

Fitchburg State University

Formal Review Report

Review Results for PK-12 Educator Preparation Programs in Massachusetts

2019-2020

Final Report: March 9, 2021

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906
Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370

Contents

- Review Context 3
 - 2019-2020 Formal Review 3
 - COVID-19 Pandemic & Formal Review Context..... 4
 - Sponsoring Organization Specific Context..... 5
 - Glossary of Key Terms..... 6
- Overview of Approval Status 8
 - Approval Recommendation 8
 - Organization Level: Domain Recommendations 9
- Domain: The Organization 10
- Domain: Partnerships 13
- Domain: Continuous Improvement 16
- Domain: The Candidate 19
- Domain: Field Based Experiences 22
- Domain: Instruction 27
 - Program Level: Domain Recommendations 27
 - Instruction: Initial, Baccalaureate Teacher Programs..... 27
 - Instruction: Initial, Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Programs 29
 - Instruction: Reading Specialist Program 30
 - Instruction: All Administrator Programs..... 32
 - Instruction: New Program – Autism Endorsement..... 35
- Appendix A: COVID-19 Response..... 36
- Appendix B: Findings Requiring Action..... 40
- Appendix C: Formal Review Decision Making..... 41

Review Context

The information below provides context for the report that follows.

2019-2020 Formal Review

Standards

The formal review was conducted in accordance with the regulations outlined in [603 CMR 7.00](#) and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) [Guidelines for Program Approval](#). New standards for program approval were passed in 2012 which elevated expectations for review and approval in the Commonwealth. Through the review process, DESE seeks to ensure that preparation in Massachusetts results in effective educators ready to support the success of all students. Several key shifts articulated by the 2012 Program Approval standards are worth noting as context for the report that follows:

- **Expectation of Impact:** Providers are required to demonstrate the impact of their preparation programs through the outcomes-based review. Evidence of program impact is weighted to a greater extent in the review process, which examines both inputs and outcomes. Evidence of outcomes may include information collected and reported by the organization and also includes state-reported output measures. For the 2020-2021 review cycle, these state-reported output measures included:
 - Completer totals
 - Employment data (placement overall and by district as well as retention)
 - Educator Evaluation Data (for top three employing districts)
 - Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL) data (pass rates)
 - Stakeholder surveys

Several output measures are published on DESE's [public profiles](#). Future reviews will include additional state-reported output measures as they become available.

- **Emphasis at the Organizational Level:** In Massachusetts, approval is granted to a Sponsoring Organization (SO). The authority granted to providers is significant in terms of both scope and duration. This means the Commonwealth places a great responsibility in SOs to maintain and improve high-quality programs during the period of approval¹. As a result, the summative evaluation that is the formal review seeks to ensure that there are systematic and structural elements in place at the organizational level, providing greater assurances that all programs are producing effective educators during the term of approval. The Program Approval standards are categorized into six categories, called domains, five of which are evaluated at the organizational level: The Organization, Partnerships, Continuous Improvement, The Candidate, and Field-Based Experiences. The sixth is the Instruction Domain.

Process

In order to uphold the rigor articulated in the 2012 standards, DESE built an improved formal review process. The 2019-2020 review year was the sixth implementation of this process. In the design and development of the process, DESE sought to ensure that it is effective, efficient, and consistently rigorous. The ultimate goal is that the review process builds a solid evidence base for decision-making. Several integrated features of the system help achieve this goal, including:

- **Evaluation Tools & Criteria** – The Review Evaluation Tool is the centerpiece of DESE's review system. It makes explicit the criteria against which Sponsoring Organizations are evaluated and guides the

¹ Period of approval is seven years, unless the program ceases to meet requirements. Under [603 CMR 7.03\(6\)](#) "The Department may conduct an interim review of an approved preparation program on an as-needed basis."

review team through the collection, analysis and evaluation of the evidence-base. The [Eval Tool Overview](#) provides the most comprehensive discussion of the development and planned implementation of the review process.

- [Review Toolkit](#) – The Toolkit provides instructions and materials for each phase of the review. It ensures that the process is streamlined and consistent.
- [Elite cohort of Reviewers](#) – DESE recruits, selects, and trains an experienced group of educators to support the evaluation of SOs.

Based on implementation of this review system, DESE is confident in the judgments and decisions detailed in this report. For more information on Massachusetts’ program approval standards and review procedures, please email EducatorPreparation@mass.gov.

COVID-19 Pandemic & Formal Review Context

The formal review of the Fitchburg State University (FSU) was initiated in Fall 2018. The team at Fitchburg State had worked to compile an offsite portfolio to explain and share evidence demonstrating how Fitchburg State is meeting program approval criteria that was submitted to DESE in Fall 2019. The Fitchburg Stateteam and the DESE review team had plans to move forward with the Formal Review onsite visit scheduled for April 2020 until the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak necessitated the onsite visit be postponed.

In March 2020, the Governor of Massachusetts declared a [State of Emergency](#) in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. With confirmed cases on the rise, the Governor placed restrictions on gatherings and ordered PK-12 Schools to close (Governor’s COVID-19 Orders [#3](#), [#16](#), and [#28](#)).

In adherence with the orders, Sponsoring Organizations and PK-12 schools/districts closed physical buildings and transitioned to distance (remote) teaching and learning. As a result, the experiences of educator preparation candidates enrolled in programs during Spring 2020 were impacted. Given the extenuating statewide circumstances, DESE expanded waiver guidance on the implementation of the end-of-program performance assessments to allow Sponsoring Organizations to approach supporting candidates during the pandemic with more flexibility.

While many Sponsoring Organizations and PK-12 schools/districts opened doors to candidates and students in Fall 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to require Sponsoring Organizations to nimbly respond to the changes in their geographic regions and to the policies set forth by their partner PK-12 schools/districts.

