

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Consent Item:

Option 9 Application, Mercer County Schools and University of the Cumberlands

Staff Recommendation:

The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) should approve the application.

Rationale:

Mercer County Schools and University of the Cumberlands have submitted an Option 9 application that meets the requirements of KRS 161.048 and 16 KAR 9:110. University of the Cumberlands holds accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation and their educator preparation programs have been approved by the EPSB.

Applicable Statute or Regulation:

KRS 161.028, KRS 161.048, 16 KAR 9:110

History/Background:

Existing Policy: KRS 161.048(10) establishes the Option 9 alternative route to certification. This route provides for the expedited certification of a person to teach at any grade level through a cooperative program between a college or university and a school district. The expedited certification program will result in a bachelor's degree and initial certification within three school years. The candidate is not certified while completing the route but shall complete a residency/paraprofessional component and receive coaching and mentoring from experienced teachers. 16 KAR 9:110 establishes the standards and procedures for Option 9 and contains sections covering providers, residency, field experience, student teaching, application review, continuance of program approval, revocation for cause, reconsideration, data reports, and professional certificates.

Summary: Mercer County Schools has partnered with the University of the Cumberlands to develop a proposed Option 9 program. In accordance with Section 5 of the regulation, staff has reviewed the application and found that it meets the requirements of KRS 161.048 and 16 KAR 9:110. A copy of the application is included in the Board Meeting Materials tab for EPSB review. As part of the proposal, each party has agreed to take on the following:

Mercer County Schools will:

- Employ the participant in a residency or paraprofessional program within the school district for the duration of the program as long as the participant is making successful progress in the Option 9 program.
- Utilize experienced teachers employed by the district to provide coaching and mentoring to the participant.
- Ensure at least one mentor is certified in the area in which certification is being sought.

- Require mentor teachers to submit evaluations to the university for each candidate each semester.
- Ensure the availability of funding for each participant for the duration of the candidate's participation in the program as long as the participant is making successful progress in the Option 9 program.
- Ensure candidates have a variety of experiences.
- Ensure at least one-year of employment provides hands-on experience in the area in which certification is being sought.
- Continue this partnership until the district's employed participants for Option 9 certification complete the program or are no longer employed by the district.
- No longer accept new candidates to the program if the district decides to end the partnership.

University of the Cumberlands will:

- Ensure that the completion of coursework and field experience will result in a bachelor's degree and initial certification.
- Ensure that courses are sequenced and offered to allow for a three-year program completion.
- Ensure that candidates document 200 hours of field experience and the eight categories of field experiences through electronic records.
- Ensure that all educator program admissions regulations are followed and documented.
- Accept work experience in place of student teaching; and
- Assign a university supervisor to work with the participant during the third year of the program.

In accordance with 16 KAR 9:110, Section 5, initial program approval will be for a period of three years. After that time, the providers may apply for continuing program approval and provide evidence of program quality.

Budget Impact: There will be costs associated with the oversight of this route.

Contact Person:

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