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

ACCREDITATION VISIT TO:

Oglala Lakota College
September 29 - October 1, 2026

SD State Board of Examiners Team:

State Consultant: Kathy Riedy
Team Member: Dr. Sharon Andrews
Team Member: Dr. Ashley Digmann
Team Member: Dr. Laura Hasselquist

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

Oglala Lakota College is a public, tribally chartered and decentralized Land Grant Institution established in 1971 by the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council. Oglala Lakota College's Education Department offers four programs at the undergraduate level: Birth to Grade Three Early Childhood, K-8 Elementary Education, 5-12 Physical Science Education, K-12 South Dakota Indian Studies; and one advanced program through the Graduate Studies Department: PK-12 Principal. The College is decentralized and offers coursework at multiple centers and through virtual delivery.

The Oglala Lakota College's mission is encapsulated in the phrase "Lakota Oyate kin Wounspe Tantanhan un Tokata Etkiya Igloapi Kte" or "Rebuilding the Lakota Nation Through Education"). This mission is guided by Oglala Lakota College's four main purposes:

a. Tribal - promoting sovereignty and the improvement of their nation
b. Cultural - celebrating and utilizing Lakota tradition throughout the program.
c. Academic - Inspiring high expectations of a diverse population utilizing collaboration and support.
d. Community - contribute to and produce individuals who contribute to the wellbeing of their own communities.

The EPP specific mission complements the overall mission of the college. At the graduate level it is "realized by preparing high-level professionals who view school leadership not as a career for personal gain, but as a sacred service to the Oyate (the people)". And at the initial level it

reads as follows: Graduates from our programs will be proficient as competent reflective teachers of content, theory, and application with an emphasis on Lakota Virtues (character education) while emphasizing community empowerment through reflection of traditional Lakota perspectives. They seek to prepare educators who will help rebuild and strengthen the Lakota Nation by integrating Lakota cultural values, language, and ways of life into professional practice.

The mission is very much in practice at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Evidence of the mission could be found and explained in the student handbook, appears on the website, appears throughout course syllabi, in assignments and assessments, and is consistent with the University's overall mission as well. In addition, it was apparent during the interview sessions that candidates, faculty, and outside stakeholders all embraced and were appreciative of the integration of Lakota culture, traditions, language and values into multiple aspects of the course of study.

C.1.2 Conceptual Framework	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target

Summary of the EPP Conceptual Framework

The Educator Preparation Program (EPP) at Oglala Lakota College is guided by a conceptual framework first developed in 2006 during preparation for NCATE preconditions. Although NCATE accreditation was not pursued, the framework continues to guide program development, continuous improvement, and alignment with Lakota values, institutional priorities, and professional standards.

Multiple factors have shaped the conceptual framework, including core beliefs, centered around Lakota history, culture, values and language; dispositions evaluating pedagogy, content, assessments and professional development; and their unit goals, which are:

1. To provide Lakota cultural understanding and practice.
2. To provide a solid academic base necessary for understanding the disciplines and how they interrelate.
3. To develop pedagogical and management skills for the creation of a school ecology inclusive of the diverse abilities and needs of the children.
4. To provide opportunities for reflection and forecasting that will positively affect student learning.

The framework is expressed visually and conceptually through what could be referred to as the Education Shield of the Oglala Vision of the Tenon Nation. This shield was modified to incorporate concepts influenced by Ernest Boyer's research identifying four priorities, or in the case of Oglala Lakota College, Four Directions.

The Four Directions Model connects cultural teachings with stages (summarized below) of candidate development, assessment benchmarks, and professional expectations for teachers and education leaders.

- Stage One - *Wiyohpiyata* (West) Requiring courage and bravery - Admission/Entrance Requirements
- Stage Two - *Waziyata* (North) Becoming proficient - Professional Core Requirements,
- Stage Three - *Wiyohinyanpata* (East) Demonstrating vision - Professional Requirements,
- Stage Four - *Itokagata* (South) Delivering knowledge, skills and ability - Internship/Infield Experience/Induction

The EPP does intend to review and potentially revise the Conceptual Framework following the College's comprehensive strategic plan review during the 2026-2027 school year to ensure consistency.

A definite connection between the College's framework and the EPP's framework was evident during interviews. A clear understanding and sense of unity in the goals and direction of the program was communicated from numerous stakeholders.

Summary of Strengths:

- The strong focus on cultural traditions and commitment to values aligns with the demographic they serve.
- Small class sizes allow for personalized support and the flexibility often needed to meet the needs of non-traditional students.

