

Arkansas State Review Guide

Division of Elementary & Secondary Education

2023



DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION



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Overview

About the State Review

Arkansas has faced teacher shortage challenges, both in numbers of teachers across districts and the percent of teachers in schools who have the training and licensure necessary to teach our students. As of 2023, approximately 15% of Arkansas public school teachers were uncertified for at least one course taught with some districts having over 50% of positions filled by uncertified teachers. Our most economically disadvantaged communities are more severely impacted by teacher shortages and quality challenges.

In 2021, The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Office of Educator Effectiveness and the Office of Education Policy (OEP) coordinated and facilitated virtual feedback sessions with 176 stakeholders and 48 survey respondents, from across the state of Arkansas to gather feedback about teachers' experiences in preparation programs. This study also offered a vision of what stakeholders would like to see in the preparation, support, and partnerships from EPP programs. Common themes included:

- Provide continuous support for early career robust mentoring;
- Expand and strengthen partnerships between Educator Preparation Programs and LEAs;
- Use technology to model and expand access to programs;
- Ensure teachers have diverse and authentic field experiences, and;
- Align Educator Preparation Program experiences with state initiatives and district needs.

To address these priorities, the DESE, Office of Educator Effectiveness established a group of stakeholders and national partners to support facilitation and development of a new Arkansas State Review for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs). The timeline and sequence of activities follow:



Goal and vision of the AR State Review

The AR State Review for EPPs sets a shared vision and bar for high-quality educator preparation in our state while supporting a process of continuous improvement to ensure all new teacher candidates prepared through those programs are ready to meet the needs of Arkansas students on day one.



