SY 22-24 Formative Feedback Review Summary
Final Report to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
June 2024

Executive Summary

From SY22 through SY24, Teacher Prep Inspection-US (TPI-US) conducted program reviews of 12 sponsoring organizations (SOs) in Massachusetts to assess programmatic alignment to Massachusetts's draft Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria. TPI-US's review team inspected Early Childhood PK–2, Elementary 1–6, and/or Moderate Disabilities K–8 licensure programs, using evidence about course content and quality, clinical experiences, and partnerships with K12 districts to assess the organizations' early literacy practices. At the conclusion of each review, each of the 12 organizations received a confidential report with clear, detailed, and comprehensive feedback on the programs' strengths and areas for growth specific to teacher candidates' preparation in evidence-based early literacy instruction.

At the close of SY24, TPI-US analyzed the data from all 12 reviews to provide the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE) with insight into the overarching patterns and trends of evidence-based early literacy instruction in the educator preparation programs that underwent a review. This report includes summative findings and recommendations based on the 12 organizational reviews.

Background and Context

Since 2013, TPI-US has been a reliable catalyst for educator preparation provider (EPP) improvement nationwide and has completed over 300 program reviews in 23 states. Grounded in a philosophy of continuous improvement, TPI-US reviews teacher preparation programs to determine how programs can expand their promising practices and address areas of needed improvement. TPI-US has shown repeated success in developing and implementing formative reviews and frameworks that produce reliable and valid information about teacher preparation programs. No other organization in the United States has the demonstrated capacity to organize and deliver the quantity or quality of inspections to move the needle on improving teacher preparation programs.

In Spring 2022, MA DESE contracted with TPI-US to conduct a pilot baseline assessment of relevant licensure programs in participating organizations. TPI-US's Early Literacy Formative Feedback Reviews are part of a larger multi-year initiative to support and invest in educator preparation providers in meeting the goal of ensuring that, ***by 2024-25, all prospective teachers in Early Childhood PK–2, Elementary 1–6 and Moderate Disabilities K–8 programs are prepared, through coursework and opportunities for practice and high-quality feedback, in evidence-based early literacy aligned to Mass Literacy***.

This work is driven by awareness and concern about the literacy performance of Massachusetts PK-12 students and by inequitable student outcomes when performance is disaggregated by student subgroups. DESE invited all approved sponsoring organizations with relevant programs to participate in an **optional, no-cost, confidential** formative feedback review starting in the Fall of 2022 and continuing through the Spring of 2024. TPI-US's Formative Feedback Reviews operationalized the new expectations and invited all participating SOs to share feedback on these draft expectations with DESE. Participating organizations also had the opportunity to submit TPI-US's report or any improvement plans created due to the formative feedback review as evidence of efficacy and impact at their next formal review. Additionally, DESE provided $10,000 to all SOs that engaged in the formative feedback review process to offset any costs associated with planning and organizing the review schedule and/or supporting programmatic improvements resulting from the review.

Methodology

In the Summer of 2022, TPI-US worked to align their process with the research base codified in Mass Literacy and the expectations for teacher preparation in evidence-based early literacy instruction outlined in the draft Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria. To design and conduct a holistic review of multiple components of an educator preparation program, a review team of national literacy experts and DESE personnel convened to develop the MA DESE Early Literacy Program Approval Framework (see here) as a rubric for assessing evidence across three domains: the Quality of Instruction, the Quality of Field-Based Experiences, and the Quality of Partnerships with districts. The goal was to create a focused framework that thoroughly assessed whether evidence-based early literacy practices were embedded throughout a teacher candidate's experiences in a program, thus enabling program candidates and completers to meet the literacy learning needs of Massachusetts students.

Once the rubric was completed and approved for use, TPI-US trained a group of national literacy experts to reliably and validly apply the MA DESE Early Literacy Framework. TPI-US ensured its reviewers understood the framework's content and application through norming and calibration practices. Training also included the TPI-US process methodology, which includes gathering evidence from multiple sources, such as interviews, coursework observations, teacher candidates in their field placements, engaging in ongoing dialog with program leadership, conducting meetings and interviews with school or district leaders, holding daily feedback meetings, and collecting and monitoring the sponsoring organizations' shared documentation and data.

TPI-US coordinated schedules, logistics, and data requests with the programs that chose to participate in the review. During that period, all parties held virtual webinars with MA DESE leadership to ensure that participants knew and understood the framework and the review methodology to facilitate the successful completion of the reviews. Additional calls and conversations with programs occurred throughout the review process. TPI-US offered multiple opportunities for programs to provide the necessary items for a thorough review.

Review teams conducted reviews on-site and met with the programs daily to summarize each program's key strengths and areas for improvement. Twelve SOs participated in this effort by sharing course materials, providing faculty teaching videos, making faculty available for interviews about their evidenced-based early literacy courses and instruction, and setting up observations with partner districts

and schools where candidates were observed teaching. TPI-US conducted numerous interviews with school principals, supervising practitioners, program supervisors, alumni, candidates, and SO leadership at all levels. In addition, TPI-US evaluated any documentation and data provided by the SO to glean insights into the decision-making processes, protocols, workings, and performance of the SO. Such sources enabled evidence to be triangulated and verified, forming a strong foundation for the overall evaluation of the program's performance and the quality of its teacher preparation in early literacy.

MA DESE contracted with TPI-US to transmit confidential final literacy review reports to each of the twelve participating SOs after their review. Standard TPI-US practice is to submit these individual reports in draft form, request programs to identify factual errors or unclear statements, and then deliver the final reports to the institution after obtaining their factual feedback.

The work of TPI-US is unique in its comprehensiveness. The review methodology ensures that evidence is collected from multiple sources, triangulated, and verified so that judgments are reliable and accurate. This methodology, coupled with TPI's commitment to collaboration and ongoing feedback with the leadership of each sponsoring organization, enables TPI-US to identify the strengths of each organization accurately and to recommend areas for improvement which if rigorously and robustly acted upon, have great potential to improve the quality of teacher preparation in literacy and most importantly to directly impact student learning and outcomes in this crucial area of students' academic development.

Collaboration with UPD

TPI-US strengthened its commitment to Antiracism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) practices. At TPI, we engaged UPD Consulting's services for training sessions for our leadership and program inspectors, whose work is pivotal in advancing the quality of teaching and learning in educator preparation programs across the US. UPD's contributions were key in ensuring that our efforts to improve our resources and practices effectively addressed power dynamics between inspector teams and preparation programs and enabled meaningful exploration of the most equitable paths forward.

