Massachusetts has set forth an ambitious goal: By 2022, candidates prepared by Massachusetts’ preparation providers will enter classrooms and demonstrate results on par with peers in their third year of teaching.

While recognizing the developmental nature of the profession, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) believes preparation can and should prepare educators to be ready to make impact on day one.

There is great urgency in attaining this goal. Massachusetts boasts the strongest student performance results in the nation, yet we experience two challenges that affect our ability to close persistent proficiency gaps: Our first-year teachers are not as effective with students as their more experienced peers and these teachers are more likely to be assigned to teach our most vulnerable students. Given that improvement in teacher performance is most steep at the beginning of an educator’s career, advancing readiness prior to entry holds promise for long-term impact with students. By focusing efforts on preparing teachers to make positive impact from the first day they enter classrooms, we can systemically raise the beginning point for growth and accelerate the effectiveness of beginning teachers.

Massachusetts is uniquely positioned to achieve this goal. Since 2012, in partnership with the Department of Higher Education and the 71 teacher preparation providers in the state, ESE has taken several steps to improve the quality of teacher training in the Commonwealth by:

- Creating valuable data linkages between preparation and employment. Providers now have access to data about the performance of their completers (e.g., employment, retention, evaluation, student achievement). Districts similarly have access to the preparation information of currently employed teachers in their schools.
- Heightening accountability by implementing a new rigorous process of review. By emphasizing evidence of impact (such as those outcome measures outlined above), ESE has been able to differentiate the performance within and across providers.
- Implementing new professional standards and a performance assessment that align expectations for preparation candidates with those used to evaluate current educators.

Due in great part to the success of these efforts, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has awarded ESE a 3.98 million dollar grant to deepen and extend the impact of this work in the Commonwealth. With the additional investment of these short-term resources, ESE will be able to add capacity and strengthen systems that will serve to accelerate the state’s progress toward our goal.

1 Ranked 1st outright or tied for 1st in reading (grades 4 and 8) and math (grades 4 and 8) since 2005. National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), IES, NCES, 2014.


Through a mixture of direct support and strategically funded pilots, efforts under the **Elevate Preparation: Impact Children (EPIC)** are designed to:

- Deepen and extend the quality of field based experiences for candidates.
- Promote and support data-driven analysis and continuous improvement among providers.
- Integrate the efforts of providers and partners to meet the increasing demands for human capital in the PK-12 sector.

In order to secure the grant, ESE submitted a proposal that outlined project work aligned in these three areas. As we act on the commitments outlined in the grant, ESE will continue to rely on the investment and engagement of stakeholders. Below, we have outlined each of the projects proposed in the grant so that various groups (providers, PK12 partners, vendors/consultants, etc.) can begin planning for potential participation in EPIC.

If you have additional questions, please email Meagan Comb, Manager for Educator Preparation and EPIC Lead, at mcomb@doe.mass.edu.

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**Stakeholder Participation Key**

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<tr>
<th>Providers</th>
<th>PK12 Partners</th>
<th>Vendor/Contractor</th>
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<td>$$$</td>
<td>Funding is available for a specific project (to be allocated through the state procurement process)</td>
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### Deepen and extend the quality of field-based experiences

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| **Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP) Implementation Support** | During the 2015-16 academic year, providers will be piloting a state-developed assessment instrument that determines candidate readiness for the classroom and is fully aligned with the MA Educator Evaluation Framework. In support of this, providers are working to redesign programs such that CAP, including the standards it assesses and the overall approach to feedback it necessitates, is seamlessly and robustly embedded into programs. In support of this, ESE will:  
- Build out a suite of train-the-trainer materials that providers can use to train Supervising Practitioners and Program Supervisors;  
- Document and disseminate best practices from the field of providers;  
- Deliver direct support to providers with onsite trainings for faculty and targeted consultations. |  
- All providers are required to use CAP and will have access to all materials developed  
- Engagement in any ESE training will be optional  
- ESE will provide direct support to at least 30 providers – tailoring consulting support for each (ranging from 1-hour conversations to in person meetings or participation in a Professional Learning Network of other providers)  
  - ESE will issue an application process for interested providers by May 2016 |
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| Program Supervisor Certification | Currently, Massachusetts sets forth clear expectations for Supervising Practitioner, including the requirement that they be rated as proficient or higher on their most recent evaluation. The state expectations, however, do not extend to the Program Supervisors who are also charged with directly overseeing and evaluating candidate performance in the practicum. In connection with the CAP Implementation work, ESE will work with our field to establish a certification mechanism that can be used to train and assess the ability of individuals to provide high-quality feedback and support to teacher candidates to positively improve their practice. | • ESE will engage and support 10-15 providers who are interested in:  
  o Helping to develop a mechanism for certifying program supervisors  
  o Piloting the protocols with a total of 200 program supervisors  
 • Funds available to stipend participating program supervisors |
| Pre-Practicum Regulations | ESE currently requires that all candidates participate in pre-practicum experiences. We plan to strengthen guidance and regulations governing program requirements as they relate to these early field experiences. The development of the new regulations would be informed by the work in other project areas including Mixed-Reality Simulations, CAP Implementation and Program Supervisor Certification and may include some of the following:  
  • Minimum hour requirements  
  • Observation/Feedback expectations  
  • Guidance on the assessment of pre-practicum experiences  
  • Guidance on placements in high-need schools and district partnerships | • ESE will collect feedback from all providers during the development of these new regulations  
 • ESE will convene an advisory group of PK12 teachers/leaders as well as preparation provider representatives.  
  o An application process to serve on the advisory group will be issued during the Spring of 2017 |
| Mixed-Reality Simulations | In many cases, candidates are unable to gain the requisite authentic early experiences (or repetitions of that experience) necessary to transform practice and build a solid set of discrete skills prior to their practicum. ESE will work with the field to embed mixed-reality simulations in coursework so that candidates have more opportunities to practice high-value skills in a low-risk environment and receive immediate and targeted feedback. By piloting this technology with several different providers | Vendor:  
 • ESE will contract with a vendor to:  
  o Develop MA-Specific simulations  
  o Support the implementation of mixed-reality simulations in coursework with selected providers |

