2016-17 Educator Preparation Formal Review

Culminating Report

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION

Executive Summary

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) believes that regular program review ensures the continued growth and improvement of our Sponsoring Organizations (SOs). We are committed to ensuring that preparation in Massachusetts results in effective educators who are ready to support the success of all students. We are pleased to release the 2016-2017 Formal Review Culminating Report to document trends and lessons learned.[1] This report demonstrates our commitment to transparency, sharing best practices, reflecting on our own efficacy in executing reviews, and informing the field of educator preparation by identifying common areas of growth as they relate to ESE's Program Approval Criteria.

It is important to note this report is not designed to be representative of all SOs in the Commonwealth; it is a summary report of those that participated in a review.[2] Therefore, our conclusions should not be generalized to all SOs in the Commonwealth. We share results only in the aggregate.

In order to further differentiate performance, ESE updated the overall program determinations to include five approval status rather than three; four out of the five were used across the seven SOs that ESE reviewed.[3] Most notably, Clark University was deemed Approved with Distinction by demonstrating with evidence that it is exceeding expectations and serving as a model of exemplary performance.

2016-17 REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

* The seven Sponsoring Organizations (SOs) that underwent formal review in 2016-17 produced 658 educators in 2015-16. These educators represent 12% of the total produced in that year by all SOs (n=5,483).

* One SO was Approved with Distinction, three were fully Approved, two were Approved with Conditions, and one received Probationary Approval.

* The number of findings SOs received ranged greatly, from zero to 19. The average SO met or exceeded 24 criteria and received eight findings.

* External reviewers felt highly confident in the consistency and efficacy of the review process based on the 2016-17 Formal Review Evaluation Survey results.

* Half of SOs who underwent review in 2016-17 felt the review process will inform the continuous improvement of their educator preparation programs.

Major Takeaways in the 2016-17 Cohort of Reviews

SOs were most proficient in the Candidate and Continuous Improvement domains.
The Candidate domain sets expectations for programmatic features such as recruitment, admission, advising, and identifying candidates at-risk. The Continuous Improvement domain sets expectations for programmatic features such as the ongoing and consistent use of internal and external evidence and the

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[1] Questions about the information contained in the report should be directed to ESE's Educator Preparation Team at edprep@doe.mass.edu.
[2] In the 2016-17 cycle of formal reviews, nine Sponsoring Organizations (SOs) were scheduled for formal review. Of those nine SOs, two decided to expire all programs prior to completing the process. As a result, this report provides data on seven SOs.
[3] Additional publically available information for each provider can be found in ESE Profiles.

solicitation and implementation of stakeholder feedback. Almost all SOs received a Proficient rating in both of these domains. This data indicates that candidates are generally having positive experiences in programs that are contributing to their effectiveness in the licensure role and SOs have the basic systems and infrastructures to support the use of data in strategic decision-making. However, 71% (n=7) received a finding for the criterion that requires SOs to act on feedback received from stakeholders to inform strategic decisions.

SOs most often needed improvement in the Field-Based Experiences domain.
The Field-Based Experiences domain sets expectations for programmatic features such as the structure of the practicum, the placement process, and supervision. Although Supervising Practitioners are crucial to their candidates' field-based experiences, many SOs do not provide the training they require to be effective. Likewise, many SOs lack systems to involve PK-12 partners in the design of field-based experiences, as well as systems to ensure the pre-practicum and practicum experiences prepare candidates for full responsibility in the licensure role.

ESE implemented a review process that is effective and consistently rigorous, though SOs raised some concerns.
In general, the external reviewers and SOs who participated in the review agreed that the state has a process that is effective and consistently rigorous:

- 71% of SOs (n=7) that were reviewed agreed that the process generated conversations about quality educator preparation at their organization.
- 92% of reviewers (n=38), who are volunteers with backgrounds in either PK-12 education or educator preparation, felt highly confident that the review process implemented at the SO they reviewed was consistent with the others in the state. No reviewers expressed low confidence in either the consistency or efficacy of the review process.

