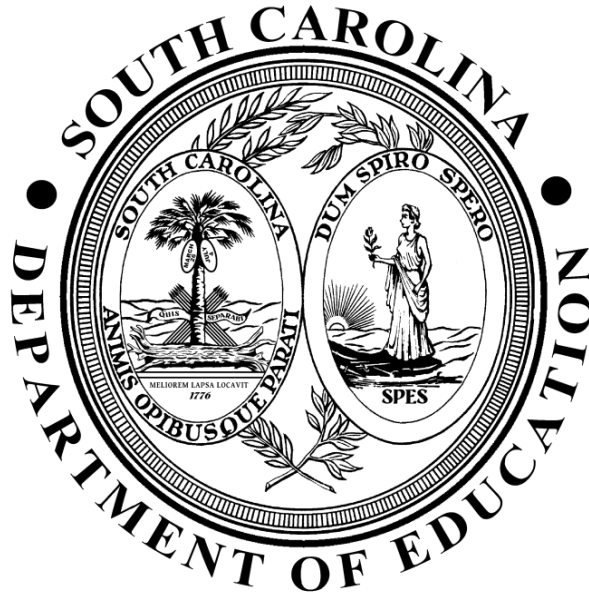


STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION
SECRETARY TO THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION



**Alternative Route Provider and Program
Approval Process and Standards**

South Carolina State Board of Education

March 12, 2019

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Contents

The Legislative Mandate.....	1
General Information.....	2
Provider Eligibility.....	2
Proposal, Review, and Approval Process	3
Provider and Program Status	5
Provider and Program Proposal	5
Section I: Provider Qualifications.....	5
A. IHE Providers.....	6
B. LEA Providers.....	6
C. Education Entity Providers.....	6
Section II: Alternative Route Preparation Program	7
South Carolina Alternative Route Preparation Program Approval Standards.....	8
Standard 1: Content of the Preparation Program	8
Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice	8
Standard 3: Candidate Recruitment and Admission	8
A. Ineligibility for Program Admission or Participation	8
B. Eligibility and Candidate Admission Requirements	9
Standard 4: Program Impact	9
Standard 5: Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	9
Standard 6: South Carolina Requirements.....	10
A. Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT).....	10
B. South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards.....	10
C. Parental Involvement.....	10
D. Educator Ethics	10
E. Safe School Climate Act (S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-63-110–150).....	11
F. South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA) (Title 59, Chapter 59)	11
G. Annual Reporting.....	11

The Legislative Mandate

SECTION 59-26-30. Cognitive assessments for teachers and teacher certification; examinations; regulations.

(A) In the area of cognitive assessments for teachers and teacher certification, the State Board of Education, acting through the State Department of Education, shall:

...

(7) award a teaching certificate to a person who successfully completes the scholastic requirements for teaching at an approved college or university and the examination he is required to take for certification purposes;

(8) award a conditional teaching certificate to a person eligible to hold a teaching certificate who does not qualify for full certification under item (7) above provided the person has earned a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university with a major in a certification area for which the board has determined there exists a critical shortage of teachers, and the person has passed the appropriate teaching examination. The board may renew a conditional teaching certificate annually for a maximum of three years, if the holder of the certificate shows satisfactory progress toward completion of a teacher certification program prescribed by the board. In part, satisfactory progress is the progress that the holder of a conditional certificate should complete the requirements for full certification within three years of being conditionally certified;

43-51. Certification Requirements; approval of alternative certification; authorization for the SBE to approve additional alternative certification programs.

...

IV. Alternative Preparation Program Applicants

...

E. The SBE, pursuant to Section 59-5-60 and 59-25-110 and this Regulation, is authorized to approve additional alternative certification programs and outline the content areas in which candidates may pursue certification pursuant to rules and guidelines published by the Board.

