Quick Reference Guide: The Educator Preparation Annual Snapshot (EPAS)

Overview

The Massachusetts Educator Preparation Annual Snapshot (EPAS) synthesizes existing state data points into a single snapshot of each Sponsoring Organization's (SO) strengths and areas for improvement. SOs can use EPAS to inform programmatic changes for their continuous improvement. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) formally reviews SOs on a 7-year cycle. EPAS is designed to establish more frequent feedback loops between DESE and SOs in between and during review cycles. EPAS is reported to SOs through Edwin Analytics and is not shared publically.

How to use the Educator Preparation Annual Snapshot

EPAS helps SOs understand their performance relative to six key questions and associated data points. Questions were determined in partnership with Sponsoring Organizations, teachers, principals, as well as an external technical advisor. EPAS helps to answer the following questions by visualizing key data metrics. See Appendix A for EPAS visuals.
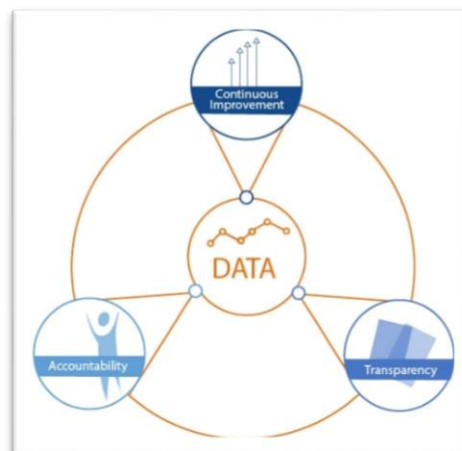
EPAS Question	Associated Data Point(s)	What does EPAS show?
Do candidates and completers re-take MTEL tests at the same rate as the state average?	MTEL	EPAS shows the percentage of candidates and/or completers at the SO who have taken the MTEL more than once compared to the state average. The data is shown by licensure test for the top three most commonly taken subject tests at the SO as well as the Communication and Literacy Skills tests.
Do completers' Student Growth Percentiles vary by program and indicate high growth with students?	Student Growth Percentiles	Although only available for a percentage of educators, Student Growth Percentiles (SGPs) provide a measure of student learning across all districts. Since SGPs takes into account student's prior achievement, they provide a measure of an educator's impact. Research indicates that in Massachusetts there is more variation in student growth within a single provider rather than across. As such, EPAS helps SOs understand and visualize the differences in teacher impact across their programs. Reference lines of 40% and 60% were selected to align with the district accountability system's definition of high and low student growth. This alignment gives SOs and school districts a shared language to share and discuss this data.
Is there a gap between the exit rate of white candidates and candidates of color?	Persistence Rates Candidate Race/Ethnicity Data	EPAS shows the persistence rate among white candidates and candidates of color compared to the state average. The state expectation is that, regardless of how many candidates of color are enrolled at an SO, white candidates and candidates of color are completing their program at similar rates. A misalignment may indicate that there are barriers that present themselves to one group more so than another.

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EPAS Question	Associated Data Point(s)	What does EPAS show?
Do key stakeholders think completers were prepared to be effective (hiring principals & completers)?	Stakeholder Surveys	EPAS creates a composite score from multiple questions from the principal and the completer survey. The composite score is a strong indicator because it is not reliant on a single survey question. EPAS compares scores to a benchmark established with input from the EPAS Advisory Group, comprised of several Massachusetts SOs. Each advisory group member took the completer and hiring principal survey and shared responses that were at the levels they would expect. From there, the aggregate survey responses were analyzed and a benchmark was set.
What percentage of completers remain in the district in which they are first employed?	Retention Rate Employment Data	Many teachers leave their districts for reasons that are not connected to their preparation, however, strong preparation can prepare candidates to be ready to work in in a variety of districts. EPAS compares the average rate of retention of completers to the average retention rate of an SO's top employing districts. By creating a *unique* comparison point for each SO, EPAS accounts for different environments that new teachers enter to provide an unbiased measure of teacher retention.
How do completers' educator evaluation summative ratings compare to other teachers' ratings, accounting for the district they are teaching in?	Educator Evaluation Summative Performance Ratings	Educator Evaluation provides a measure of job performance for educators. EPAS controls for the differences in how that framework is implemented across different districts. This graph compares the average educator evaluation ratings for an SO to two key reference lines – all teachers and first year teachers. This provides an opportunity for SOs to see how completers from their organization are doing relative to the performance of all teachers and/or first year teachers. The state expectation is that completers are ready to teach on day one and that they receive comparable ratings compared to all other teachers in that district. With this graphic, SOs can determine where they fall relative to that expectation. It also provides feedback on how completers are performing relative to other first year teachers in that district.