Areas for Improvement: NONE

Recommendation: Standard Met

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

OLC has clear admission standards for both the initial and advanced programs. Prerequisite requirements for the undergraduate education program include specific GPA and course grade requirements, a qualifying score on the required content Praxis, and a background check. Entrance into the education department include an application, letters of recommendation, writing samples, an interview, and professional portfolio. The undergraduate program includes these requirements in both the Teacher Preparation Handbook and the Teacher Training Application packet to ensure that candidates are aware of the requirements for application. During interviews, program completers did explain that when the time came for them to apply to the undergraduate program, they were surprised that they had to complete the application for the program. It would be beneficial to make sure that this process is clearly explained to students early and often in the education career.

The graduate program requirements are clear and occur prior to admission to the program. Program application includes an application packet, reference letters, specific academic entrance requirements, and a writing sample. An annual graduate studies orientation is required to finalize entry into the program.

Pass rates on content licensure exams have generally improved over the past 8 years. However, the number of test takers has also decreased during this time period. With a 12–13-year average completion rate in the undergraduate program, it is a challenge to stay current and remember content from the beginning of educational careers. While Praxis pass rates trend low, the university is offering support to students. OLC provides support in the form of Praxis bootcamps.

The advanced program assessments are clear. Interviews with candidates and graduates within the program could clearly describe these assignments. The assessments include the Comprehensive Portfolio, Content Course GPA, Curriculum Improvement Plan, Principal Internship, School Community Action Project, School Improvement Plan, and Internship Disposition Rating.

The Comprehensive Portfolio was referenced many times during interviews of graduate program stakeholders. Candidates continuously demonstrate proficiency across the leadership standards.

The School Community Action Project was discussed in the interviews by graduate student candidates and alumni. These individuals referenced this project and explained how relevant and meaningful this project was. This project is completed during the internship allowing students to connect research, community engagement, and leadership practice into a meaningful project centered around school improvement. This project is grounded in Lakota values and allows students to demonstrate how they create a positive learning environment for all students.

C.2.2 InTASC Standards	**Unacceptable**	**Acceptable X**	**Target**

The undergraduate program has a clear list of assessments that are aligned to the InTASC standards. Program assessments include Praxis content and pedagogy exams, content area GPA, lesson planning and presentation rubrics, student teaching evaluations, Impact on Student Learning Project, InTASC portfolio, and Program Learning Outcomes demonstrated in portfolio. These assessments are clearly aligned with specific transitions within the program.
As noted above, Praxis pass rates in both content and pedagogy are low, but work is being done to prepare students for these exams through a Praxis boot camp in the summers.
Average GPA's within the designated content area are consistently high in completers. GPA is used as a cumulative indicator of candidate performance across general education, content, and methods coursework.

Lesson plan presentation data is recorded using a 5-point scale. Five standards are assessed in the rubric along with Lakota values, diverse learners, etc. Average scores are near 4.0 in most categories.

Student disposition and professionalism are assessed using a 5-point scale. Again, scores are consistently high on both of these evaluations.

The Impact on Student Learning Project is a summative assessment that documents candidates' abilities to plan, implement, assess, and reflect on their instruction in a classroom setting. Overall candidates scores average above the acceptable level. Results of this assessment indicate that elementary education candidates are able to design standards-aligned instruction, assess and analyze student learning, implement effective instructional practices, and reflect on their professional growth.

OLC is offering support for students in their InTASC portfolio assessment by offering workshops to help students complete this project. Faculty indicated that at least two people

assess the portfolio for consistency of ratings. Scores for this project are consistently above the acceptable level and indicate a high-level performance.

The graduate program assessments were clearly explained. The graduates and current students spoke specifically about the meaningfulness of these assessments. The assessments included in the graduate program allow students to evaluate instruction, support teachers, promote pedagogy, and improve student learning through curriculum and instruction.

Current students and graduates in the advanced program referenced the School Community Action Project, which allowed candidates to research an educational challenge by collecting data, collaborating with school employees and stakeholders, and to make evidence-based recommendations.

It is clear that the education program, both graduate and undergraduate, values the Lakota culture and ensures that all students are well-educated and prepared to carry those values into their future classrooms. Interviews with faculty, students, and graduates placed a strong emphasis on the Lakota values and how well OLC taught these in the curriculum.

Summary of Strengths:

- The EPP has clear admission standards for both the initial and advanced programs.
- The undergraduate program has a clear list of assessments that are aligned to the InTASC standards
- The advanced program assessments are clear. Interviews with candidates and graduates within the program could clearly describe these assignments.

