

South Dakota
Board of Examiners Report
for Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) approval

ACCREDITATION VISIT
TO:

DAKOTA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

SD State Board of Examiners Team:

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TYPE OF VISIT:

CONTINUING

Summary for Educator Preparation Provider (EPP)

Standards		Team Findings	
		Initial	Advanced
1	EPP's Mission, Conceptual Framework, and Responsibility	M	M
2	Preparation of Candidates in Teacher Education	M	M
3	Assessment System and EPP Evaluation	M	M
4	Field Experiences and Clinical Practice	M	M

M = Standard Met

NM = Standard Not Met

NA = Not Applicable

Standard 1

EPP Mission, Conceptual Framework, and Responsibility

Higher education programs for the preparation of education personnel shall operate under a written mission statement. The EPP's statements of goals and program objectives, consistent with the mission statement, shall serve as a basis for decision making regarding policies affecting all of the programs for the preparation of education personnel and shall assure that education graduates are prepared to serve in P-12 schools.

This section sets the context for the visit. It should clearly state the mission of the EPP. It should describe the characteristics of the EPP and identify and describe any branch campuses, off-campus sites, alternate route programs, and distance learning programs for professional school personnel. This section also provides an overview of the EPP's conceptual framework. The overview should include a brief description of the framework and its development.

Information reported in the Self-study report for Standard 1 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the SSR that are incorrect.)

YES

C.1.1 EPP Mission	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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Dakota Wesleyan University was established in 1883 by Methodist settlers. Their goal at the time was to “build a college of stone while living in houses of sod”. Founded with deep religious convictions, they established the motto ‘Sacrifice or Service’. This remains the mission of the university to this day. The EPP specific vision, “Impacting futures... one mind at a time” aligns with the developmental approach to learning. This mission, vision and goals of the EPP are clearly communicated within the Education program handbook and do seem to be reflected in the overall assessments. There was not as much evidence found online that was specific to the Education Department.

Through interviews, faculty and candidates were able to confirm that the mission is reflected in the program through curriculum requirements, events related to the Aspiring Educators and Educators Rising organizations and campus wide service activities.

C.1.2 Conceptual Framework	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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The Educator Preparation Program conceptual framework has remained largely unchanged over the years. The focus on human values, interpersonal relationships, and competence and maturity are reflected in the five domains in which the EPP intends for their candidates to advance. Those domains are:

Knowledge: The teacher candidate/principal will understand central concepts, tools of inquiry, and the structure of the discipline(s) they teach. They will understand how children learn and develop intellectually, socially, and personally. They will know and use a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students' critical thinking, problem solving, and performance skills. They will understand and use formal and informal assessment strategies to ensure the continuous intellectual, social, and physical development of the learner.

Communication: The teacher candidate/principal will be able to create learning experiences that make subject matter meaningful for students; they will use their knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.

Environment: The teacher candidate/principal will apply an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation. The candidate's understanding of student differences in approaches to learning will allow them to create instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners. They will affirm the value of diversity through experiences, study, and integration of extra- cultural examination and educational application.

Relationships: The teacher candidate/principal will plan instruction and undertake action based on knowledge of the students, parents, and community as well as curricular goals. They will foster relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students' learning and well-being.

Teacher Attributes: The teacher candidate/principal will be a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of their choices and actions on others and who actively seeks opportunities to grow professionally. The creation of a professional community wherein candidates develop the capability, confidence, efficacy, and sense of authority, enabling them to create a community that will positively transform the lives and actions of all learners that engage them in attaining their full potential.[SSR]

The institution's overall Five Foundation Pillars; Critical and Collaborative Thinking, Effective Expression, Cultural and Global Awareness, Civic Values and Engagement, and Personal Growth and Maturity, support this goal and align well with the EPP's mission.

Expectations and transitions throughout the program are communicated and reinforced routinely. The EPP does plan to review both its mission and conceptual framework in the future to ensure continued accordance as their program is revised and improved.

Faculty, Candidate and Stakeholder Interviews supported an overall awareness and understanding of what the program strives to achieve.

Summary of Strengths:

The EPP has the unique advantage of having an elementary school adjacent/connected to the campus giving the candidates ample opportunity to have hands-on access throughout their course of study. Candidate course of study expectations are clearly defined and communicated. Their small size allows for individualized experiences. Coursework and programs continue to be

revamped and improved. Enrollment has increased since their last review. Education program faculty expressed that they feel the Education program is strongly supported and celebrated by the university.

Areas for Improvement:

None

Rationale:

NA

Recommendation: Standard Met

Corrections to the Board of Examiners Report: None

Standard 2

Preparation of Candidates in Teacher Education

The EPP shall print and distribute a policy with specific admission standards and procedures that govern student recruitment and acceptance into the preparation programs. The EPP shall provide written verification that candidates are informed about state laws and rules that govern the issuance of certificates for educational personnel.