Our work with UPD Consulting has yielded several tangible benefits:

- **Accelerated Impact:** We have accelerated our impact significantly through collaboration across different levels and roles within the teacher preparation ecosystem.
- **Effective Change Management:** UPD has equipped us with change management strategies to support shifts in mindsets, skill development, and daily habits.
- **Ongoing Improvement:** UPD's guidance in using quantitative and qualitative data to center the human experience has enabled us to keep a people-first approach to assessing progress, quality, and impact in ongoing cycles.

With UPD's support, our leadership at TPI has committed to important changes, such as integrating explicit ADEI language in our framework for site reviews, prioritizing program management, enhancing on-site visits, and fostering collaboration with partners. These shifts have been crucial in aligning our work with ADEI principles.

Overall Findings

	Rating			
Domain	**Strong (4)**	**Good (3)**	**NI (2)**	**Inadequate (1)**
I-A	0	2	4	6
I-B	0	3	3	6
I-C	1	3	4	4
I-D	1	2	7	2
I-E	0	2	4	6
2	0	2	8	2
3	0	1	6	5

TOTALS	2	15	36	31
Percentage	**2.4%**	**17.9%**	**42.9%**	**36.9%**

The table above summarizes the scores of each sponsoring organization across the three domains. The twelve SOs earned a total of 84 quality rating scores through the use of the vetted rubric by trained review teams. **As seen from these results, only 17 of the 84 scores were Strong or Good (20.2% of all earned scores), while 67 of the 84 scores earned in the review by SOs were Needs Improvement or Inadequate (79.8%).**

Only twelve of the forty-seven MA sponsoring organizations offering literacy coursework and training opted into the free reviews. It is not claimed here that these twelve sponsoring organizations are a representative sample of all programs that prepare new teachers in Massachusetts to understand evidence-based reading instruction and teach it effectively to students. Nonetheless, according to the Nation's Report Card, as of 2022, only 43% of 4th graders in Massachusetts scored at or above proficiency on NAEP, and the reading proficiency levels for Black and Latino or Hispanic students were less than half that for White students. This data suggests that the TPI-US's findings on distribution of quality and the challenges it flags for

high-quality early literacy preparation across the Commonwealth may paint an accurate statewide picture of the need for significant improvement.

In another state where TPI-US was engaged to assess the quality of reading instruction and training in 30 educator preparation programs, we found only two programs rated as Strong on a rubric aligned to that state's standards. These results led to a follow-up technical support engagement with TPI-US to help program faculty redesign their courses in line with state standards and TPI-US review reports and to map structured literacy within and across courses explicitly and systematically. This allows programs to spiral content so that it is not taught in isolation and is covered with the depth needed for candidates to learn and apply.

While SO's faculty and leaders were sometimes disappointed by the review teams' findings, most acknowledged their accuracy and stated that the reports would inform improvements. In that same spirit, TPI-US has developed a consolidated set of recommendations for DESE and SOs seeking to prepare teacher candidates throughout Massachusetts.

Recommendations for Massachusetts

Organizations received confidential reports with recommendations specific to their areas of improvement. While each organization was unique in its strengths and areas in need of improvement, review teams examining coursework, course materials, and field experiences across all twelve SOs noted several areas where support for enhanced coursework, faculty teaching, or field placements and partnerships would advance the literacy improvement goals that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts seeks. These overall recommendations for SOs include:

- All faculty across an SO's programs and departments must work together to map a practical framework for systematically and sequentially teaching all components of effective literacy language instruction (oral language development, foundational reading skills, reading comprehension, and writing).
    - Specifically, faculty should determine which courses now on offer or modified will introduce, model, practice, implement, and reinforce each literacy component to a high standard so that candidates enrolled in the program are best equipped to meet the needs of all learners in the classroom.
    - The sequencing should spiral content knowledge, enabling candidates to understand best how literacy skills interconnect so they can then

use those connections to analyze students 'performance, especially that of students who need more intensive support in reading and writing.

- Ensure that courses give deeper and more consistent attention to diverse learners' learning needs through:.
    - Course content that explicitly and directly teaches evidence research-based methods for differentiated literacy instruction.
    - Opportunities for candidates to see effective delivery of individualized and culturally and linguistically responsive evidence-based literacy instruction modeled in course instruction
    - High-quality supervised opportunities to practice differentiating their instruction and receive accurate feedback on their practice. is essential if every Massachusetts child is to benefit from evidenced-based teaching.
- Ground course content in research to allow candidates to distinguish between evidence-based and non-evidence-based instructional materials so that they may become critical consumers and users of literacy curricular resources.
- Ensure that the SO and partner schools discuss and regularly analyze the quality of clinical placements so that candidates can practice and demonstrate evidence-based early literacy practices that advance positive student learning outcomes.
- Analyze student performance data to help all parties gain deeper insight and understanding of how the educator preparation program's components (coursework, field-based placements, and partnerships) impact student learning.
- Ensure that all faculty, program supervisors, and supervising practitioners partake in regular and robust training on high-quality observation and feedback practices specific to early literacy so that candidates always receive accurate, consistent, and reliable feedback on their literacy instruction. It is important that the SO collects data on the efficacy of this training, shares it with faculty and partners, and uses it to improve coursework quality and candidate performance.
- Strive to place all candidates in schools where they will consistently see good models of explicit, systematic, and sequential evidence-based early literacy instruction with supervising practitioners (SPs) who use HQIM in a highly effective and productive manner. The SO should actively select SPs with strong literacy content knowledge and coaching skills to help candidates develop and continue their quest to become accomplished literacy practitioners. The SO should ensure that this selection and placement process is created through a

close working partnership with schools and districts, where all partners assume responsibility for raising the standards of literacy achievement for all students.