When asked about the efficacy of the process, several SOs believed the quantitative evidence collected during onsite focus groups was weighted too heavily in the decision-making process; these SOs recommended that the evidence they submitted to ESE during the offsite portion of the review should be elevated. However, as is outlined in our guidance, we have an outcomes-based process that focuses on evidence of impact. ESE will host an Evidence Workshop in 2018 to support SOs with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively incorporate outcomes-based evidence aligned with the program review criteria into their offsite submission.

Providers are acting on feedback and demonstrating improvements.
Some SOs from earlier cohorts were previously determined Approved with Conditions[4]. In 2016-17, the following two SOs demonstrated with evidence that they have met the conditions outlined in their reports based on their review. As such, their approval status has been updated to Full Approval:

- City on a Hill
- Worcester Polytechnic Institute

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[4] Culminating Reports from previous review cohorts can be found on our Continuous Improvement page.

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Needs Assessments

The first step in the Formal Review process is a Needs Assessment. In cases where a program has low completion or zero completion over the previous three years or is submitting a new program for state approval, Sponsoring Organizations (SOs) must demonstrate state-specific need for the program as well as the capacity to meet the demands of running the program. The Needs Assessment ensures that both the SO's resources and ESE's review are focused on the programs that will continue to serve the Commonwealth's need for effective educators.[5]

> **The Needs Assessment phase led to a 35% decrease (from 263 to 172) in the number of programs under review across seven SOs in the 2016-2017 formal review cycle**

Chart 1: Needs Assessment Phase, Formal Review, 2016-17
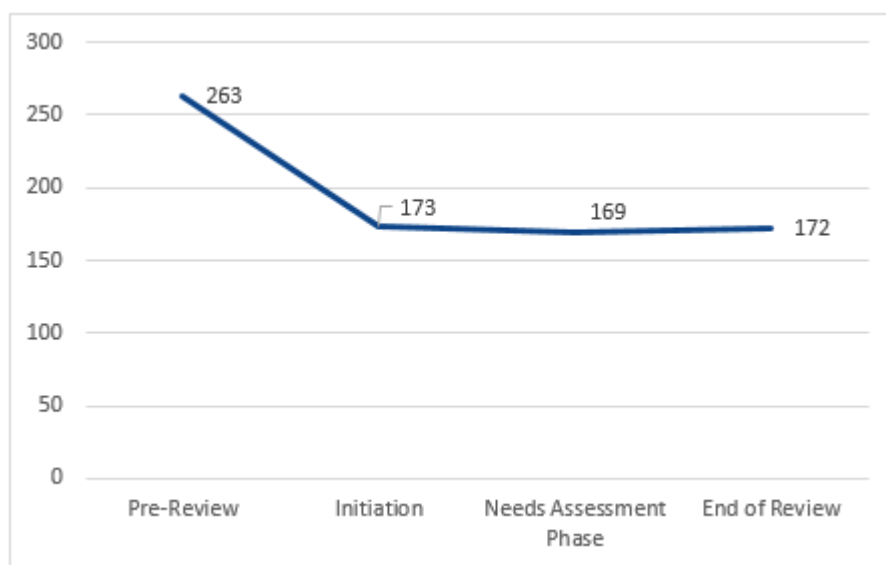
During the Needs Assessment phase in 2016-17, SOs opted to discontinue 90 of the 148 low-enrollment programs. From there, 93% of programs that underwent a Needs Assessment were able to demonstrate need. ESE also approved three new programs, which brought the total to 172 individual programs.

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[5] For more information on Needs Assessments, please see the 2016 Needs Assessment Policy Advisory.

Overall Determination Ratings

Four of the five approval statuses were used in 2016-17: Approved with Distinction (1), Approved (3), Approved with Conditions (2), and Probationary Approval (1)

Each review results in an approval determination. Overall determinations reflect the cumulative impact of all other judgments made throughout the review. In 2016, ESE expanded the levels of approval in order to further differentiate performance within the Commonwealth. The approval determinations are: Approved with Distinction, Approved, Approved with Conditions, Probationary Approval, and Not Approved.[6]

In the 2016-2017 cohort of reviews, one organization exceeded rigorous state expectations and serves as a model of exemplar performance: Clark University. Three SOs met the high bar set by the state. The two SOs that were Approved with Conditions are serving candidates well but have significant areas to address in order to meet all of the state's standards. One SO received probationary approval, meaning there are significant areas that need to be addressed and candidate experience is not consistently assured to be high quality. ESE will closely monitor this SO over the coming years.

