



DIVISION OF ELEMENTARY
& SECONDARY EDUCATION

AR State Review

Standard 2 On-Site Review Handbook

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CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Purpose of the On-site Review	3
Section 1: Overview of the On-site Review for Education Preparation Programs	4
Preparation and Planning	4
Evidence Guide	5
Schedule	6
During the Visit.....	7
Section 2: Overview of On-site Review for Review Team.....	7
The Reviewers	7
Preparation and Planning	8
Determining Performance Levels.....	8
During the Visit.....	9
After the Visit	9
Maintaining Confidentiality and Document Security	10
Section 3: Post On-site Review Process	10
Timeline for Reporting	10
The Performance Report	10
Arkansas State Review Glossary.....	11

Introduction

In 2021 DESE began the work, in partnership with The New Teacher Project ([TNTP](#)) and Arkansas state stakeholders, to set a vision and approach to guide the design of a State Review for Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs). This work has been grounded in what we understand about the current state of our educator workforce needs in Arkansas as well as what new teachers must be prepared to deliver on day one. We are excited to announce the launch of the State On-site Review in January 2024.

This handbook is intended to provide an overview of the on-site review process for EPPs and for reviewers. Section 1 describes instructions and guidance for EPPs leading up to and during the on-site review. Section 2 gives an overview for reviewers in terms of what to expect before the review, determining performance levels, and logistics about the visit. Section 3 describes the timeline and process of feedback after the review including some details about the Performance Report. The glossary at the end of the handbook focuses on some of the Arkansas initiatives that are mentioned throughout the review process and will be a helpful tool for reviewers.

Purpose of the On-site Review

The State Review focuses on three Standards for initial teacher licensure programs, measured through integration of ADE priorities. Two of the three standards are primarily measured through a state-run data collection process. Standard 1, Candidate Recruitment & Completion, and Standard 3, Meeting Workforce Needs, track important indicators of EPP's contributions to a robust Arkansas educator workforce through their preparation of initial licensure teachers.

Standard 2, Preparing Candidates Effectively, necessitates a different approach, focusing on aspects of EPP's development of day one ready teachers. The indicators of Standard 2 rely on multiple layers of evidence that provide a picture of EPP's intentional design and sequencing of coursework, clinical experiences, assessment, and support.

The on-site review serves as the mechanism to gather and weigh evidence by engaging a small team to review key information and artifacts submitted by the program. The review teams either gather virtually or at the EPP site to analyze evidence aligned to metrics, weighing it against rubrics detailing different performance levels. This analyzed evidence is then combined to permit determination of performance levels at the criteria, indicator, and standard 2 level. A report of the performance levels, with explanatory narratives for the ratings and recommendations, is delivered to the EPPs.

DESE is supported in carrying out on-site reviews through a partnership with The New Teacher Project, [TNTP](#), a non-profit organization. The on-site review process will be facilitated by The New Teacher Project (TNTP) for reviews occurring between spring 2024 and spring 2026.

STANDARD 2 PREPARING CANDIDATES EFFECTIVELY		
2.1 Coursework	2.2 Clinical experiences	2.3 Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Candidates receive high-quality program coursework that is evidence-basedb. Candidates' coursework supports their development as a teacherc. Candidates are provided with knowledgeable and effective course instructors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Candidates are provided clinical experiences that support their development as a teacherb. Candidates across the program are provided with an effective clinical internshipc. Strong partnerships exist between the EPP and K12 schools & districts that facilitate the development of strong candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Candidates are successful with their program courseworkb. Candidates are successful in their clinical internship

Section 1: Overview of the On-site Review for Education Preparation Programs

The on-site Review for Standard 2 occurs on a cyclical basis. Conducted during an EPP's review year, the on-site review consists of three stages, broadly outlined below.