Summary of Findings for Each Area of Study

Domain 1: Quality of Instruction

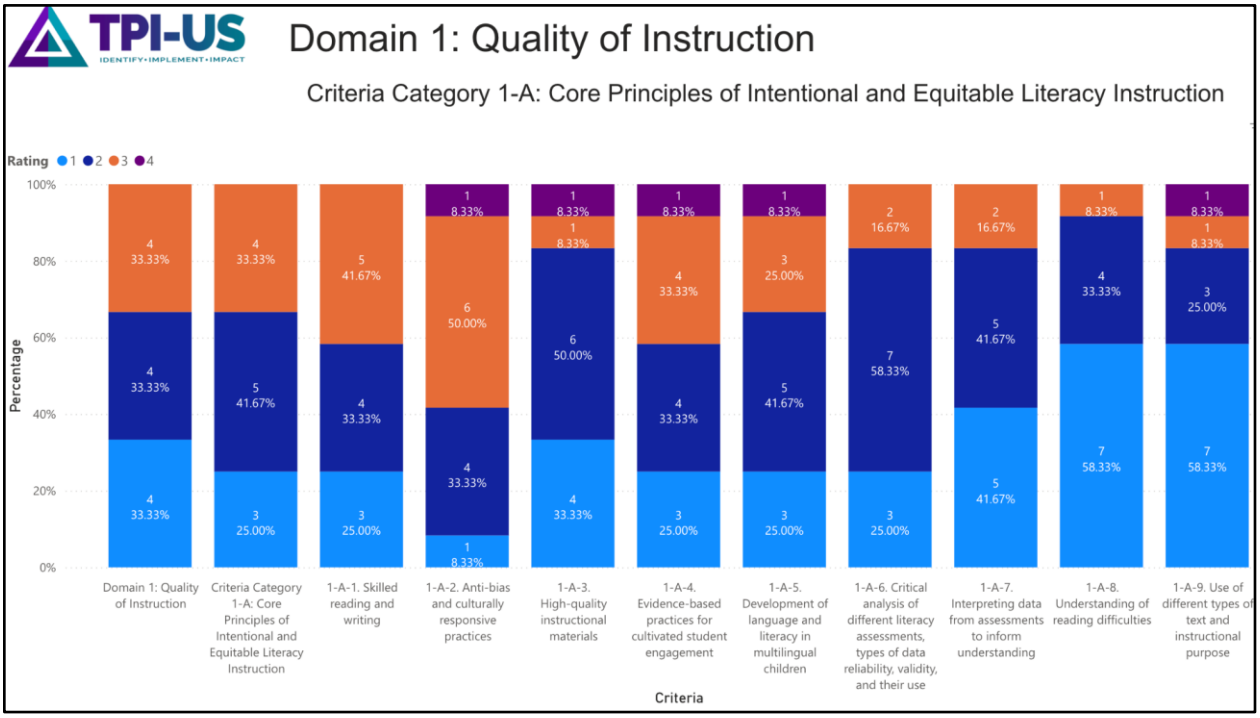
Criteria Category 1-A: Core Principles of Intentional and Equitable Literacy Instruction

Context and Rationale

Candidates should have opportunities to learn the basic principles of effective literacy instruction in their coursework. This will ensure that candidates have a solid foundation for inclusive literacy instruction, responsive to their students, and informed by research.

Essential Questions

- How well does the organization ensure candidates have the foundational knowledge of evidence-based literacy practices to meet all learners' needs?
- How well does the program prepare candidates to recognize the importance of evidence-based literacy research practices and identify quality research?
- How well do the course materials and assignments prepare candidates to implement evidence-based practices with all learners?



N=12

NOTE—Programs scoring Inadequate or Need Improvement show little to no evidence of teaching the criteria, and when evidence is present, it is rooted in an approach that does not align with Mass Literacy.

Overall Criteria Findings- 1-A Core Literacy Principles

- 0 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Strong."
- 4 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Good."
- 5 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Needs Improvement."
- 3 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Inadequate."

- Examples of Areas of Strength:
    - Elementary literacy spirals the theoretical frameworks throughout courses, is aligned to evidence-based early literacy practices, provides exposure to HQIM samples for some assignments, and models how to use CURATE to analyze whether a curriculum is high-quality.
    - Coursework aligned to the National Reading Panel Report or evidence-based literacy frameworks, such as the "simple view of reading" or Scarborough's Rope.
    - Preparation in administering and analyzing valid and reliable assessments, such as those on the list of approved early literacy screeners
    - Preparation in utilizing MTSS to support all students

- Examples of Areas for Improvement
    - Lack of a clear and intentional scope and sequence of coursework so that candidates build knowledge and skills over time
    - The need to create cohesion and shared language among literacy faculty
    - Lack of clear definitions and/or modeling of equitable literacy instruction that is culturally and linguistically sustaining
    - Lack of use of HQIM
    - Lack of instruction on appropriate assessment practices tied to each literacy strand and used to drive instruction.

