social Studies (7-12), Speech (7-12), and Technology Education (Industrial Arts)(7-12).

The reauthorization team recommends conditional reauthorization of the institution’s alternative educator preparation as a one/two-year program for Early Childhood Education (Birth-8) and Elementary Education (K-6). The state team will have a follow-up visit in March 2021 to address the implementation of the areas for improvement as stated in this report.

Review Team Members

The review team for the site visit consisted of one representative from CDE, and three peer reviewers from alternative preparation program across the state with additional support from two CDE reading specialists for specific parts of the site visit agenda.

- Jennifer Kral, Educator Preparation Specialist, Colorado Dept. of Education
- Dr. Julie Hart, Director, Friends Teacher Preparation Program
- Dr. Jenny Fox, Assistant Director & Special Education Program Lead, ASPIRE to Teach, University of Colorado Denver
- Brooke Hanks, Undergraduate and Graduate Faculty in Education, Western Colorado University
- Alex Frasier, Colorado Dept. of Education
- Ellen Hunter, Colorado Dept. of Education

Offsite Peer Review

Prior to the site visit, peers from the field reviewed the submitted matrices and accompanying documents to provide feedback around the content of the program and how it is aligned to the endorsement standards. There was some initial feedback wondering around how content is aligned to the science of reading instruction. Since Metropolitan State University of Denver is seeking reauthorization of special education, elementary and early childhood in addition to the secondary and k-12 endorsements they submitted the special education, elementary and early childhood matrices for review.

Site Visit Meetings and Protocol

The team reviewed materials submitted by Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver) prior to the site visit. During the on-site visit, current alternative candidates, past candidates, mentors, instructors, coaches, advisory council members, and district administrators were contacted and interviewed regarding their experience with the educator preparation program at MSU Denver. Their individual comments and feedback have been incorporated into this report.
The site review team met with the following team members on February 19-20:
- Dr. Liz Hinde, Dean, School of Education
- Dr. Lisa Altemueller, Associate Dean, School of Education
- Jisele Mitchell, Director Alternative Licensure Programs
- Deana Alfonso, Alternative Licensure Program Coordinator
- Dr. Eron Reed, Alternative Licensure Program 2 Elementary Instructor

In addition, the review team met with the following stakeholders:
- Three mentor teachers
- Ten past candidates
- Fourteen current candidates
- Two assistant principals/principals
- One Special Education Assistant Director
- Five alternative licensure program instructors
- Four alternative licensure program coaches
- Nine advisory council members

**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. §22-60.5-205, C.R.S. §22-60.5-206, and C.C.R §2260.5-R-12.00. Based on the review of submitted materials and the site review findings outlined in the following report, each measure is given an overall rating of: proficient, partially proficient, or not proficient.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternative Educator Preparation Program Statutory Performance Measures</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Not Proficient</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1 A. and B. Designated Agency Role and Context:</strong> The designated agency: supports a distinct region where there is a current teacher shortage or endorsement areas that are difficult to fill; decreases the issuance of emergency teacher licenses; recruits and employs non-traditional candidates; and provides educator pathways to alternative candidates with experience in areas other than education.</td>
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<td><strong>2A. Program Organization and Administration:</strong> The designated agency shall establish an advisory council, regionally represented if appropriate to the program, which shall include, at a minimum, representatives from participating school districts, BOCES or accredited nonpublic schools; at least one qualified mentor teacher; and a representative from any accepted institution of higher education cooperating with the designated agency. The advisory council provides the designated agency with information regarding the organization, management, and operation of the approved alternative teacher program.</td>
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<td><strong>2B. Alternatively Licensed Educator Oversight and Support:</strong> The composition of the alternative teacher preparation program support team shall include, at the least, the alternative teacher’s mentor teacher, the building principal and a representative of the approved institution of higher education or designated agency. Duties of the support team include but are not limited to meeting on a regular schedule with an agenda. Documentation of such regularly scheduled meetings shall include, but not be limited to, evidence of the alternatively licensed teacher toward meeting the program’s objectives; evaluation of the related prior education and experience of the alternatively licensed teacher to determine the appropriate program elements which will prepare the candidate for full licensure, as prescribed by these and other relevant rules and policies.</td>
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## Alternative Educator Preparation Program
### Statutory Performance Measures