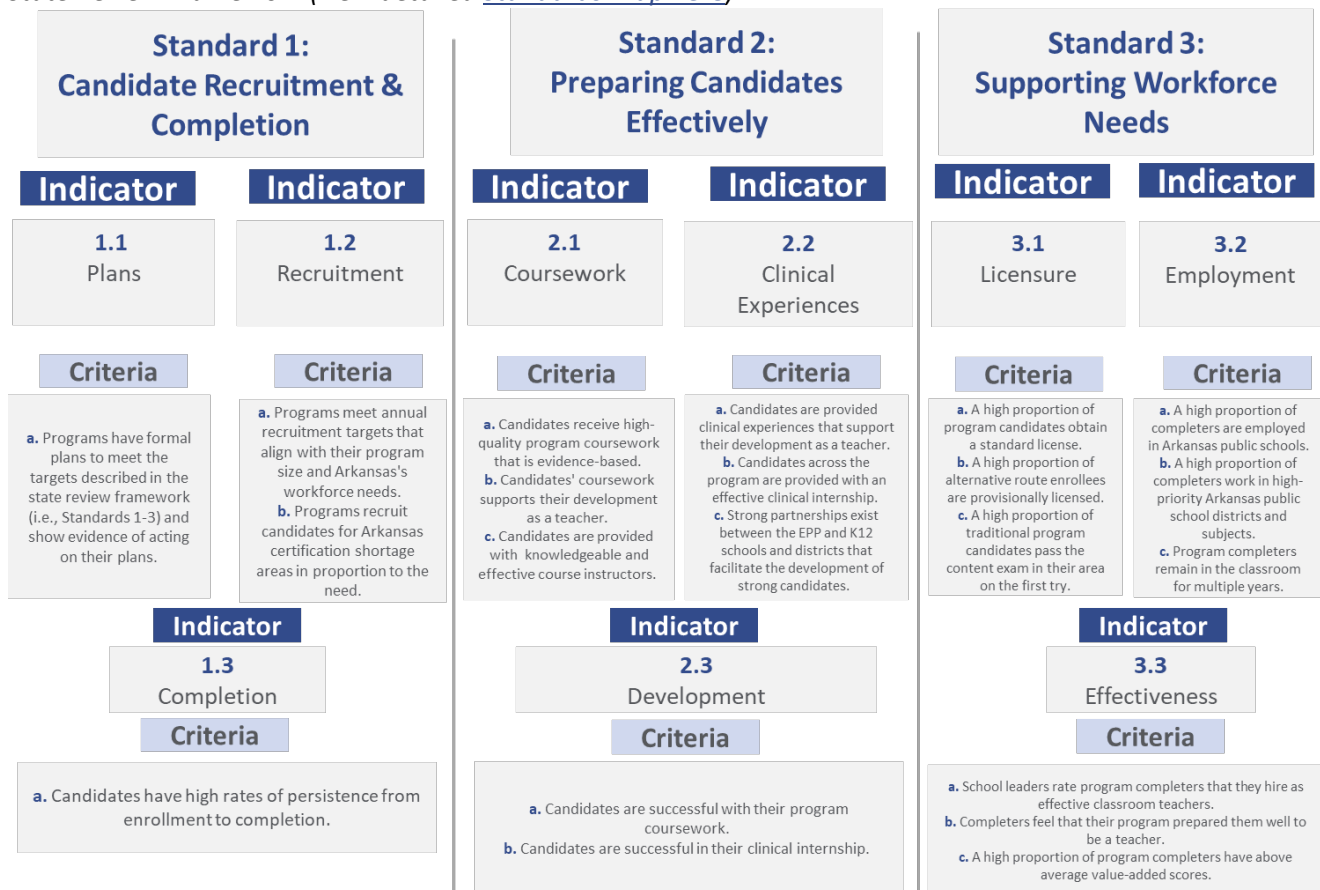
Outline of State Review Process

The State Review Approach

The AR State Review for EPPs was designed to elevate the key pieces of data and the program experiences that align with our vision for high quality preparation of teachers that are ready to meet the needs of Arkansas students on day one. The organization and focus of the overarching framework include three core standards with aligned indicators and criteria. The AR State Review Standards are:

1. Candidate Recruitment & Completion
2. Preparing Candidates Effectively
3. Meeting Workforce Needs

State Review Framework (view detailed [Standards Map here](#))





State Review Performance Rating

The overall performance rating for each EPP will be determined by using a formula that considers the individual ratings for each standard. The approach and methodology for determining the overall rating is provided below.

Each of the criteria and indicators will be assigned points based on the extent to which the EPP achieved the set target. The criteria scores are then averaged to serve as the score for each indicator. The indicator scores are then averaged across standards and will determine the overall performance level. The targets within each criteria for Standard 1 and Standard 3 are determined by averages from historical data. The targets within Standard 2 are set based on guidelines outlined for the EPP on-site review process. Scoring is on a 0-3 point scale that will assign points based on the performance level brackets (table below).

EPPs will receive an overall performance level (Exceeds, Meets, Approaching and Below) and score (0-3), which will be an average of the indicator scores and measures how close an EPP is to the target.

Performance Level	Average Score Equivalent	Score Cut-Off
Exceeds (3 points)	Exceeds on two of three Standards or Indicators	Average Score ≥ 2.67
Meets (2 points)	Meets on all three standards or indicators	$2.67 < \text{Average Score} < 1.67$
Approaching (1 point)	Approaching on one Standard or Indicator and Meets on the other two	$1.67 \leq \text{Average Score} < 0.67$
Below (0 points)	Below on one Standard or Indicator and Approaching on the other two	Average Score ≤ 0.67



Rating Each Standard

A performance level and score will be assigned for each standard in the framework and will be determined based on the average of scores for each indicator. During the State Review process, evidence will be collected to align with the named criteria for each indicator.

State compiled educator workforce and effectiveness data will be assessed as evidence for Standard 1 and 3. The data for Standard 2 will be gathered through on-site review. DESE staff and peer review teams will utilize the on-site review approach and rubric to facilitate the review process with each EPP. Reviewers will receive training and have access to an [On-Site Review Handbook](#) that will outline the steps of the review process.