Table 1: Number of Completers, Employment Rates, and Overall Approval Status

Sponsoring Organization	Number of Completers (2015-16)[7]	Employment Rate in MA Public Schools (2014-15)	Overall Approval Status
Boston College	212	44.4%	Approved
Clark University	27	64.3%	Approved with Distinction
Massachusetts College of Art	20	33.3%	Approved with Conditions
Tufts University	64	46.2%	Approved with Conditions
UMass – Dartmouth	45	76.7%	Probationary Approval
UMass – Lowell	84	85.4%	Approved
Westfield State University	206	62.1%	Approved
Becker College	*Expired approval – no longer endorses candidates for licensure in MA*		
Boston Conservatory	*Expired approval – no longer endorses candidates for licensure in MA*		
Total:	**658**	**Average: 58%**	

As mentioned previously, programs under review produced 658 educators in 2015-16, which represents approximately 12% of total educators produced in Massachusetts that year (n=5,483). Only about half of these completers gained employment in a Massachusetts public school (approximately 382 candidates). From this cohort, about 81% of completers employed in a MA public school in 2015-16 graduated from a program that received full approval or distinction; two of the Commonwealth's larger programs (Boston College and Westfield State University) received full approval.

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[6] For more information about approval determinations, and how other judgments impact the overall determination rating, please see the Program Approval Guidelines.
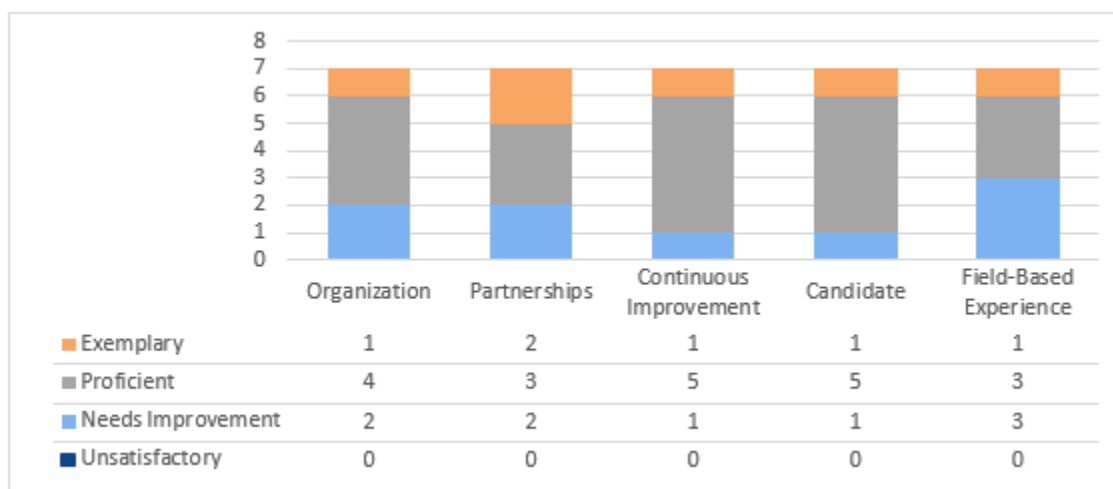[7] Program Completion Year.

Domain Ratings

Domains are the major categories upon which ESE evaluates SOs. There are five domains assessed at the organization level.[8]

- **The Organization** (ORG): *Is the organization set up to support and sustain effective preparation?*
- **Partnerships** (PAR): *Is the organization meeting the needs of the PK-12 system?*
- **Continuous Improvement** (CI): *Is the organization engaging in continuous improvement efforts that result in better prepared educators?*
- **The Candidate** (CAN): *Is the candidate's experience in the program contributing to effective preparation?*
- **Field-Based Experience** (FBE): *Do candidates have the necessary experiences in the field to be ready for the licensure role?*

> **Sponsoring Organizations are most proficient in the Continuous Improvement and Candidate domains and need the most improvement in the Field-Based Experience domain**