The EPP shall prepare candidates to work in a school as a teacher, administrator or school service specialist. These candidates must know and demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn. Assessments shall be given to the candidate to ensure the candidate meets professional, state, and EPP standards.

Information reported in the Self-study report for Standard 2 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the SSR that are incorrect.)

YES

C.2.1 Candidate Knowledge and Skills	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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Admissions.

According to the Self-Study Report (SSR), admission to the education program at DWU includes completing and submitting the program application packet of 6 requirements. The EPP ensures that candidates know the application process by meeting with an advisor a minimum of two times per year. During these meetings, students are informed of their progress, timeline to apply for admission to the education program, and reminded of the requirements they need for program completion. A spreadsheet is kept by the Education Support Specialist to track student progress in completing program requirements, which is shared amongst faculty. The education department at DWU meets weekly to discuss new applications for admission to the education program and for approvals to student teach. Candidates receive an official letter of acceptance into the education program [evidence: copy of acceptance letter]. The EPP provided the Admission Policy and Practices for admission to the Advanced program. Deadlines are provided for Fall, Spring, and Summer admittance.

Students submit an application packet for student teaching. DWU provided evidence of the Student Teaching application that includes a list of admission requirements. An official email of student teaching placement is sent once the placement is approved.

Current enrolled student interviews during the review supported evidence in the SSR that the admission to the Education program is clear and well supported. They spoke to meeting with advisors to talk about their plan of study. Once they get into practicum and education methods

course, the advisor plays a key role in supporting their progress and transition points. When asked about how students are informed of the application to teacher education process, students shared, “At different stages, the faculty remind you about the process on how to get you the application packet, test schedule (worked with Education Support Specialist), and ways to report test results.” They included that exam due dates were included on their plan of study. Students in the site visit interview confirmed the admissions notification process. They stated that once they take the Core PRAXIS exam they apply. Once they are accepted to the program, they receive a letter from Dr. Digmann.

Candidate Knowledge and Skills.

DWU provides pass rates for Praxis II Content and Praxis PLT disaggregated by program. Documentation demonstrates that elementary education, special education and K-12 specialty areas candidates who took the Praxis II have 100% pass rates in the licensure exams for both content and pedagogy. Although the SSR states, “The 100% pass rates suggest that candidates know the content they plan to teach as described in institution, professional, and state standards; and as future educators, they will have a positive impact on K-12 student learning.”, the EPP recognizes that not every candidate is successful at their first attempt. The EPP shares resources with students, such as faculty or peer facilitated study groups or 240B tutoring tools, to help promote success on a second attempt. Individual students opt to utilize the supports. In the rare instance that someone does not pass the Praxis exam, DWU has a waiver for them to complete and sign that they are “graduating without this licensure requirement”. The EPP addressed the challenge of measuring completers’ content and pedagogical knowledge during the COVID pandemic due to testing center closures and how they managed the situation.

The EPP provides data for the Advanced Program Principal Comprehensive Exam. “The data, showing a 100% pass rate on the comprehensive exam, indicates that principal candidates possess strong pedagogical knowledge. This success reflects the principal candidates’ ability to connect course content to effective principal practices.” [SRR] The EPP provides additional evidence of professional knowledge through the Principal Internship Digital Portfolio and Presentation (aligned with NELP), the Internship final evaluation rubric scores (aligned with NELP), and the NELP Self-Assessment Tool. Data from key assessments indicate Advance program students create a positive environment for student learning, developmental levels of students, diversity of students & families, school law, and policy.

For Advanced Programs, the EPP provided evidence of K12 Principal program placement in leadership careers after degree completion (6 of 11 since 2021) and a Program Report, which included assessment alignment with NELP Standards. These pieces of evidence indicate high pass rates of all assessments, evaluations, and successful career placements after degree completion. The EPP did not include an employer survey or focus group interview. The EPP stated that, “follow-up studies of graduates and employers indicate that the MA in Education K12 Principal program successfully prepares graduates with the knowledge and skills needed for

leadership roles in schools.” [SSR] No formal graduate or employer survey for Advanced Programs was provided. The EPP included placement data, however preparedness was not assessed. In a follow-up to the EPP for requested evidence, DWU stated that “due to the small size of our program, the program director also checks in with alumni of the principal preparation program to gather employment data.” Interviews during the review supported the need to have a formalized assessment process for Educational Administration preparedness. “A formal graduate survey has not been administered for their employers; discussions related to preparedness have been informal. A survey will be implemented moving forward.” [Final February 2025 Evidence and Questions and DWU Education Faculty Interview]. The EPP plans to create and disseminate an Advanced Program graduate and employer survey.

