

CAEP promotes excellence in educator preparation through evidence-based accreditation that assures quality and supports continuous improvement to advance P-12 student learning.

Message from Co-chairs

The members of the CAEP Commission on Standards and Performance Reporting have enthusiastically accepted President Cibulka's invitation and charge. CAEP is taking up its new responsibilities at a critical time. Its accreditation functions can provide powerful leverage for a new vitality in educator preparation that leads to more effective learning by America's P-12 students.

The Opportunity

The current policy context for education makes this moment as a pivotal one, offering an unprecedented opportunity. CAEP falls at the intersection of education policy with practice of the education profession. Its leaders have set challenging goals to make accreditation more effective by raising its rigor, and simultaneously, by fostering innovation.

What makes CAEP's beginnings even stronger is the sea change in the education policy landscape. This moment is characterized by the fortuitous juncture of governmental policies and practices: a now widely held perspective that well-prepared teachers and other education professionals are critical for increased learning in the classroom, and the advent of CAEP as the new and sole national educator preparation accreditor. If CAEP fails to take bold action now, states will move on, leaving accreditation on the sidelines.

The potential for CAEP to make a decisive impact on educator preparation has motivated the Commissioners. We eagerly are searching for appropriate ways to maximize the considerable leverage that the accreditation process can create. Commissioners have identified four especially critical points of leverage for CAEP accreditation:

- Build partnerships and strong clinical experiences—Educator preparation providers and collaborating schools and districts bring complementary experiences that, joined together, promise far stronger preparation programs.
- Raise and assure candidate quality—From recruitment and admission, through preparation, and at exit, educator preparation providers must take responsibility to prepare an education workforce that is more able and more representative of America's diverse population.
- Include all providers—CAEP must encourage innovations in preparation by welcoming all of the varied providers that seek accreditation and meet challenging levels of performance.
- And, surmounting all others, insist that preparation be judged by outcomes and impact on P-12 student learning—Results matter; "effort" is not enough.

These points of leverage are not accreditation "business as usual," nor do they represent marginal changes from education accreditation in the past. Exercising them can add value to what states are trying to accomplish with their reforms in preparation policy, reinforcing the efforts of leading states.

Consequences

After the Commission completes its final recommendations later this year, the CAEP Board will need to craft practical implementation plans. Realistically, the Commission's vision for higher quality, more consistent, and more rigorous evidence will need to be phased in over a brief period of years in collaboration with states. As new assessments and more common measures become available, the evidence expectations can be raised.

States and philanthropic foundations also must step up to their responsibilities for preparation. The Council of Chief State School Officers has recently published a report² on educator preparation and entry into the profession. One of its recommendations is that state purposes to "support program improvement." The report continues, "[s]tates should have a plan for supporting programs that have identified weaknesses and areas for improvement, especially in cases where a preparation program has been identified as at-risk or low performing."

We concur. Some providers simply lack appropriate faculty, sufficient resources, or capacity to monitor their own progress for continuous improvement. Effective preparation requires both sufficient, and effectively used, funds. The facts cannot be ignored.

These changes may not be for every provider. The bar is high so that attaining accreditation status would be a meaningful achievement. Setting high standards will change incentives and change the behavior of providers. High expectations for admissions and a wide array of opportunities to develop proficiencies during preparation will, themselves, attract more able candidates into teaching.