Chart 2: Domain Ratings, Aggregate, Formal Review 2016-17

	Organization	Partnerships	Continuous Improvement	Candidate	Field-Based Experience
■ Exemplary	1	2	1	1	1
■ Proficient	4	3	5	5	3
■ Needs Improvement	2	2	1	1	3
■ Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0	0

ESE gave an exemplary rating at least once in every organization-level domain. An exemplary domain indicates the SO is exceeding expectations and can serve as a model for other providers in the organization, state, and/or nation. In the previous cohort of reviews, ESE gave only two exemplary ratings at the organization level, compared to six this year. One organization received exemplary ratings in all organization-level domains. ESE gave zero ratings of unsatisfactory in 2016-17, compared to three the previous year.

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[8] For more information about the domain ratings, please see the Program Approval Guidelines.

Criteria Ratings

All but one SO received a finding in the area of training supervisors, making it the most commonly given finding. On average, SOs received eight findings (of 32 criteria)

Findings are areas of concern that require corrective action. Findings impact an SO's overall approval status because they indicate that a program approval criterion is not being met.[9]

Chart 3: Most Common Findings, Formal Review, 2016-17
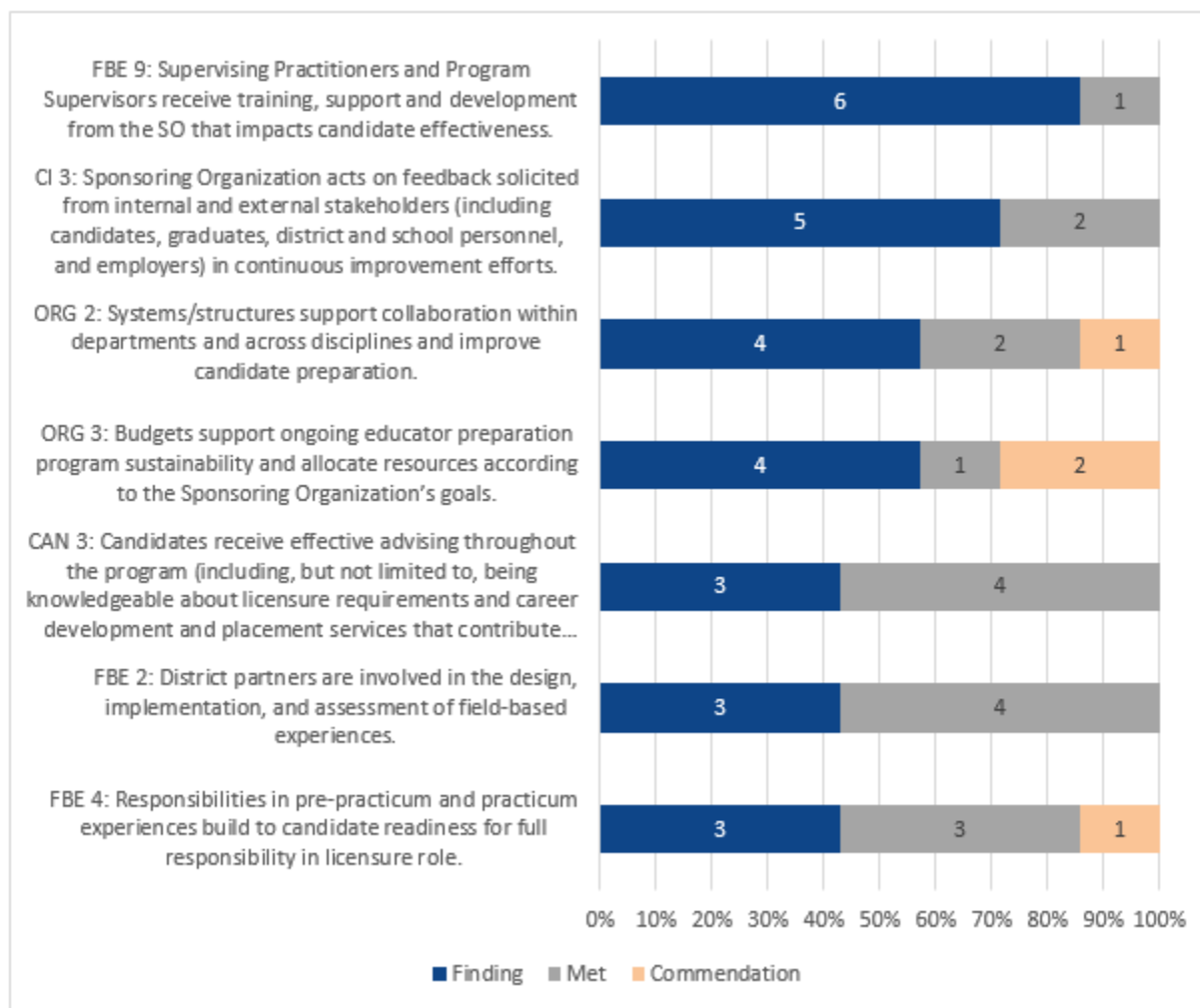
Trends were similar to previous years. Training for supervisors continues to be an area where most SOs are not meeting expectations. Robust training for supervisors, particularly Supervising Practitioners, is of critical importance to meet expectations outlined in the Candidate Assessment for Performance. Acting on feedback from stakeholders is another area where many SOs continue to underperform. ESE