Strategies for Incorporating EPAS into Existing Continuous Improvement Efforts

EPAS synthesizes, analyzes, and visualizes state-level data that SOs already have access to in Public Profiles and Edwin Analytics. Sponsoring Organizations in Massachusetts have the opportunity to leverage EPAS into their pre-existing continuous improvement cycles for purposes of continuous improvement, transparency, and accountability. Strategies to integrate EPAS into pre-existing systems and structures include:

Cycle	Strategy	Description
Continuous Improvement	Use EPAS as a data guidepost for further inquiry.	The data points included in EPAS are trends seen over a number of candidates and completers. Often, they focus on workforce outcomes one to two years post program completion. EPAS is a signal of the overall performance of an SO, but not of necessary action steps. SOs need to engage in further data inquiry to determine associated actions and next steps. EPAS includes descriptors, when applicable, on the graph to help facilitate data interpretation: • Promote: Represents data that is above the set expectation. SOs should seek to understand the practice yielding the outcome, triangulate with other state or local data, and promote it by sharing it with other licensure programs within an SO or with other SOs. • Track: Represents data that is at the set expectation. This indicates that a program is 'on-track' but continued monitoring is required. • Probe: Represents data that falls below the benchmark. SOs should seek to understand what practice is yielding the outcome and seek to understand why and what can be done to improve.
Continuous Improvement	Use EPAS as the gateway to Edwin Analytics.	EPAS graphics link to associated Edwin reports so that SOs can dig deeper into relevant, available data. SOs are also encouraged to incorporate their own locally collected data to inform action planning and root cause analysis.
Transparency	Share EPAS with key stakeholders.	Although EPAS graphics are not available to the public, they may be downloaded as a PDF and shared with relevant stakeholders. Key stakeholders (i.e., partner districts, hiring principals) can help to understand data and illuminate next steps. EPAS is also a helpful signal of performance for prospective program entrants and leadership teams.

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Cycle	Strategy	Description
Accountability	Include EPAS in formal review-offsite submission.	EPAS aligns with criteria associated with the Continuous Improvement Domain in the Program Approval Criteria List and can be used as a source of evidence in the offsite submission of the formal review. For example, EPAS is a potential signal that a candidates are being well-prepared to meet the needs of their students. SOs have access to multiple years of EPAS data and can look for trends over time that associate with programmatic changes.[1] EPAS can also be used to signal consistent and ongoing use of external data that informs strategic decisions in the offsite submission. EPAS may catalyze strategic decisions that impact the SO, candidates, and employing schools/districts.

Considerations When Using EPAS

1. What to do if you run EPAS and no data is generated:
    a. EPAS displays data for initial teacher licensure programs only.
    b. Try to widen the number of completion years that you are looking at.
    c. Make sure employment data is available for the completion years you selected.
    d. Keep in mind that if select multiple years of data and one year is suppressed, no data will show.
2. What to do if your n-sizes are not what you expect:
    a. EPAS has different business rules than other Edwin reports to try to increase n-size.
    b. EPAS includes teachers that enter into the teaching workforce within a three-year window of completing their program to account for teachers that don't go right into teaching.
3. If load time is slow:
    a. The data is crunching in real time and can sometimes take up to one to two minutes to load.
4. If you run into any technical issues or if something seems off, please email edprep@doe.mass.edu.

[1] The Evidence of Impact Advisory provides guidance on how to plan for the incorporation of high-quality evidence of impact in the offsite portion of the formal review.
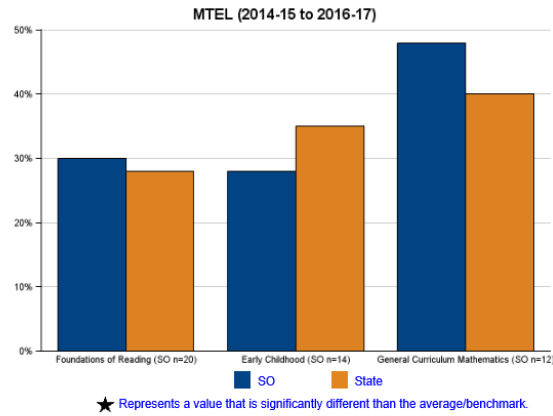
Appendix A: Sample EPAS Visuals

Do candidates and completers re-take MTEL tests at the same rate as the state average?

Description: This graphic shows the percentage of candidates and/or completers at your SO who have taken the MTEL more than once compared to the state average. The data is shown by licensure test for the top three most commonly taken subject tests at your SO as well as the Communication and Literacy Skills tests.

Goal: The percentage of candidates/completers who re-take a test is as close to 0% as possible.

Additional Resources: To see a related data for further inquiry and analysis, please see the Performance Measures Report (EP703) in Edwin (EP 703 includes MTEL pass and retake rates).