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>2C. Mentor Teacher Selection and Supervision Training Program:</strong></th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Not Proficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria are established for the selection of mentor teachers which shall include, but not be limited to, evidence and/or confirmation of exemplary teaching and school leadership; the ability to model and counsel the alternative teacher; relevant coursework; and a valid license and endorsement, in the alternatively-licensed teacher’s content area if available. Duties of the mentor teacher include, but may not be limited to, serving as a member of the support team; providing ongoing counseling and supervision of the alternative teacher; and having the primary responsibility for representing the support team in the process of evaluating with regard to and making recommendations for the licensing of the alternative teacher. Designated agency maintains a checklist of the duties of the mentor teacher and the time required of that teacher to mentor the alternatively licensed teacher. The mentor teacher checklist shall include, but not be limited to the following elements: membership on the support team and attendance at meetings; identification of the time the mentor will spend in counseling and supervising the alternatively licensed teacher; and the primary responsibility of the mentor to represent the support team in the process of evaluating and making recommendations regarding the initial licensing of the alternatively licensed teacher. An articulated, mandatory and intensive supervision training program for mentors provides direction with regard to structured guidance, the provision of regular ongoing support to new teachers and teacher performance evaluation. The designated agency makes provisions to assist the mentor teacher in properly discharging his/her regular duties. Such provisions may include, but not be limited to: providing a substitute teacher for the mentor teacher, as necessary and appropriate; and allowing for adequate compensatory time and/or other compensation for the mentor teacher’s required planning and observation schedule and ongoing regular conferences with the alternatively-licensed teacher.</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>3A. Candidate Entry Requirements:</strong></th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Not Proficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>The designated agency requires alternatively licensed teachers to be employed by or have a clinical agreement in place with a Colorado school district, accredited nonpublic school or BOCES to teach, receive training and be supervised by a qualified mentor teacher and an appropriate support team as follows: alternative teachers must demonstrate competency in their subject area endorsement and/or assignment; if the alternatively licensed teacher is asked to teach in any content area(s) outside of his/her assessed content area, the school or school district is required to keep on file documented evidence that the alternatively licensed teacher has completed 24 semester hours of applicable coursework in the additional content area(s) or the equivalent, thereof, or has passed the related state-approved content area exam(s).</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>3B. Instruction Plan and Activities:</strong></th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Not Proficient</th>
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<td>Training of alternatively licensed teachers shall include 225 clock hours of planned instruction, and activities shall include, but not be limited to, teacher preparation courses that meet the teacher quality standards or special services provider quality standards and training in dropout prevention. The 225-clock hours shall, at a minimum, include professional development that addresses the content as outlined in section 5.00 of the CDE Rules and Regulations. The hours of required instruction and activities may be modified by the alternative teacher’s support team, but only after a documented and performance-based evaluation of the candidate’s proficiency determines that one or more of the program’s requirements has already been met by the alternatively licensed teacher’s proven knowledge or past experience; administration prior to the beginning of the alternatively licensed educator’s employment or clinical experience, the program shall include an orientation to the school, its student population, policies and procedures which affect teaching, classroom management strategies and teacher responsibilities, as prescribed by section 18.00(1)(c) of these rules.</td>
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### Alternative Educator Preparation Program

#### Statutory Performance Measures

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>3C. Candidate Evaluation Process:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Not Proficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>Evaluations of alternatively licensed teachers shall be conducted and documented in accordance with 22-9-106, C.R.S. An inventory of standards pursuant to section 5.00 of these rules for each alternatively licensed teacher candidate in its program documents how the alternatively licensed teacher demonstrates proficient knowledge and understanding of the teacher quality standards for Colorado teachers, and their standard elements, including demonstration of proficient performance in a classroom setting.</td>
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<th>4AB. Comprehensive, Ongoing Assessment:</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Partially Proficient</th>
<th>Not Proficient</th>
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<tr>
<td>The designated agency gathers and analyzes data in order to continuously improve program elements that relate to the CDE Rules and Regulations. Comprehensive and ongoing evaluation of each candidate’s subject matter and professional knowledge and ability to demonstrate skill in applying the professional knowledge base.</td>
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</table>
Statutory Performance Measure 1A and B. Designated Agency Role and Context:

The designated agency: supports a distinct region where there is a current teacher shortage or endorsement areas that are difficult to fill; decreases the issuance of emergency teacher licenses; recruits and employs non-traditional candidates; and provides educator pathways to alternative candidates with experience in areas other than education.

The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

**Historical Context**

The Alternative Licensure Program at MSU Denver for general education was established in 2000, at that time called Teacher in Residence Program (TiR) Two Year program. The ALP 1 (Alternative Licensure Program 1 Year) was established in Fall 2005, based on student need.

CASEL program (Colorado Accelerated Special Education Licensure) was established in 2003-2004. The program is two years in length and provides a comprehensive special education course sequence which aligns with the traditional program on campus (See Addendums 1 & 2). Students are also required to complete an Extended School Year (ESY) practicum during the summer between Year 1 and Year 2 of the program. This allows the students to experience working with a different age group of students and students with different disabilities and aligns with the Special Education Generalist 5 - 21 endorsement.

When the Alternative Licensure Programs first began, all classes met weekly (face to face). Over the last five years the classes have changed to a hybrid format, with one class each month being online except for the Master of Arts in Teaching Elementary Education and Special Education concentration. In addition, the program now services the Front Range area, whereas initially the program only served the Denver Metro area.

An area that sets the Alternative Licensure Programs at MSU Denver apart from other programs in Colorado is our coaching model. We provide in classroom coaching for all of our teacher candidates. Each candidate receives a minimum of five (5) coaching/observation visits per semester for a total of ten (10) visits each of the two years they are enrolled in the program. These visits are generally conducted by the cohort instructor in year one and a coach in year two, but this can vary according to the number of students enrolled. These visits and the support surrounding them, including follow up emails, phone calls, texts, and potentially resultant instructional moves in subsequent classes, are mentor-like in nature. Candidates are supported in their instructional practice, in navigating their responsibilities and workload as a teacher in terms of planning/organizing/duties/meetings/data tracking, in adapting to the culture of the school including handling relationships with co-workers/administration/parents, in setting goals, celebrating achievements, and identifying areas on which to focus.

In addition to this tailored, face to face coaching, our program emphasizes resilience, self-care, and the teacher self. Particularly in the elementary cohort, the work of Parker Palmer is used to draw attention to the call to teach, and personal and professional identity. Core Reflection (Korthagen, 2014) is woven into classes to help teachers focus on their personal strengths and qualities in facing the inevitable challenges in teaching that are known to lead to stress and burnout. Laying this foundation by engaging in open and honest conversations and reflective journal work will help sustain teachers in their classrooms with their students.
There have been two major changes since the last reauthorization for the Alternative Licensure Programs at MSU Denver. First was in January 2015, both the general education and the special education programs came together under one director. Initially the Teacher in Residence Program (general education) and the CASEL program (special education) each had their own director. The programs collaborated for meetings with school districts but otherwise operated independently. This change has allowed the Alternative Licensure Programs to work collaboratively and to share expertise with each other and has simplified partnerships with schools and districts.