General Information

All educator preparation providers (EPPs) and the programs they offer must be approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) in order to recruit, admit, and prepare teacher candidates for certification through an alternative route preparation program. To be approved, providers and alternative route preparation programs must demonstrate the capacity to prepare teachers who will be effective in classroom practice. The purpose of this document is to establish the process and standards for the approval of new alternative route preparation programs in South Carolina.

For the purpose of these approval guidelines, the SBE has adopted the definition of an EPP as established by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP): an entity that is responsible for the preparation of educators. For SBE approval, an EPP may be an institution of higher education (IHE), a school district or consortium of school districts, a governmental agency (e.g., the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE)), or a for-profit or nonprofit education entity that meets the eligibility requirements set forth below. Additionally, the SBE defines an alternative route program as a teacher preparation pathway that primarily serves candidates employed as a teacher of record in a public classroom setting while completing requirements of the pathway to advance to a standard educator certificate.

Provider Eligibility

The following types of providers are eligible to seek approval to offer an alternative route teacher preparation program in South Carolina:

1. A regionally-accredited, South Carolina-based **IHE or consortium of IHEs** with traditional programs approved by the SBE for the preparation of teachers. The IHE must have an established partnership for the preparation of teachers with at least one school district.
2. A South Carolina school district or **local educational agency (LEA) or a consortium of LEAs** in good standing with the SCDE and SBE. For the purpose of provider approval, a single LEA or each LEA in a consortium must be in good standing with the SCDE and SBE. An LEA in good standing is defined as one that meets each of the following criteria:
 - a. Acceptable accreditation classification as defined in SBE Regulation [43-300, Accreditation Criteria](#). To be eligible to seek approval to offer an alternative route preparation program, a school district must achieve one of the following accreditation designations: Accredited/All Clear, Accredited/Advised, or Accredited/Warned. Although a district with status Accredited/Warned is eligible to submit a proposal for provider or program approval, the LEA may not begin recruitment of candidates and program implementation if its status drops to Accredited/Probation. A district with status Accredited/Probation or Accreditation Denied is not eligible to submit a proposal for provider or program approval.
 - b. Acceptable fiscal status as defined in [Section 59-20-90](#) of the Code of Laws of South Carolina. A school district for which the State Superintendent of Education has declared a “fiscal caution” or “fiscal emergency” is not eligible to seek approval to offer an alternative route preparation program. Although a district with status “fiscal watch” is eligible to submit a proposal for provider or program approval, the LEA

may not begin recruitment of candidates and program implementation if its status drops to “fiscal caution” or “fiscal emergency”.

- c. Acceptable status as defined according to federal Uniform Grant Guidance. A district designated as high-risk per the SCDE’s annual risk assessment as required by [2 C.F.R. Part 200.331](#) is not eligible to seek approval to offer an alternative route preparation program.
3. A South Carolina **governmental agency**.
4. A South-Carolina-based **education entity (i.e., a nonprofit corporation, business corporation, limited liability company, limited partnership, or limited liability partnership)** that has established a partnership for the preparation of teachers with at least one school district that is in good standing with the SCDE and the SBE. See Standard 2 of the Program Approval Standards in this document for information regarding the partnership agreement. An eligible education entity may be for-profit or nonprofit and must have an administrative office and personnel located in South Carolina. An eligible education entity must be registered with the South Carolina Secretary of State and must provide evidence of good standing on an annual basis by submitting a copy of the Certificate of Existence, also known as the Certificate of Good Standing, from the Secretary of State’s Office.

Proposal, Review, and Approval Process

Providers and preparation programs must be approved by the SBE. A provider with current SBE-approved programs may submit a proposal for a new alternative route program. If the provider does not currently offer SBE-approved preparation programs, the application must seek approval for both the provider and program.

