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Commissioner

# Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Massachusetts Sponsoring Organizations  
**From:** Educator Effectiveness Team  
**Date:** June 23, 2021  
**Subject:** Revised Timeline for Updating the Guidelines for Educator Preparation Program Approval

In January 2021, we [shared a timeline](#) with you that articulated three rounds of updates to program approval guidelines, beginning in 2021 and extending through the 2022-23 school year, culminating in the launch of new formal approvals in 2023-24. After careful consideration, DESE is extending the timeline by which updated program approval expectations will go into effect. Specifically, the current formal approval cycle will conclude by Spring 2022, and the new formal approval cycle will launch in Fall 2024. This will allow for three full years beyond the pandemic to restore and refine systems and structures, engage in thought partnership around the next iteration of program approval, deepen practice in support of these objectives, solidify metrics of success, and ensure three years of un-disrupted outcome data for consideration.

During this time, we will:

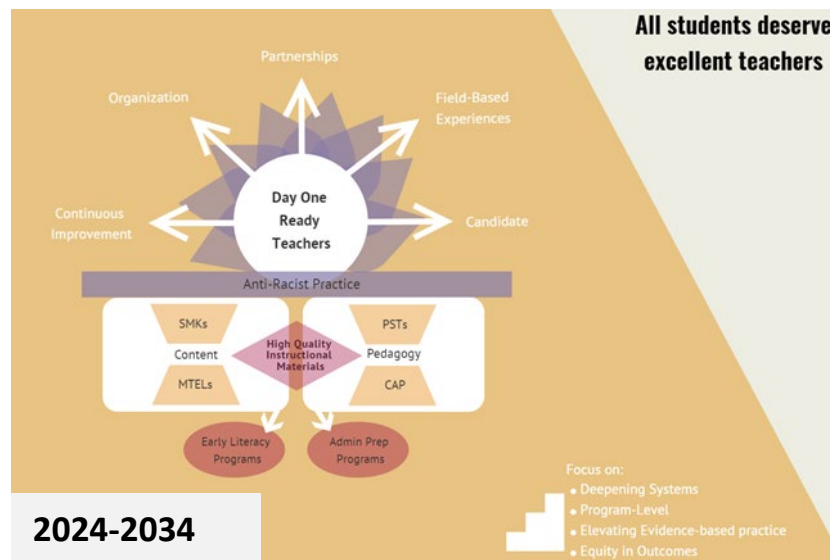
- Extend current formal approval for all Sponsoring Organizations that are Approved or Approved with Distinction until new formal approval timelines are established. Ample notification (at least one year) will be provided to organizations up for review in the first year of the new review process.
- Support any Sponsoring Organizations that are Approved with Conditions or under Probationary Approval to address conditions and provide evidence to obtain full approval.
- Release updates to the Program Approval Guidelines starting in 2022, with new Formal Reviews slated to begin in 2024-2025.

### The Next Three Years: 2021-2024

Over the next three years, we want to engage, partner, and collectively prepare to launch the next iteration of formal reviews. Working together, we hope to take the additional year to explore more deeply the two areas of focus for the next evolution of program approval:

- **Building a foundation of anti-racist practice.** First is a vision for day one readiness that centers explicit anti-racist practices that enable teachers and administrators to nurture and cultivate the academic excellence, cultural and linguistic competence, sociopolitical consciousness, and emotional intelligence of all students. As we've shared previously, one of the driving questions in our work moving forward will be to ask ourselves, "How are educator preparation efforts designed to break historical patterns of racial inequity – not by accident, but by design?" Updated program approval expectations and processes will support our collective work toward this goal.
- **Deepening instruction and program-level expectations.** Second is a more explicit examination of instructional programming in accordance with expectations for the knowledge, skills, and abilities of candidates and completers, as detailed in the following guidelines:
  - [Professional Standards for Teachers Guidelines](#) (updated 2015)
  - [Subject-Matter Knowledge Guidelines](#) (updated 2018)
  - [Guidelines for Administrative Preparation](#) (2012, to be updated 2021)

We will look to see increased alignment between expectations for PK12 and educator preparation (e.g., emphasis on subject matter knowledge and evidence-based practices as outlined in the MA Curriculum Frameworks) with a specific focus on Early Literacy and Administrator Preparation, given research pointing to stagnant reading levels and the important role of principals in shaping student learning.



As we have communicated, the intent is not that Sponsoring Organizations must completely change the systems and structures put in place to meet existing DESE expectations. Rather, that you build upon/adjust current practices with these additional lenses in mind. To this end, **we are focusing in SY2021-22 on collective thought partnership and progress toward these goals, including but not limited to the following:**

- Completion of formal reviews for the final cohort of Sponsoring Organizations
- Implementation support to transition to [updated guidelines for the preparation of administrative leaders](#) (we will be running an Implementation Support Network for Sponsoring Organizations focused on aligning programmatic elements to updated guidelines)
- Continued partnership, resource development, and targeted supports focused on curricular literacy in teacher preparation and evidence-based early literacy practices aligned to [Mass Literacy](#)

Throughout this upcoming year, we remain committed to maintaining open and transparent lines of communication, as well as ongoing and thoughtful dialogue with you. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to preparing the very best educators, and for your ongoing partnership.