Stage	Timeline	Activities
1. Before on-site	8-10 weeks before the on-site review	DESE* holds orientation call with the EPP to launch review Review team identified
	3-6 weeks before the on-site review	DESE* trains review team virtually
	4-6 weeks before the on-site review	EPP submits evidence guide and evidence artifacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule of focus groups, clinical experience with coaching, courses • Access to online or asynchronous coursework • Documents uploaded to a secure platform
	Up to 2 weeks before the on-site review	Members of the review team start to review evidence submitted by the EPP
	1 week before the on-site review	DESE* and EPP hold check-in and final details call
2. During on-site	Up to 2 days	Review team gathers to complete a virtual, in-person, or hybrid on-site review. Working in pairs, reviewers gather evidence by leading focus groups, observing at the EPP and clinical internship sites, and examining documentation. They then determine performance trends of the evidence gathered. EPPs participate by setting up a review team space, escorting reviewers to off-site observations, and participating in focus groups.
3. After on-site	1-2 weeks post on-site	DESE* holds On-site debrief call with EPP
	1 week after request	EPP responds to any additional evidence requests
	4-6 weeks after on-site	DESE* completes performance level determinations
	4-6 weeks after on-site	DESE* shares Performance Reports DESE* and EPP hold a Performance Report Debrief

*The on-site review process will be facilitated by The New Teacher Project (TNTP) for reviews occurring between spring 2024 and spring 2026.

Preparation and Planning

Early in the on-site review year, the EPP should identify a core group responsible for participating in the on-site review. This group should include a point person for communication and coordination with DESE. The point person for the EPP communicates with the review team about the materials needed in advance of the visit and the materials and general logistics needed on-site. Basically, this person helps ensure the review runs smoothly. Additional responsibilities of the core group include:

- Participating in an orientation call 8-10 weeks prior to on-site review. Additional follow-up calls can be scheduled as needed.
- Completing the evidence guide 4-6 weeks prior to on-site review. This includes
 - Identifying, organizing, and uploading artifacts and documents that demonstrate the criteria and metrics in the State Review Framework
 - Identifying and inviting focus group participants
 - Scheduling observations of courses and clinical experience supervision
 - Drafting an initial schedule for the on-site review days

Evidence Guide

The Evidence Guide will be available at least 10-12 weeks prior to the on-site review. Four to six weeks before the review, the EPP should provide the documents and data listed in the Evidence Guide. If a provider has both traditional and alternative routes, evidence will need to be provided for both. The list includes documents such as:

- Program Handbooks
- Programs of Study/Degree plans
- Course syllabi
- Roster of course instructors
- Clinical Experience Handbooks
- Guidance or handbooks for experienced mentor teachers and clinical supervisors
- Coaching artifacts used by experienced mentor teachers and clinical supervisors
- Artifacts showing collaboration between the district/schools and the EPP

During the on-site review, the team will be visiting and observing courses and conducting focus groups. The point person for the EPP should arrange the observations and focus groups well before the visit. The observations fall into two categories:

- coursework experience
- clinical internship/coaching

The schedule should include up to five observations of coursework and up to five observations of teaching/coaching sessions.

The focus groups are also an important perspective in the review. The EPP has the opportunity to schedule six different groups of up to 10 people in each. The focus groups include:

- students re: coursework
- students re: clinical internship
- an experienced mentor teacher group
- a course instructor group
- a program director group
- a partnership group (schools and districts)

In both the observations and the focus groups, it is important to include a range of performance levels or range of tenure. EPPs should resist the temptation to include every possible piece of evidence that might bear on the standards. EPPs can support an efficient review by being judicious in selecting only the evidence that best makes their case. Tips and best practices for scheduling will be reviewed during the orientation call with the EPP and will be described in detail in the Evidence Guide.

Schedule

During the On-site Review visit, teams will be engaging in meetings and discussions to gather evidence about how EPPs prepare teacher candidates. They will be reviewing documents and observing classes, teaching and coaching. They will also be conducting focus groups. It is helpful to have time in the schedule for them to meet and review findings and discuss conclusions with each other. The team needs 30 minutes of preparation prior to the team meeting in the morning and an hour after each focus group or after each observation to discuss results.

Here is a sample schedule over a two-day review.