Stakeholders reported a positive and collaborative experience working with the EPP’s education department to ensure candidates have pedagogical and content knowledge. During the content faculty interview, content faculty spoke to the high level of collaboration with the Education department faculty for student success and Praxis preparation. They expressed rich interdisciplinary connections that aided in curriculum changes and support for student teachers. One commented that their role was to focus on the [content] standards to prepare students where the Education department focuses on teaching standards. Multiple expressed the strength of this partnership for preparing effective teachers. They shared evidence of this partnership through the end of program capstone experience. Each Education student presents a poster about implementing a lesson and an assessment as student teachers. They share what they learned in the process and demonstrate their grasp of the content and how to teach it.

C.2.2 InTASC Standards	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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The EPP utilizes six key assessments to determine that candidates meet the InTASC standards. DWU measures teacher candidates’ ability to apply their content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge and skills through these measures.

1. Praxis Content Exam
2. Digital Teaching Portfolio
3. Integrated Thematic Unit
4. Final Teacher Candidate Evaluation
5. Teacher Impact on Student Learning Project
6. Principles of Learning and Teaching Exam

The EPP provided evidence that the rubrics used to evaluate assignments and clinical experiences (#2-6 above) align and are informed by InTASC standards. Scores for the rubrics were cited in the SSR to provide evidence that candidates meet all 10 InTASC Standards by completion of the program. Overall, the students received relatively high scores.

Evidence provided by the EPP indicates that they look at data by program and assignment, but there is limited evidence of a comprehensive analysis. For example, for Key Assessment #2: Digital Teaching Portfolio, the EPP wrote that, “Scores indicate that candidates understand the relationship of content and pedagogical knowledge and skills and have a broad knowledge of instructional strategies that promote student learning.” [SSR] The EPP provided ratings and scores of each key assessment, however analysis of each InTASC standard was not included. A formal approach for analyzing data would benefit the EPP to identify strengths, weaknesses, trends, and patterns aligned with each of the 10 InTASC standards. Additionally, the rubric scores provided were inconsistent with some out of a 3-point scale while others were out of 4 or 10 points, thus it is difficult to compare averages across the 5 evaluations (Praxis omitted as it is scored externally). The EPP acknowledged that implementing a consistent rubric scoring system is needed to ensure analysis across key assessments.

A state accreditation expectation is that the EPP provides evidence that candidates are able to assess, plan for instruction, utilize a variety of instructional strategies, and provide equitable and inclusive learning experiences for P-12 students. The EPP continually receives positive feedback from cooperating teachers regarding the preparedness of the teacher candidates. [SSR] Evidence of addressing the need to prepare candidates to work with a variety of learners (InTASC Standard #2) was provided. The EPP stated that they revised course content based on the attribute review. Students at DWU are required to take an Introduction to Exceptional Students course. All students are also required to take EDU310 (Human Relations). In this course, students learn about the unique needs of multilingual learners, prepare lesson materials for multilingual learners, and complete a one-day field experience to the Huron School District to see these teaching strategies in action. Students in the interview shared that they learned about the following instructional strategies, such as Direct Instruction, “I do, We do, You do”. They also shared the importance of using periodic assessments to inform instruction (do we need to review the content?) and the use of summative assessments for evaluation purposes. An example was provided about using individual assessments (comprehension or vocabulary assessment) to inform instructional or intervention strategies for the child.

DWU students are often placed in the Mitchell School District due to proximity (L.B. Williams is physically connected to DWU). “The Mitchell school district represents an invaluable partner with respect to placing student teachers but the critical role it plays risks overuse and burnout.” [SSR] Students are encouraged to seek placements in other school districts to have a variety of diverse experiences (i.e., rural and urban). The EPP Education Support Specialist reaches out to school leaders for placement opportunities. Students expressed the valuable impact of field experiences in a variety of settings during the site interview.

The EPP’s key assessments provide evidence that candidates are prepared to plan for instruction. DWU provides a narrative explaining the Integrated Thematic Unit of Study assignment in EDU 424: Literacy Methods in the Content Area which is utilized in the assessment of candidates’ ability to plan instruction. The goal of the unit of study is for candidates to apply explicit

teaching methods that support the principles of literacy including reading, writing, listening, speaking and viewing. Additional evidence reveals candidates' ability to access and analyze student learning, make appropriate adjustments to instruction and implement meaningful learning experiences for all students. DWU provided the assignment rubric which was based on former InTASC standards. DWU explained in an email in December 2024, that "due to instructor changes at the time of the implementation of the new standards, this rubric was never updated. We have now changed the rubric for upcoming semesters." In the site visit interview, students said that they learned technology skills that impacted their teaching through the "Tech for Teachers" course. This is a class focused on practical tools and software (SeeSaw, Dojo, art software, Canva, games/interactive activities, assistive technology) as well as the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI). Informal peer to peer shares within and outside of the class helped their own experiences with technology.