MTEL (2014-15 to 2016-17)

★ Represents a value that is significantly different than the average/benchmark.

Do completers' Student Growth Percentiles vary by program and indicate high growth with students?

Description: Although only available for a small percentage of educators, Student Growth Percentiles (SGP) provide a measure of student learning across all districts. Since SGP takes into account student's prior achievement, they provide a measure of an educator's impact. Research indicates that in Massachusetts there is more variation in student growth within a single provider rather than across. DESE created a visual that would easily allow SOs to understand the differences in teacher impact across their programs. Reference lines of 40% and 60% were selected to align with the district accountability system's definition of high and low student growth. This alignment gives SOs and school districts a shared language to share and discuss this data.

Goal: Median SGPs for each program are above the line representing 60%. If the SGPs vary considerably by program and /or have large vertical lines that indicates significant variation in completer effectiveness from a single SO.

Additional Resources: To see related data for further inquiry and analysis, please see the MA Public Employment Summary (EP 702) in Edwin (EP 702 includes SGPs by program, race/ethnicity, and school district).
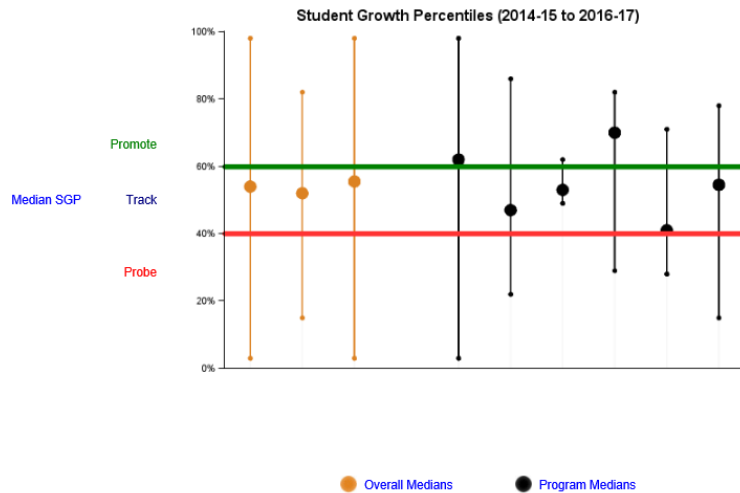
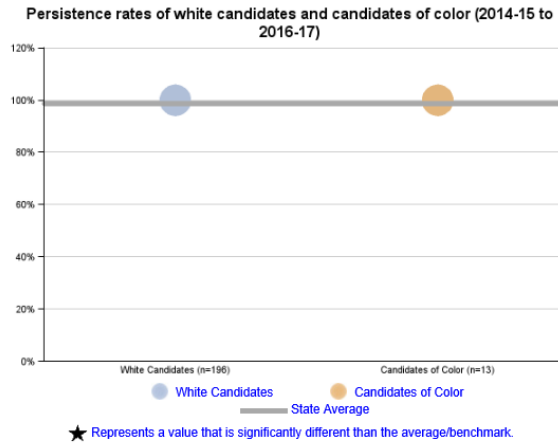Student Growth Percentiles (2014-15 to 2016-17)

Is there a gap between the exit rate of white candidates and candidates of color?

Description: The state expectation is that, regardless of how many candidates of color a SO has enrolled, white candidates and candidates of color are completing their program at similar rates. A misalignment may indicate that there are barriers that present themselves to one group more so than another.

Goal: Program completion rates of white candidates and candidates of color are similar to each other.

Additional Resources: To see related data for further inquiry and analysis, please see the Educator Prep Program Cohort Pipeline Report (EP 701) in Edwin (EP 701 includes exit rate and reason by race/ethnicity).

Persistence rates of white candidates and candidates of color (2014-15 to 2016-17)

- ● White Candidates
- ● Candidates of Color
- ▬ State Average
- ★ Represents a value that is significantly different than the average/benchmark.