Criteria Category 1-B: Language Comprehension

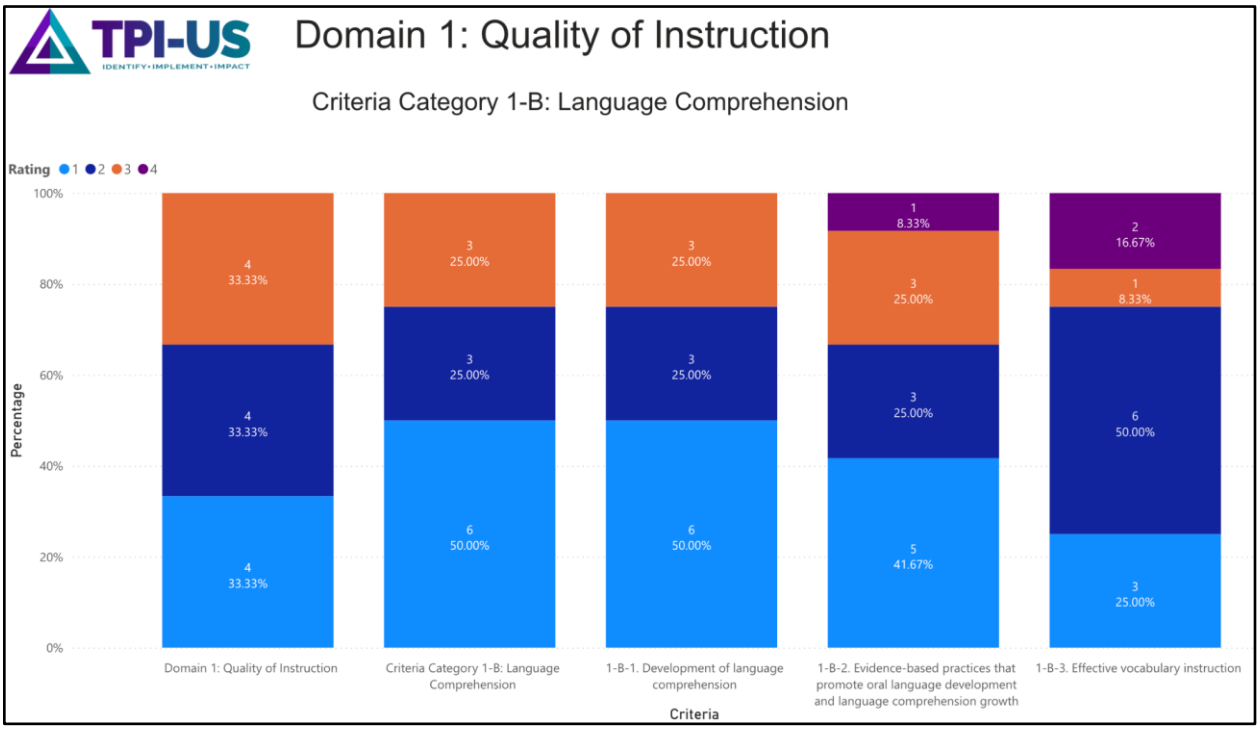
Context and Rationale

In their coursework, candidates should have opportunities to gain the content knowledge needed to effectively support students' language comprehension development, with a clear understanding of the role of oral language and vocabulary in effective literacy instruction. Programs should demonstrate that candidates are prepared with the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective

educators in all areas of language comprehension described in the Massachusetts Literacy Guide.

Essential Questions

- How does the organization/program ensure candidates can explain and demonstrate the interrelationships between oral language and literacy development (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, writing, and language)?
- How does the organization ensure candidates explain and demonstrate the components of language comprehension, including vocabulary, syntax and grammar, pragmatics, and background knowledge?
- How does the organization ensure candidates can demonstrate an understanding of effective vocabulary instruction?
- What coursework and training in assessment equip candidates with the knowledge, understanding, and skills to accurately assess, analyze, and utilize the data to drive instruction for oral language?



N=12

NOTE—Programs scoring Inadequate or Need Improvement show little to no evidence of teaching the criteria, and when evidence is present, it is rooted in an approach not aligned with Mass Literacy

Overall Criteria Findings - 1-B Language Comprehension

- 0 Sponsoring Organizations rated “Strong.”
- 3 Sponsoring Organizations rated “Good.”
- 3 Sponsoring Organizations rated “Needs Improvement.”
- 6 Sponsoring Organizations were rated “Inadequate.”

- Examples of Areas of Strength:
    - Coursework consistently and explicitly taught teacher candidates the components of language comprehension (vocabulary, syntax and grammar, pragmatics, and background knowledge).
    - The coursework focused directly on assessing oral language development, providing opportunities for practice and demonstrating by the instructor.

- Examples of Areas for Improvement
    - Inconsistent approaches to vocabulary instruction in course content; faculty have yet to norm around the different aspects and tiers of vocabulary, assessment of vocabulary, instructor modeling, and attention to diverse learners.
    - Lack of opportunities for teacher candidates to apply content knowledge in vocabulary (ex, knowledge of morphemes) to the design of effective vocabulary instruction.
    - Lack of explicit connections between courses that would deepen and spiral the content knowledge specific to language comprehension
    - There are not enough opportunities for teacher candidates to practice differentiation in oral language instruction so that they can have a strong understanding of how to apply this with PK-12 students.

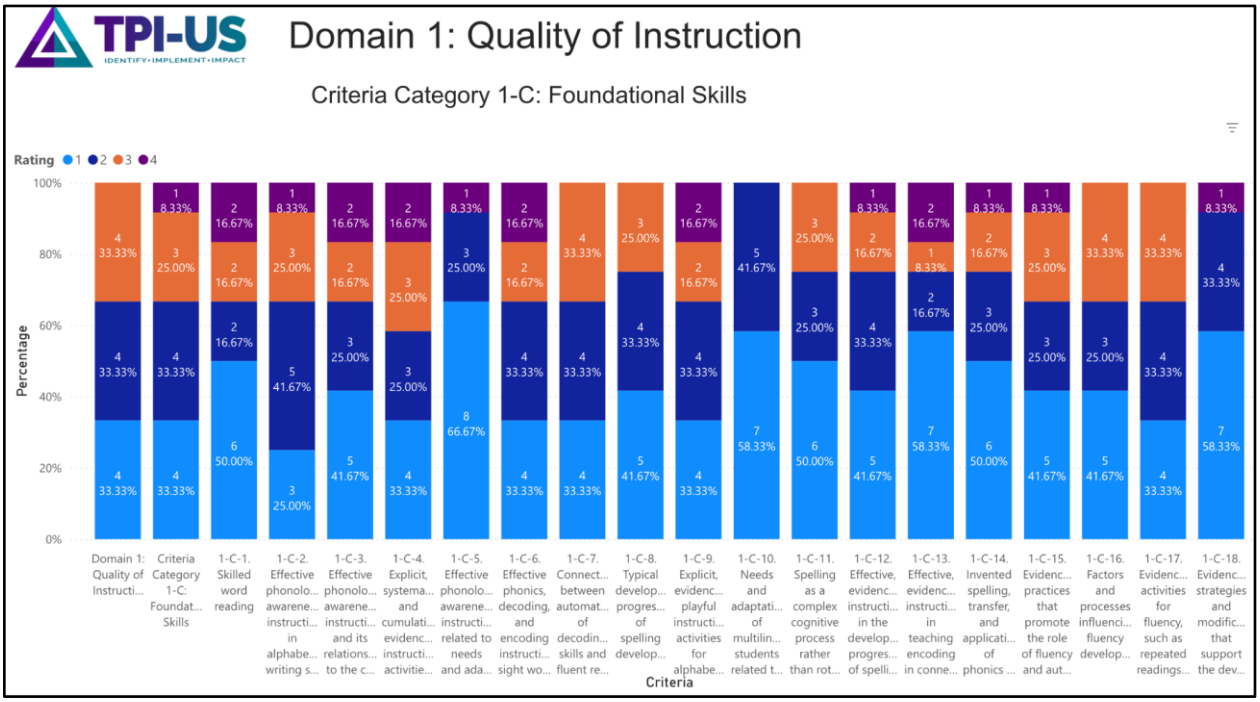
Criteria Category 1-C: Foundational Skills

Context and Rationale

In coursework, candidates should have opportunities to gain the deep content knowledge needed to teach the foundational reading skills, rooted in the understanding that those foundational skills are necessary for fluent and successful reading in later grades.