During the site visit interviews, faculty shared that elementary program partners with L.B. Williams to try using tools they are learning in college courses, such as diagnostic assessment and progress monitoring. Students use the data from these assessments to tailor our work and planning. The Special Education program goes to all elementary schools in Mitchell, along with Mitchell Middle School and Mitchell High School, for hands-on experiences to do skill-based assessments and to go through the IEP process with mock IEP meetings.

The EPP collects information about candidate preparedness through completion of a candidate self-reported survey and an employer survey. Candidate response rates averaged 30% over three years. The employer survey response rate decreased significantly for the 2023-2024 year to 28% whereas it was 65% and 68% in previous years. Results of both surveys indicate that candidates were adequately prepared (ratings between 2-3 out of 3).

Summary of Strengths:

The admission process is well-structured with clear requirements, effective tracking systems, and regular advising meetings to support students through program transitions. Current students confirm that the application process is transparent and well-supported by faculty advisors who provide timely reminders and assistance. The program shows 100% pass rates on Praxis II Content and PLT exams for elementary education, special education, and K-12 specialty areas, with support systems in place for students who need additional attempts. Particularly noteworthy is the strong collaboration between education faculty and content faculty, creating interdisciplinary connections that enhance curriculum development and student teaching preparation. The K-12 Principal program also shows success with positive placement rates, though more formal assessment processes for Advanced Programs are being developed. The EPP provides data ratings and scores of 6 key assessments that demonstrate candidates' ability to assess, plan for instruction, utilize a variety of instructional strategies, and provide equitable and inclusive learning experiences for P-12 students.

Areas for Improvement:

1. The EPP needs to formally measure graduates' knowledge and skill preparedness of the Advanced Programs-MA in Education K12 Principal program through a graduate and employer survey after graduation.
2. The EPP provided limited evidence demonstrating formal, comprehensive analysis of data across the 6 Key Assessments for InTASC standards.

Rationale:

1. The EPP provided placement data for Advanced program graduates, however, did not provide data and analysis of the candidate's content and pedagogical knowledge, ability to create positive environments for student learning, and the policy contexts after degree completion. Implementing a formal survey for graduates of the Advanced Program and employers would systematize the process.
2. The EPP provided ratings and scores of each key assessment, however analysis of each InTASC standard was not included. The rubric scores provided were inconsistent with some out of a 3 point scale while others were out of 10 points. The EPP acknowledged that implementing a consistent rubric scoring system is needed to ensure analysis across key assessments.

Recommendation: Standard Met**Corrections to the Board of Examiners Report: None**

Standard 3

Assessment System and EPP Evaluation

The EPP shall develop an assessment system with its professional community that reflects its conceptual framework and professional and state standards. The EPP's system shall include a comprehensive and integrated set of evaluation measures that shall be used to monitor candidate performance and to manage and improve programs. Decisions about candidate performance shall be based on assessments conducted during admission into programs, at appropriate transition points, and at program completion. The EPP shall take effective steps to eliminate sources of bias in performance assessments and work to establish fair, accurate, and consistent assessments.

The EPP shall regularly and systematically compile, summarize, and analyze data, which shall be used to improve applicant qualifications, candidate and graduate proficiency, and program quality.

The EPP shall regularly and systematically use data, including candidate and other school personnel performance information, to evaluate the efficacy of its courses, programs, and clinical experiences. The EPP shall analyze program evaluation and performance assessment data and initiate changes if necessary. The EPP shall regularly share candidate and faculty assessment data with candidates and faculty to help them reflect on and improve their performance.

Information reported in the Self-study report for Standard 3 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the SSR that are incorrect.)

Yes

C.3.1 Assessment System	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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DWU's EPP has assessments in place designed to monitor candidates throughout their program of study at established transition points from program admission to student teaching or internship to program completion and beyond and to inform management of the program at both the initial and advanced levels. Assessments are varied and include both direct and indirect measures, including but not limited to GPA, PRAXIS content and pedagogical (PLT) test scores, portfolios, attribute reviews, performance assessments, student teacher evaluations, attribute ratings, mentor evaluations, faculty recommendations and follow up surveys. In interviews, candidates were able to describe program assessments and highlighted a variety of ways they received ongoing feedback and guidance throughout their program from EPP faculty both formally and informally. Other stakeholders such as cooperating teachers evidenced their understanding of their role and preparation to complete assessment tools related to the student teaching experience. Content faculty from across the institution spoke of their involvement in writing the SD DOE Program Review Reports and how they collaborated with EPP leadership on that endeavor. Scoring tools such as rubrics are aligned with INTASC standards and the Danielson Framework for the initial level and to the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) Standards for the advanced level. Data are gathered as assessments occur according to when they are typically administered and at established transition points. Data are reported using a variety of rating scales such as a 3-, 4- or 10-point rating scale and by indicating the average candidate score on key assessment

indicators as they align to the InTASC or NELP standards. The inconsistent rating scales make data analysis challenging when reviewing data across all assessments for trends and patterns of candidate performance or to inform program management.