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| Step 1 | The provider submits a statement of intent to submit an application at least sixty days prior to the planned submission of a proposal. |
| Step 2 | The SCDE, Office of Educator Services reviews the intent form and notifies the Professional Review Committee (PRC) and SBE of the provider’s intent, provides guidance regarding program approval standards and proposal requirements, provides any requested technical assistance, and begins forming an external team of trained reviewers. |
| Step 3 | The provider submits the proposal and all supporting documentation to the SCDE. Proposals must be submitted by March 15 or September 15 annually, the same deadline in place for traditional college- or university-based preparation programs. |
| Step 4 | The SCDE and external peer review team will evaluate the extent to which the proposal meets program approval standards and respond to the provider within sixty days. The review may include a scheduled site visit. |
| Step 5 | <p>The SCDE communicates the results of the initial review to the provider. Possible decisions include the following options.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. <i>Preliminary Approval.</i> The SCDE and external review team recommend provider and/or program approval and forward the proposal to the PRC for consideration.b. <i>Preliminary Approval with Conditions or Further Development Required.</i> The SCDE and external review committee determine areas that may |

require revision or further development to meet standards for recommendation of approval and return the proposal to the provider for response. The provider must submit a revised proposal within forty-five days. A proposal that is returned with conditions or for further development may be revised and resubmitted no more than two times. If the provider does not submit a revised proposal by the communicated deadline, the provider must begin a new proposal process by submitting a statement of intent.

- c. *Non-approval.* The SCDE and external review team determine that the proposal fails to meet provider requirements and/or one or more program approval standards. The SCDE notifies the provider that the proposal, as submitted, is not recommended for approval. The provider may redevelop the proposal and initiate a new approval process by a subsequent submission deadline (March 15 or September 15) or may submit an appeal to the SBE in accordance with the established appeal process for educator preparation programs.

Step 6 Following receipt of a recommendation of approval by the external review team, the SCDE Office of Educator Services will schedule the proposal and recommendation for consideration by the PRC. The PRC may render one of the following decisions.

- a. *PRC Approval.* The PRC recommends approval of the proposal and moves the proposal forward for consideration by the SBE. The SCDE Office of Educator Services places the proposal on the agenda of the Education Professions Committee (EPC) of the SBE and the full SBE.
- b. *PRC Preliminary Approval with Conditions or Further Development Required.* The PRC recommends approval of the proposal with conditions for the provider to address. The PRC may stipulate that the proposal may move forward to the SBE with the noted correction(s) or addition(s) or may request to review the proposal an additional time. Alternatively, the PRC may return the proposal for further development before rendering a decision. If the provider does not submit a revised proposal by the communicated deadline, the provider must begin a new proposal process by submitting a statement of intent.
- c. *PRC Non-approval.* The PRC does not recommend the proposal for approval. The SCDE will notify the provider of the decision by the PRC. The provider may initiate a new program development process and submit a new proposal by a subsequent submission deadline (March 15 or September 15) or submit an appeal to the SBE in accordance with the established appeal process for educator preparation programs.

Step 7 The EPC and SBE consider the proposal. The following decisions are possible.

- a. *SBE Initial Approval.* The SBE approves the program for implementation.
- b. *SBE Initial Approval with Conditions.* The SBE approves the proposal conditionally pending further development/elaboration by the provider and final reconsideration for approval before the SBE.
- c. *SBE Denial.* The SBE does not approve the proposal. The provider may not recruit or admit candidates; however, the provider may initiate a new

program development process and submit a new proposal by a subsequent submission deadline (March 15 or September 15) or may submit an appeal to the Administrative Law Court (ALC) in accordance with the established appeal process for educator preparation programs.

- Step 8 After receiving initial approval, the provider must work with the SCDE Office of Educator Services to develop program implementation guidelines for SBE approval and may begin recruiting and admitting candidates in accordance with the approved program guidelines. The provider must work with the SCDE Office of Educator Services to ensure that all application and certification requirements are met.
- Step 9 The provider must present a program update to the EPC and SBE no later than March 31 of the school year in which the provider fully admits the first cohort of candidates. The update must include a plan for meeting Alternative Route Preparation Program Approval Standards 4 and 5 and candidate data including, but not limited to, the number of candidates by certification area who applied, were admitted, and have been issued the first alternative route certificate.
- Step 10 Within three years of initial approval, the provider must successfully complete a review process to achieve continuing approval to recruit, admit, and prepare candidates. A program that fails to receive continuing approval within three years may not recruit and admit new candidates and must develop a plan for the termination of the program.