There are three types of evidence that reviewers look at: a set of documents submitted by the EPP, focus group responses, and coursework and clinical internship observations. EPPs submit their documentation evidence before the review. This includes files, handbooks, templates and artifacts. Focus groups and observations are convened by the EPP and are conducted by the review team. The evidence table in the following section includes a high-level description of evidence by Standard.



Evidence Table

<p>Standard 1</p>	<p>1.1 Plans EPP program plan must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address each indicator of the state review framework and • Provide evidence of actions to implement the plan <p>Program plans will be submitted and reviewed annually by the Office of Educator Effectiveness and Licensure</p> <p>1.2 and 1.3 State generated data reports that include HEA Title II individual data from EPP Federal Title II reporting.</p>
<p>Standard 2</p>	<p>Recommended Documentation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program Handbook(s) • Programs of study/degree plans showing the progression and sequencing of coursework and connections to program checkpoints and transitions • Course syllabi for the programs included above which include objectives and assessments aligned to: Arkansas K12 standards, use of high-quality instructional materials, state initiatives (e.g. Science of Reading, Math Quest), Aspiring Teacher Rubric, Arkansas Educator competencies, and Arkansas Teaching Standards as appropriate • Roster of course instructors (faculty and facilitators who teacher or supervise candidates) listing degrees obtained, most recent teaching and/or supervision assignments teacher certification and licenses held, PreK-12 teaching experience, evidence of TESS/Aspiring Teacher Rubric training, areas of expertise and research, recent PD and conferences • Clinical Experience Handbook(s) or Guidance for candidates and/or supervisors • Guidance, handbooks and/or MOUs for experienced mentor teachers outlining selection criteria, training and orientation, responsibilities, evaluation • Guidance, handbooks and/or training sequence for clinical supervisors • Tracker or samples of current experienced mentor teacher credentials including teacher certification and licenses held, teaching experience, effectiveness data, trainings and PD attended • Coaching templates, meeting agendas, protocols, and/or rubrics used by experienced mentor teachers and clinical supervisors • Samples of written feedback to candidates that are connected to the Aspiring Teacher Rubric*, clearly linked to evidence of student learning during observed lessons, built on the previous feedback • Tracker or samples of current experienced mentor teacher credentials including teacher certification and licenses held, teaching experience, effectiveness data, trainings and PD attended • Coaching templates, meeting agendas, protocols, and/or rubrics used by experienced mentor teachers and clinical supervisors



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Samples of written feedback to candidates that are connected to the Aspiring Teacher Rubric*, clearly linked to evidence of student learning during observed lessons, built on the previous feedback • Trackers or evaluation results of clinical supervisors • Artifacts showing collaboration between districts/schools and the EPP to co-construct clinical experiences, such as working groups and advisory boards, meeting agendas, frameworks for discussion, and/or goal-setting templates • Artifacts showing collaboration between districts/schools and the EPP to develop effective communication structures between mentor teachers and clinical supervisors <p>Outline of the plan or system for tracking candidate progress with coursework that includes data showing candidate’s mastery of coursework requirements for the last 3 cohorts, the impact of support plans, the role of the candidate in the plans’</p>
Standard 3	<p>3.1 Licensure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State generated data reports that are developed using HEA Title II data, Arkansas Educator Licensure System (AELS) licensure data, Pearson and Praxis Licensure Assessment Data <p>3.2 Employment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State generated data reports that are developed using HEA Title II data and school district employment data <p>3.3 Effectiveness</p> <p>State generated data reports that are developed using HEA Title II data, EPP completer and EPP completer supervisor survey data, and value-added measure data.</p>



Standard 1 and 3, Annual Reports

EPP data reports

EPPs will receive workforce data reports one-time per year to support planning and program quality metrics for programs. The reports will show how each EPP's data aligns with the established targets for each quantitative metric in Standards 1 and 3.

Standard 2, On-Site Review

Timeline

Each EPP will have an on-site review every six years. The on-site review is broken into three parts- before, during and after. Starting eight to ten weeks before the review, the EPP participates in an orientation call with DESE. Four to six weeks ahead of the visit the EPP submits evidence and documentation, and one week before the visit there is a final call to review final logistics and scheduling.