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[9] For more information about program approval criteria, please see the Program Approval Guidelines.

addresses the need for support in these two areas by providing SOs with the following tools and resources:

- CAP Training Modules (to be released in January 2018) that SOs can use as a communication and supplemental training tool for their supervisors. The modules cover foundational information about the CAP 5-step cycle, rubric, and supervisor roles and responsibilities.
- Online Calibration Tool to promote a shared understanding of high quality practice and feedback within and across Massachusetts public schools and SOs. Several SOs have participated in the Calibration Training Workshop Series using this tool offered by ESE.
- Teacher Educator Effectiveness Practices Framework as a resource for identifying, developing, and supporting teacher educators, along with a professional development opportunity (March 2018) for faculty interested in working together around the domain of "facilitating practice."
- Stakeholder Surveys that collect feedback from key stakeholders and gives SOs an annual indication of how their stakeholders perceive candidate readiness.

> **In this cohort of reviews, five criteria were met by all Sponsoring Organizations. On average, a single SO met or exceeded 24 criteria (of 32 total)**

The five criteria that all SOs met spanned across four domains – Organization (ORG), Continuous Improvement (CI), Candidate (CAN), and Field Based Experiences (FBE).

Table 2: List of criteria that were met by all SOs in the 2016-17 review

	Criteria
ORG 4	All candidates, regardless of program or delivery model, have equitable and consistent access to resources.
ORG 6	Faculty/instructors and staff engage in professional development or work in the field that has a positive impact on the quality of preparation provided to candidates.
CI 2	The consistent and ongoing use of internal and external evidence, including ESE data, informs strategic decisions that impact the Sponsoring Organization, education programs, candidates, and employing schools/districts.
CAN 2	Admission criteria and processes are rigorous such that those admitted demonstrate success in the program and during employment in the licensure role.
FBE 8	FBE 8: Supervising Practitioner qualifications meet regulatory requirements set forth in 603 CMR 7.02 and in Guidelines for Program Approval.

Diversity Criteria

The Massachusetts Advocates for Diversity in Education (MADE) Taskforce advised ESE to "increase the transparency and accountability of preparation program efforts to diversify their enrollment and program completion." In accordance with this recommendation, ESE publishes results of reviews pertaining to diversity criteria. For the criteria of "**Systems to recruit and admit candidates result in the increased racial and ethnic diversity of completers in the workforce**" (CAN 1), ESE gave two commendations, three criteria met ratings, and two findings in this area.[10]

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[10] Specific demographic information for each provider can be found in ESE Profiles.