Essential Questions

- How does the organization ensure candidates can explain and demonstrate an understanding of effective phonological awareness instruction outlined in the Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria and its progression?
- How does the organization ensure candidates understand the effective phonics, decoding, and encoding instruction outlined in the Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria?
- How does the organization ensure candidates can explain and demonstrate an understanding of evidence-based practices that promote the development of reading fluency as outlined in the Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria?



N=12

NOTE—Programs scoring Inadequate or Need Improvement show little to no evidence of teaching the criteria. When evidence is present, it is rooted in an approach that is not aligned to Mass Literacy.

Overall Criteria Findings - 1-C Foundational Skills

- 1 Sponsoring Organization rated "Strong."
- 3 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Good."
- 4 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Needs Improvement."
- 4 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Inadequate."

- Examples of Areas of Strength:
    - A strength of the course is the gradual development of candidates' knowledge and skills in developing and delivering evidence-based literacy instruction to diverse learners. The opportunities for candidates to engage in good models of instruction then micro-teach to teach in the field, ultimately are supported by feedback from the sponsoring organization faculty.
    - Faculty delivers explicit, systematic, and sequential content knowledge to ensure candidates understand the appropriate development of foundational skills for the students they teach.

- Examples of Areas for Improvement
    - To improve literacy instruction further, the course should integrate explicit coverage of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing components. Activities and assignments focusing on each aspect can provide pre-service teachers with practical strategies grounded in evidence-based practices. Moreover, matching course assignments with the fundamental principles of intentional and equitable literacy instruction observed in lessons can better prepare educators to establish inclusive and effective learning environments; equitable literacy instruction can enhance educators' preparation to create inclusive and effective learning environments.
    - Gaps in faculty knowledge or misalignment in the approach to teaching foundational literacy skills
    - Lack of clear connections across courses to promote a deep, rich understanding of the interconnected relationship between various literacy skills
    - Textbooks and materials used do not support teacher-candidate learning (either because they are not aligned to evidence-based early literacy approaches or because they are not well placed in the candidates' continuum of study)
    - Using consistent definitions of terms and assessments that could be referenced across courses

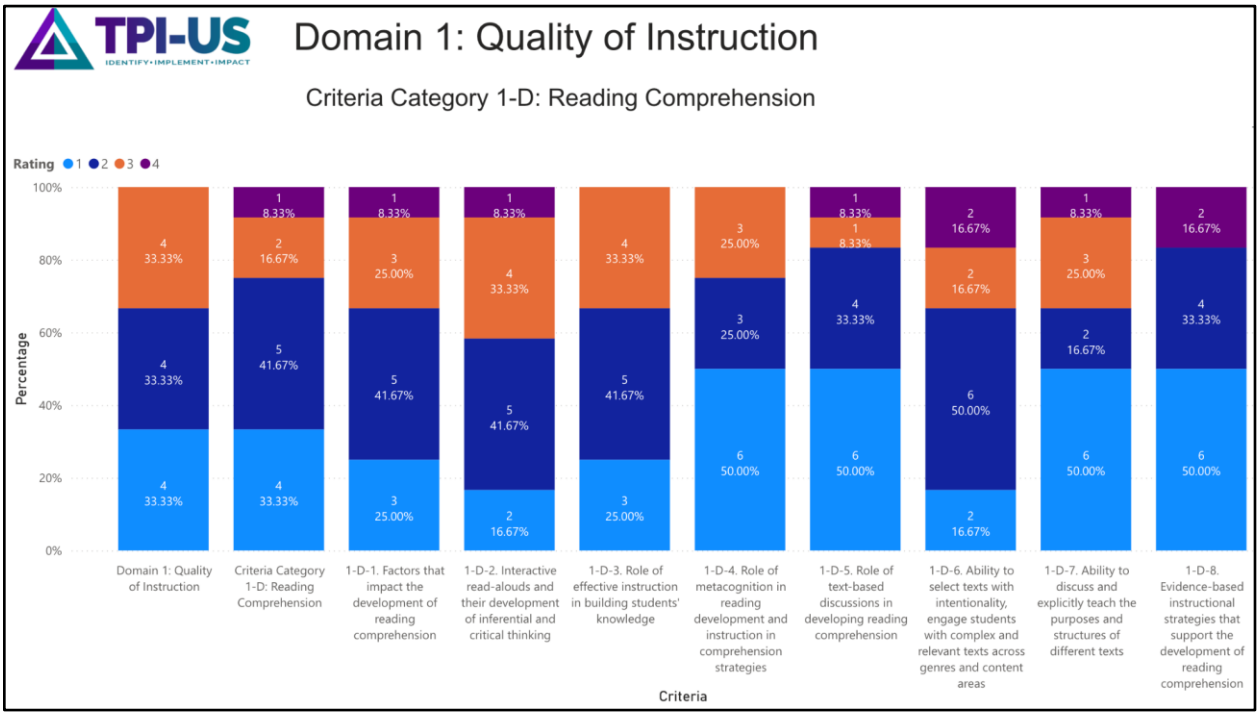
Criteria Category 1-D: Reading Comprehension

Context and Rationale

This review area focuses on the candidates' opportunities in coursework to gain the content knowledge necessary to effectively teach standards articulated in the MA English Language Arts (ELA) Frameworks through grade-level appropriate practices that will promote reading comprehension, critical thinking, and knowledge building.

Essential Questions

- How does the organization ensure individual teacher candidates secure knowledge of the factors that impact the development of reading comprehension?
- How does the organization ensure that the individual teacher candidates gain the knowledge to practice and demonstrate effective instruction to support student's development of reading comprehension?
- How does the organization ensure the individual teacher candidates know, practice, and demonstrate evidence-based instructional strategies and adaptations that effectively support the development of reading comprehension for a diverse population of learners?



N=12

NOTE—Programs scoring Inadequate or Need Improvement show little to no evidence of teaching the criteria, and when evidence is present, it is rooted in an approach that is not aligned to Mass Literacy

Overall Criteria Findings - 1-D Reading Comprehension

- 1 Sponsoring Organization rated "Strong."
- 2 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Good."
- 5 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Needs Improvement."
- 4 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Inadequate."