The on-site visit is two full days. During the visit, the review team conducts the focus groups and observations. They review documents and meet together to discuss findings and norm on ratings.

About six weeks after the review the EPPs meet with DESE and receive their Performance Report.

On-Site Review Roles and Responsibilities

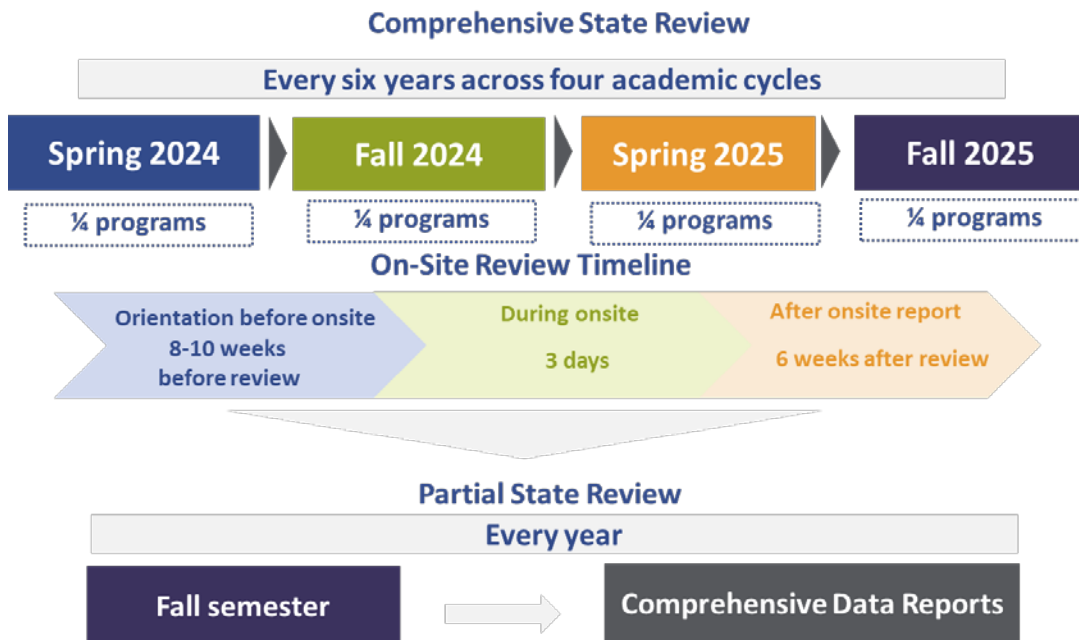
There are two primary roles in the State Review process: **Reviewer team and EPP team.**

- Reviewers: the team responsible for conducting the on-site review; contains EPP and non EPP educational leaders from across the state of Arkansas
- EPPs: EPP leadership and staff responsible for providing evidence to the review team before and during the assigned State Review period; includes all EPPs in the state



State Review Timeline and Approach

Timeline



Approach

The full cycle of a State Review period will take approximately two years to complete reviews for every EPP in the state covering all three standards. Reviews will be conducted for approximately ¼ of programs per semester for the two-year period. EPPs will receive a State Review every six years for programs meeting expectations. For programs evaluated to be performing below expectations, there will be a performance improvement plan and a mid-cycle review at the three-year mark.

Beginning in 2024, EPPs will additionally undergo a Science of Reading coursework audit that will sit within the structure of the Arkansas State Review for Education Preparation Programs (EPPs). The addition of this audit will accelerate the state’s efforts to ensure educators completing their training and certification are also prepared to teach and develop literacy skills for all Arkansas students on day one. The approach will align to and build upon the state executive order to prioritize Literacy, Empowerment, Accountability, Readiness, Networking, And School Safety (LEARNs). The Science of Reading Audit will be conducted alongside the State Review for all 26 state-approved EPP programs in AR that offer K-6 and special education certification pathways. The audit will focus on Science of Reading proficiency and awareness requirements as they relate to the preparation of Arkansas teacher candidates.