Criteria Ratings - Commendations

The 18 commendations awarded in 2016-17 were issued in 15 criteria that spanned across all domains except for Continuous Improvement domain

ESE awarded 18 criteria-level commendations across three SOs. Commendations are reserved for the truly exceptional, innovative, or outstanding practices. A commendation requires compelling evidence, particularly evidence of impact. Below, we highlight several practices that received commendations:

Commendation Spotlight: *Partnership at UMass Lowell*
Criterion PAR 1: Sponsoring Organization responds to the needs of PK-12 districts/schools.
The Graduate School of Education (GSE) at UMass Lowell (UML) has systems and structures in place that effectively and consistently respond to the needs of their PK-12 district and schools partners in a variety of ways. In particular, GSE has made multiple programmatic changes in direct response of the needs of their PK-12 partners. When UML explored the potential of initiating a new program in Early Childhood, a survey from Partners showed what they really wanted were completers with both Elementary and Moderate Disabilities licenses. As a result, UML built a program to meet those specific needs. Similarly, GSE developed UTeach licensure programs in direct response to partners' expressed need for well-qualified STEM teachers. In an onsite focus group, a UML partner expressed, "[UML has] a real understanding of the needs of our school [how to tailor the] preparation for candidates going in. They're always asking us what we think." In another example, a different partner shared that after expressing the need for more teachers who are well prepared to serve their English Language Learners, UML quickly responded through required coursework. Similarly, when PK-12 partners asked for support in developing new principals, UML planned an induction program.

Commendation Spotlight: *Connecting Field-Based Experiences and Coursework at Clark University*
Criterion FBE 3: Field-based experiences are fully embedded in program coursework such that connections between theory and practice are explicit.
Clark University (CU) embeds field-experiences into coursework in several ways that have positively impacted candidates. Field experiences begin during the summer and the experiences are integrated with courses throughout candidates' full yearlong experience, including explicit inclusion of Teacher Rounds in candidates' "Ways of Knowing" courses. Through the Teacher Rounds, candidates are able to see teachers at partner schools model pedagogy and then reflect on the instruction delivered during that lesson. The "Teaching and Learning" course series also supports development of candidates' practice through field-based assignments and is integrated with onsite seminars at the partner schools. Another strategy to integrate field-based experiences and coursework includes utilizing all Program Supervisors as faculty and hiring part-time faculty who are PK-12 teachers to co-teach courses with CU faculty. By bridging the knowledge of the university and school practitioners, CU is able to create a clear link between theory and practice for candidates. Onsite, one staff member shared, "The coursework is aligned to what they're doing in the classroom. They're producing unit plans that they're going to teach, and then I [as their Program Supervisor] visit them to see them teach that unit plan [and provide feedback]."

Criterion ORG 3: Budgets support ongoing educator preparation program sustainability and allocate resources according to the Sponsoring Organization's goals.

The Graduate School of Education (GSE) at UMass Lowell (UML) supports all licensure programs, provides faculty with resources upon their request, and goes beyond supporting daily operations by allocating funds to respond to PK-12 partners' needs. When UML's partners reported needs for more STEM teachers and diverse teacher candidates, UML responded by applying for a five-year Race to the Top grant and launching UTeach, which includes science, math, and engineering initial baccalaureate licensure programs. UML intentionally started these programs at the baccalaureate level because there is more diversity in their undergraduate population than their graduate population. UML also secured funding for Mursion, a mixed-reality classroom simulation software, when PK-12 partners shared they wanted teacher candidates with more classroom management experience. UML has been able to secure funding to sustain the UTeach program and the use of Mursion beyond the initial start-up costs. These examples demonstrate UML's ability to proactively identify innovative opportunities to improve their programming while also responding to PK-12 partners' needs.

Commendation Spotlight*: Improving Practice and Learning through Partnerships at Clark University*
Criterion PAR 3: Partnerships improve experience for preparation candidates; and
Criterion PAR 4: Partnerships positively impact the outcomes of PK-12 students.

Clark University (CU) establishes PK-12 partnerships with the candidates' experience as a primary objective. For example, candidates have a full-year high-quality practicum placement, onsite seminars tap into school-based knowledge and practice, and its Supervising Practitioners co-teach coursework. Additionally, CU integrates candidates' summer coursework with the "Adam Achievers" and other summer academies for 7th, 9th and 10th grade students from partner schools. CU also engages in a "Rounds" process that allows candidates, partner school teachers, and CU faculty to collaborate in learning from actual practice in partner schools. During an onsite visit, a recent CU completer shared, "Being a part of [the Rounds process] has groomed me to go into a school and be a part of the community."