- Examples of Areas of Strength:
    - Coursework consistently addresses the factors that impact comprehension and evidence-based instructional strategies
    - Courses provide candidates with the opportunities to practice teaching reading comprehension
    - The program regularly includes instructor modeling to ensure candidates are prepared to develop students' comprehension and understanding of complex, grade-level text.

- Examples of Areas for Improvement
    - Intentional design of coursework to include modeling and rehearsal activities where teacher candidates practice implementing strategies, such as think-alouds, for developing reading comprehension
    - Lack of explicit course content that builds teacher candidate's understanding of the many factors and foundational skills that impact reading comprehension.

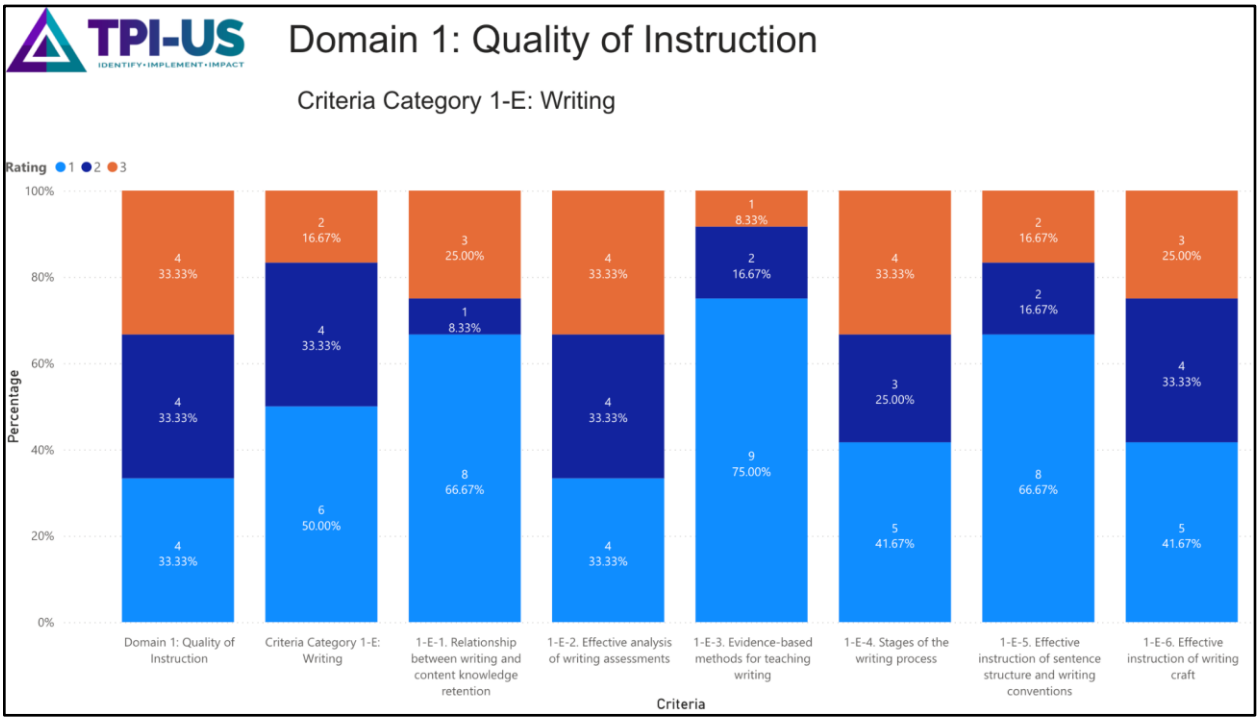
Criteria Category 1-E: Writing

Context and Rationale

This review area focuses on candidates' opportunities in coursework to gain the content knowledge necessary to effectively teach the skills in the MA ELA Frameworks through grade-level-appropriate practices that will promote the development of writing fluency.

Essential Questions

- How does the organization ensure that individual teacher candidates have the knowledge to practice and demonstrate evidence-based practices for teaching writing as outlined in the Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria?
- How does the organization ensure individual teacher candidates secure the knowledge to practice and demonstrate effective analysis of writing assessments and provide meaningful, targeted feedback to promote a safe and equitable learning environment for writing?



N=12

NOTE—Programs scoring Inadequate or Need Improvement show little to no evidence of teaching the criteria, and when evidence is present, it is rooted in an approach that is not aligned to Mass Literacy

Overall Criteria Findings- 1-E Writing

- 0 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Strong."
- 2 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Good."
- 4 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Needs Improvement."
- 6 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Inadequate."

- Examples of Areas of Strength:

    - The approach to writing instruction as a developmental process was consistent across courses.
    - Teacher candidates had direct instruction on how to assess writing and were provided opportunities to practice writing assessment.
    - Courses included instructor modeling to demonstrate classroom application of research-backed writing instruction methods.

- Examples of Areas for Improvement
    - To enhance literacy instruction, candidates should integrate writing across the curriculum to reinforce content knowledge retention and communication skills.
    - Lack of course content focused on building teacher candidate's understanding of the recursive process between reading and writing
    - Misalignment between the program's instruction in methods of teaching writing and current research on how writing develops and evidence-based strategies for writing instruction (such as graphic organizers and the use of mentor texts)