With the understanding that the COVID-19 outbreak required Sponsoring Organizations to deviate from routine practices in order to respond to candidates’, schools’/districts’, and the organization’s needs, DESE focused the formal review on the Sponsoring Organization’s educator preparation efforts pre-pandemic (prior to March 2020). For organizations undergoing review:

- When possible, DESE advised Sponsoring Organizations to prepare the offsite submission materials based on practices and evidence prior to the pandemic. Sponsoring Organizations may have also shared evidence reflective of ongoing systems and structures, which may include data collected during and after the state of emergency. Given that Fitchburg State submitted their offsite submission in Fall 2019, all offsite evidence referred to systems and structures implemented prior to March 2020.
- During the offsite phase of the formal review, DESE focused on state output measures available from the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years, pulling in data from 2016-17 as needed. DESE also considered

state output measures from 2019-20 as appropriate, recognizing the context of state closures related to the state of emergency.

- DESE worked with Fitchburg State to reschedule the onsite portion of the formal review to Fall 2020. Recognizing the ongoing pandemic, DESE and Fitchburg State converted the previously scheduled in-person onsite visit to a fully virtual onsite visit by moving all focus groups and interviews into a video conference format.
- During onsite portion of the formal review, DESE hosted virtual focus groups and facilitators instructed all stakeholder groups to focus responses on pre-pandemic experiences. DESE also provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their experience based on how Fitchburg State responded/is responding to the pandemic. In cases where recent examples were relevant, they have been highlighted in the report.

As a result, this report will focus on evidence from pre-March 2020, however, may also reference current efforts as appropriate.

Sponsoring Organization Specific Context

Overview

The following is an organization overview written by Fitchburg State University and provided to DESE during the offsite portion of the review:

Context: Fitchburg State University has been educating teachers for the past 125 years. As we celebrate our 125th year as an institution of higher education, we are proud that our mission, vision and academic programs have always included a core focus on the education of quality teacher candidates. This past year we became the School of Education, and with that change we renewed our commitment to excellent preparation of teachers for the Commonwealth.

Fitchburg State’s School of Education is a dynamic organization, which focuses on continual quality improvement through data, quality instruction that is integrated with well-designed pre-practicum / practicum experiences, and programs that are grounded in our belief that FSU candidates will be “Classroom Ready” on day one.

Framework: The overarching theme of our [conceptual framework](#) is: The Educator as Reflective Leader. The programs are rooted in this value, with our curricular compass guided by four key directions: The Educator as: 1. Knowledgeable; 2. Ethical; 3. Skillful and 4. Caring.



Faculty in the Education Unit have worked to organize and articulate the multiple dimensions of the Education Unit programs within a defined knowledge base and relate them to our conceptual framework and mission. In our continued support of and complement of the Fitchburg State University mission's commitment to leadership and service to our community and the Commonwealth, the Educational Unit incorporates this leadership aspect into its Conceptual Framework.

Candidates plan, implement, and evaluate their effectiveness on students' learning through varied field experiences. Feedback from mentors and supervisors helps to nurture our Candidates' self-reflection so that they can examine perspectives, biases, and teaching practices. Candidates analyze data to make data driven decisions that impact instructional, building, and organizational decisions that influence student achievement. As Reflective Leaders, our Candidates become partners in the community, recognizing the importance of today's diverse society.

Mission Statement - The School of Education: We aspire to be a community of educational professionals whose individual expertise is collectively and deliberately constructed to enable all Fitchburg State University education candidates to fully realize the Conceptual Framework – knowledgeable, skillful, ethical, and caring educators as reflective leaders – so that all children and young adults will experience the delight and power in learning and become active, contributing citizens in a global society

Offerings and Organization: Our initial licensure programs in the [Education Department](#) are Early Childhood, Elementary, and Special Education. Our middle school and secondary programs are housed in the [Program Area – Secondary Middle School](#) (See History, English, Math, Science, Biology, and Engineering Technology departments), - this is a team which is composed of both liberal arts and education faculty, who ensure content SMKs and professional teaching standards are met in the curriculum. We offer these programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, and we remain committed to ensuring quality teachers enter the workforce. Along with the initial licensure programs, we have specific graduate programs for, School Counselor, Reading Specialist, Autism Disorder, and Educational Leadership and Management – Principal K-8 and 9-12 and Supervisor/ Director K-12.

Information about Fitchburg State University is best accessed on the Sponsoring Organization's website: <https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/>

Additional data and information specific to educator preparation programs can be found on [DESE's public profiles](#) page.

Glossary of Key Terms

The terms below are used throughout this report. As these terms have state-specific meaning and are often misunderstood, DESE has defined them below. For ease of understanding, the definitions provided are informal. For the regulatory definitions, see [603 CMR 7.02](#). Commonly used synonyms are *italicized*.

Sponsoring Organization (SO): Institution of higher education or alternative preparation organization that provides, or seeks to provide, approved preparation programs with the ability to endorse candidates for Massachusetts licensure; *prep provider, program, institution*

Program: Content- and license-specific program within a SO. Programs are labeled by the subject area and level of the license being sought (e.g., Mathematics 5-8, Mathematics 8-12 are individual programs)

Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP): A culminating assessment required for program completion in the Commonwealth. The assessment establishes an intentional bridge from training to practice by aligning expectations with the [Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework](#).

Candidate: A person who is currently enrolled in an Ed Prep Program; *students*

Completer: A person who has successfully completed an Ed Prep Program; *alumni, graduates*

Student: PK-12 child

Supervising Practitioner (SP): A licensed teacher who oversees the candidates' field-based experience; *cooperating teacher, mentor teacher*

Program Supervisor (PS): A member of the SO staff. The PS serves as the liaison between the SO and the practicum placement. He/she/they is/are responsible for overseeing the student teaching experience, observing and providing feedback to the candidate, and coordinating the assessment for program completion

Faculty: A person who teaches coursework in the program. This includes part-time (sometimes referred to as adjunct) and full-time faculty; *instructors; adjuncts; professors*

Initial License: A candidate is eligible for an Initial license once he/she/they successfully complete(s) an educator preparation program approved by the Commissioner, and meets other eligibility requirements established by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Professional License: A candidate is eligible for a Professional License, which is an advanced license, after obtaining an Initial license for at least three years and completing additional graduate coursework.

See [Appendix C: Formal Review Decision Making for additional terms and definitions](#).

Overview of Approval Status

Approval Recommendation

As a result of this review, The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in conjunction with a team of reviewers, has determined that Fitchburg State University be recommended for “Formal Approval.”