Provider and Program Status

If a provider loses eligibility status as outlined in this document, the SCDE and SBE will automatically review the approval status of the provider and any preparation program it offers. Loss of eligibility status may result in the revocation of the provider and program approval.

Provider and Program Proposal

If the party submitting a program proposal is not currently approved by the SBE as an EPP for alternative route preparation programs, the proposer must submit both Section I and Section II as outlined below. If requested by the SCDE, PRC, or EPC, an approved provider must also submit Section I or requested components of Section I.

Section I: Provider Qualifications

The proposal must identify the name and location of the provider, including a listing and the qualifications of provider leadership with direct oversight of the proposed program. As part of the proposal, providers must demonstrate the capacity and stability to offer an alternative route preparation program through which candidates may build upon their knowledge of subject area content, gain the pedagogical knowledge and skills to become effective classroom practitioners, and advance to a standard educator certificate.

A. IHE Providers

As part of the proposal and in order to be approved to offer an alternative route preparation program, a South Carolina-based IHE (or consortium of IHEs) must provide evidence of the following:

1. Regional accreditation. The IHE provider must provide documentation of regional accreditation;
2. Provider accreditation and SBE approval. The provider must provide evidence of full accreditation by the national accrediting organization with which the State has a partnership agreement or by the SBE if accredited through a state approval process;
3. Key administrative and instructional personnel. The proposal must identify key IHE staff responsible for administration of the program and those responsible for the preparation and support of program participants; and
4. A partnership agreement with at least one South Carolina LEA. The provider must provide documentation of a partnership with at least one South Carolina school district for the preparation of teachers through an alternative route preparation process. See Standard 2 of the Program Approval Standards in this document for information regarding the partnership agreement.

B. LEA Providers

As part of the proposal and in order to be approved to offer an alternative route preparation program, a single LEA or each LEA in a consortium must provide evidence of each of the following:

1. LEA Accreditation Status. A district with status Accredited/Probation or Accreditation Denied is not eligible to submit a proposal for provider or program approval.
2. LEA Fiscal Status. A district in which the State Superintendent of Education has declared a “fiscal caution” or “fiscal emergency” is not eligible to submit a proposal for provider or program approval.
3. Key administrative and instructional personnel. The proposal must identify key LEA staff responsible for administration of the program and those responsible for the preparation and support of program participants. A consortium of LEAs must identify the district that is the primary administrative partner or indicate how administrative responsibilities will be shared among partner districts.

C. Education Entity Providers

As part of the proposal, and in order to be approved to offer an alternative route preparation program, an education entity must provide evidence of each of the following:

1. Registration and good standing with the South Carolina Secretary of State. An education entity must provide copies of documentation on file with the Secretary of State including a copy of the Certificate of Existence, also known as the Certificate of Good Standing, and state and federal tax identification numbers.

2. Business Plan and South Carolina presence. An education entity must provide a business plan outlining the governance and operational structure of the organization including an administrative office located in South Carolina at which provider personnel may meet with candidates and program participants. The business plan must identify the key leaders and operational personnel of the entity.
3. Key administrative and instructional personnel. An education entity must identify provider staff responsible for administration of the program and those responsible for the preparation and support of program participants.
4. A partnership agreement with at least one South Carolina LEA. The provider must provide documentation of a partnership with at least one South Carolina school district for the preparation of teachers through an alternative route preparation process. See Standard 2 of the Program Approval Standards for information regarding the partnership agreement.