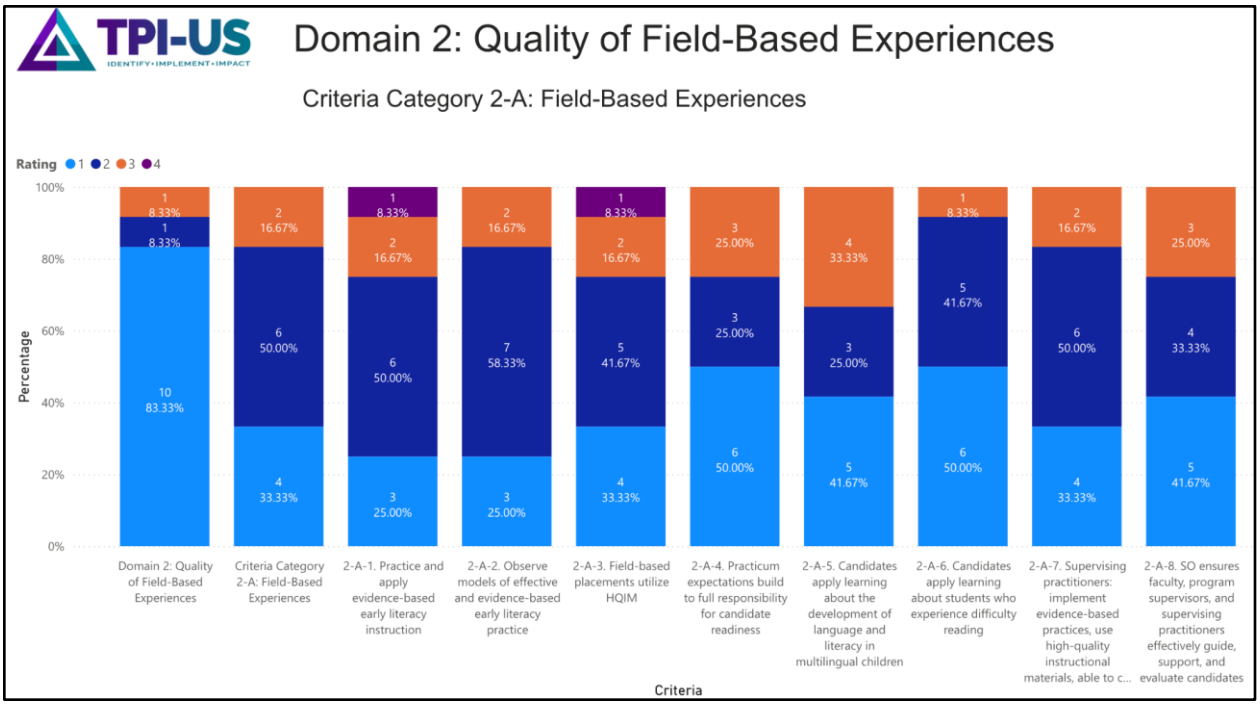
Domain 2: Quality of Field-Based Experiences

Context and Rationale

Field-based experiences enable candidates to apply the knowledge they acquire through program coursework. All candidates must receive high-quality feedback and supervision during the field experience.

Essential Questions

- What opportunities do candidates have to practice and apply coursework learning in field-based experiences or connect to practice?
- How well does the program ensure candidates receive high-quality field placements that support evidence-based literacy practices and the use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM)?
- How well do the field placements and practice prepare candidates to implement evidence-based practices with all learners, including multilinguistic and diverse populations of learners?



N=12

NOTE—Programs scoring Inadequate or Need Improvement show little to no evidence of intentional partnerships that support candidates' practice and exposure to evidence-based early literacy instruction aligned to Mass Literacy.

Overall Criteria Findings -2-A Field-Based Experiences

- 0 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Strong."
- 2 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Good."
- 6 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Needs Improvement."
- 4 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Inadequate."

- Examples of Areas of Strength:
    - Teacher candidates have field placements that provide numerous opportunities to practice and apply evidence-based early literacy instruction.
    - Procedures for field-based placements allow teacher candidates to gradually take on responsibility in the classroom, thereby preparing them for licensure.
    - Programs actively assess candidates during their field-based placements on their ability to demonstrate evidence-based practices, their evaluation and adaptation of materials, and their ability to analyze assessment data through formal and summative observations (including the use of DESE's literacy observation tool)

- Examples of Areas for Improvement
    - Quality of written and oral feedback that all supervisors provide to candidates
    - Collaboration between educator preparation faculty, program supervisors, and supervising practitioners to gain greater insight and understanding of the teacher candidates' successes and barriers in applying coursework to practice
    - Lack of shared understanding or agreement on what constitutes highly effective teaching and learning across all personnel
    - The SO should ensure that candidates are consistently placed in classrooms with SPs who are good models of evidenced-based early literacy practices and have intentional opportunities to practice and fully apply evidence-based early literacy instruction using HQIM. The SO must facilitate regular communication and collaboration among all partners and stakeholders to ensure that resources for instructional improvement are readily available and that mechanisms for continuous program evaluation and refinement are in place.

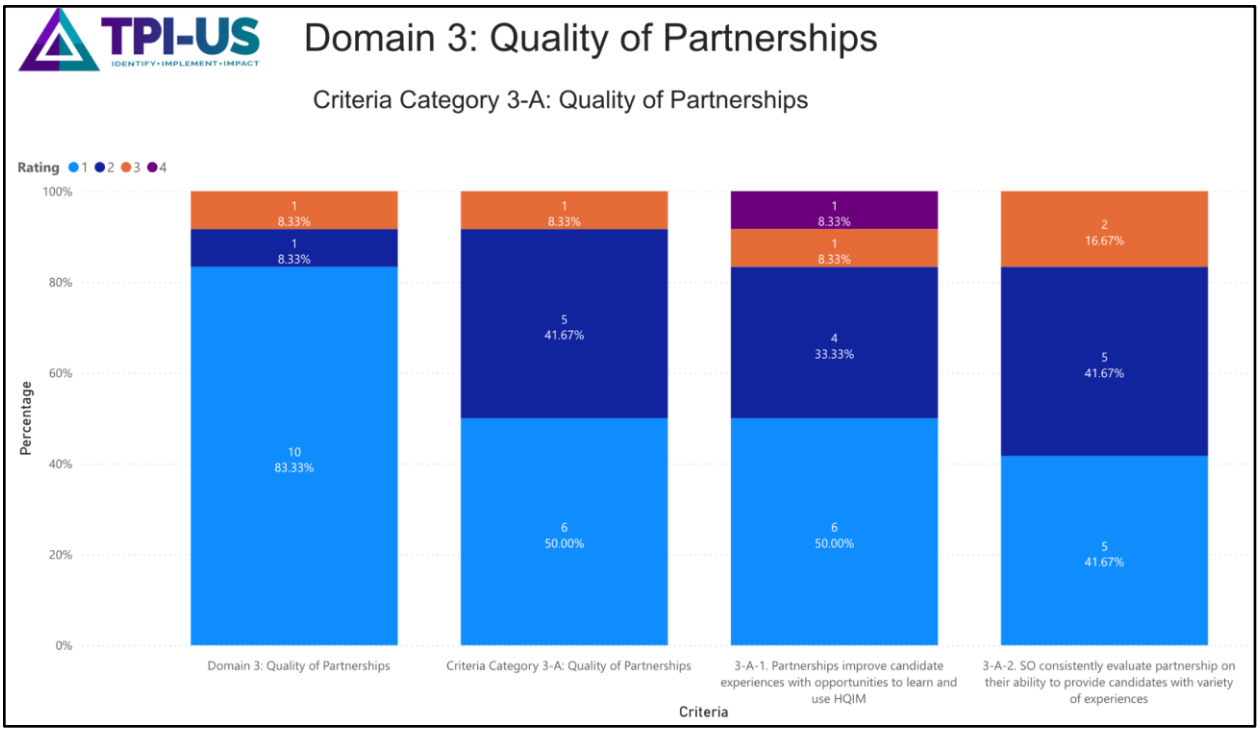
Domain 3: Quality of Partnerships

Context and Rationale

Program supervisors and supervising practitioners are critical in facilitating teacher candidates' development of evidence-based early literacy instructional practices. Their guidance and support must be based on a mutual understanding and agreement about what candidates are expected to know and must be able to do in their teaching practice. To ensure that consistency benefits both teacher candidates and K12 partner schools and districts, the collaboration between preparation programs and district partners is essential—not only between individual program faculty and their contacts in the school or district but also at the provider and the district or school leadership levels.