**Our Mission Statement:** The Alternative Licensure Program at MSU Denver is a success-oriented, student-driven teacher preparation program that provides teachers with growth opportunities and a quality education through collaborative and supportive relationships that emphasize head/heart teaching. The MSU Denver ALP serves the metro Denver area (and beyond - we have students who attend from Colorado Springs, Greeley, Longmont, etc.) and the population of MSU Denver is known to be nontraditional. That is, many are returning students/career changers/over 25 (37.8%), first generation students (49.1%), veterans (5.2%), ASSET students (N= 357), and students of color (44.7%) (Retrieved from https://www.msudenver.edu/media/marketingandcommunications/aboutmsudenver/documents/MSUDvr_FactSheet20182019_8.5x11.pdf). These representations are often reflected in the ALP, varying year to year with enrollment. This diversity, among other groups not mentioned here, allows MSU Denver and the ALP to provide Denver metro students with teachers who represent them.

**Summary Finding:** The review team found the MSU Denver program Proficient on Measures 1A and 1B.

MSU Denver partners with several school districts, with, the top three districts where candidates are employed being Denver Public Schools, Aurora Public Schools, and Douglas County School District. Often these candidates are being hired in hard-to-fill positions such as self-contained special education classrooms. Metro consistently has high numbers of candidates enrolled in special education, elementary education, science and math. Several districts noted how appreciative they are that Metro will accept candidates into their program after the program start date. One school district noted they would be lost without their partnership with Metro. Lastly, Metro differentiates their pathways to licensure based on endorsement areas and if teachers are coming into the program with teaching experience. This practice of differentiation is a strength of their program by prioritizing the needs of candidates and districts over a one size fits all approach to their program delivery.

**Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):**

- NA

**Additional Recommendations:**

- NA
Statutory Performance Measure 2A. Program Organization and Administration:

The designated agency shall establish an advisory council, regionally represented if appropriate to the program, which shall include, at a minimum, representatives from participating school districts, BOCES or accredited nonpublic schools; at least one qualified mentor teacher; and a representative from any accepted institution of higher education cooperating with the designated agency. The advisory council provides the designated agency with information regarding the organization, management, and operation of the approved alternative teacher program.

The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

_The Advisory Council historically has met two times per year; in fall and in spring. We use the meeting to address two needs. First is to update members on CDE policies and program updates. Second is for the council to provide feedback and advice on processes and practices. As an example, at our last meeting there was a suggestion for creating a video that the district could use to help teacher candidates understand the alternative licensure process._

_Currently the Advisory Council consists of Human Resource Directors from our partner schools and districts, many of whom have been teachers and building administrators. One representative was an alternative licensure candidate in another state and then went on to help develop an alternative licensure program in her district. In the future we will continue to meet with the larger advisory group since this has historically been a meaningful process for communication and collaboration. However, we will develop a smaller advisory council to help guide key work in support of our teacher candidates within their school district, specifically in relationship to mentoring and education administrators on the needs of alternative licensure teachers._

**Summary Finding:** The review team found the MSU Denver program Proficient on Measure 2A.

The leadership team has worked hard identifying who should be part of this advisory council, and in meeting with the advisory council the state team noted it consists of some very committed members who have been partnering with Metro over the past several years. The council consists of some nice diversity and includes members from the actual licensure program, and partnering districts including having the voice of a facility school represented. While the council could not speak specifically around data being collected and analyzed or around specific goals the council may have, they could speak to their role and articulate examples of items discussed from past meetings as well as examples in how the program has continued to grow over time.

**Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):**
- NA

**Additional Recommendations:**
- Consider having the voice of a past candidate as part of the council.
- Identify a vision and some goals for the council, perhaps around the findings of this report alongside the goals identified in the best practices report.
Statutory Performance Measure 2B. Alternatively Licensed Educator Oversight and Support:
The composition of the alternative teacher preparation program support team shall include, at the least, the alternative
teacher’s mentor teacher, the building principal and a representative of the approved institution of higher education or
designated agency. Duties of the support team include, but are not limited to, meeting on a regular schedule with an agenda.
Documentation of such regularly scheduled meetings shall include, but not be limited to, evidence of the alternatively
licensed teacher toward meeting the program’s objectives; evaluation of the related prior education and experience of the
alternatively licensed teacher to determine the appropriate program elements which will prepare the candidate for full
licensure, as prescribed by these and other relevant rules and policies.

The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

The educator support team consists of the program director, program coordinator, instructor, coach, and mentor
teacher.

Program Director: The director’s role and responsibility is to oversee the program; its function and operation
both within the School of Education and as a unique/alternative option for teacher candidates. The director’s
responsibilities include liaison between the ALP and the School of Education, liaison between ALP and school
districts, liaison between the ALP and CDE, budget, program operation and evaluation including work with the
coordinator, instructor, coaches, and students.

Program Coordinator: The coordinator’s role is to coordinate all parts of the student’s requirements to enter and
advance through the program, from interest to admission to completion. The coordinator’s responsibilities
include data collection (CDE, Title II, student records (observation data)), maintaining/updating the program
website, tracking and responding to those interested in applying to the program, tracking and managing
applications and required components, serving as liaison between the ALP and CDE, serving as liaison between
the ALP and the School of Education and other departments across campus, and collaborating with the director,
instructors, and coaches.