Section II: Alternative Route Preparation Program

The provider must submit a proposal that includes the following elements:

- A. Name of Provider and Program.
- B. Targeted Certification Areas.
- C. Anticipated Start Date.
- D. Candidate Recruitment Plan.
 - The proposal must indicate the target cohort size and a plan for recruiting candidates.
- E. Qualifications of Preparation Program Staff
 - The proposal must include curriculum vitae of key program staff responsible for the preparation and support of candidates.
- F. Budget and Sources of Revenue
 - The proposal must include a projected budget and identify all sources of revenue including fees and costs to be paid by participants. The proposal must indicate payment timelines or schedules as well as options for payment forgiveness for teaching service, if any. The budget proposal must indicate a minimum cohort size to sustain the program.
- G. Description and Timeline of the Preparation Program
 - The proposal must include a detailed plan for the curriculum of the preparation program including delivery method and timeframe, field placements and supervision, assessments, and success criteria.
 - In order to advance from an Alternative Route certificate to a standard, renewable Professional certificate, a program participant must complete all requirements of the approved program, earn successful results during the State's induction and summative evaluation processes, and earn a qualifying score on a pedagogy assessment approved by the SBE.
 - Per Section 59-26-30, an educator can receive no more than four conditional or Alternative Route certificates.
- H. Explanation demonstrating the program meets Alternative Route Preparation Program Approval Standards 1–3 and 6.
- I. Appeal and grievance policy for participants.
- J. Transition plan for program participants if the provider ceases operation for any reason.

Alternative Route Provider and Program Approval Process and Standards

March 12, 2019

Page 7

South Carolina Alternative Route Preparation Program Approval Standards

South Carolina Alternative Route Preparation Program Approval Standards 1–5 are adapted from the CAEP standards for initial level preparation programs. Standard 6 includes South Carolina specific requirements.

Initial Approval. For initial approval of an alternative route preparation program, the provider must submit evidence of the program’s capacity to meet Standards 1, 2, 3, and 6.

First SBE Report. During the first-year report to the SBE, the provider must provide a plan for collecting data and meeting Standards 4 and 5.

Continuing Approval. Within three years of initial approval, the provider must demonstrate evidence for all South Carolina Alternative Route Preparation Program Approval Standards.

Standard 1: Content of the Preparation Program

The provider demonstrates that the content of the preparation program is aligned to the [InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards](#) and is designed so that candidates develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective teachers. Candidates must be able to demonstrate an understanding of learners and learning, content and the ability to teach content to students, instructional practice, and professional responsibility.

Standard 2: Clinical Partnerships and Practice

The provider demonstrates evidence of a formal partnership with one or more LEAs for the clinical preparation of candidates. Clinical components of the preparation program may be job-embedded while the candidate serves as a teacher of record. Clinical components should provide candidates with formative feedback and opportunities to apply the pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions of effective teachers as they design, implement, and assess instruction for learners. Evidence of the partnership agreement may be provided in the form of a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) outlining the collaboration between the provider and LEA for the preparation and support of alternative route candidates.

Standard 3: Candidate Recruitment and Admission

The provider details a plan for the recruitment and admission of candidates aligned with requirements stipulated below.

A. Ineligibility for Program Admission or Participation

An individual who has been enrolled in student teaching in a traditional teacher preparation program is not eligible for admission to or participation in an alternative route preparation program. In such an instance, the candidate must meet the certification requirements of the traditional preparation program in which he or she was enrolled for student teaching and be

recommended for certification by that provider. An individual who was unable to complete the student teaching experience due to extenuating circumstances (e.g., a medical or family emergency) may request approval from the SCDE, Office of Educator Services. The request must include documentation of the extenuating circumstances and of good standing with the traditional preparation program. Individuals who voluntarily withdrew or were removed from student teaching due to issues related to unprofessional conduct are not eligible to seek approval under this provision.

Additionally, an individual who fails to complete requirements for one South Carolina alternative route preparation program is not eligible for admission to or participation in another alternative route.