Areas for Improvement: NONE

Recommendation: Standard Met

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

At OLC, the EPP engages in assessment work that is embedded within a broader system of institutional effectiveness including annual reporting through the Institutional Effectiveness Plan (IEP) and Institutional Effectiveness Report (IER), Annual Department Reports, regularly scheduled Academic Program Reviews, Assessment Days, strategic planning processes, and periodic external reviews by entities such as the South Dakota Department of Education (SD DOE). College administration spoke highly of the EPPs record of submitting required reports and student work samples as expected by the college and being actively engaged in the institution's assessment work. To that end, EPP faculty complete course-level assessment reports to inform course revision and refinement; however, the documentation reviewed does not clearly demonstrate how findings from the course-level assessment reports are used to inform programmatic decision making beyond individual courses.

SD DOE Program Review Reports provide evidence that data are collected for key assessments and subsequently reviewed and analyzed. During interviews, however, faculty did not provide responses describing how data from these key assessments are systematically reviewed and

analyzed to identify patterns or trends of candidate performance ultimately leading to data-driven, programmatic decision making. A review of initial-level EPP meeting minutes did not reveal assessment work related to key assessment data review. However, SD DOE Program Review Reports include the past three years of data on the EPPs key assessments, evidencing that data collection, review, and analysis was conducted for the purpose of those reports. In addition, SD DOE Program Review Reports include alignment tables for key assessments that demonstrate alignment with relevant standards at both the initial and advanced levels as do other documents, including institutionally required assessment reports. Attachment A in the SSR, likewise, demonstrates attention to standards alignment at the initial level. Candidates and faculty referenced the various standards for both the initial and advanced programs during interviews.

Cooperating teachers were able to describe the assessment measures in place during student teaching and shared about the meeting with their student teacher and the student teacher supervisor at the beginning of the student teaching placement where expectations were shared and questions could be asked and answered. All three individuals–the student teacher, cooperating teacher, and student teacher supervisor–have access to a shared google drive folder housing student teacher materials and documents. Documentation provided for review included examples of the shared google drive folders and during interviews the shared google drive folder was described and explained. Cooperating teachers reported they felt prepared for their mentoring role. Unfortunately, no current student teachers were present during their scheduled interview session.

Evidence provided did not include a current document that clearly describes the overall assessment system for the initial program other than the 2015 *Assessment Handbook* for faculty, which focused primarily on evaluation tools and alignment information. The EPP acknowledged that the Assessment Handbook is outdated and has plans to develop an updated document during the current academic year.

The EPP does not regularly conduct a specific, structured activity—such as an annual data retreat—focused on examining its EPP key assessment data for programmatic decision making using a comprehensive data set. EPP meeting agendas and minutes, along with other documents, reference assessment activities which provide evidence that faculty engage in assessment work related to individual courses and consider proposed changes to those courses as well as assessment work for the institution; however, agendas and minutes reviewed did not clearly reference examination of key assessment data or document programmatic decisions resulting from analysis of that data. Much of the available documentation related to assessment reflects institutionally required assessment activities rather than a clearly articulated process for systematically reviewing EPP key assessment and other EPP data to inform programmatic change or monitor candidate matriculation through the program.

EPP faculty stated that they do “a lot” of assessment work, especially at the end of each term but it was not clear what that involved. EPP faculty were familiar with the various assessments such as the InTASC Portfolio, PRAXIS tests, and the Impact on Student Learning Project but did not offer specifics with regard to how or when these assessments are reviewed or scored. Program leadership reported that faculty review and score these types of key assessments at the end-of-the-term meeting and that this work involves scoring of assessments by more than one faculty member. However, a review of available EPP meeting minutes did not reflect this type of assessment work. When asked how teacher candidates submit their completed assessments,

some EPP faculty reported that the InTASC Portfolio was done via a hard copy and handed in while others talked about candidates emailing documents or housing them in Moodle or in a Google Drive folder. It was mentioned by program leadership that efforts to standardize an electronic approach are in the beginning stages.

At the advanced level, a document titled *Data Process* related to the graduate program provides summary information regarding the data review cycle and identifies faculty transitions as a factor affecting consistency within the assessment system. Presently, assessment work has become effectively structured and systematized within the advanced program. The document indicates that a structured data cycle was scheduled to begin in Spring 2026 and other documentation provides evidence of recent work associated with launching this planned cycle. This was confirmed in interviews with various stakeholders. An additional advanced level program document, *Assessment of Student Learning*, describes a cyclical assessment process designed to collect data related to candidate mastery of Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). The document provides candidate performance data, identifies strengths and areas for growth, and identifies "next steps." During interviews it was clear that the assessment processes at the advanced level are becoming more systematized and formalized with a current 2026-2027 student handbook in place inclusive of information about admission to the program expectations as well as evaluation tools such as rubrics. The *Advanced Program Data and Continuous Improvement Process* document provides further evidence of the EPPs work to systematize and formalize its assessment system at the advanced level for its graduate program.

