

KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

STAFF NOTE

Consent Item:

University of Louisville: Approval of the Learning and Behavior Disorders, Moderate to Severe Disabilities and Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education Initial Undergraduate Programs for Single Certification and Dual Certification LBD & MSD or MSD and IECE.

Staff's Recommendation:

The Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) should approve the University of Louisville's Learning and Behavior Disorders, Moderate to Severe Disabilities, and Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education programs as recommended by the Program Review Committee.

Rationale:

The submitted programs have demonstrated compliance with the EPSB regulations for admission and standards alignment requirements established in 16 KAR 2:010. The proposed educator preparation programs follow the appropriate regulations (16 KAR 5:010; 16 KAR 2:010) outlining program requirements for program approval as established by the EPSB. The programs have completed the review process and received a recommendation for approval from the Program Review Committee.

Applicable Statutes and Regulation:

KRS 161.028, KRS 161.030, 16 KAR 5:010, 16 KAR 5:020, 16 KAR 2:010.

Action Question:

Should the EPSB approve the: Learning and Behavior Disorders, Moderate to Severe Disabilities, and Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education programs submitted by the University of Louisville?

History/Background:

Existing Policy: KRS 161.028 and KRS 161.030 require the EPSB to establish curricula for educator preparation programs in Kentucky and approve such programs for Educator Preparation Providers. The Educator Preparation Branch and the Program Review Committee evaluated the program review documents submitted for approval against performance-based program certification guidelines established by the EPSB. The proposal meets all the requirements set forth by the EPSB.

Summary: The demand for qualified Special Education teachers is acute, and Kentucky's teacher preparation programs are not producing enough graduates to meet the demand. The University of Louisville proposes the establishment of a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Special Education program. Unlike the current dual-certification model at the University of Louisville, which restricts candidates to earning certification in only one area of Special Education alongside elementary education, this new program would allow undergraduates to major in one or more Special Education certification areas: Learning and Behavior Disorders (LBD), Moderate and Severe

Disabilities (MSD), and Interdisciplinary Early Childhood Education (IECE). Candidates have the option to complete their degree as a standalone or combined pathway. This added flexibility directly responds to workforce shortages and unmet certification needs in the state.

The proposed B.S. in Special Education would be the first in Kentucky to offer multiple customizable certification pathways, including:

- Standalone certification in LBD, MSD, or IECE;
- Dual certification in LBD + MSD; or,
- Dual certification in MSD + IECE.

The University of Louisville's B.S. in Special Education program will expand access, aligning licensure pathways with district needs, and create a more agile and sustainable Special Education workforce pipeline. By addressing these structural gaps, the University of Louisville's proposed program has the potential to significantly improve educational outcomes for students with disabilities across Kentucky.

Budget Impact: There is no budgetary impact.

Groups Consulted and Brief Summary of Responses:

Staff within the Division of Educator Preparation and Certification have reviewed this program proposal and determined that the program meets the requirements for approval. This program proposal also has completed the review process and received a recommendation for approval from the Program Review Committee pursuant to 16 KAR 5:010, Section 22.

Contact Person:

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