Information regarding the establishment of inter-rater reliability was described as accomplished through informal mentoring of new faculty and collaboration among stakeholders scoring the assessments. Faculty reported that there is an awareness of inconsistent rating scales and that there is a plan to work toward a consistent rating scale, but it was not clear what that plan involved. While stakeholders felt confident to implement evaluation procedures there was no evidence of any formal training or meetings held to establish inter-rater reliability to ensure that assessments were fairly administered or that there is a common understanding of the various rating scales in place. During interviews, however, EPP faculty described how they typically initiate collaboration with one another to have a shared understanding of assessments and rubrics and recalled one more formal scoring activity to establish inter-rater reliability. EPP faculty are aware of key assessments and during interviews shared that they are always dialoguing about candidate performance in weekly departmental meetings and in their daily interactions. The relatively small size of the department means faculty have many opportunities to collaborate and network.

The SSR and various documents evidenced ongoing assessment work, however, there was no EPP Assessment Plan document available for review that described all aspects of its assessment system. When asked about the existence of an EPP Assessment Plan document, faculty confirmed that there is no such document and referenced the University Assessment Report as the EPPs assessment plan and that assessment information is also included in the Education Department Handbook. While various documents provide data results from assessment measures and/or information about the assessments, they do not include information regarding the assessment plan's mission or vision statement, candidate transition points, details regarding the cycle of assessment including timelines for data review, assessment plan review, faculty roles, responsibilities, and leadership related to assessment.

C.3.2 Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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For the initial level program, data from each assessment are gathered and summarized by the Education Support Specialist who is responsible to maintain the assessment system. For the advanced level program, data from assessments are gathered and summarized by the Master of Arts in Education Program Coordinator. Coordinators were able to describe their role in gathering and summarizing data. Education faculty indicated that data are reviewed in “real time” as it becomes available at weekly department meetings. Access to data is via the Education Department’s shared drive, Wesleyan Central.

Data are reported and aggregated for the EPP and disaggregated by program. This is reflected in the evidence provided as well as the SD DOE Program Review Reports and the SD DOE Program Recognition Reports. In addition, the EPP has a record of submission of institutional level assessment reports such as the Program Review completed on a 5-year cycle and annual assessment plans. Data charts in the SSR provide information about how initial level candidates are meeting outcomes as aligned to key assessment indicators and evidence that they are well

prepared for their classroom roles and responsibilities. Data charts in the SSR also summarize advanced program candidate performance on key assessments as aligned to the NELP standards.

While there are various documents presenting data, there is not a comprehensive data packet that summarizes data across all six key assessments to inform review and analysis of the data to identify programmatic trends and patterns. However, data charts for the initial level program starting on page 31 with prompt H.1. through prompt H.10. on page 36 of the SSR are organized around areas as defined by the InTASC standards. This presentation of data evidences how candidates have performed in meeting InTASC standards across all six key assessments and provides a way to review and analyze candidate performance across all six key assessments.

There is not an established meeting that focuses specifically on data review and analysis for either the initial or advanced levels; this was confirmed in interviews. When asked about how the EPP considers data it was indicated that data for a particular assessment are reviewed once it has been gathered and summarized, as it becomes available. This approach was described as an ongoing, fluid process with key assessment data from a particular assessment being considered in isolation of other data. Thus, data are reviewed in an ongoing manner at weekly department meetings as well as during informal conversations. Selected meeting minutes were provided and while these did reference changes to course offerings, there was no reference to specific data that informed these changes. A comprehensive record of meeting minutes was not available for review.

Follow up survey data results for the initial level program are reported as aligned to InTASC standards; administration of follow up surveys for both program graduates and their employers are reflected in initial level program transition points. Program completers confirmed completion of follow up surveys and described other venues where the EPP engaged them in conversation to gather feedback regarding the quality of their preparation. Program completers spoke highly of the collegial and supportive nature of EPP faculty with many indicating they have maintained connections with faculty after program completion.

No follow up survey data were reported for the advanced level program even though the SSR referenced an advanced level follow up survey on page 26. In addition, information on assessments tied to program transition points at the advanced level did not reflect administration of a follow up survey after program completion. A 2019-2020 advanced program survey template was available for review but no results were provided so it is unclear if this was administered. It should be noted that the advanced K-12 Principal Program was brought out of dormancy fall 2021, thus the survey template provided was developed prior to that given its date stamp. In interviews EPP faculty confirmed that the follow up survey for advanced program completers was an aspect that needed to be addressed and re-launched. It was noted, anecdotally, that the program director reviews employment data related to the advanced program but no data were available for review. Thus, there is no data provided from advanced program completers or their employers regarding the quality of their preparation program for their leadership role.