With respect to leadership and responsibility for assessment, the SSR identifies a shared responsibility and indicates that the Dean of the EPP provides leadership at the initial level, while the Director of Graduate Studies provides leadership at the advanced level. This was confirmed throughout several interview sessions.

The assessment system is subject to review through accreditation and program review processes. The SSR indicates that future plans include formalizing assessment processes; however, a specific timeline and supporting documentation for this work were not provided. The SSR also identifies several strategies intended to support fair and unbiased assessment, including the use of common rubrics, multiple measures, multiple reviewers, clearly defined expectations, and ongoing feedback. Both five-point and three-point scoring scales are used, and candidates receive assessment expectations in advance. While these practices provide evidence of attention to consistency and transparency in assessment, the available evidence did not identify efforts for establishing, monitoring, or evaluating inter-rater reliability. In an interview it was noted that EPP faculty score key assessments such as the impact project in pairs and then the two faculty discuss their ratings. No documentation of these dual ratings was provided as evidence.

Recent graduates of the advanced program were able to describe the assessments such as portfolios and projects required throughout their program of study and reported that these were valuable in contributing to their growing development in various leadership roles. Graduates expressed satisfaction with the feedback and weekly communication via email or phone calls they received throughout the program but did not speak to how they were formally evaluated during their internship.

C.3.2 Data Collection, Analysis, and Evaluation	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target

A variety of evaluation measures are used across the EPP at both the initial and advanced level, including GPA, rubrics, portfolios, field experience, internship, and student-teaching evaluations, PRAXIS examinations, and program-level assessments. The SSR and SD DOE Program Review Reports identify key assessments at both the initial and advanced levels with documentation demonstrating that data from these key assessments are collected; this was validated in the SD DOE Program Recognition Report feedback from reviewers. Assessment data are collected and summarized through various, shared platforms providing faculty with access to assessment information including Moodle and Google Drive. SD DOE Program Review Reports are inclusive of data charts and/or tables for each key assessment. Documents summarizing key assessment data for the advanced program were available for review including GPA data, portfolio data, and the Curriculum Improvement Plan. These documents also included data review and analysis information.

Institutional reports, including Title II and Board of Trustees (BOT) reports, were provided as evidence of assessment and reporting activities; however, the documentation does not clearly explain how the information contained in these reports is analyzed or used to inform programmatic change. Much of the institutional reporting reviewed focuses on recruitment, retention, and enrollment, while other assessment information is presented at the individual-course level. The documentation did not provide clear evidence of a systematic process for examining trends across the EPPs multiple key assessments or data sources, identifying patterns in candidate performance, determining areas requiring attention, and using those findings to develop and implement programmatic changes at the initial level. While there are various documents presenting data, there is not a comprehensive data packet that summarizes data across all EPP assessments to inform review and analysis of the data to identify programmatic trends and patterns especially as they align to the InTASC standards. The SSR provides a narrative overview of candidate performance data as it aligns to InTASC standards in its response to Standard II Preparation of Candidates in Teacher Education which sometimes includes references to data but more often describes the nature and purpose of the assessments.

Transition points are aligned with the conceptual framework's Four Directional Model, with assessments occurring at program admission, entry to clinical practice, exit from clinical practice, program completion, and following program completion. The EPP uses a combination of direct and indirect measures across these transition points. Measures include, but are not limited to, GPA, portfolios, PRAXIS examinations, dispositions evaluations, entrance and exit interviews, clinical evaluations, and course assignments. These measures are summarized in the transition-point assessment table beginning on page 98 of the SSR.

Candidates did describe appreciation for the workshops and other non-classroom opportunities the EPP offers to provide support for the InTASC portfolio development or PRAXIS preparation which candidates are encouraged but not required to attend. Both the Teacher Preparation Program Student Handbook and Student Teaching Handbook were provided for documentation but each are dated with a time stamp of 2019, thus it is not clear if the information in these documents is current or accurate.

C.3.3 Use of Data for Program Improvement	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target

Ongoing assessment activities, such as Assessment Days, are referenced throughout the documentation. However, these activities appear to function primarily as institutionally sponsored events rather than as regularly scheduled opportunities for EPP faculty to collectively review key assessment data, identify trends, and make documented programmatic decisions.

