

## COOPERATION AGREEMENT

between the  
Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation  
and  
Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board

This agreement establishes a framework for cooperation between the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP), 173 Milkweed Dr. Lake Frederick, VA 22630, and the Minnesota Professional Educator Licensing and Standards Board (PELSB), 1021 Bandana Blvd., E., Suite 222, St. Paul, MN 55108, with regard to quality assurance activities in support of educator preparation in the State of Minnesota. The purpose of this agreement is to support quality assurance, continuous improvement, and innovation in educator preparation by entities approved by PELSB as they seek and maintain national accreditation through AAQEP.

The term of this agreement shall begin **April 14, 2023**, and end **June 30, 2025**. The agreement may be modified whenever PELSB and AAQEP find it appropriate during this term.

AAQEP affirms PELSB's efforts to ensure quality preparation of educators to meet the needs of MN's children, families, schools, and communities and commits to ensuring quality educator preparation by AAQEP-member providers approved by PELSB. By entering this agreement, PELSB affirms AAQEP's mission of promoting and recognizing quality educator preparation that strengthens the education profession's ability to serve all students, schools, and communities.

### 1. Standards Used in Quality Assurance Reviews

Quality assurance reviews conducted by AAQEP in MN will be guided by the current version of the AAQEP standards (available at <https://aaqep.org>) and in keeping with AAQEP policy regarding the application of those standards. In conducting reviews of programs approved by PELSB, AAQEP will require that all relevant MN standards and state rules/regulations be addressed.

Pursuant to *Minnesota Rules* 8705.1300, providers accredited by AAQEP can demonstrate a subset of all the required provider standards set for in relevant regulations and rules.

Providers approved by PELSB must meet all relevant MN standards set forth in *Minnesota Statutes* chapter 122A and *Minnesota Rules* chapters 8705 and 8710, and other relevant regulations/rules.

In addition, providers are welcome to orient their quality assurance review to other relevant professional standards (for example, those from professional associations such as the National Council for Social Studies, the International Literacy Association, the National Council for Teachers of Mathematics, etc.).

## **2. Scope of Quality Assurance Reviews**

The scope of AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in MN must include all programs registered with or recognized by the state education authority that require continuous accreditation [as specified in relevant reference to state law or policy]. In addition to the programs specified above, the provider may, at its discretion, choose to include additional programs of study leading to a degree or certificate designed for those intending to work as, or already working as, educational professionals. For such programs of study, where no state standards are specified, the provider shall identify any standards in addition to the AAQEP standards to which the programs are aligned.

The scope of the AAQEP accreditation sought by providers in MN will be determined by the provider in consultation with AAQEP. The provider will clearly identify which aspects of its work are and are not accredited in all public displays that make note of accreditation.

## **3. Quality Assurance Review Process**

All quality assurance reviews conducted by AAQEP will be guided by AAQEP's policies and procedures as specified in the *Guide to AAQEP Accreditation*, available at <https://aaqep.org>.

- AAQEP's process includes an optional proposal review stage two to three years prior to a scheduled site visit.
- All quality assurance reviews seeking 'accreditation' status (7 years) include an off-site review conducted virtually two months prior to each site visit which PELSB staff are welcome to attend, and an on-site visit, the scope of which is determined by program size and complexity.
- All quality assurance reviews seeking 'initial accreditation' status (5 years) include a preliminary virtual meeting with program staff and a virtual site visit which includes stakeholder meetings and review of data when appropriate; PELSB staff are welcome to attend these meetings.

## **4. Review Team Composition**

AAQEP will appoint a sufficient number of Quality Review Team members with appropriate qualifications to each review case to ensure that the review is carried out thoroughly and efficiently. Each AAQEP review team will include at least one educational practitioner from MN nominated by the provider hosting the review; that practitioner will receive training and support

from AAQEP. The local practitioner(s) will support the review team's understanding of and respect for the local and state educational context and participate as a full member of the Quality Review Team.

In addition to the AAQEP-appointed members, one or more PELSB staff members may participate as observers. Other observers, including those seeking a better understanding of the AAQEP process, may participate as agreed to by AAQEP and the host provider.

## **5. Reviewer Preparation and Qualifications**

All review team members will meet AAQEP preparation and quality requirements. Reviewer training and professional learning opportunities will be made available to PELSB staff at no cost (though AAQEP will not cover travel expenses); PELSB observers are invited to participate in training prior to joining review teams as observers. Training is not a condition for participation as observers.