Instructor: The instructor’s role is to provide curriculum and instruction as well as coaching support to the
students in the cohort to which they are assigned. The instructor’s responsibilities include designing and
implementing curriculum/syllabi, differentiating instruction, modifying instruction based on assessments and
teaching and learning feedback loops, and supporting students through coaching and observations aimed at
improving their practice and helping them meet the Teacher Quality Standards.

Coach: The coach’s role is to support students. The coach’s responsibility is to support students through coaching
and observations aimed at improving their practice and helping them meet the Teacher Quality Standards.

Mentor Teacher: The mentor teacher’s role is to support students as teacher of record in their school. The
mentor’s responsibilities include providing information about the school culture, offering emotional support,
providing curriculum and instruction support including planning and organizing, and coaching aimed at
improving practice.

The above support team members provide a network of support to give the candidate counseling/coaching and
supervision. The members collaborate to evaluate and make recommendations regarding licensure as well as to
make decisions about how best to support each candidate according to their needs. This collaboration and
decision-making is based on the Teacher Quality Standards, course syllabi and rubrics, dispositions lists, and
coeaching feedback forms.

Each candidate receives a minimum of five (5) coaching/observation visits per semester for a total of ten (10)
visits each of the two years they are enrolled in the program. These visits are generally conducted by the cohort
instructor in year one and a coach in year two, but this can vary according to the number of students enrolled.
These visits and the support surrounding them, including follow up emails, phone calls, texts, and potentially
resultant instructional moves are mentor-like in nature.

If a candidate is identified or self-identifies as struggling in the program, either with coursework or in their
teaching position, the response and support are tailored to the candidate’s needs. The candidates are enrolled in
the ALP because they have been hired by a school (district). Our work in supporting them during struggle may be
to help them realize through lengthy conversations over coffee that the content of the program is condensed
such that they will master all of it as they grow into their careers. The high needs context they may struggle in
perhaps requires us to support them with extra resources or even workshops such as Trauma Informed
Pedagogy. Students may struggle in ways that are a concern to the team with respect to the quality of work in
the courses or job assignment. There is a Dispositions Process that is followed based on Dispositions lists (See
Addendum 5) that may follow conversations with the candidate, their mentor, their principal, or all three. The
Dispositions Process (See Addendum 6) leads to a Remediation Plan to get the candidate “back on track”.

**Summary Finding:** The review team found Metropolitan State University of Denver program Proficient on
Performance Measure 2B.

The support that candidates receive while in the program was noted as one of the biggest strengths of the
program. Current candidates, past candidates, mentors, principals, coaches, and instructors could all speak to
how candidates are supported and what happens when a candidate struggles and is not meeting program
expectations. For students who are not meeting expectations, there are tools in place to help them become
successful. If needed, the program has a disposition tool they use as well as a remediation plan. Partnering
districts praised the program for their collaborative approach in supporting struggling candidates as well as
praised Metro for their communication and flexibility to help these individual candidates.

**Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):**
- NA

**Additional Recommendations:**
- NA
Statutory Performance Measure 2C. Mentor Teacher Selection & Supervision Training Program:

Criteria are established for the selection of mentor teachers which shall include, but not be limited to, evidence and/or confirmation of exemplary teaching and school leadership; the ability to model and counsel the alternative teacher; relevant coursework; and a valid license and endorsement, in the alternatively-licensed teacher’s content area if available. Duties of the mentor teacher include, but may not be limited to, serving as a member of the support team; providing ongoing counseling and supervision of the alternative teacher; and having the primary responsibility for representing the support team in the process of evaluating with regard to and making recommendations for the licensing of the alternative teacher. Designated agency maintains a checklist of the duties of the mentor teacher and the time required of that teacher to mentor the alternatively licensed teacher. The mentor teacher checklist shall include, but not be limited to the following elements: membership on the support team and attendance at meetings; identification of the time the mentor will spend in counseling and supervising the alternatively licensed teacher; and the primary responsibility of the mentor to represent the support team in the process of evaluating and making recommendations regarding the initial licensing of the alternatively licensed teacher.

An articulated, mandatory and intensive supervision training program for mentors provides direction with regard to structured guidance, the provision of regular ongoing support to new teachers and teacher performance evaluation. The designated agency makes provisions to assist the mentor teacher in properly discharging his/her regular duties. Such provisions may include, but not be limited to: providing a substitute teacher for the mentor teacher, as necessary and appropriate; and allowing for adequate compensatory time and/or other compensation for the mentor teacher’s required planning and observation schedule and ongoing regular conferences with the alternatively-licensed teacher.

The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

Our program does not have leverage in mentor identification, selection, or assignment – it is a district/building decision. Therefore, we communicate with candidate-identified mentors in the following ways:

- We gather background information about the mentors, such as education & training, experience as a mentor, teaching assignment, schedule and contact information (See Addendum 7).
- Mentor information/responsibilities for MSU Denver ALP are provided both hard copy and via introduction email to each mentor (See Addendum 8).
- Mentors are invited to first meetings with candidates at their schools for introduction/information purposes.
- Mentors have received, in the past, updates on content being covered in classes and candidate progress both toward Teacher Quality Standards and in the program in general (response to this communication has been little to none).