All EPPs will receive comprehensive data reports aligned to the indicators in Standard 1 and Standard 3, one time per year.



Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Vision for Stakeholder Engagement

A State Review Task Force was established at the beginning of this work to advise and provide input on the design and priority areas that show up in the State Review Framework. The Task Force convened regularly around a few guiding questions to drive the work:

1. What needs to be true so that every student of Arkansas has access to a high-quality, equitable education?
2. How do we ensure that this state review process centers on continuous improvement?
3. How do we balance the needs and realities of different stakeholders through this process?

The role of the Task Force has primarily focused on providing input and feedback on the design approach and outcomes connected to the state review process. They have additionally supported communications and advisement on implementation. The Task Force represents a diverse group of individuals representing EPPs, LEAs, educators, educator advocacy groups and state leadership.

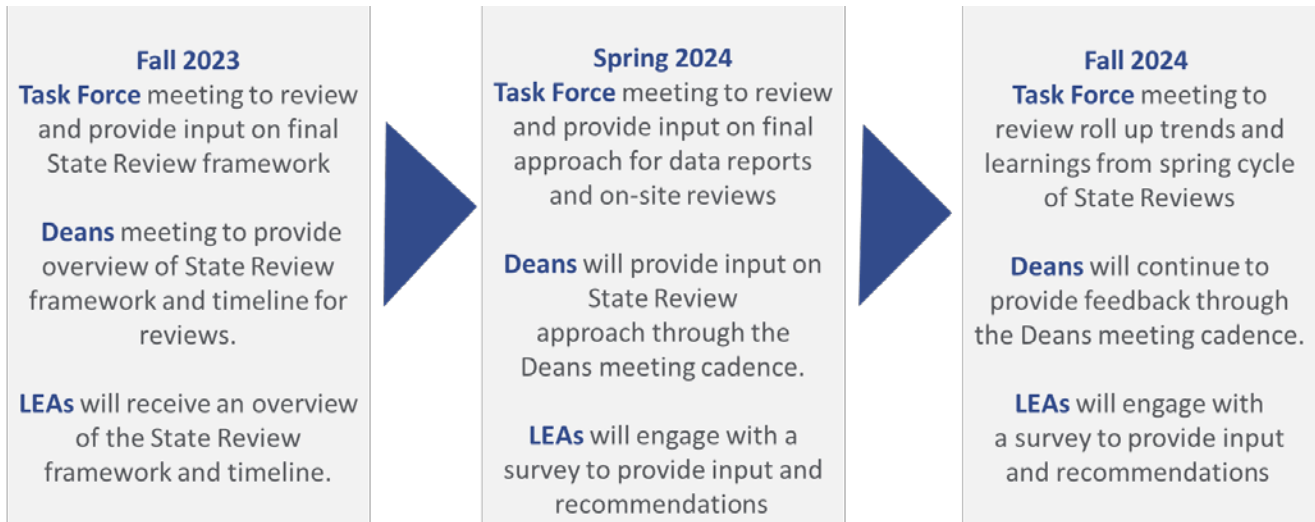
As part of the launch and implementation of the State Review, district leaders and EPP deans will be invited to engage in multiple opportunities to learn about the process and provide input.

Engagement Plan

The Task force will engage in virtual and/or in-person convening(s) to hear findings and share feedback. LEAs/Deans will attend standing weekly DESE meetings to learn about updates and share feedback from their institutions.

August - December 2023: Leading up to the first formal review cycle, stakeholders will learn about the finalized standards and criteria via small group sessions and communications. There will be additional opportunities to provide asynchronous feedback via surveys for more general items.

January 2024 - December 2025: DESE will convene the task force at the end of each semester to share learnings and information from the prior cycle of reviews. The task force will continue to be engaged asynchronously between cycles by continuing to receive communications regarding the State Review process.



State Review Information

For additional information and questions related to the AR State Review framework and process, reach out to:

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