According to the *Guidelines for Program Approval*:

Formal Approval

A program that has been granted formal approval is recognized by the state to have met all standards for preparing effective educators in Massachusetts. Approved programs are authorized by the state to endorse candidates for licensure with full reciprocity benefits.

DESE is recommending Fitchburg State for Formal Approval. Evidence generated throughout the offsite and onsite portion of the review indicates that Fitchburg State has many strengths in its work preparing educators. Fitchburg State demonstrated consistency in well-preparing educators as well as the capacity to make improvements to programs where necessary, as outlined in this report.

DESE rated Fitchburg State “Exemplary” in the Organization domain and “Proficient” in the Partnership, Continuous Improvement, Candidate, and Field-Based Experiences domains. Several themes emerged within and across domains that contributed to these ratings, including:

- Strength of the organizational systems and structures supporting educator preparation, which has contributed to consistency across domains and programs while maintaining flexibility and responsiveness to stakeholder needs
- Attention to continuous improvement efforts, including attention to regularly sharing data and soliciting input from a variety of stakeholders to inform decision-making
- Supportive, mutually beneficial partnerships with PK-12 districts that benefit educators, students, and candidates through a variety of professional development, student learning, and hiring practices
- Robust selection and communication processes for Supervising Practitioners, including collaborative meetings with Supervising Practitioners, Program Supervisors, and Candidates

Also of note is the recent work Fitchburg State has undertaken to evaluate its systems, structures, and practices in an effort to promote antiracism both within Fitchburg State and in Completers’ practice. Several Candidates/Completers noted the emphasis on antiracism and culturally responsive teaching in their programs, and other stakeholders highlighted the recent supports provided by Fitchburg State to develop and interrogate their own practices.

Overall, Fitchburg State’s stakeholders are positive about their experience. Onsite, 84 percent of Candidates/Completers (n=88), 100 percent of Ed Prep Faculty (n=20), 100 percent of Program Supervisors (n=6), 100 percent of Supervising Practitioners (n=13), and 100 percent of Arts & Sciences Faculty (n=4) agreed that they would recommend Fitchburg State’s programs to others. Additionally, 87 percent of Candidates/Completers (n=31), 100 percent of Ed Prep Faculty (n=20), 100 percent of Program Supervisors (n=10), 92 percent of Supervising Practitioners (n=13), and 100 percent of Arts & Sciences Faculty (n=4) agreed that candidates who complete Fitchburg State’s

programs are prepared to be effective educators. Given these perceptions and the strengths noted throughout this report, Fitchburg State is recommended for Formal Approval.

For more information on the decision-making process and definitions for the rating levels, see [Appendix C](#).

The chart below provides an overview of the rating for each domain.

Organization Level: Domain Recommendations

Domain	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
The Organization	✓			
Partnerships		✓		
Continuous Improvement		✓		
The Candidate		✓		
Field-Based Experiences		✓		
Instruction (By Program)	See Program Level: Domain Recommendations			

Domain: The Organization

Is the organization set up to support and sustain effective preparation programs?

Commendations

None

Met Criteria

- ✓ ORG 1: Organization demonstrates sufficient capacity and authority to effectively support and sustain effective educator preparation programs.
 - According to their offsite submission, all educator preparation programs at Fitchburg State are overseen by the School of Education, led by the Education Dean. The Dean oversees the Education Department and Program Area Secondary/Middle School Education (PA-SM) Chairs who manage the day to day operations of all programs as well as the Director of Licensure and Coordinator of Placement, Partnerships, and Recruitment who manage licensure and field-based experiences across programs. Recent decisions made by Fitchburg State leadership include creating the PA-SM structure to oversee program coordinators from each content area for middle and secondary teacher licensure, leading to a common curriculum and collaboration time across these programs, and redesigning pre-practicum experiences to increase pre-practicum hours and coaching/feedback opportunities for teacher candidates. Onsite, all (n=6) Arts & Sciences Faculty, all (n=10) Full-Time Education Faculty, and 82 percent (n=11) Part-Time Education Faculty agreed that leadership for preparation programs has sufficient capacity and authority to make decisions necessary to support effective educator preparation programs. There was consensus when one Part-Time Faculty member shared, "Leadership is really strong and encourages [participation from] part-time staff in decision-making and changes that need to occur and how those [changes] impact our students."
- ✓ ORG 2: Systems/structures support collaboration within departments and across disciplines and improve candidate preparation.
 - Fitchburg State's offsite submission described several structures that support collaboration within departments and across disciplines, including monthly unit meetings with both Education and Arts & Sciences faculty, PA-SM and Education Department meetings, and University Committees. Onsite, all (n=10) Full-Time Faculty, 70 percent (n=10) of Part-Time Faculty, and 50 percent (n=6) of Arts & Sciences Faculty agreed there are structures and systems that support collaboration within departments. Ninety percent (n=10) of Full-Time Faculty, 50 percent (n=10) of Part-Time Faculty, and all (n=6) Arts & Sciences Faculty agreed there are structures and systems that support collaboration across departments. One Arts & Sciences Faculty member explained, "At the department level, all of our faculty are involved in teaching SMK, so decisions about teacher preparation through SMK go to the entire history faculty. Each department also has a secondary education Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating across disciplines." There was consensus when another added, "The inclusion of the secondary education Coordinators who are SMK specialists in the Education department meetings has been useful." All (n=10) Full-Time Faculty, 80 percent (n=10) of Part-Time Faculty, and 83 percent (n=6) of Arts & Sciences Faculty agreed that collaboration has resulted in improved candidate preparation. Several examples of improved preparation were cited by Faculty members, including the new Life Science for Educators course developed by Biology, Chemistry, and Education faculty and the study abroad program developed by SEI faculty.
- ✓ ORG 3: Budgets support ongoing educator preparation program sustainability and allocate resources according to the Sponsoring Organization's goals.