C.3.3 Use of Data for Program Improvement	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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The SSR indicates that data has informed programmatic change and offers examples of changes made including course revisions and creation of assessments. According to the SSR, changes at the initial level have been made based upon candidate performance on PRAXIS data and course evaluations as well as substantial revisions to the Special Education program to better align with updated CEC standards and trends in the field. Examples include updates to reading content, specifically the Science of Reading, for the ELED program, revamping of the Technology for Teachers course to be in-person and aligned to current technology standards, and significant updates to the Special Education program such as the mock annual IEP meeting simulation assignment. During interviews, cooperating teachers were able to speak to these kinds of program updates and appreciated the revisions. The SSR indicates that data from course evaluations and PRAXIS scores informed these changes but specifics were not provided; likewise, the limited meeting minutes provided did not identify specific data that informed these decisions. When asked, faculty indicated that they are always looking at data but no formal process for data analysis was described or documented. However, EPP faculty were able to describe recent revisions to the attribute evaluation form which were based upon feedback from stakeholders using the form. Faculty from content areas preparing Secondary or All-Grades Education candidates shared how review of PRAXIS content test data has informed course or program revisions based upon data review and analysis. For example, the English Department has added coursework regarding young adult literature in response to data review as well as to better align with SD DOE Program Standards and prepare candidates for their content exam. Content faculty teaching coursework taken by Elementary Education majors described recent curricular revisions specifically to the science content courses to better prepare Elementary Education majors for their teaching roles as well as for the K-6 PRAXIS Science Content test.

The SSR indicated that focus groups have been used to inform change at the advanced level although specific changes were not detailed. Documentation of focus groups was limited to one set of minutes from July 2020; there was no document detailing what specific changes had been made based upon that feedback. However, it should be noted that the advanced level principal program was brought out of dormancy fall 2021 while the focus group document is dated July 2020. Thus, it would appear the focus group feedback was gathered prior to the program starting date of fall 2021 perhaps to inform program development rather than to inform data-driven decisions once the program was up and running. It does not appear that feedback from stakeholders regarding the advanced level program has been facilitated since it was re-launched.

Summary of Strengths:

The EPP has assessments in place to measure initial and advanced level candidate performance and professionalism and to manage program operations.

Areas for Improvement:

1. The creation of an EPP Assessment Plan document would provide guidance and clarity to data collection, review, analysis, and evaluation to inform programmatic decision making.

Rationale:

Formalization and standardization of the current approach to assessment through the creation of (1) an EPP Assessment Plan document, (2) a common rating scale, and (3) an annual comprehensive data packet would systematize current assessment practices.

Recommendation: Standard Met

Corrections to the Board of Examiners Report: None

Standard 4

Field Experiences and Clinical Practice

The EPP and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences and clinical practice so that teacher candidates and other school personnel develop and demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to help all students learn.

In this section the EPP must include (1) initial and advanced programs for teachers, (2) programs for other school professionals, and (3) off-campus, distance learning, and alternate route programs, noting differences when they exist.

Information reported in the Self-study report for Standard 4 was validated in the exhibits and interviews. (If not, provide an explanation and indicate the pages of the SSR that are incorrect.)

Yes

C.4.1 Collaboration Between EPP and School Partners	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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The Dakota Wesleyan University Education Department collaborates with the Mitchell School District as well as with K-12 schools within a 20-30 mile radius. A unique, collaborative relationship has existed for 30+ years with the L.B. Williams Elementary School which was constructed adjacent to the Dakota Wesleyan University Education Department. This creates a rich opportunity for practical, hands-on elementary classroom experiences that are an extension of the educational theory, techniques and methodologies being learned in educator preparation coursework. Faculty, principals, cooperating teachers, graduates and candidates shared multiple examples of collaborative experiences from freshman year through practicum and student teaching experiences.

The Mitchell School District and surrounding school districts provide opportunities for candidates to participate in a variety of field and clinical experiences. Interviews with alumni and candidates confirm that faculty engage in many field experiences alongside their teacher candidates, ensuring their experiences align with course concepts, guiding their application of instructional and assessment techniques, and modeling as needed. Faculty of course-based field experiences report that they meet with principals to initiate these experiences, then work with classroom teachers to implement them. Candidates noted that faculty frequently use entrance/exit tickets and other brief polls to adjust their instruction and align field experiences. For example, when it was pointed out that classroom management techniques being emphasized were geared toward the elementary level, the instructor modified course activities to include classroom management techniques for teachers of adolescent learners at the secondary level.