Sample Daily Schedule

	Day 1	Day 2
8:30 – 12:00	Welcome from Pilot Site Evidence collection and review (in pairs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document review • Conduct focus groups and observations 	Evidence review continues Analysis and norming Review team debrief and next steps
12:30 – 1:00	Working lunch (provided by EPP)	Working lunch (provided by EPP)
1:00 – 3:00	Evidence review continues	Evidence review continues/ Review team departs
3:00 – 5:00	Analysis and norming	

During the Visit

The days go by quickly during reviews, and we know it is difficult to schedule all the necessary groups within a two-day window. In order to maximize efficiency, we request that the EPP participate in the review process by

- Providing escorts for navigating to observations off-site
- Providing a reviewer space and rooms for holding in-person or virtual focus groups
- Providing an overview (15-30 minutes) at the start of on-site review orienting the review team to the mission, goals, and initiatives of the EPP
- Providing a light breakfast, lunch, and dinner for the review team
- Checking in and being available to the review team for questions during the on-site review
- Managing any changes in the schedules

Section 2: Overview of On-site Review for Review Team

The Reviewers

In September 2023, TNTP launched recruitment for the on-site review team. The on-site review team is responsible for gathering evidence, aligning it with the State Review framework, and determining evidence trends. In this streamlined review process, the emphasis is on reviewing a core set of documents, focus group responses, and observation findings that most efficiently speak to the program’s efforts to produce day one ready teachers.

Members of the review team agree to maintain confidentiality of the teams’ findings and processes, while upholding the principles and goals of the review. During reviewer training, the team will norm around writing high-quality evidence statements, maintaining objectivity, and evaluating evidence. Participation benefits members by deepening their familiarity with the standards framework and State Review, learning about innovative practices in other EPPs, and building collective efficacy across the state.

The review team consists of six reviewers (a mix of EPP and non EPP volunteers) and DESE representatives. Reviewers are encouraged to participate in multiple reviews. Reviewer training is held virtually in the fall and the spring, with mini-training refreshers as needed to ensure that teams are prepared to engage while on-site. Each team includes educators with backgrounds in areas relevant to the State Review, such as educator preparation, K-12 teaching, and school leadership.

Reviewer membership is voluntary and unpaid, but reviewers are reimbursed through DESE for some expenses: mileage and one overnight in a hotel. Light breakfast, lunch, and dinner are provided by the hosting EPP.

Preparation and Planning

Responsibilities	Time	Details
Reviewer training	2 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">held virtuallyan additional refresher training may be held prior to on-site visits
Individual self-study/ preparation for on-site review	Up to 5 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none">review protocols and toolsbegin document review
On-site review	2 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none">held at hosting EPPsome reviews may be held virtually or with the team gathering at DESE
Post-on-site document review	varies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">reviewers may be asked to continue document review and analysis if needed

The On-site Review Framework will evaluate coursework, clinical experiences, and candidate development. In evaluating the evidence and data, teams will use a preponderance of evidence to rate each metric. To prove an element by a preponderance of evidence means to prove that something is more likely than not. Review team members will use the descriptors in the rubrics guide and the Guiding Questions. Likely sources of evidence are meant to serve as initial guidance and are not exhaustive or prescriptive. Evidence is considered in the context of the EPP. We recognize that no one evaluator can be completely objective, so we include time in the schedule for reviewers to rate scores together and question inferences.

Determining Performance Levels

Evidence-Level Metric Performance: During the on-site review, review teams use tools to capture evidence from three sources: documents, focus groups, and observations. After collecting evidence, review teams interpret the evidence and determine metric-level performance ratings following these steps:

1. Reread the metrics
2. Align examples, quotes, and other relevant context from the scripting to each metric and add to the summary.
3. Review the rubric for each criterion and aligned metric. Then, give a preliminary evaluation of the strength of that evidence as trending towards “meets + exceeds”, “meets expectation”, or “approaching expectation.” If a metric has no aligned examples, quotes, or other context, select the “not observed” option. “Below” is reserved for a pattern of negative evidence or evidence that was asked for and not provided.