With respect to follow-up surveys for undergraduate program completers, OLC Graduate and Employer Satisfaction Reports were provided for review. These reports, however, are institution-wide reports rather than reports specific to EPP program completers. The available documentation indicates that the reports represent undergraduate program completers or graduates across the institution rather than candidates from the EPP. No documentation of follow-up surveys specifically addressing undergraduate EPP program completers was available for review. EPP faculty are aware that the follow-up surveys have not been recently administered and indicated this will be addressed moving forward, although details were not shared.

Documentation of recent efforts related to follow-up surveys for the graduate program was available. A *Fall 2026 LMEA Graduate Follow-Up Survey Report* summarizes feedback from advanced program candidates; however, the documentation reviewed did not include corresponding feedback from employers.

The SSR identifies several examples as evidence of data-driven decision making, including alignment review and revision through curriculum mapping, course revisions by individual faculty, strengthened PRAXIS preparation opportunities, refinement of the impact project, handbook revisions, and enhanced approaches to documenting field experiences. The cited changes appear to represent routine or naturally occurring program updates, such as revisions to curriculum alignment documents, handbooks, or program materials, rather than substantive programmatic changes prompted by review and analysis of candidate performance or other assessment data.

When asked to share an example of how assessment work or data reviewed informed programmatic change, EPP faculty talked about the end of the semester assessment work related to the courses they each teach. During interviews it was shared that EPP faculty score portfolios and the impact projects and discuss their impressions at an end-of-the-term department meeting but it was not clear how this analysis, if warranted, led to programmatic change. However, a review of available meeting minutes did not reflect that type of assessment work. Available meeting minutes did document assessment work for the institution and agenda items related to course-level assessments, general education assessment tasks and curriculum mapping were noted. It did not appear that a comprehensive data packet was compiled with information about the EPPs key assessments in advance of these semester meetings at the initial level. Advanced program faculty were able to speak to data review and analysis; documents reflected this assessment work as well.

Cooperating teachers expressed a desire to have a formal way to provide feedback to the EPP regarding areas needing more emphasis in the initial program such as classroom management, differentiation, and subject matter content related to SD DOE's social studies standards for

elementary education. Likewise, administrators expressed a need for more preparation in the Science of Reading for student teachers. It was noted that sharing this kind of feedback with the EPP was something that these individuals would be comfortable doing which reflects on the strong lines of communication in place but it did not appear that this feedback had been shared with the EPP. This was also true for the mentors of graduate students doing their internship.

Summary of Strengths:

- The EPP has assessments in place to measure initial and advanced level candidate performance.

Areas for Improvement:

- Program materials for the **initial level program**, such as the Assessment Handbook and other program documents, need updating to provide current information to all stakeholders and to provide guidance and clarity to data collection, review, analysis, and evaluation to inform programmatic decision making for the EPP.

Rationale:

- Formalization and standardization of the EPPs current approach to assessment at the **initial level** through updating the Assessment Handbook and other program documents as well as the creation of an annual comprehensive data packet would systematize current assessment practices.

Recommendation: Standard Met

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	Target
		X	

The Educator Preparation Program (EPP) partners with a diverse network of educational organizations to design, deliver, and evaluate field and clinical experiences. These partners include tribal and Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools, public school districts, private and parochial schools, and early childhood education programs. Through these collaborations, candidates engage in authentic learning experiences across rural, reservation, and urban settings and work with diverse student populations, families, and communities.

Early childhood partnerships include tribal, federal, community-based, and private programs that provide experiences with infants, toddlers, preschool-aged children, and their families. Collectively, these partnerships ensure candidates have access to clinical experiences that support the development of culturally responsive teaching, leadership skills, and the ability to effectively serve learners in a variety of educational settings.

Initial Programs

As an initial licensure program, the EPP demonstrates a commitment to collaborative partnerships that support the design, implementation, and continuous improvement of clinical experiences. The Education Department works closely with PK-12 schools, early childhood settings, tribal education agencies, mentor teachers, school administrators, and community partners to ensure that field experiences, practicum placements, and student teaching opportunities are aligned with workforce needs, professional standards, and community priorities. These partners contribute to informal discussions regarding candidate preparation, curriculum, assessment practices, and placement decisions, helping to ensure candidates are prepared to meet the needs of diverse learners and educational settings. Stakeholder meetings confirmed the relationship between the EPP and stakeholders.