Historically, we provided mentor night with activities to build relationships and talk strategies but that has been discontinued due to mentors’ lack of willingness/motivation in participating. (Over the last five years, the participation level of district/building mentors has dwindled to below 40 percent.)

Because we have no control over the mentor teacher the candidate may or may not have, we support the teachers as if they have no mentor or lack a quality mentor relationship. That is, the above support team members provide a network of support to give the candidate counseling/coaching and supervision. The members collaborate to evaluate and make recommendations regarding licensure as well as to make decisions about how
best to support each candidate according to their needs. This collaboration and decision-making is based on the Teacher Quality Standards, course syllabi and rubrics, dispositions lists, and coaching feedback forms.

Each candidate receives a minimum of five (5) coaching/observation visits per semester for a total of ten (10) visits each of the two years they are enrolled in the program. These visits are generally conducted by the cohort instructor in year one and a coach in year two, but this can vary according to the number of students enrolled. These visits and the support surrounding them, including follow up emails, phone calls, texts, and potentially resultant instructional moves are mentor-like in nature.

We are looking for ways to fund a mentor training program and have clear ideas about what shall be covered in such a training program. At the present time, we need help identifying a way to engage mentors since we do not identify, select, or assign them and since the candidates are not student teachers, rather, teachers of record.

**Summary Finding:** The review team found the MSU Denver program Proficient on Performance Measure 2C.

The mentors whom the state team connected with during the site visit spoke very highly of the Metro program and shared their appreciation for the instructors/coaches connecting frequently with the mentor while they are in the buildings observing the candidates. However, there were some anecdotal stories shared where candidates got to the end of the year before they realized they were supposed to have an onsite mentor. Mentors noted that they did not have any formal training from Metro around mentoring and the expectations of them as a mentor for the program. As a way to counter balance the inconsistency around mentor support from the different partnering schools for candidates, the alternative licensure program has built coaching into the program. Program coaches are expected to complete 10 observations each year, this far exceeds the minimum requirement of 4 that the state has named. At this time the program leadership noted there is not a specific model of coaching/mentoring used to train program coaches. However, they do pair up new coaches with the veteran coaches who then help and guide the new coaches.

**Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):**

- NA

**Additional Recommendations:**

- Consider using a coaching model for the coaches, that perhaps then they could share this same model with onsite mentors.
- Provide a mandatory training for all mentors.
- Establish and communicate mentor criteria, roles, and responsibilities.
The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

**Teacher candidates - Alternative License**

Our program follows the criteria set by the Colorado Department of Education. Candidates are able to access the information and worksheets on the CDE website. We also have information on our website and provide links to CDE.

We work collaboratively with our partner districts and schools. Many of our partners understand the alternative licensure process. However, there are times when a district representative may be new to the process or there is a disconnection in the process. When this occurs we connect directly with them and work through the process together. The Statement of Assurance process starts with the candidate’s employer.

**Employees support – Alternative License**

This process falls to the ALP coordinator and director. We provide information on our website and provide support to candidates through individual or group meetings as well as by phone and email. When needed, we provide the checklist from CDE, regarding the process to candidates.

**Standards for Entry**

We accept all candidates who meet the CDE alternative licensure requirements and have a teaching contract. Additionally, candidates complete the MSU Denver & Alternative Licensure Program enrollment process, which at times is different than the standard for official transcripts that the state requires. This relates to transcripts outside of the United States and causes a delay in the teacher candidate’s official enrollment.

**Modifications to Instructional Plan**

To address the need for adjustments for candidates’ background knowledge/experience the ALP 1 program was created. This option is not available for candidates teaching special education or graduate students.

Below are the current guidelines for admission into the ALP 1 program. These guidelines are reviewed annually and adjustments are made.

Document a minimum of 2 years of previous, full-time, contracted teaching experience in an accredited public, private or charter PK-12 school in the United States.
Have teaching experience as the “teacher of record” for the classroom. Paraprofessional and substitute experience would not be counted towards the 2-year minimum requirement

Know that the 2-year minimum requirement also needs to be in the same content area and/or level as the content area and/or level in which you will be receiving your teaching license

Have been hired as a full-time teacher in any Colorado Front Range public school district, public or private charter school, or accredited private school

The final decision for acceptance into the ALP 1 program is made by the ALP 1 instructor and ALP director.

Training of alternatively licensed teachers shall include 225 clock hours of planned instruction, and activities shall include, but not be limited to, teacher preparation courses that meet the teacher quality standards or special services provider quality standards and training in dropout prevention. The 225-clock hours shall, at a minimum, include professional development that addresses the content as outlined in section 5.00 of the CDE Rules and Regulations. The hours of required instruction and activities may be modified by the alternative teacher’s support team, but only after a documented and performance-based evaluation of the candidate’s proficiency determines that one or more of the program’s requirements has already been met by the alternatively licensed teacher’s proven knowledge or past experience; administration prior to the beginning of the alternatively licensed educator’s employment or clinical experience, the program shall include an orientation to the school, its student population, policies and procedures which affect teaching, classroom management strategies and teacher responsibilities, as prescribed by section 12.00(1)(c) of these rules.

Summary Finding: The review team found the MSU Denver program Proficient on Performance Measure 3A.