The DWU educator preparation program indicates that cooperating teacher feedback during the delivery and evaluation of the field and clinical experiences provides the education department with necessary information on candidates' teaching performance as well as with respect to the way in which the unit delivers its program. Content area faculty in the areas of English, history, mathematics, music and science report unique relationships with cooperating teachers stemming

from many of them being former students and graduates of DWU. This has led to open and candid conversations about candidate performance.

The unit's final student teaching evaluation is completed by the cooperating teacher and a 1-year follow-up survey, aligned with the InTASC Standards, is the concluding evaluation in the preparation of a Dakota Wesleyan University teacher candidate and is completed, independently by both the candidate and their employer. Results of these assessments were presented in the artifact file. The education department faculty reported on-going, informal meetings with principals and cooperating teachers, and review of assessment data in real-time as it is submitted. Content area faculty members indicated that while their meetings with the education department chair and faculty student teaching supervisors were anecdotal in nature, they have frequent conversations about the performance of their students during practicum and clinical experiences. Content area faculty shared examples of curriculum and program adjustments that have been made as a result of candidate performance on the Praxis content exams.

The Education Support Specialist serves as the placement coordinator and works closely with K-12 administrators and university supervisors, as well as with the candidates and their cooperating teachers for all school district placements in field and clinical experiences. All teacher candidates complete a minimum of two semesters of practicum experience prior to their student teaching placement. Teacher candidates identify three schools in which they would like to complete their student teaching and, until recently, have been encouraged to list three teachers or grade level preferences on the student teaching application. The application process has recently been revised to focus on grade level preferences without the identification of specific, potential cooperating teachers. The education support specialist contacts the schools to find placement for the candidates.

The Graduate Education Program Director and the principal candidate collaborate with school administrators for which the candidate was employed. Candidates who were not employed by a site with both elementary and secondary students in the same building required additional collaboration with school administration at a different site. In addition, the Graduate Education Program Director works with candidates who wish to complete a placement in a school other than which they are employed. The internship handbook outlines a series of required and optional experiences that are to be completed. School administrators provide essential guidance, mentorship, and oversight as principal candidates engage in learning experiences. Teachers contribute by opening their classrooms to allow principal candidates to conduct classroom observations under the guidance of an administrative supervisor, fostering an environment of trust and professional growth.

The EPP indicated that principals used to be invited to campus for yearly meetings, but COVID put an end to that. Due to transitions in the Education Support Specialist position, minutes from those meetings cannot be found. It was noted that most of the conversations happen informally due to the Education Department's relationship with the administrators in both Mitchell and the surrounding area, with many phone calls, drop-in meetings, and email exchanges to address needs for both the districts and DWU. This process was reiterated in the focus group meeting with faculty. The EPP is working to reestablish those formal meetings.

The Region 3 Principal's Meeting was hosted on campus in March just prior to the accreditation visit. Principals hosted a panel discussion with the DWU teacher candidates, then met with

education faculty to discuss ways DWU could best support the districts as well as ways that DWU might improve the training of teacher candidates. During focus group meetings the department chair and area administrators who attended the meeting noted that the department's Education Support Specialist took notes at the meeting.

Email correspondence messages with principals submitted in the artifact file provided written evidence of collaboration. A placement email sent to a principal served as a thank you message which highlighted key areas related to getting a candidate started in their placement and included a copy of the student teaching handbook. An email chain that occurred over a week's time provided an example of an Education Department Professor reaching out to a MS Principal about the possibility of scheduling a lesson presentation for a course and also asked about the need to restructure a 15-hour experience in another to ease expectations placed upon classroom teachers. The principal's response was positive and indicated they would think about how they might be able to make the experience a little different. During the focus group discussion principals noted that they frequently communicate with the EPP through email and text messages, phone calls, and brief in person meetings.

C 4.2 Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target
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Clear entry and exit points are outlined for entrance into the educator preparation program, acceptance into student teaching and administrative internships, and exit from the program. The DWU educator preparation program has a department handbook as well as student teaching and internship handbooks. Clear entry and exit points are outlined for entrance into the educator preparation program, acceptance into student teaching and administrative internships, and exit from the program. Guidelines also include the criteria for selection of school-based clinical faculty and administrative supervisors. The college catalog and website support and provide additional information about programs and internship opportunities.