The EPP and its partners share responsibility for clinical placement decisions and candidate support. The Education Department coordinates placements, verifies candidate eligibility, communicates program requirements, and monitors alignment with certification standards, while school administrators and mentor teachers identify appropriate settings and qualified mentors to support candidate growth. Placement decisions are made collaboratively and consider factors such as licensure area, grade level, candidate needs, geographic location, mentor availability, and opportunities to work with diverse student populations. Stakeholder meetings confirm the collaborative nature of candidate placement between the EPP, school partners, and teacher candidates. Ongoing communication between the EPP and school partners allows for timely monitoring of candidate progress and rapid response to concerns related to candidate performance, mentor effectiveness, or placement suitability. Documentation provided demonstrates the EPP's ability to work closely with school partners when teacher candidates need additional support.

Clinical partners play an active role in candidate development through mentoring, supervision, coaching, observations, feedback, and the provision of authentic learning experiences. Mentor teachers, administrators, and college supervisors work together to help candidates connect coursework, professional standards, and clinical practice while gradually assuming increased responsibility for instruction and classroom leadership. Partners also contribute resources that enrich candidate learning, including access to curriculum materials, assessment data, instructional technologies, professional development opportunities, and school-based leadership experiences. Stakeholder meetings also identified it was a mutually beneficial relationship as teacher candidates contribute positively to the schools they are apart of through the integration of Lakota values and cultural knowledge into classrooms and schools. The clinical partners also identified the teacher candidate's knowledge of technology as valuable, often serving as support for current classroom teachers.

The EPP further demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement through shared evaluation and assessment processes. School-based partners participate in candidate observations, performance assessments, and evaluations of candidate readiness and effectiveness. Informal feedback from partners, along with candidate performance data, is used to strengthen clinical experiences, refine support systems, improve placement processes, and inform program decision-making. These collaborative efforts ensure that clinical experiences remain relevant, rigorous, and responsive to the needs of schools and communities. Effort to standardize the feedback collection process would help ensure feedback is captured to provide clearer evidence of the partnerships.

A notable strength of the EPP is the integration of its Four Directional Conceptual Framework throughout clinical partnerships and candidate support. Through collaboration with school and community partners, candidates are encouraged to connect professional practice with Lakota values, cultural knowledge, and community priorities. This shared commitment to professional excellence, cultural responsiveness, and continuous improvement contributes significantly to the quality of clinical preparation and candidate success within this initial preparation program.

Advanced Programs

As the EPP's advanced preparation program, the Graduate Studies Department demonstrates a strong commitment to collaborative partnerships that support the preparation of educational leaders. The EPP works closely with practicing school administrators, community leaders,

educational organizations, and advisory board members to design, deliver, and evaluate leadership-focused clinical experiences. Through advisory committee participation, internship planning, and the development of authentic leadership activities, partners help ensure that clinical experiences address current school improvement priorities and prepare candidates for leadership roles in diverse educational settings.

The EPP and its partners share responsibility for determining and supporting internship placements. Candidates identify potential internship sites aligned with their certification goals, while school partners identify qualified mentor administrators and verify that placements provide appropriate leadership experiences. The EPP reviews and approves all placements to ensure compliance with professional, licensure, accreditation, and conflict-of-interest requirements. Once approved, candidates, mentor administrators, and faculty supervisors collaboratively establish internship goals and activities that align with program standards while addressing the needs of the partner school or educational organization. Candidates and stakeholders spoke highly of this collaborative process during interviews and felt it was crucial to provide meaningful experiences to all involved.

School-based mentors play a vital role in candidate development by providing authentic leadership experiences and ongoing professional guidance. Through internships and action research projects, candidates engage in instructional leadership, organizational management, school operations, decision-making, and school improvement efforts. Partners provide access to critical resources, including school data, personnel, technology systems, administrative processes, and stakeholder groups, allowing candidates to apply leadership theory within real-world educational contexts. Faculty supervisors complement these experiences through academic support, performance monitoring, and oversight to ensure alignment with program expectations and leadership standards.

The EPP further demonstrates a culture of continuous improvement through strong collaboration with its partners in candidate and program evaluation. School-based mentors contribute to internship assessments, portfolio reviews, and performance evaluations, while advisory board members and employers provide feedback regarding graduate preparedness and program effectiveness. Information gathered through these processes is used to refine internship experiences, strengthen candidate support systems, and guide ongoing program improvements. Through these collaborative partnerships, the EPP ensures that leadership preparation remains responsive to evolving school and community needs.

A particular strength of the advanced program is the integration of the Four Directional Conceptual Framework within clinical partnerships and leadership development. Stakeholders routinely praise the ability of candidates and the EPP to promote leadership practices grounded in Lakota values, cultural responsiveness, and community engagement. This shared commitment to professional excellence, continuous improvement, and culturally grounded leadership provides candidates with meaningful opportunities to develop as effective educational leaders while serving the needs of schools, students, and communities.