- Ninety percent (n=10) of Full-Time Faculty and 55 percent (n=11) of Part-Time Faculty agreed that the budget allocates resources to the educator preparation programs according to organizational goals. All (n=10) Full-Time Faculty, 82 percent (n=11) of Part-Time Faculty, and 83 percent (n=6) of Arts & Sciences Faculty agreed they have the resources they need to effectively prepare educators. One Part-Time Faculty member explained, “I’m not aware of the particulars [of the] budget, but always feel that when I need resources they are made available to me.” Other Faculty members cited grants to support TeachLive, alternative assignments to support the creation of a collaborative curriculum, and access to standards-based curricula and materials as evidence of budgetary support. The offsite submission includes additional examples of budgetary allocations made to support goals for educator preparation, including technology and professional development to support Goal 1C to make innovative use of developing technologies and providing additional supervision for pre-practicum candidates in support of Goal 3A2 to broaden and expand opportunities for pre-practicum.
- ✓ ORG 4: All candidates, regardless of program or delivery model, have equitable and consistent access to resources.
- Onsite, 81 percent (n=88) of Candidates/Completers agreed that they have/had equitable access to the resources necessary to complete their program requirements. Candidates/Completers described access to advising, MTEL preparation courses, and assessment and curricular materials to support their preparation. One Candidate explained that, as part of an Advisory Board, they have seen Fitchburg State tackle issues of equity, “It is a big step that they are making in recognizing equity and diversity in schools. We’ve talked about MTELS and how to help students pass MTELS. I believe they started [additional MTEL preparation courses] and additional programs to support diversity.” Another Candidate shared, “I was a little nervous about being in the hybrid program with so many courses online, but it has been really easy to reach out to faculty and the communication was really beneficial.”
- ✓ ORG 5: Recruitment, selection, and evaluation processes result in the hiring and retention of effective faculty/instructors and staff.
- While Fitchburg State’s offsite submission describes the process for recruitment, hiring, and evaluation of full-time tenure track faculty, the processes for part-time faculty were not described in the offsite submission. Despite that, there was agreement among stakeholders that faculty/instructors are effective. Additionally, there was consensus when one Part-Time Faculty member described their evaluation experience: “[I was observed] for over an hour, then we had a conference, then they prepared and submitted a detailed evaluation. The quality of supervision and evaluation is quite good.” Another Part-Time Faculty member added, “I had the same person [observe my teaching]. He understood what was going on and gave valuable feedback.” Full-Time Faculty members also described a robust evaluation cycle that includes “observations, student feedback, and professional feedback [that] supports us in our growth as professors.” Among Faculty members, agreement rates were as follows:

	% Agree		
	Full-Time Faculty (n=10)	Part-Time Faculty (n=10)	Arts & Sciences Faculty (n=5)
Our recruitment and hiring processes result in the employment of effective faculty.	100	80	80
Our evaluation processes result in the retention of effective faculty.	100	90	60
Faculty are evaluated based on our ability to effectively prepare educators.	90	100	20

- Seventy-seven percent (n=88) of Candidates/Completers agreed that faculty/instructors were effective in preparing candidates for their licensure role. One Candidate/Completer shared, “[Faculty were] caring, passionate, responsive, and effective. Classes were daunting and rigorous, but I came out prepared. The courses spiral a little bit, so everything comes together nicely.” There was consensus when another Candidate/Completer added, “I felt there was a really good mix of institutional knowledge and practical knowledge. They gave you philosophies and things from a curriculum basis and add a lot of ‘what you’ll actually see and encounter.’ That gave you a good sense of what you’re going to step into in the role.”
- ✓ ORG 6: Faculty/instructors and staff engage in professional development or work in the field that has a positive impact on the quality of preparation provided to candidates.
- Onsite, 90 percent (n=10) of Full-Time Faculty, 80 percent (n=10) of Part-Time Faculty, and 80 percent (n=5) of Arts & Sciences Faculty agreed that they participate in professional development experiences through or supported by Fitchburg State that have a positive impact on the work of preparing educators. One Full-Time Faculty member shared, “Every faculty member is allotted [funding for professional development]. Fitchburg State also provides professional development twice a year. Also, faculty from across campus contribute to workshops through the Center for Teaching and Learning. Some topics have included assessment, instructions, socio-emotional learning, anti-racist pedagogy, and supporting students with disabilities.” A Part-Time Faculty member added, “From a PD perspective, especially this year, the school is constantly coming out with PD opportunities that are well-timed. We just had diversity and anti-racism training.” In the Welcome Meeting, Fitchburg State described a recent partnership with the Collaborative for Education Services to support faculty to explore equity and social justice issues related to curriculum and instruction, and “build the staff community to be vulnerable and supportive of a collegial review of Eurocentricity and racial bias as it impacts curriculum, instruction, and advising within the Education department.”

Findings

None

Overall Domain Recommendation	✓	Exemplary
		Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

Fitchburg State has taken intentional steps to structure their educator preparation programs in a manner that ensures consistency, promotes collaboration within and across departments and disciplines, and well-supports faculty members through evaluation and professional development. The restructuring of the PA-SM programs and the existing structure of the Educator Preparation Department have fostered ongoing collaboration across departments to ensure candidates are well-prepared. Evidence indicates that faculty are effective at preparing educators and are supported through robust evaluation and professional development systems. Additionally, budgetary decisions are aligned with programmatic goals and have fostered improved preparation for candidates. Across domains within this report, DESE found evidence for few findings, signaling the strength of the Organization is supporting educator preparation programs. Additionally, recent transitions in leadership at the organization occurred without negatively impacting this level of consistency. As a result of these intentional systems and structures to support and sustain educator preparation programs, and the consistency of their impact on candidate preparation, this domain is rated Exemplary.

Professional Suggestions
None

Domain: Partnerships

Is educator preparation from your organization meeting the needs of the PK-12 system?