CU's involvement with its partner schools has positively impacted PK-12 student outcomes. The University Park Campus School (UPCS), a diverse and high needs school, was co-founded by CU and Worcester Public Schools (WPS) to enhance educational opportunities for the high-need Main South neighborhood. All except for one core academic teacher at UPCS are CU completers and the school hosts a cohort of CU candidates for their field placements each year. While the WPS overall graduation rate is 84 percent, almost 100 percent of UPCS students graduate each year. Additionally, all UPCS students qualify for postsecondary education on an annual basis, with more than 80 percent on track for a two or four-year degree, according to CU. Looking to build similar success, the Superintendent of WPS began collaborating with CU in 2012 to revitalize Claremont Academy, a historically underperforming school. As of 2016, the 10th grade ELA MCAS scores at all three secondary partner schools (Claremont Academy, South High School, and UPCS) rank first in the district. All CU PK-12 partners who responded to a DESE survey (n=11) indicated their partnership with CU can be described as a "multi-faceted partnership that is a symbiotic strategy for improved student outcomes."

Evaluation of the Consistency, Efficacy, and Efficiency of the Formal Review Process

ESE articulates three guiding principles around which the review process is built:
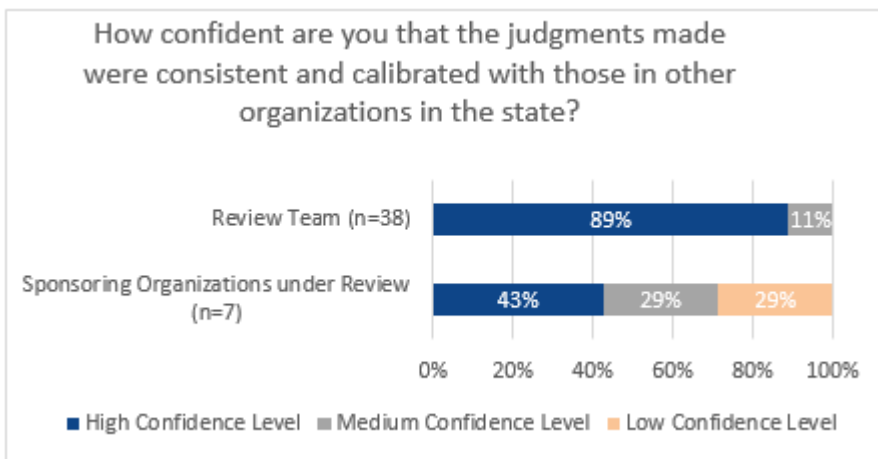
- **Consistent:** within and across organizations in terms of execution and the calibration of results.
- **Effective:** build on a solid evidentiary base for decision-making and appropriately differentiates within and among organizations.
- **Efficient:** streamlined, targeted, and systematic; any investment of efforts leads to improved outcomes.

ESE surveys both SOs who underwent review as well as the reviewers that volunteered to evaluate the quality of preparation against the program approval criteria. We use these surveys to continuously strengthen the formal review process. We disseminate high-level results as a way to share our analysis of the data and the associated action steps. At a high level, the results from the 2016-17 cohort of reviews indicate a low rate of confidence and positivity from SOs under review versus a high rate of confidence and positivity from the review team. To understand this data more fully, we reviewed data from previous years as well as data from this year's review. We found a lack of alignment to data collected in previous years and to what the review teams reported in 2016-17.

> **External reviewers reported a higher level of confidence with the consistency of the review process than SOs who were under review.**

While SOs under review expressed comparatively less confidence in the consistency in the process that SOs in the past, this trend was not shared by reviewers. Consistency is one of the hallmarks of the review process. The state holds all Sponsoring Organizations to the same rigorous expectations and

How confident are you that the judgments made were consistent and calibrated with those in other organizations in the state?