C 4.2 Design, Implementation, and Evaluation of Field Experiences and Clinical Practice	Unacceptable	Acceptable X	Target

Initial Programs

The EPP's initial teacher preparation program has established a comprehensive and systematic approach to candidate development that integrates admission requirements, developmental clinical experiences, strong school partnerships, ongoing assessment, and continuous candidate support. The program is grounded in the Four Directional Conceptual Framework and aligns candidate preparation with South Dakota educator preparation requirements, InTASC standards, specialized professional standards, and Lakota values.

The EPP has clearly defined entry, progression, and exit requirements for clinical practice. Prior to entering practicum or student teaching, candidates must successfully complete required coursework, maintain established academic standards, satisfy licensure examination requirements, submit a formal application, and receive departmental approval. Candidates also complete placement planning activities and any required background checks. To successfully complete clinical practice, candidates must demonstrate proficiency through supervised field experiences, positive clinical evaluations, successful completion of key assessments, professional conduct, and active engagement in all clinical requirements. Program completion requires candidates to satisfy all degree and licensure requirements, complete key assessments and portfolios, and demonstrate readiness for recommendation for licensure as affirmed by stakeholder and candidate interviews and documentation provided by the EPP.

Candidate proficiency is evaluated through multiple measures, including course-based assessments, clinical evaluations, Praxis examinations, the Professional InTASC Portfolio, and the Impact on Student Learning Project.

The EPP systematically develops candidates' ability to integrate technology into instructional and professional practice. Candidates demonstrate technology proficiency through lesson planning, teaching demonstrations, clinical evaluations, professional portfolios, and the Impact on Student Learning Project. Stakeholders noted candidates' knowledge of technology as beneficial to the schools they are apart. They gave examples of candidates supporting current teachers with the integration and use of technology.

The EPP also demonstrates a systematic process for selecting, preparing, and supporting school-based clinical faculty. Cooperating teachers and other clinical mentors are selected based on professional licensure, demonstrated effectiveness, administrative recommendation, successful teaching experience, and the ability to support candidate growth. School-based clinical faculty are a part of a tripartite meeting with the EPP and teacher candidate for orientation and training. During the meeting the Student Teaching Handbook, assessment resources, and ongoing communication are discussed.

Throughout clinical practice, candidates receive extensive support through a collaborative supervision model involving university supervisors, cooperating teachers, and school administrators. Regular observations, conferences, formative feedback, reflective activities, student teaching logs, and shared digital resources provide continuous opportunities for growth. College supervisors maintain regular contact with candidates and school-based partners, while

structured assessment processes and formal intervention procedures ensure candidates receive timely guidance and support when needed.

Overall, the EPP provides a coherent system of clinical preparation. Through admission and completion requirements, clinical partnerships, qualified clinical faculty, intentional technology integration, and continuous candidate support, the initial preparation program effectively prepares candidates to enter the teaching profession.

Advanced Programs

As the EPP's advanced preparation program, the Graduate Studies Department has established a comprehensive system for developing educational leaders through carefully structured clinical experiences, assessment processes, school partnerships, and ongoing candidate support. The program is grounded in the Four Directional Conceptual Framework and intentionally aligns candidate preparation with Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards, South Dakota State Competencies, and Lakota leadership values of bravery, generosity, fortitude, and wisdom.

The EPP maintains clearly defined entry, progression, and exit requirements that ensure candidates are prepared for advanced clinical practice. Prior to beginning the leadership internship, candidates must successfully complete prerequisite coursework, maintain the required GPA, attend internship orientation, submit an internship application, and secure an approved placement site and qualified school-based mentor. Internship placements must meet program, licensure, and conflict-of-interest requirements and receive final approval from the EPP. To complete clinical practice successfully, candidates participate in a supervised internship spanning two semesters, maintain activity logs and reflective journals, complete leadership experiences aligned with program standards, and engage regularly with faculty supervisors and school-based mentors. Program completion requires successful completion of internship hours, clinical evaluations, portfolio requirements, graduation requirements, and the completion and defense of the School Community Action Project (SCAP).

The EPP ensures candidate development through a systematic progression model. Candidates begin by developing foundational leadership dispositions, philosophies, and professional competencies before progressing into field-based assignments that require application of leadership theory within authentic educational settings. The internship serves as the culminating clinical experience, providing opportunities for candidates to assume substantial leadership responsibilities across instructional leadership, organizational management, ethical practice, collaboration, and school improvement. This developmental structure supports the gradual transition from aspiring educational leader to practicing school administrator. Candidates confirmed that this structure has given them the skills and the confidence to assume leadership roles in their school and communities grounded in Lakota values and traditions.