Commendations

None

Met Criteria

- ✓ PAR 1: Sponsoring Organization responds to the needs of PK-12 districts/schools.
 - Onsite, Partners shared that they have a collaborative relationship with Fitchburg State that is responsive to their needs. All (n=6) Partners agreed that their partnership with Fitchburg State is mutually beneficial. One Partner explained, “I meet once monthly with Dean Murray to discuss our teacher pipeline and how to bring more professional development to our educators. There is a lot of communication and efforts to meet the needs of our students.” Eighty-three percent (n=6) of Partners agreed that Fitchburg State has inquired about their needs. Fifty percent (n=6) agreed Fitchburg State has been responsive to their district’s hiring needs, 67 percent (n=6) agreed Fitchburg State has helped shape curriculum and instruction in preparation programs to better serve their district, and 33 percent (n=6) agreed Fitchburg State has helped meet professional development needs. Fitchburg State cited several additional examples of their response to meet the needs of the McKay Arts Academy, their partner PreK-8 school, in their offsite submission. First, they worked collaboratively with the McKay administrative team to address behavioral concerns through consultation, professional development, and student support resources, resulting in improved student behavior and positive feedback from students, teachers, and candidates. Fitchburg State has also partnered with the McKay Academy to develop and implement a collaborative reading program, which provides instruction and field-based experiences for candidates who provide students with differentiated reading instruction.
- ✓ PAR 2: PK-12 partners make contributions that inform Sponsoring Organization’s continuous improvement efforts.
 - Fitchburg State indicated that they collect input from partners through a variety of settings and formats, including the Dean’s Education Advisory Board, Superintendents Breakfasts, Principal Groups, and informal conversations. Onsite, Faculty described several examples of improvements driven by partner contributions, including switching to the Google platform and providing candidates access to Chromebooks in preparation coursework to align with the technology used in partner districts and designing new pre-practicum experiences for candidates. Eighty-three percent (n=6) of Partners agreed that Fitchburg State solicits their contributions and 67 percent (n=6) agreed that Fitchburg State has used those contributions to inform continuous improvement efforts. One Partner said, “Fitchburg State invited local school district leaders to discuss what courses they can offer to better prepare candidates for teaching positions in our districts.” Another added, “After each semester, they have reached out to what worked well, what didn’t, and what needs to change. They ask what candidates need to [better] prepare for and make adjustments as to how they worked with [candidates].”
- ✓ PAR 3: Partnerships improve experience for preparation candidates.
 - Eighty-three percent (n=6) of Partners agreed that their partnership with the organization has improved the experience for candidates. Several Partners cited the hiring pipeline that has

developed through their partnership as a key benefit for both their district and Fitchburg State candidates. One Partner shared, “Many of our open positions are filled by Fitchburg State graduates. We have hired Fitchburg State students who complete their student teaching in our district, and Fitchburg State also helps when we have hard to fill positions.” Another agreed saying, “Whenever we are in need of a candidate for a position, we always reach out to Fitchburg State to help.” Similarly, a Candidate/Completer shared, “I was able to get a full time teaching job when I did my practicum [as a result of the relationship between Fitchburg State and my employing district], so I ended up doing my practicum while I was a first year teacher. I felt very prepared and supported and everything I learned leading up to that was clicking and meshing up with my school, and what I was set up to do, and what the expectations were.” All (n=6) Program Supervisors agreed that Fitchburg State’s partnerships with PK-12 schools/districts has improved the experience for candidates. Program Supervisors primarily cited the collaboration between Fitchburg State and its partners as well as the strength of the Supervising Practitioners in improving candidates’ experiences

- ✓ PAR 4: Partnerships positively impact the outcomes of PK-12 students.
 - Eighty-three percent (n=6) of Partners agreed that their partnership with Fitchburg State has had a positive impact on the outcomes of students in their school/district and 83 percent (n=6) agreed that new hires from Fitchburg State have a positive impact on student learning from day one in the classroom/school. Similarly, 83 percent (n=14) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that their school’s partnership with Fitchburg State has improved outcomes in their classroom/school/district. One Supervising Practitioner shared, “One of the professors comes into my room with 18 pre-practicum candidates three times each week. My students have really improved their reading scores and skills.” Another added, “Some of the ideas candidates bring stay with us and really improve our practice as a school.” As noted above in PAR 1, Fitchburg State described in their offsite submission a reduction in behavioral incidents and increased reading and writing scores as evidence of the impact of their partnership with the McKay Academy.
- ✓ PAR 5: Sponsoring Organization evaluates partnerships on an ongoing basis, sustains those that are effective, and takes steps to improve those that are not.
 - In their offsite submission, Fitchburg State indicated that they have an advisory board comprised of partner school principals that helps evaluate partnerships to ensure they are mutually beneficial. They also collect and analyze survey data from partner schools and other stakeholders. In the Field-Based Experiences Staff Interview, they shared examples of discontinuing and/or working to improve partnerships following principal turnover and other challenges. Partners onsite confirmed the regular communication with Fitchburg State helps them ensure their partnerships are effective. Eighty-three percent (n=6) of Partners agreed that Fitchburg State evaluates the quality of their partnership on an ongoing basis and that Fitchburg State takes steps to improve their partnership.

Findings

None

Overall Domain Recommendation		Exemplary
	✓	Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

This domain is rated Proficient because Fitchburg State has established and maintained partnerships that

serve the needs of PK-12 schools and districts. Partners expressed satisfaction with their relationship with Fitchburg State, often citing the frequent and robust communication with Fitchburg State as a key component of their mutually beneficial partnership. Several Partners also cited the hiring pipeline they have developed with Fitchburg State and Fitchburg State’s ongoing improvements to their preparation programs as examples of how Fitchburg State has been responsive to their needs. One Partner explained, “The partnership that has been built with FSU is crucial for [our district]. We continue to hire our student teachers consistently each year at a rate of 50% or more - some we would love to have but they are far from home so choose to go homeward bound. They consistently reach out for our opinions and thought and validate them too!” All (n=6) Partners onsite agreed with the following:

- Overall, I would recommend this program to others.
- I would recommend other schools/districts establish partnerships with this organization.
- Given the costs (e.g., monetary, time, capacity, etc.) of this partnership, my district is getting a valuable return on its investment.
- Only candidates that are ready to have a positive impact with students complete this program.
- Candidates who complete this program are prepared to be effective educators.
- I would hire candidates who complete this program.

Fitchburg State’s Declared Partners	Partners Represented Onsite	Top Hiring Districts (First Employing District, 2017-2018)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitchburg Public Schools • Leominster Public Schools • Lowell Public Schools • North Middlesex Regional School District • Sizer Charter School 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harvard Public Schools • Fitchburg Public Schools (2) • Leominster Public Schools (3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leominster Public Schools (8.8%) • Fitchburg Public Schools (6%) • North Middlesex Regional School District (4.3%) • Lowell Public Schools (4.1%)

Professional Suggestions

None

Domain: Continuous Improvement

Is your organization driven by continuous improvement efforts that result in better prepared educators?