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4 Program Supervisors: The supervisor from the sponsoring organization, under whose immediate supervision the candidate for licensure practices during a practicum. This is in contrast to the Supervising Practitioner who is the current educator whose classroom the candidate teaches.
### Initiative Overview

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<td><strong>Elevate Preparation: Impact Children (EPIC)</strong></td>
<td>ESE will be better positioned to understand the potential implications for statewide adoption of this approach (see, pre-practicum regulations). Additionally, by building MA-specific simulations we will be able to focus feedback on the micro-skills derived directly from the Professional Standards for Teachers and CAP.</td>
<td>• ESE anticipates releasing a Request for Proposals in early 2016 Providers: • ESE will select multiple providers to pilot simulations within their programs. The goal is by June 2018 to train more than 1,500 candidates using the simulations • Once a vendor is selected, ESE will issue an application process to become a piloting provider. We anticipate this application process opening in April 2016.</td>
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<td><strong>Edwin Analytics Reports</strong></td>
<td>A critical element in an effort to improve the quality of preparation is access to high-quality data, particularly outcomes data. The state maintains a robust set of data that links preparation to completers once employed, including evaluation ratings and Student Growth Percentiles (SGP). The state is, however, limited in the current set of reporting mechanisms accessible to providers. To address this, ESE will build out additional analytics tools that providers will then be able to use to inform continuous improvement efforts. Such new reports may include: • Program Survey data by item, by program • CAP and PAL data</td>
<td>Vendor: • ESE will work with a vendor to support the development of new reports and the ongoing refinement of existing ones • ESE anticipates releasing a Request for Proposals in early 2016 Providers: • All providers will have access to the data reports • Providers will be asked to inform the development of the new reports. Applications for this advisory group will be made available in the Spring of 2016.</td>
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<td><strong>Preparation Stakeholder Surveys</strong></td>
<td>Through support from the EPIC grant, ESE will be able to continue the development of program surveys that provide perception data from several stakeholder groups (candidates, completers, Supervising Practitioners, hiring principals) for use in continuous improvement and accountability systems. Additionally, ESE will be able to more expeditiously and robustly report the data to providers and the public.</td>
<td>• All providers will have access to the data and surveys</td>
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### Early Indicator System

ESE intends to build an early indicator system that uses all available state output measures and serves to benchmark provider performance on an annual basis. This early indicator system will feed directly into the accountability system and trigger both incentives and consequences based on program impact data. In order to do this in a way that aligns with our current approach we will work closely with an advisory group from the field and a technical advisor(s) who will support the various models the state should be considering.

- ESE will convene an advisory group of preparation provider representatives as well as PK12 teachers/leaders.
- An application process to serve on the advisory group will be forthcoming (pending the release of the U.S. Department of Education Title II Regulations).

### Formative Feedback Reviews

ESE plans to support inspection-style reviews for up to eight providers. By engaging in external evaluations, providers will gain insight into their own programs in a way they would not otherwise be able to access. Further, providers will have funds to launch a strategic effort to address and improve an area identified as a result of the review. This formative feedback review is for continuous improvement purposes only and is not tied in any way to state accountability.

- ESE will select a vendor to support formative feedback reviews for up to 8 providers.
- ESE anticipates releasing a Request for Proposals in Spring 2016.

**Providers:**
- Selected providers would engage in the formative program review during the 2016-2017 academic year.
- Based on the results, each provider would be awarded up to $20,000 to launch an improvement initiative within the organization.

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**Integrate the efforts of providers and partners to meet the increasing demands for human capital.**

### Partnership Consortium

ESE will facilitate intentional structures and conversations between preparation providers and PK12 districts. In support of this, we propose to host 2-3 regional meetings annually (year 2: 2016-17 and 3: 2017-18) with one meeting in spring 2016, that focus on human capital data and challenges in the Commonwealth. Specific outcomes will be determined by participants in the consortium, such as:

- Robust agreements that strengthen the quality of the practicum placement
- Coordinated assignment, recognition

- All providers and districts will be invited to attend consortia meetings. The first regional meeting will be held in May 2016.
- Participation in additional Learning Networks will be selective with applications tailored to the interests of the state and parties involved.
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| Induction Institutes  | ESE hopes to facilitate deeper partnerships between preparation providers and PK-12 districts by helping to blur the line between pre-service and in-service. To accomplish this, ESE will facilitate induction and ongoing mentoring support for first year teachers in two regions of Massachusetts, comprised of districts that hire high rates of new teachers annually and serve a high-need population. Preparation providers will be selected to work directly with districts in planning and providing the induction and support. The Partnership Consortia will be a companion endeavor to the Induction Institute work, serving as a springboard in planning and as a mechanism for expansion and sustainability based on lessons learned in this pilot. | • Three districts in two regions have been selected to participate: Malden/Revere and Holyoke.  
• Districts will work to outline their needs and ESE will issue a Request for Proposals in early 2016 to support the selection of one or more providers. |
| Diversity Pipeline    | Led by our key partner, the Department of Higher Education (DHE), will work with multiple providers to enhance recruitment and enrollment of diverse candidates through targeted outreach and grow-your-own strategies.                                                                                                            | Providers:  
• DHE will work directly with currently approved providers                                                                                                   |