Candidate proficiency is evaluated through multiple measures that provide evidence of readiness for leadership roles. Assessment instruments include course-based field assignments, internship evaluations, performance matrices, digital portfolios, and the School Community Action Project. As the program's capstone assessment, the SCAP requires candidates to identify a significant school improvement need, conduct research, develop an action plan, and demonstrate the integration of leadership standards, state competencies, and Lakota leadership philosophy. Candidate performance is further evaluated through formal assessments completed by

Cooperating On-site Administrators (COSAs), portfolio audits, and ongoing faculty review of leadership artifacts and reflective activities.

Technology integration is an important component of the advanced program and is embedded throughout coursework and clinical practice. The EPP ensures candidates develop the capacity to use technology as both an instructional and administrative leadership tool. During internships, candidates evaluate technology systems, analyze information management processes, assess instructional technology needs, review infrastructure and technology policies, and identify resources that support school improvement initiatives.

A notable strength of the EPP is its systematic approach to selecting and preparing school-based clinical faculty. Cooperating On-site Administrators are required to be licensed, practicing principals with the expertise necessary to mentor leadership candidates in authentic educational environments. Candidates may not complete internships under their immediate supervisors, ensuring objectivity in mentoring and evaluation. The EPP reviews and approves all internship placements and mentors through a formal oversight process that includes placement agreements, supervisory approval, and verification that leadership experiences align with program standards.

The EPP also provides comprehensive preparation and support for school-based clinical faculty. Mentor administrators participate in formal placement meetings with candidates and college supervisors to review internship expectations, leadership standards, assessment procedures, and program requirements. Clinical faculty are provided with program handbooks and internship materials that outline ELCC standards, the Four Directional Conceptual Framework, and expectations for supervising candidates. Ongoing communication between mentors and faculty supervisors ensures consistency in candidate assessment and supports successful implementation of internship experiences and the SCAP.

Continuous candidate support is a defining feature of the advanced program. Faculty also provide individualized mentoring during the development and defense of the School Community Action Project, helping candidates connect research, school improvement priorities, professional standards, and Lakota cultural values. In addition, the EPP monitors candidate progress throughout the program and provides intervention and support when academic or professional concerns arise. Candidate interviews confirmed the faculty support and celebration of the students as a highlight of the program. That support has been instrumental in enabling candidates to continue in the program when facing personal challenges and moments of self-doubt.

The EPP's commitment to candidate development extends beyond graduation through induction support and ongoing program evaluation processes. Employer and graduate satisfaction surveys provide valuable information regarding graduate preparedness and program effectiveness, allowing the EPP to continuously refine leadership preparation and remain responsive to the needs of schools and communities.

Overall, the EPP demonstrates a coherent and well-developed system for advanced leadership preparation. Through admission and completion requirements, standards-based clinical experiences, qualified clinical faculty, intentional technology integration, comprehensive assessment systems, and sustained candidate support, the advanced program effectively prepares candidates to assume leadership roles and contribute meaningfully to school improvement, organizational effectiveness, and educational excellence.

Summary of Strengths:

- Stakeholders noted that they felt comfortable communicating with OLC regarding concerns, questions, and program-related issues, and they highlighted the value of ongoing informal conversations about program performance. Students also expressed appreciation for the care and support provided by faculty when navigating academic and personal challenges.

- The integration of Lakota culture and values was repeatedly emphasized as a significant strength by both students and stakeholders. For many students, this cultural emphasis was a primary factor in choosing the program. Stakeholders also praised the ways in which OLC prepares candidates to incorporate Lakota culture into their lessons, classrooms, and school communities, allowing them to serve students in culturally responsive and meaningful ways.

Areas for Improvement:

- The EPP would benefit from implementing a formalized and consistent process across the initial and advanced program for documenting communication with clinical partners and collecting feedback from stakeholders before and after field and clinical experiences.

Rationale:

- While the program demonstrates strong collaborative relationships with candidates, cooperating teachers, and school partners through ongoing informal communication, a more standardized approach would strengthen consistency and documentation across placements. Establishing formal protocols for placement meetings, documenting key communications, and systematically collecting feedback from candidates, placement supervisors, and administrators both before and after clinical experiences would provide clearer evidence of partnership engagement. Such practices would support continuous improvement efforts and enhance the EPP's ability to evaluate and refine clinical experiences over time.

Recommendation: Standard Met