The school partners serve as mentors for all field experiences, practicums and clinical experiences. During these experiences, teacher candidates are placed with state certified highly qualified teachers. Field experience required hours vary by course and range from 2 to 20 hours. These experiences are listed in the self-study and during their focus group meeting candidates reported observing classroom lessons, having a reading buddy, and visiting classrooms and schools with diverse student populations. Practicum candidates' hours are set for 25 hours per course and these experiences serve as in-depth experiences prior to student teaching, including lesson delivery, progress monitoring, and participation in professional meetings. Candidates indicated these experiences were invaluable to helping them feel prepared and confident going into student teaching. During the clinical student teaching experience, teacher candidates spend 70 days in the classroom for ELED and secondary majors and 75 days in the classroom for K-12 SPED and K-12 Music. Double majors (i.e. elementary and special education) complete their student teaching over the course of two semesters. The mentors provide support and guidance with effective teaching methods, lesson planning and presentations, and classroom management. Responsibilities and requirements for the cooperating teacher, supervising professor, and student

teacher are included in the student teaching handbook. During the final clinical experience, teacher candidates are evaluated three times by their cooperating teacher, twice by the university supervisor, and teacher candidates write their own self-evaluation at midterm. Student teachers reported having regular conversations with their cooperating teacher and frequent check-ins (phone calls, emails and text messages) with their supervising professor.

Two culminating, capstone projects serve as a means of ensuring candidates are able to demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities that all beginning teachers should possess. The Digital Teaching Portfolio is a collection of artifacts from the student teaching experience and education courses. The portfolio reflects a candidate's passion for education, their personality and professionalism, demonstration of the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards for new teachers, and serves as a resource during the job search process. The Action Research: Teacher Impact on Student Learning Assessment is completed during the student teaching experience and is designed to dispose candidates to tying together many pieces of the teaching and learning process including thoughtfully and systematically plan effective units of instruction, using formative and summative assessment to inform instruction, communicate learning data and results to others, and reflect on their practice and performance as a teacher. Candidates create a poster of the Impact Assessment and present this to faculty, staff, and students during the DWU Capstone Day held each semester. The Impact Assessment is evaluated by external evaluators during this event.

Data charts for the digital teaching portfolio and impact on student learning assessment were included in the self-study artifact file along with the final teacher candidate evaluations. EPP faculty and staff, including content area faculty, report having conversations about evidence presented in the portfolios and revealed through the impact poster presentations.

The administrative internship handbook clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of interns, supervising administrators and university graduate studies personnel and outlines internship activities, procedures and documentation. Acceptance into the administrative internship requires a valid teaching license, GPA of 3.0 or higher and completion of prerequisite courses. Candidates in the principal leadership program complete a minimum of 180 hours completing both required activities (shadowing their administrative supervisor, preparing an annual cycle of their mentor's responsibilities, attending meetings and conducting staff evaluations) and elective activities (two selected from each of the National Educational Leadership Program recognition standards). Principal candidates complete a self-assessment and are also evaluated by their supervisor. Exit requirements for their clinical practice includes a presentation of their professional portfolio, a program evaluation and comprehensive exam. Administration candidates indicated they had regular contact with the graduate studies director and their supervising administrator. This communication helped keep them on track, focus their activities, and meet requirements.

Advanced candidates work alongside their administrative supervisor to develop opportunities to complete the required and suggested activities described in the handbook and internship syllabus.

Advanced candidates and the administrative supervisors who participated in the focus groups reported having ongoing conversations with one another and frequent communication with the graduate education program director. Administrative candidates maintain a log, including weekly reflective journals, throughout their internship demonstrating activities and competencies at both the elementary and secondary levels. These are reviewed and feedback is provided by both the university supervisor and graduate education program director. A written evaluation is formally completed by the administrative supervisor and university supervisor / graduate education program director. Raw data from the NELP internship self-assessment and supervising administrator evaluation and comprehensive final were included in the self-study artifact file.

Cooperating teachers indicated their student teachers had strong technological skills and were able to effectively utilize the classroom technologies. Principal candidates use technology throughout the program's coursework. They use technology to collect, analyze and disseminate data as well as to communicate effectively with students, staff and the school community.

Summary of Strengths:

There is evidence of strong collegial, collaborative relationship between the EPP and PK-12 partners. The EPP demonstrates a strong commitment to work with school partners to provide field-based experience that will foster candidate professional growth while meeting pK-12 student, staff and program needs. Candidates, especially at the undergraduate level, benefit from a wide range of field-based, practicum and clinical experiences throughout their program beginning their freshman year. Candidates report strong professional relationships with the EPP, in which personal and professional interactions support their development.

Areas for Improvement:

1. Shifting from anecdotal evidence, based on personal observations and subjective interpretations of data, to formal data analysis, utilizing a systematic approach to examine patterns and trends, of the field-based, clinical experiences will enhance the validity and reliability of evaluations, ensuring that program improvement decisions are made based on solid evidence.

Rationale:

Formal analysis of strengths and weaknesses of data findings over time and across multiple performance measures will support an accurate portrayal of the effectiveness of field-based experiences and candidate performance, provide a basis for data-driven decisions, and lend itself to a continuous cycle of improvement in fine-tuning field-based, practicum and clinical experiences.

Recommendation: Standard Met

Corrections to the Board of Examiners Report: None