How do completers' educator evaluation summative ratings compare to other teachers' ratings, accounting for the district they are teaching in?
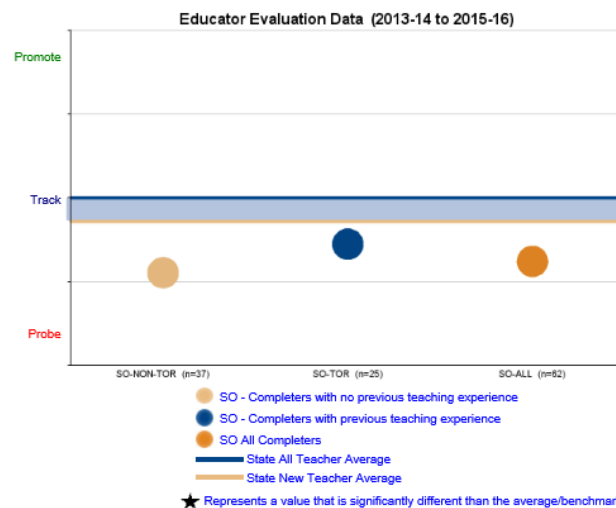
Description: Educator Evaluation provides a measure of job performance for educators using a consistent framework across Massachusetts. This graph controls for the differences in how that framework is implemented across different districts. This graph compares the average educator evaluation ratings for your SO to two key reference lines – all teachers and first year teachers. This provides an opportunity for SOs to see how completers from their program are doing relative to the performance of all teachers and/or first year teachers. Since the state expectation is that completers are ready to teach on day one, we expect completers to receive comparable ratings compared to all other teachers in that district. Using this metric, SOs can determine where they fall relative to that expectation. It also provides feedback about how completers are performing relative to other first year teachers in that district.

Goal: Each subgroup is approaching or above the line representing average educator rating for all educators.

Additional Resources: To see a related data for further inquiry and analysis, please see the following reports:

Performance Measures Report (EP703) in Edwin – Includes Educator Evaluation data by program across the four standards.

Ed Prep Completer Performance – Public Profiles – Includes Educator Evaluation data and compares it to data from top employing districts.

Educator Evaluation Data (2013-14 to 2015-16)

- ● SO - Completers with no previous teaching experience
- ● SO - Completers with previous teaching experience
- ● SO All Completers
- ▬ State All Teacher Average
- ▬ State New Teacher Average
- ★ Represents a value that is significantly different than the average/benchmark.

Massachusetts Executive Office of Education

What percentage of completers remain in the district in which they are first employed?

Description: Many teachers leave their districts for reasons that are not connected to their preparation, however, strong preparation can prepare candidates to be ready to work in challenging districts. This metric compares the average rate of retention of completers to the average retention rate in an SO's top employing districts. By creating a unique comparison point for each SO, EPAS accounts for different environments that new teachers enter to provide an unbiased measure of teacher retention.

Goal: Your SO's retention rate is higher than the district composite, indicating your candidates are more likely to stay in a district after their first year.

Additional Resources: To see related data for further inquiry and analysis, please see the following reports:

  MA Public Employment Summary (EP 702) – includes employment and retention rates for candidates' first year of employment.
  Candidate List with up to 5 Years of License and MA Public Employment (EP 801) – includes the district the candidate was first employed in after completing their program as well as their most recent district.
  Employment of Preparation Program Completers in MA Public Schools – Public Profiles - Includes employment and retention data.

Retention Data (2013-14 to 2014-15)

● SO (n=160)	⎯⎯ Composite District
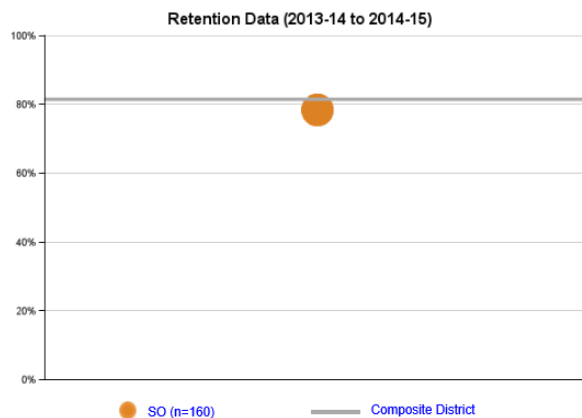
★ Represents a value that is significantly different than the average/benchmark.

UMass/Amherst Top Employing Districts (2013-14 to 2014-15)

District	# of Completers Hired
Springfield	94
Holyoke	18
Shrewsbury	14

Do key stakeholders think completers were prepared to be effective (hiring principals & completers)?

Description: This graph creates a composite score from multiple questions from the principal and the completer survey. The composite score is a strong indicator, because it is not reliant on a single survey question. We compare these scores to a benchmark established with input from the EPAS Advisory Group, comprised of several Massachusetts SOs. Each advisory group member took the completer and hiring principal survey and shared responses that were at the levels they would expect. From there, the aggregate survey responses were analyzed and a benchmark was set.

Goal: SO survey averages are above the benchmark.

Additional Resources: To see related data for further inquiry and analysis, please see the Educator Prep Survey Report (EP 704) in Edwin (EP 704 includes item level survey data).

Completer Survey Data (2015-16 to 2015-16)

● SO Average (n=)	
⎯⎯ State Benchmark	

Hiring Principal Survey Data (2015-16 to 2015-16)

● SO Average (n=9)	
⎯⎯ State Benchmark	