Commendations

None

Met Criteria

- ✓ CI 1: Sponsoring Organization monitors individual program efficacy and ensures that candidates who complete the program are prepared to be effective in the licensure role.
 - In their offsite submission, Fitchburg State explained that the systems and processes used to monitor individual program efficacy fall within four categories: Data and Assessment Review, Curriculum Committees, Departmental/Unit Meetings, and Advisory Boards/Constituent Groups. For each category, Fitchburg State described how evidence of program efficacy is collected and analyzed collaboratively to inform decision-making. Recent improvements driven by these processes include expanding TeachLive to all undergraduate programs after reviewing pilot data and redesigning pre-practicum experiences based on exit surveys and Advisory Board feedback. While the examples shared in the offsite focused heavily on Baccalaureate Teacher programs, evidence collected onsite indicates that Candidates/Completers are being well-prepared across programs. Among Candidates/Completers, there was agreement that their program had prepared them to be effective in the licensure role ranging from 81 percent (n=27) for Baccalaureate Teacher Candidates/Completers to 100 percent (n=5) for School Guidance Candidates/Completers (see additional data in the Instruction domain below). All Partners (n=6), all Program Supervisors (n=6), all Faculty (n=24), and 92 percent of Supervising Practitioners (n=14) also agreed that completers from Fitchburg State's programs are prepared to be effective in their licensure role.
- ✓ CI 2: The consistent and ongoing use of internal and external evidence, including DESE data, informs strategic decisions that impact the Sponsoring Organization, education programs, candidates, and employing schools/districts.
 - Faculty review data reports that include Candidate Disposition Rubric data, Lesson Plan Rubric data, Teacher Work Sample Rubric data, Teacher Candidate Exit Survey data, DESE Edwin Reports, and CAP Rubric data twice each year, according to the offsite submission. Based on these conversations, Program Chairs submit a data review worksheet with observations and possible strategic action steps. Data reports are also shared with Advisory Boards and referenced during unit/department meetings to support ongoing decision-making. The Program Quality and Impact Committee reviews additional data across three years to highlight evidence that may inform decision-making. Recent decisions made as a result of this data review process include hiring an additional academic advisor for the Post-Baccalaureate Moderate Disabilities program (based on exit survey and DESE Stakeholder Survey data) and updating CAP trainings to be more specific (based on exit surveys, Licensure Packet Rubric data, and Program Supervisor feedback surveys). Onsite, 90 percent (n=10) of Full-Time Faculty, all (n=10) Part-Time Faculty, and all (n=6) Program Supervisors agreed that Fitchburg State makes strategic decisions based on internal and external evidence. All (n=10) Full-Time Faculty, all (n=10) Part-Time Faculty, and all (n=6) Program Supervisors also agreed that data, including DESE data, is consistently used to inform strategic decisions that impact the organization, preparation programs, candidates, and employing schools/districts. One Faculty member shared, "Based on DESE data and student surveys, we have completely revamped our undergraduate programs to increase coaching models and classroom experience."

- ✓ CI 3: Sponsoring Organization acts on feedback solicited from internal and external stakeholders (including candidates, graduates, district and school personnel, and employers) in continuous improvement efforts.
 - Onsite, 73 percent (n=88) of Candidates/Completers, 85 percent (n=13) of Supervising Practitioners, and all (n=6) of Program Supervisors agreed that Fitchburg State collects their feedback about the quality of their educator preparation programming. Forty-two percent (n=88) of Candidates/Completers, 77 percent (n=13) of Supervising Practitioners, and all (n=6) Program Supervisors agreed that Fitchburg State has made changes as a result of their feedback. While some Candidates/Completers indicated they were unsure what changes had been made based on their feedback, others cited several examples. There was consensus when one explained, “I noticed several professors that would say, ‘this didn’t work last year so we are trying it differently’ and had changed the syllabus based on feedback.” Another Candidate/Completer shared, “Pre-practicum hours used to be [scheduled between classes] when I started the program and as I was completing they designated one day during the week to pre-practicum hours. It was built as a class so it was in your schedule and you did not need to fit it in between classes. This was a great change because it was challenging to get enough hours in when classes were scattered throughout the week.” In their offsite submission, Fitchburg State described additional examples informed by stakeholder feedback and Advisory Board (comprised of Faculty, Administrators, Supervising Practitioners, Teacher Candidates, Principals, Alumni, Parents, and Community members) input, including utilizing the Google Platform, purchasing Chromebooks, and other examples noted above in CI 1 and CI 2.
- ✓ CI 4: Goals articulated in the State Annual Report yield improvements to the Sponsoring Organization’s educator preparation programs.
 - According to their offsite submission, Fitchburg State’s annual goals are finalized by the Dean of Education and are informed by faculty, data reports, the Advisory Board, and the Provost. Recent goals and progress towards them include:
 - 2016: Review teacher preparation programs to determine appropriate expansion and/or consolidation. As a result of this goal, Fitchburg State closed 22 programs for low enrollment and proposed an Autism Endorsement program. Undergraduate retention rates have improved since these efforts.
 - 2016: Broaden and expand opportunities for pre-practicum to meet the needs of candidates, Fitchburg State, and partner schools/districts. Fitchburg State restructured pre-practicum experiences to provide additional coaching and feedback opportunities and more classroom experience, resulting in improved agreement rates in undergraduate exit surveys.

Findings

None

Overall Domain Recommendation		Exemplary
	✓	Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

Evidence indicates that Fitchburg State is driven by continuous improvement efforts that result in better prepared educators. All stakeholder groups were able to describe programmatic improvements made as a result of the strategic use of data and/or feedback from stakeholder groups. Several also described how

Fitchburg State “continues to grow with the times” as a result of their focus on continuous improvement efforts. Fitchburg State has a robust process for reviewing a variety of internal and external evidence, including DESE data, university data, and stakeholder feedback, at several points throughout each year and through a variety of lenses and structures. These intentional systems have led to improvements to programs ranging from coursework changes, to technology use, to field-based experience structure and support. As a result of the evidence demonstrating their continuous improvement efforts, Fitchburg State is rated Proficient in this domain.