An individual whose certificate is denied, suspended, or revoked pursuant to SBE Regulation 43.58 will not be allowed to participate in or be readmitted to an alternative route preparation program.

B. Eligibility and Candidate Admission Requirements

An individual who is seeking certification through an alternative route preparation program must meet the candidate admission requirements listed below.

1. The candidate must have earned a bachelor's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution or from an institution with teacher-preparation programs approved for certification purposes by the state of South Carolina.
2. The candidate must have earned a major in the certification subject area or a major equivalence in the certification subject area as defined by the SBE.
3. The candidate must have earned a GPA of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale. The GPA in the content area major or the GPA in the last sixty hours of coursework may be used to meet this requirement.
4. The candidate must earn a successful score on the state-approved content area assessment(s) in the certification subject area.
5. The candidate must submit to the provider a statement of disclosure regarding any prior convictions to include felonies and misdemeanors.

Standard 4: Program Impact

The provider must demonstrate the impact of program participants on PK–12 student learning and growth, classroom instruction, and schools.

Standard 5: Program Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

The provider maintains an assessment system to measure program quality and participant and program completer effectiveness and to guide program improvements. The evaluation system must include valid and reliable data from multiple measures and include stakeholder feedback from program participants, completers, and school and district personnel.

Standard 6: South Carolina Requirements

The provider must demonstrate evidence that the preparation program includes the following state-specific requirements.

A. Assisting, Developing, and Evaluating Professional Teaching (ADEPT)

The program must provide participants with an introduction to the South Carolina Teaching Standards 4.0 and related rubric and formative feedback on their classroom practices using the rubric.

B. South Carolina College and Career Ready Standards

The program must provide candidates with opportunities to plan, implement, and assess instruction aligned with appropriate South Carolina subject area standards for PK–12 learners and the *Profile of the South Carolina Graduate*.

C. Parental Involvement

The program must provide candidates with opportunities to learn, understand, and apply best practices regarding parental involvement. Candidates must be provided instruction in how to work with parents/guardians of PK–12 students and other members of the education community. As part of this training, candidates should know how to:

1. use practices that are responsive to racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity, and are appropriate to various grade-level needs;
2. establish and maintain a parent-friendly school setting;
3. provide an awareness of community resources that strengthen families and assist students to succeed; and
4. utilize knowledge of other topics appropriate for fostering partnerships between a parent and a teacher.

D. Educator Ethics

The program must include instruction in ethical principles and practice for educators aligned with the [Model Code of Ethics for Educators](#). The provider must implement educator ethics awareness training that addresses an educator's responsibility to:

1. maintain trust in the profession and act responsibly;
2. commit to the highest level of professional and ethical practice, including the demonstration of knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for professional competence;
3. treat students with dignity and respect and promote their health, safety, and well-being to include establishing and maintaining appropriate verbal, physical, emotional, and social boundaries;
4. promote positive relationships and effective interactions with members of the school community, while maintaining professional boundaries;

Alternative Route Provider and Program Approval Process and Standards

March 12, 2019

Page 10

5. ensure appropriate boundaries of time, place, and role when using electronic communication; and
6. conform to the principles of the Standards of Conduct for South Carolina Educators established in [Section 59-25-160](#) and [SBE Regulation 43-58, Disciplinary Action on Educator Certificates](#).

E. Safe School Climate Act

The program must include instruction in the identification and prevention of harassment, intimidation, or bullying as defined in the Safe School Climate Act (S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-63-110–150); appropriate student behavior; and the reporting requirements for school employees, students, or volunteers.

F. South Carolina Education and Economic Development Act (EEDA)

The program must include instruction for teachers related to the EEDA (S.C. Code Ann. §§ 59-59-110–250) regarding school curriculum organized around career clusters as well as teaching that supports career exploration and provides students with both “strong academics and real-world problem solving skills.”

G. Annual Reporting

The provider must complete all annual reporting requirements stipulated by the SBE including Title II reporting.