Essential Questions

- How do SOs and partners work together to ensure quality experiences for candidates to learn and use high-quality materials in literacy instruction?
- How do SOs and district partners ensure candidates have high-quality classroom experiences to practice and apply learning from coursework?



N=12

NOTE—Programs scoring Inadequate or Need Improvement show little to no evidence of intentional partnerships that support candidates' practice and exposure to evidence-based early literacy instruction aligned to Mass Literacy.

Overall Criteria Findings -3-A Quality of Partnerships

- 0 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Strong."
- 1 Sponsoring Organization rated "Good."
- 6 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Needs Improvement."
- 5 Sponsoring Organizations rated "Inadequate."

- Examples of Areas of Strength
    - Sponsoring organizations communicate with their partner school districts to understand what curriculum is being used and how to incorporate it into their coursework.
        - The sponsoring organization has purchased HQIM aligned with what the partner district is using which will provide candidates with opportunities to practice using HQIM.
    - SO will attend district curriculum training.
    - Surveys are also sent out to elicit feedback on what is used in the schools.

- Examples of Areas for Improvement
    - Revising the MOUs to ensure they are mutually beneficial with data-sharing agreements so that all parties are held accountable for ensuring that candidates' clinical experiences are quality and equitable. That should include guaranteeing that all candidates are in placements with SPs who are good models of evidence-based literacy practices and providing candidates with experiences to learn and use HQIMs in evidence-based early literacy. In addition, the SO should monitor the established criteria and expectations in selecting program supervisors and SPs to ensure that all candidates receive a consistent experience that significantly helps them become highly effective classroom practitioners. The SO and district(s) should regularly review the MOUs to ensure that agreements and expectations are upheld.
    - Inconsistent or insufficient collaboration with designated schools to develop strong partnerships whereby candidates are placed in classrooms with strong supervising practitioners and/or high-quality instructional materials
    - There are no processes for selecting supervising practitioners who use HQIM with fidelity and who are highly effective practitioners of evidence-based literacy instruction.
    - Lack of a shared vision between schools and the SO on what constitutes the best teaching and learning practices in literacy
    - Assessing the content and quality of coursework relative to the needs of partner schools' curriculum

Conclusion

Teacher Prep Inspection-US (TPI-US) shares Massachusetts' commitment to advancing reading proficiency for every student. We are grateful for the opportunity to conduct this review of educator preparation in literacy instruction across Massachusetts programs that train teachers for the state's schools.

Many program reviews demonstrated that faculty and program leaders want to improve coursework and clinical placements to positively impact candidates' ability to educate PK–12 students and promote solid achievement outcomes. The commitment to and need for programs to act with a sense of urgency to address their shortcomings must lie at the core of a quest for improvement. To that end, understanding the external resources and expertise available to foster improvement will be a significant contributing factor for the MA DESE to consider moving forward.

Acknowledgments:

TPI-US acknowledges the assistance and support of numerous individuals who contributed in important ways to the design, development, and completion of the Massachusetts Pilot Literacy Reviews. Our institutional and consolidated reports recognize the assistance provided by faculty members and program or institutional leaders who cooperated with the review.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Claire Abbott, director, Office of Educator Effectiveness at MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Siobhan Allen, literacy specialist, Office of Educator Effectiveness at MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Massachusetts Literacy Review Rubric Development Team
Cindy Edwards, reviewer, TPI-US
Antonio Fierro, chief impact officer for educator preparation and curriculum, Barksdale Reading Institute
Paulette Garza, reviewer, TPI-US
Stephanie Howard, senior director of programs, TPI-US
Holly Womack, logistics manager, reviewer, North Carolina literacy review project manager, TPI-US

Reviewers and Lead Reviewers
Stephanie Howard, Massachusetts literacy review project manager, TPI-US
Holly Womack, literacy review logistics manager, TPI-US
Martin Newell, director of quality assurance, TPI-US
Cindy Edwards, reviewer, TPI-US
Paulette Garza, reviewer, TPI-US
Merridith Murray, lead reviewer, TPI-US
Kristina Scott Quinlan, lead reviewer, Salem State University
Meranda Sierra, lead reviewer, TPI-US
Yolunda Beale, reviewer, Memphis Teacher Residency
Diana Betts, reviewer, Gardner-Webb University
April Evans, reviewer, University of Arkansas Fort Smith
Stephanie Grote-Garcia, reviewer, University of the Incarnate Word
Leslie Novosel, reviewer, TPI-US
Paola Pilonieta, reviewer, UNC-Charlotte
Monica Riley, reviewer, University of Arkansas Fort Smith

Summary Report Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Stephanie Howard, senior director of programs, TPI-US

Appendix A: *Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria*

The *Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria* articulate expectations for evidence-based early literacy instruction in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Moderate Disabilities licensure programs in Massachusetts. They will ultimately serve as a framework for future program reviews of these three licensure programs. The program approval criteria reflect various stakeholders' guidance and partnership, including literacy and special education faculty, national experts, and Massachusetts PK12 educators.

MA DESE published an initial draft of the *Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria* in Summer 2023; this initial draft was used to develop TPI-US Early Literacy Formative Feedback Review Framework (see Appendix B).

Since the publication of this initial draft, MA DESE collected feedback from formative feedback review participants, stakeholder focus groups, and public comment to finalize the criteria. Click here to access the final *Early Literacy Program Approval Criteria*.

Appendix B: TPI's Early Literacy Formative Feedback Review Framework

early-literacy-review-framework.pdf

Appendix C: 2024 MA EPP Literacy Review Data