Professional Suggestions

None

Domain: The Candidate

Is the candidate's experience throughout the program contributing to effective preparation?

Commendations

None

Met Criteria

- ✓ CAN 2: Admission criteria and processes are rigorous such that those admitted demonstrate success in the program and during employment in the licensure role.
 - For Baccalaureate candidates, Fitchburg State requires all Education majors to meet the Stage One Review, with requirements including successful completion of 'core courses' and pre-practicum experiences, passing the Communication and Literacy MTEL, completion of two Candidate Dispositions Assessments, and a recommendation from the academic advisor to be formally admitted to the program. For all Post-Baccalaureate programs, applications include transcript review, passing the Communication and Literacy MTEL, letters of recommendation, resume, and an essay. Individual Post-Baccalaureate programs have additional requirements for specific coursework, MTEL passage, and/or minimum GPA requirements. A review of candidate artifacts confirmed this process. Onsite, 60 percent (n=10) of Full-Time Faculty, 80 percent (n=10) of Part-Time Faculty, and 75 percent (n=4) of Arts & Sciences Faculty agreed that admission criteria and processes for educator preparation programs are rigorous such that candidates admitted demonstrate success in the program. One Faculty member explained, "As a state institution, we have to follow the admission criteria of the other state universities; however, we do have additional gates/stage reviews to demonstrate student success in the programs." All (n=6) Program Supervisors and 71 percent (n=14) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that candidates have the required subject-matter knowledge to be successful in the licensure role. Similarly, all (n=6) Program Supervisors and 79 percent (n=14) of Supervising Practitioners agreed candidates have the dispositions necessary for effectiveness in the licensure role. There was agreement when one Supervising Practitioner shared, "I cannot say enough positive things about the [candidates I have supervised]. I highly recommend them and I would hire them."
- ✓ CAN 3: Candidates receive effective advising throughout the program (including, but not limited to, being knowledgeable about licensure requirements and career development and placement services that contribute to employment upon completion).
 - Sixty-seven percent (n=88) of Candidates/Completers agreed that, overall, they are/were effectively advised. Seventy-five percent (n=88) agreed they are/were well-informed by the program about the requirements for licensure and 67 percent (n=88) agreed they received career development and support that will have a positive impact on their ability to get employed upon completion. There was some consensus when one Candidate/Completer shared, "I felt super prepared because they laid it all out. The resources they gave us were super helpful and all of the meetings with licensure were a huge help because they made sure we were on the right track and there was no confusion. Right from the start they outlined everything." Another Candidate/Completer said, "I ask a lot of questions, but my advisor never made me feel like I asked too many! I got really great advising and felt very supported." While several Candidates/Completers from one cohort of a program noted their advisor "negatively impacted them in getting their degree," they added that Fitchburg State had considered that feedback and the advisor was no longer involved in their preparation program.
 - Ninety percent (n=10) of Full-Time Faculty and all (n=4) Part-Time Faculty agreed they have the time and resources necessary to effectively advise educator preparation candidates. Overall, 75

percent of candidate files (n=20) included robust evidence of advising throughout the candidate's experience. The remaining files, from Administrator and Reading Specialist candidates, included less evidence.

- ✓ CAN 4: Candidates at risk of not meeting standards are identified throughout the program (in pre-practicum, during coursework, and while in practicum) and receive necessary supports and guidance to improve or exit the program.
 - According to their offsite submission, Fitchburg State candidates are identified as at-risk using an Alert form, which prompts a meeting with the Candidate, their advisor, faculty/practitioner, and the Chair/Coordinator of the program to build an action plan. Candidate progress is also monitored on the SSC platform and Degree Works, and advisors use these platforms to inform recommendations for university support services as appropriate. One Faculty member explained, “At every meeting we now set aside time to discuss candidates at-risk or those we are concerned about.” Another added, “We use the Candidate Dispositions Assessment and Alert forms to identify and support students who are struggling, and make referrals for counseling when appropriate. Students who don’t meet standards are often counseled [into non-licensure tracks].” A Program Supervisor described the supports provided during field-based experiences, saying, “The three candidates who I have had concerns about, were each handled very efficiently and with a lot of empathy by Fitchburg State.” While several Supervising Practitioners shared that they had not had an at-risk candidate and did not have the information to agree with the statement(s), there was consensus among those who had supported a candidate at-risk when one explained, “The college supervisors did everything possible to help them get through. It was great to see everyone put their best effort in to help this candidate succeed and do well.” One Partner added, “When there are concerns regarding a student teacher's readiness, multiple steps are put into place and there is significant communication and various supports available to the candidate and the supervising teacher. Although this has happened infrequently, I have been impressed with the process.” Onsite, stakeholders generally agreed that candidates at-risk are identified and supported or counseled out:

	% Indicating 'Agree'				
	FT Faculty (n=10)	PT Faculty (n=10)	A&S Faculty (n=4)	Program Supervisors (n=6)	Supervising Practitioners (n=14)
Candidates at risk of not meeting standards for the licensure role are identified in [coursework and/or field-based experiences].	90	90	100	83	62
Candidates identified to be at risk receive the support needed to improve.	90	90	100	83	69
Candidates who are unable to meet standards exit the program.	90	80		83	23

- In a review of candidate artifacts (n=16), six candidates were identified as at-risk as a result of academic and/or dispositional concerns prior to their practicum and ten were identified during field-based experiences for dispositional and/or pedagogical concerns. Ultimately, eight of these candidates were endorsed for licensure after receiving supports and meeting expectations. Another is on track for endorsement, and the remaining seven switched to a non-licensure track.
- ✓ CAN 5: Waiver policy ensures that academic and professional standards of the licensure role are met.

- Fitchburg State's waiver policy requires a student who wishes to have something waived to initiate a student petition process. Fitchburg State provided evidence from 17 candidates of how this process was carried out; additionally, three candidates from the random sample also included documented waivers. The evidence indicates that Fitchburg State follows their waiver policy as outlined.