At times the alternative licensure program must connect with the traditional teacher preparation program on advising of students who are looking to teach. Occasionally aspiring candidates may not qualify for the alternative licensure program, so they are advised to connect with the traditional program, this results in candidates going on the Temporary Educator Eligibility (TEE) authorization. The reverse situation happens too, when a candidate enrolled in the master’s program ends up getting a job, they will then transfer into the alternative licensure program. Metro consistently ensures candidates have a job prior to enrolling in the program. Several candidates apply for the program even though they have experience teaching, but they would like to be licensed. Metro has created a one-year program for candidates with teaching experience as opposed to the two-year program for candidates without teaching experience. Protocols are in place to determine which program is going to be the best fit for each individual candidate. This ability to move candidates from one program to the next and adjust time and depth of instruction off candidates’ expertise really sets this alternative program apart from some others providing opportunities that benefit both candidates and schools. Based upon enrollment in the program, sometimes a candidate may be the only one in their endorsed area. Some of these candidates expressed interest in having the ability to connect with someone else teaching in the same content area.

Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):

- NA

Additional Recommendations:

- How can you leverage alumni to connect with candidates who might be an n of 1 in the program?
Statutory Performance Measure 3B. Instruction Plan and Activities:

Training of alternatively licensed teachers shall include 225 clock hours of planned instruction, and activities shall include, but not be limited to, teacher preparation courses that meet the teacher quality standards or special services provider quality standards and training in dropout prevention. The 225-clock hours shall, at a minimum, include professional development that addresses the content as outlined in section 5.00 of the CDE Rules and Regulations. The hours of required instruction and activities may be modified by the alternative teacher’s support team, but only after a documented and performance-based evaluation of the candidate’s proficiency determines that one or more of the program’s requirements has already been met by the alternatively licensed teacher’s proven knowledge or past experience; administration prior to the beginning of the alternatively licensed educator’s employment or clinical experience, the program shall include an orientation to the school, its student population, policies and procedures which affect teaching, classroom management strategies and teacher responsibilities, as prescribed by section 18.00(1)(c) of these rules.

The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

**District/School Site Orientation**

Since the MSU Denver ALP works with candidates in multiple schools we are not familiar with the individual orientation process in each school. Our instructors/coaches help orient candidates to their specific teaching assignment. In addition to the individual support the ALP holds a Summer Seminar session for all candidates who have been hired by the middle of July.

The ALP 1 program meets for 2 days and reviews the process for final acceptance into the ALP 1 program. At this time the instructor is also able to gather more information about the candidates teaching experience including unit/lesson planning, classroom management and understanding of standards.

The ALP 2 program meets for 5 days. The focus of the sessions are on classroom management, creating first week plans for classes/components of lesson plans, relational teaching, working with parents/letter to families, assessment, state standards, history of education...)

The ALP SED program meets for 8 days. In these sessions the candidates learn about classroom management, lesson planning, and specific content information for special education. (IEP process, qualification process, co-teaching, data tracking...)

ALP 2 and ALP SED programs provide make-up seminar sessions for candidates who are hired after the Summer Seminar sessions.

**Monitoring mentor support**

Students keep track of the mentor sessions on an individual log. Instructors/coaches meet regularly with their teacher candidates and check in on support they are receiving from their mentors. They also communicate by email and phone when the mentor is not available in person (See Addendum 10).

Evaluations of alternatively licensed teachers shall be conducted and documented in accordance with 22-9-106, C.R.S. An inventory of standards pursuant to section 5.00 of these rules for each alternatively licensed teacher candidate in its program documents how the alternatively licensed teacher demonstrates proficient knowledge and understanding of the teacher quality standards for Colorado teachers, and their standard elements, including demonstration of proficient performance in a classroom setting.
Summary Finding: The review team found the MSU Denver program Partially Proficient on Performance Measure 3B.

Current candidates and past candidates that the state review team spoke to all shared how much they valued this program and how coursework and assignments were immediately applicable. Some of the more recent past candidates and current candidates talked about their knowledge of the universal design for learning model they learned in the program. Current and past elementary education, early childhood, and special education candidates noted some disconnect from special education to general education around really understanding the multi-tiered system of support. When current and former candidates were asked what changes they would make or suggest for the program, all elementary, early childhood, and special education candidates asked for more instruction around literacy specifically stating they did not feel prepared to teach reading. When speaking with the building and district leaders, they noted a similar finding. They shared elementary and early childhood candidates need to know the science of teaching reading so they can better support students needing a tier three intervention or who may qualify for having a specific learning disability. The framework used for reading in the special education program is aligned to the science of reading instruction and the faculty showed aligned in their understanding of the science of teaching reading and approach to teaching reading including a strong alignment of anchor texts for special education focusing on the state reading standards.

Prior to the state site visit, the peer review process of the program’s alignment to endorsement standards found two possible areas of concern. One wondering the peer reviewers noted was how well the resources in early childhood and elementary education are aligned to the science of reading. The second area was the difference in instruction between the early childhood and elementary content to ensure the depth of instruction around birth to age three content outlined in the early childhood endorsement standards. The state site team utilized the stakeholder feedback conversations to deepen their understanding and findings around these two areas during the site visit conversations with leadership, instructors, and stakeholder conversations. The findings for these two areas are addressed below:

1. While onsite the team had an opportunity to look more closely at the primary texts being used to teach reading instruction for elementary and early childhood candidates. After the peer review, analysis of resources, as well as feedback from the candidates (past and current), the state team is concerned that the resources being used contradict what is known about the science of early reading instruction. Post site visit, the leadership team shared some recent changes they have made and are working on making to deepen the alignment to the reading standards. The elementary matrix was revised, and additional materials were resubmitted to CDE for further review following the site visit. CDE had those updated crosswalks to the reading standards peer reviewed and saw some improvements in aligning to the standards, whether this was around additional resources being identified as required texts as well as stronger outcomes, evidence and strategies used to meet these standards. However, while there have been some improvements, the second round of peer reviews also identified some gaps that still need to be addressed. For example, after reviewing the syllabi, there was a question around the amount of time spent teaching certain elements within the standards. As the leadership team and instructors continue to build upon this alignment work that has been started, ensure that instructors content delivery of and candidates understanding about the science of teaching reading is seen as the primary way to teach all emerging readers how to read as opposed to just a piece of early reading or as an intervention strategy with struggling readers.
2. After review of the matrices and in talking to faculty, current candidates and past candidates, the state team noted how similar the elementary and early childhood pathways were being instructed. Although there is great overlap in these two endorsement areas around K-3rd grade content, the early childhood endorsement standards that reference birth-age 3 were identified as the area that needs to be developed out more in the program. Program leadership should determine what content and how delivery of these pathways are being differentiated for the candidates. Post site visit the early childhood matrix was revised and resubmitted for review to show more differentiation and to address the areas of birth-age 3. The matrix and syllabi were reviewed by peers and the peers noted a few gaps that remain in deepening the alignment to the early childhood endorsement standards. This feedback will be shared with program leadership so they can continue to adjust content and delivery and ensure all early childhood candidates are prepared to teach birth-age 8 students.

With the variety of texts and other resources used throughout your program to meet the endorsement and teacher quality standards, be cautious of any being outdated. Consider the role the resources play in the course and what supplemental materials may complement them (i.e. Wong’s book The First Days of School may be very useful, but it may not contain current research around being culturally responsive. So, what resources could be embedded into the program and courses to meet this current need in the schools?) Another consideration was a combination of books being used in special education that would be better suited for elementary instruction. During the site visit the state team members suggested several resource ideas with the leadership team and were told those resources were already in place, but there was no evidence of them mentioned in the syllabi nor articulated by current or past candidates. As the leadership team continues to refine their program, work with instructors to align primary texts and resources, ensure they are noted on the syllabi, and are being integrated into the instruction so candidates have a deep understanding of the intended content from those identified resources.

Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):

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 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.

- Ensure the early childhood candidates’ coursework is differentiated enough from the elementary coursework so that the early childhood candidates are getting content that is aligned to the early childhood standards and elements, especially around the birth to age three instruction.

- 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 leadership and instructors 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 alternative 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 3C. Candidate Evaluation Process:

Evaluations of alternatively licensed teachers shall be conducted and documented in accordance with 22-9-106, C.R.S. An inventory of standards pursuant to section 5.00 of these rules for each alternatively licensed teacher candidate in its program documents how the alternatively licensed teacher demonstrates proficient knowledge and understanding of the teacher quality standards for Colorado teachers, and their standard elements, including demonstration of proficient performance in a classroom setting.

The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

**Evaluation of Candidates**
Candidates are evaluated through coursework, ability to implement learning in their classes, and classroom observations. In each program up to 50% of their grade is based on classroom observations. This includes dispositions.

All candidates are observed five times per semester, for a total of ten observations per year. If a candidate needs additional support the instructor/coach will provide additional observations and support.

Instructors/Coaches use an observation tool (See ADDENDUM 11) that includes the standards observed, areas of strength, areas of growth and recommendations. Observations are for a class period. If possible, we debrief with the candidate after the observation. If their schedule does not allow for this, we set up a time to connect with them.

**Evaluation Responsibility**
The ALP Director is ultimately responsible for making sure observations and evaluations are completed. Observations are submitted by the instructor/coach monthly to the ALP Coordinator to be filed in individual student folders.

**Evaluative Feedback**
Feedback is ongoing throughout the program. Candidates receive detailed observations notes after an observation along with a debrief session. If possible, the debriefing is immediately after the observation. This is not always possible. A phone/email debrief may be used instead. Often, observations focus on a specific aspect of a lesson/teaching/responsibility, i.e., procedure, closure, IEP meeting, guided reading group, etc. Teachers
provide a lesson plan/information in advance of the visit. Candidates also receive feedback regarding coursework and their engagement in class.

**Evaluator Preparation**
Instructors and coaches in the ALP have at least five years of teaching experience and documented experience in coaching or supervising teachers in public schools. Many of our team members have been building administrators, instructional coaches, team leaders and district coordinators. In addition to their previous experience, we provide opportunities for new team members by doing side by side observations.

**Measures of Effectiveness**
The ALP closely monitors candidates’ overall performance. We look at their performance in class and in their teaching assignments. When a candidate is struggling it tends to be in more than one area, including life issues that impact their ability to do their best. Most candidates are aware of when they are struggling and will proactively ask for additional support. However, there are times when we hear from their mentor or administrator that they are struggling.

When this happens, we work with the candidate to put a plan in place that is suitable and designed to meet their specific needs. If the mentor or their administrator has brought the concern to us, we include them in the process. We also have the option to use the School of Education dispositions lists and Process including Remediation Plan to document and address specific concerns. Once a plan is in place, we work closely with the candidate to provide the supports to be successful. If the candidate does not progress, we talk about next steps.

In one case, we worked with administrators who wanted to keep the candidate in their job until the end of the school year. The candidate was doing well in our classes but was struggling with the students and school culture where they taught. We changed the coach who supported the candidate and held the candidate accountable to the agreement. The candidate improved their classroom management, engagement of students, and continued to meet the expectations set for their performance and coursework. At the end of the year the candidate resigned from their position and was hired at another school. The candidate went on to be a successful teacher in a school with a different school climate. Historically we have not had to dismiss many candidates. Usually they self-select out of the program/teaching.