Performance Levels			
Exceeds	Meets	Approaching	Below
<p>Meets target</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Shows strong evidence of systems and planning that result in continuous improvement.</p>	<p>Most of the time</p> <p>80-100% of the time or instances</p> <p>AND</p> <p>Candidate experiences include comparable opportunities and support similar outcomes across all licensure areas</p> <p>Qualifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate consistent clearly and intentionally appropriate mostly 	<p>Sometimes</p> <p>60-80% of the time or instances</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Candidate experiences inconsistently include comparable opportunities and support similar outcomes across all licensure areas</p> <p>Qualifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> occasionally inconsistent partial somewhat some 	<p>Rarely</p> <p>less than 60% of the time or instances</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Candidate experiences do not include comparable opportunities and support similar outcomes across all licensure areas</p> <p>Qualifiers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> few little or no does not

Most likely to be found in documentation that is submitted as “supplemental”

Consistency versus inconsistency; Comprehensive evidence versus anecdotal; Inconsistent across routes; Some differences in experience that impact opportunity

Negative evidence; Asked for evidence, not provided; Route experiences do not create same opportunities or support same outcomes; If no examples are found, use “not observed” and include explanation

During the Visit

The On-site State Review was created to streamline the review process. It is conducted by the state of Arkansas for the context of Arkansas. Educational leaders from across the state volunteer their time to take part in the process. The review usually lasts two full days from 8-5pm, and sometimes there are additional documents to review in the evenings. During the review days the review teams will observe classes and coaching, facilitate focus groups, review documents, and discuss evidence and findings with other review team members. Because the days are packed, it is important that all the reviewers clear their schedule and engage fully in the process.

After the Visit

The goal is for the work of a reviewer to be complete by the end of the on-site review. There may be occasions when the lead reviewer may have additional questions about evidence statements or request support if additional evidence is submitted during the week following a review. Reviewers will be asked to complete a survey about their experience and for any suggestions they may have about improving the process, but for the most part, the job of the reviewer is finished at the end of the on-site review.

Maintaining Confidentiality and Document Security

The State Review team is committed to maintaining confidentiality and a consistent process for all EPPs. All materials related to a state review by the ADE are the property of the institution under review and will be kept confidential by the ADE. The ADE will only make the materials available to the public if it is required by state or federal law or by a court of competent jurisdiction.

Program review materials include, but are not limited to, institutional documents, program of study proposals, syllabi, and assessments. The review team will treat as confidential all elements of the state review process and information they may be privy to as part of that process. A review member should not share information and perceptions about a program review or discuss the program review in public places. They must not be affiliated with the EPP under review.

Section 3: Post On-site Review Process

Either at the end of the review or within two weeks after the On-site review, the lead reviewer will set up a 30 min check in call with the EPP to debrief the experience. Performance ratings will not be discussed at this time. This first call will be an opportunity to talk about the strengths and challenges of the process and any suggestions for improvement the EPP may have.

Timeline for Reporting

Within the first week after the on-site review the lead reviewer may reach out to the EPP with additional evidence requests. The deadline to submit the additional evidence is one week after the request. Within two weeks following the on-site review, the EPP will have a chance to debrief the visit with DESE. Within 4-6 weeks of the review, the EPP will receive a final report about the main findings of the on-site review for Standard 2 as well as Standards 1 and 3. The EPP will participate in a performance report debrief with DESE. It is important for EPPs to be able to respond to the report. In addition to the first post review call and the final call, there will be a section in the performance report for EPPs to be able to provide feedback and comments after the full review experience.

The Performance Report

Four to six weeks after the On-site Review, the lead reviewer will email the EPP a performance report. The performance report will include performance levels for Standards 1, 2, and 3.

Most criteria used for Standards 1 and 3 will have data collected through a state-run data collection process and does not require programs to collect additional evidence. For Standard 2 the report uses evidence from the onsite review to examine educator preparation program performance. The criteria used to assess performance is the result from multiple conversations with groups of stakeholders that included teacher preparation program deans, candidates, current school leaders and teachers, recent graduates, and DESE staff. The information in the performance report is meant to inform a continuous improvement process that takes educator preparation programs closer to the goals needed to serve Arkansas' students.

Arkansas State Review Glossary

In the interest of clarity and ease of accessibility, this glossary is included in multiple on-site resources to provide definitions of terms that pertain to the review.