Review Team (n=38): 89% High Confidence Level, 11% Medium Confidence Level

Sponsoring Organizations under Review (n=7): 43% High Confidence Level, 29% Medium Confidence Level, 29% Low Confidence Level

■ High Confidence Level ■ Medium Confidence Level ■ Low Confidence Level

"We appreciated the effort to contextualize the evidence presented in the report, to take into account particular features of our program…we appreciated when a discrepant number or two was considered in light of the preponderance of evidence." – SO Review designee

therefore undergo the same review process. To establish consistency across reviews, ESE uses the same materials with all SOs including: toolkits and worksheets, guidance documents, evaluation tools, program approval criteria,[11] and interview and focus group protocols. Reviewers all undergo the same training and are required to complete calibration

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[11] Review materials and resources are all publicly available in our Review Toolkit and Evaluation Tools page.

exercises. ESE maintains the level of integrity across all reviews with internal vetting structures in place to ensure consistency in judgments across reviews.

> 📊 **SOs under review felt less confident than reviewers regarding the efficacy of the process such that judgments made about their programs were rooted in evidence.**

SOs were more critical than reviewers about whether judgments made as part of the review process were based on evidence, as well. SOs noted that their low agreement stemmed from three things in particular:

The judgments were made based on evidence

	Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Disagree
Review Team (n=38)	90%	10%		
Sponsoring Organizations under Review (n=7)	29%	14%	29%	29%

- **Low sample sizes:** Currently, ESE relies on SOs under review to recruit stakeholders to attend interviews and focus groups while onsite. ESE previously responded to feedback from SOs that scheduling some stakeholder groups is challenging by adjusting the times of our onsite meetings to the evening to better accommodate an educator's schedule. To boost sample sizes further, ESE is incorporating state stakeholder survey data into the review process in 2017-18.[12] Incorporating these surveys into the formal review will boost the number of individuals participating and providing evidence.

- **The rating scale:** The rating scale used on both the stakeholder surveys and the focus group questionnaires is the same: agree, somewhat agree, neither agree nor disagree, somewhat disagree, and disagree. SOs noted concerns that ESE reports on the percentage of stakeholders who selected 'agree' in response to a prompt and does not include the percentage of those who selected 'somewhat agree.' Some reviewers noted a similar sentiment yet still rated their confidence as high. However, when making criterion-level decisions, the review team considers the results from the whole scale and the variation that occurs as a result. The quantitative data is compared alongside the open-ended qualitative segments of the focus groups, which helps drive decisions. ESE maintains high expectations for the performance of providers across the state, noting the definition provided to stakeholders of 'agree' indicates things are happening both consistently and at a high level.

- **Triangulation:** The review process weights evidence of impact more heavily than other sources of data. Evidence collected onsite as part of the focus groups is a significant piece of outcome evidence that links to a given criteria. As such, it is often weighted more heavily than evidence of plans or inputs submitted as part of the offsite submission. ESE plans to host an Evidence Workshop in 2018 to prepare organizations for incorporating evidence of impact into their narratives in formal review.
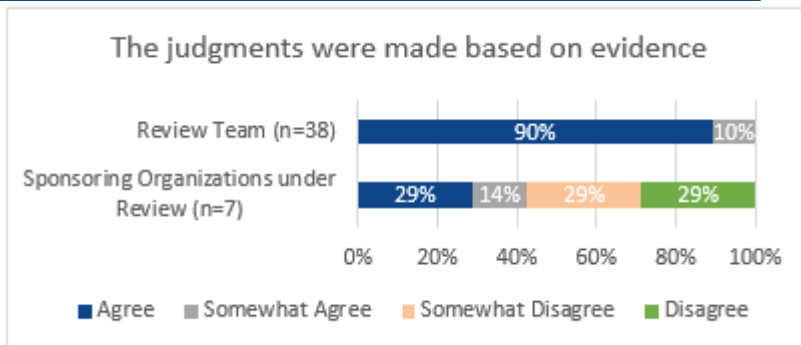
> *"There is a willingness, from all parties, to provide the most accurate assessment possible in an effort to move programs to their next stage of development. Only accurate information, with a thoughtful sense of calibration, can make the progress possible." – Ed Prep Reviewer*

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[12] Descriptions of survey subjects as survey questions are publicly available in our Stakeholder Surveys page.

Preparing for the review cost SOs an average of $6,752.

SOs had a hard time pinpointing the amount of hours it took to prepare their submission. SOs reported on average the review to cost $6,752. This varied substantially by the size of the organization and the complexity of the review. The lowest estimate was $3,000 and the highest estimate was about $20,000.