## **6. Relation of Accreditation to Program Approval**

All decisions for state approval of education preparation programs for each content or specialty area are within the sole authority of the PELSB. State decisions to approve or not approve provider programs are made independent of AAQEP determinations regarding the accreditation of the provider. AAQEP acknowledges that the rules and standards that govern state approval of a provider and its programs in MN are subject to change at any time by PELSB.

AAQEP's process requires disaggregation of evidence by licensure, certificate, or endorsement area as well as by program site and/or mode of delivery. This allows for quality judgments to be made regarding each licensure, certificate, or endorsement area program under the scope of accreditation. Quality assurance at the program level provides evidence for how AAQEP standards on candidate and completer performance are being met and facilitate comprehensive judgment of the provider as a whole.

## **7. Accreditation Decisions**

AAQEP accreditation decisions are made by the AAQEP Accreditation Commission. Accreditation statuses and terms are detailed in AAQEP's *Guide* and policy documents, available at <https://aaqep.org>. Accreditation status is granted for a term of 7 years, contingent on the completion of annual reports and any other required reports. Initial accreditation status is granted for a term of five years, contingent on the completion of annual reports and any other required reports. Observers from PELSB are welcome to attend meetings of the Accreditation Commission at which cases of MN providers are considered (meetings are typically conducted via video conference). Accreditation decisions, including the reports on which decisions are based and the Accreditation Commission's rationale for each decision, will be shared with PELSB.

## **8. Communication and Logistics of Collaboration**

Providers seeking AAQEP accreditation will ensure that PELSB is apprised of the schedule of accreditation activities, including scheduled site visit dates. Providers will also send a copy of or links to the final version of their Quality Assurance Report (the self-study) electronically to PELSB at the same time they provide it to AAQEP. AAQEP will inform PELSB of the Accreditation Commission meeting(s) at which a provider's case will be considered.

AAQEP will send copies of all reports or official letters generated by the review team and the Accreditation Commission to the PELSB contact person. The primary contact person is Tyra Nelson-Reck at Tyra.Reck@state.mn.us.

In addition, PELSB and AAQEP agree to share information regarding any changes to state approval and national accreditation status.

## **9. AAQEP Capacity Review and Formative Support Options**

In cooperation with and at the discretion of PELSB, AAQEP will make available to MN providers the following additional services:

- AAQEP Program Performance Review. AAQEP provides a means for accomplishing both EPP accreditation and program review simultaneously based on the preparation of a single report. This assures that program-level review is based on the most current available evidence and that the EPP and program-level evaluation and planning are integrated. Program performance review is based on the disaggregated evidence presented in the standard AAQEP Quality Assurance Report, supplemented by additional analysis by programs that is appended to the report. The review addresses program-specific standards alignment and evidence regarding content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and instructional performance, and includes analysis of program-specific data and planning for improvement based on that data. The State makes the final decision on the approval of any program.
- AAQEP also facilitates program and provider improvement for entities that have identified specific shortcomings in their work, including cases where shortcomings have been identified through external evaluations such as state or accreditation reviews. AAQEP will enter into an agreement with the provider and PELSB to establish a timeline, priorities, and outcomes for such reviews.

## **10. Membership**

AAQEP views cooperation among accreditors, educator preparation providers, and SEAs as essential to effective quality assurance. It enters into this agreement with the intent of supporting both PELSB and providers authorized by it in ensuring the preparation of excellent and effective teachers and other professional educators. PELSB agrees to join AAQEP as a state member at no cost in support of these goals.

In support of shared goals, AAQEP will provide supportive services including workshops and webinars to providers in MN at a reasonable cost. PELSB staff may participate in any AAQEP activities offered within MN at no cost (except that AAQEP cannot cover travel expenses, meals, or lodging). AAQEP will also provide one PELSB staff member with a no-cost registration to its annual Quality Assurance Symposium and provide any additional PELSB staff registration at the reduced member rate. In addition, PELSB staff may participate in AAQEP professional learning events, including reviewer training, at no cost (travel, etc., excepted, as above).

**Signatures:**

DocuSigned by:



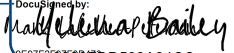
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6/1/2023

Mark LaCelle-Peterson, President and CEO, AAQEP

Date

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6/1/2023

Name of SEA Representative, SEA

Date