Term	Draft Definition	Resources
AR Math QuEST	<p>A professional learning journey for ambitious teaching that promotes equity and engagement of all students in meaningful mathematics learning experiences of reasoning and problem solving.</p> <p>AR Math QuEST empowers educators and families to help students develop positive identities as doers of mathematics to increase student achievement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AR Math QuEST Page • The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)'s Effective Mathematics Teaching Practices • The Standards for Mathematical Practice
Arkansas Academic Standards	<p>Documents that outline student learning expectations for grades K -12 in nine content areas:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arkansas Academic Standards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer Science, • English Language Arts • Fine Arts • Health & PE • Library Media • Mathematics • Science, • Social Studies • World Languages. • Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 Months
Arkansas Educator Competencies:	<p>Documents that describe what an educator should know and be able to do in a particular licensure area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educator Competency Documents
Aspiring Teacher Rubric	<p>A framework that has been specifically developed to assist teacher candidates in their growth and development by providing them with mentoring and feedback. It lays out the key competencies that must guide the feedback and coaching provided to teacher candidates.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiring TESS Framework
Clinical Experience	<p>The activities for candidates in educator preparation programs that allow early and ongoing practice opportunities to apply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules Governing Educator Licensure (p.6)

	content and pedagogical knowledge, such as observations, tutoring, assisting teachers and administrators, and practicums.	
Clinical Internship	A culminating clinical practice experience that can be of varying duration but no less than 15 weeks. The clinical internship takes place in an authentic educational setting where teacher candidates engage in the pedagogical work of the profession of teaching, closely integrated with educator preparation instruction and supported by a formal school-educator preparation partnership. Placements must reflect the subject area and grade level of the license being sought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules Governing Educator Licensure (p.6)
Collaborative processes	Established protocols, both formal and informal for communication, data analysis, iterative review, information exchange, and strategy development between two parties towards a common goal.	
Danielson Framework for Teaching	An instructional resource that describes the practices and habits of effective teaching and a vision for instructional excellence so educators can reflect on professional practice and grow in their profession.	
Evidence-based practices	Professional practices identified by high-quality research to have positive effects on student outcomes.	John Hattie's <i>Visible Learning</i>
Experienced Mentor Teacher	A teacher with a minimum of three years of teaching experience, current Effective Teacher Summative Evaluation, and DESE-approved coaching training with Lead or Master Educator Designation Preferred.	Language designated specifically for the EPP review process to identify school-based teachers supporting candidates in their clinical experience.
Field Supervisor	The educator preparation provider (EPP) support personnel assigned to support and develop a candidate's knowledge, skills, or professional dispositions throughout the candidate's clinical experience	Language designated specifically for the EPP review process to identify EPP-based personnel supporting candidates in their clinical experience at the EPP.
High Performing Candidates	Candidates whose performance on any related materials, assignments, or tasks demonstrates effective knowledge, synthesis, and/or application of learning to satisfy	

	program requirements, take on leadership opportunities, and support others in the program.	
High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM)	<p>Curricular materials aligned to state standards that have been thoroughly vetted by a third-party reviewer for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rigorous, grade level content and assessment • relevance to diverse student populations • teacher usability • accuracy of assessment data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arkansas Initiative for Instructional Materials (AIIM) • Video Introducing HQIM • Arkansas Literacy Curriculum Approved Programs • AR Ed Reports: instructional material reviews for ELA, Math, and Science
Not On Track	Candidates whose performance on any related materials, assignments, or tasks does not demonstrate effective knowledge, synthesis, and/or application to learning and thus implies they will not satisfy clinical experience requirements.	
Proficiency	Performance on any related materials, assignments, or tasks that demonstrate effective knowledge, synthesis, and/or application to learning to satisfy EPP requirements.	
Science of Reading	Act 1063 of 2017, the Right to Read Act, requires graduates from 2021 and after to demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and practices of scientific reading instruction to hold an Elementary Education (K-6) and Special Education (K-12) license. Graduates obtaining 7-12 licenses demonstrate awareness in knowledge and practices scientific reading instruction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SOR Requirements for Educator Preparation • The document Proficiency and Awareness Pathways in Educator Preparation Programs provides the coursework/modules that have been implemented within programs to meet the Right to Read Act.
Student Growth	Measurable improvement demonstrated through understanding, synthesis, or application of AR K-12 Standards	
The Teacher Excellence and Support System (TESS) Rubric	A statewide tool used to guide observations and determine areas for support and growth for all K-12 teachers. The rubric aligns with Charlotte Danielson's <i>Framework for Teaching</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher Excellence and Support System • Arkansas TESS Rubric for Classroom Teachers