**Summary Finding:** The review team found the MSU Denver program Proficient on Performance Measure 3C.

Candidates are observed and evaluated several times during their program experience. Coaches are in the classroom a minimum of 10 times each year and are providing feedback each time. The observation notes are uploaded in a campus system. In addition to the observation feedback forms the candidates get, the coaches are also completing their evaluations on how well they are doing around the teacher quality standards. These forms are shared with both the coaches and instructors. Coaches and instructors take it upon themselves to meet monthly to review each candidate’s progress in coursework and application of content. In addition, candidates must submit a teacher work sample and reflective journal entries to their instructors.

**Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):**
- NA

**Additional Recommendations:**
- Formalize a system of expectations for how often coaches and instructors connect around candidate growth.
Statutory Performance Measure 4A. Comprehensive, Ongoing Assessment:

The designated agency gathers and analyzes data in order to continuously improve program elements that relate to the CDE Rules and Regulations. Comprehensive and ongoing evaluation of each candidate’s subject matter and professional knowledge and ability to demonstrate skill in applying the professional knowledge base.

The following partial description is taken from the MSU Denver Program Report to CDE:

Evidence of Learning
The matrices submitted by the MSU Denver Alternative Licensure Programs document the “breadth and depth” of the content covered in each program.

There are multiple data points for candidates’ learning that are used regularly to evaluate candidate learning.

Grades in courses. Candidates must earn at least a C in every course. If a C is earned instructors work with the candidate to put an improvement plan in place. As a program we do not feel C work is what we want to see in our teacher candidates. Students have the opportunity to resubmit an assignment to meet proficiencies. Dispositions for university and their teaching assignments (field) are completed and reviewed in an ongoing process.

Meeting Colorado Teacher Quality Standards

Program Improvement Data Analysis
The instructors meet monthly to discuss trends and to share success and concerns

Annually we review data from each cohort. An informal survey that provides feedback regarding coursework, mentor/administrator support, class format, observations etc.

Results from ALP Graduate Survey currently completed every 4 - 5 years. Data is shared with the advisory council

Coursework alignment to Colorado Teacher Quality Standards

Instructors and Coaches use anecdotal data to discuss current trends/events that may not be captured in a formal survey.

Informal meeting with district partners to gather information for improvement.

Designated Agency Improvement/Growth Plan

Diversify the representation of the advisory committee and schedule trimester meetings that include data analysis and decision making. We will create an advisory committee of 5-7 people that is representative of different stakeholders, i.e., principals, teachers, and coaches (or people who represent multiple roles) as well as different programs (elementary, secondary, and special education). We also need to have members who represent different groups that are reflective of the teachers in our programs and the students they serve.
Develop a system to engage and collaborate with our teacher candidates’ building mentors. We would like to offer a week-long mentor training/development session in June. Recertification credit would be a way to incentivize participation in the session, but we could offer payment if a grant were secured or even just quality food and supplies. Potential participants could be principal-identified mentors or even previous mentors of ALP teachers.

**Summary Finding:** The review team found the MSU Denver program Partially Proficient on Performance Measure 4AB.

The Metropolitan State University of Denver has developed deep roots with their partnering school districts. Due to the structure of the program and systems in place there are several touch points in which stakeholders are engaged and provided informal feedback to program leadership. Program leadership and staff are responsive to these needs. The passion and natural leadership the team has, has allowed the program to become progressive over the last few years.

Program leadership shared a variety of data with the state team and it was evident the program has more data than what was shared during the site visit. How can the program be thoughtful around systemizing everything so that the program is sustainable? Teachers and coaches naturally step up and meet the job requirements and more, but how can they be supported in a way to prevent burnout? The state team noted there are some loose systems in place to evaluate staff. How might the program gather data and feedback to help teachers and coaches grow professionally?

**Areas for Improvement (Must be addressed to meet proficiency):**
- Formalize a process to collect data from all stakeholders and then set goals around how the program will use this data to drive continuous improvement.
- How do you balance the qualitative and quantitative data collection to set program goals?

**Additional Recommendations:**
- Engage the advisory council in using this data to drive continuous improvement plans.

**Recommendation**

The reauthorization team recommends full reauthorization of most of the institution’s alternative educator preparation as a one/two-year program. This recommendation applies to the following endorsement areas: Special Education Generalist (5-21), Dance (K-12), Drama Theater Arts (K-12), World Languages (K-12), Comprehensive Health (K-12), Instructional Technology (K-12), Music (K-12), Physical Education (K-12), Agriculture and Renewable Natural Resources (7-12), Business/Marketing (7-12), English Language Arts (7-12), Family and Consumer Studies (7-12), Mathematics (7-12), Science (7-12), Social Studies (7-12), Speech (7-12), and Technology Education (Industrial Arts)(7-12).

The reauthorization team recommends conditional reauthorization of the institution’s alternative educator preparation as a one/two-year program for Early Childhood Education (Birth-8) and Elementary Education (K-6).
The state team will have a follow-up visit in March 2021 to address the implementation of the areas for improvement as stated in this report.

Rejoinder and Next Steps

Metropolitan State University of Denver shall note any errors of fact in this report and respond in a rejoinder with any supplemental information requested within 15 days of the delivery of this report.

Materials and questions should be sent to:

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303.866.6898

Conclusion

The State Review Team would like to thank Metropolitan State University of Denver personnel, for planning and participating in the on-site visit. We look forward to continuing our working partnership with the program to address the needs of the educator preparation programs now and in the future.