Findings

- CAN 1: Systems to recruit and admit candidates result in the increased racial and ethnic diversity of completers in the workforce.
 - In their offsite submission and in the Welcome Meeting, Fitchburg State described several new initiatives aimed at increasing the racial and ethnic diversity of completers in the workforce. These include both recruitment strategies such as early college pathways and partnerships with local districts and retention initiatives to increase retention of faculty and candidates of color, including the Hispanic Male Initiative providing mentoring and support to first year students, a Special Projects grant to use library resources to increase sense of belonging among diverse candidates, and the Dean’s Anti-racism Fund initiative to support the development or revision of antiracist curricula and professional development. At this time, these efforts have not yet yielded an increase in the racial and ethnic diversity of enrolled candidates. According to Edwin data, 97 percent (n=735) of 2019-2020 candidates who reported their race/ethnicity identified as White, compared with 95 percent (n=823) in 2018-2019 and 95 percent (n=809) in 2017-2018.

Overall Domain Recommendation		Exemplary
	✓	Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

Candidates/Completers onsite indicated that they were well-supported throughout their program, and that this contributed to their preparation. One Candidate/Completer explained, “I have had an extremely positive experience in Fitchburg State’s program. I love the community that has been created by the faculty and the expectations of the program.” Other stakeholders agreed that the admission, advising, and supports for candidates-at-risk well-serve Candidates/Completers and support their preparation. One Faculty member explained, “I can honestly say that Fitchburg State faculty are genuinely committed to meeting the individual needs of each candidate.” While Fitchburg State is not yet demonstrating that they have systems to recruit and admit candidates that will result in the increased racial and ethnic diversity of completers in the workforce, they are taking steps to address that need through both internal changes to curricular materials and pedagogy as well as external efforts at recruiting and supporting diverse candidates. As a result, this domain is rated Proficient.

Professional Suggestions

- In 2020, DESE issued an advisory on the use of MTEs, stating, "Providers that have an existing policy in place where MTEs are used as a determining factor in decisions about admission, continuation in, or completion of initial teacher preparation programs should interrogate the implications of this policy and should consider revising existing policy based on information in this advisory." Given Fitchburg State's current admissions requirements for Post-Baccalaureate candidates, they should examine potential impacts on applicants.

Domain: Field Based Experiences

Do candidates have the necessary experiences in the field to be ready for the licensure role?

Commendations

- ★ FBE 7: Field-based experiences are in settings with diverse learners (e.g., students from diverse ethnic, racial, gender, socioeconomic, and exceptional groups).
 - According to their offsite submission, the School of Education has a diversity policy stating that all candidates must complete two-thirds of their pre-practicum experiences in diverse settings, and describe detailed criteria for defining diverse settings. A classroom or site is considered diverse if it meets three out of five indicators based on students’ race/ethnicity, students’ socioeconomic status, students who are English Language Learners, students with disabilities, or students who are gifted and talented and require adaptations. The level of specificity and intentionality surrounding Fitchburg State’s definition and identification of diverse pre-practicum and practicum experiences for candidates strengthens their preparation. Seventy-eight percent (n=83) of Candidates/Completers agreed that they have had field-based experiences in settings with diverse learners. One Candidate/Completer said, “It is really important to note how much Fitchburg State wanted us to teach in urban settings. They were really focused on preparing us to work in diverse areas.” Another added, “In my experience I saw different languages and backgrounds and socio-economic statuses that really opened up my eyes and helped with the job I have now.” In DESE-issued stakeholder surveys, agreement rates were slightly higher:

		% Indicating “Agree”		
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
During my field-based experiences, I worked with students from diverse ethnic, racial, socioeconomic, and exceptional groups.	Candidates	92 (n=25)	84 (n=43)	82 (n=22)
	Completers	100 (n=9)	100 (n=15)	85 (n=13)

Met Criteria

- ✓ FBE 1: Practicum hours meet regulatory requirements as per [603 CMR 7.04 \(4\)](#)
 - All candidate artifacts (n=20) included evidence that practicum hours met regulatory requirements for the licensure role.
- ✓ FBE 2: District partners are involved in the design, implementation, and assessment of field-based experiences.
 - Eighty-three percent (n=6) of Partners agreed that their district/school is involved in the design, implementation, and assessment of candidates’ field-based experiences. Partners described “meetings throughout the school year between Fitchburg State and our district to discuss field-based experiences.” Fitchburg State explained in their offsite submission that they involve Partners through Advisory Board meetings, monthly Superintendents’ Breakfasts, and through conversations and feedback from teachers and administrators in partner schools. These efforts have led to a redesign of pre-practicum experiences in consultation with the Advisory Board and a Curriculum Advisory meeting with area teachers. As noted below in FBE 5, Partners also indicated that they are closely involved in the process of identifying Supervising Practitioners and matching them intentionally with candidates.
- ✓ FBE 3: Field-based experiences are fully embedded in program coursework such that connections between theory and practice are explicit.

- Seventy-four percent (n=31*) of Candidates/Completers agreed that their experiences in the field are/were embedded as part of their coursework such that connections between theory and practice were explicit. One Candidate/Completer shared, “Our assignments were consistently engaging, valuable, and directly applicable to the classroom environment.” Another added, “Classes were very, very helpful. We had the opportunity to take part in what I’ll eventually be doing for a job. I really appreciated the opportunities within the assignments. [Going into the field to complete assignments] and then coming back to class to collaborate with our peers and talk with our professors about our experience was great.” In their offsite submission, Fitchburg State explained that all programs have field-based experiences designed to connect theory to practice, and Supervising Practitioners receive resources including required assignments that are explicitly connected to specific topics. Course instructors, supervisors, and candidates communicate regularly to ensure candidates are connecting theory to practice.
- ✓ FBE 4: Responsibilities in pre-practicum and practicum experiences build to candidate readiness for full responsibility in licensure role.
 - Fitchburg State shared that pre-practicum experiences have been redesigned to increase opportunities for coaching and feedback early in field-based experiences, including opportunities for most Baccalaureate teacher candidates to take coursework co-taught with a professor and classroom teacher with field-based experiences in that teacher’s classroom. Within the practicum, candidates are given a gradual increase of responsibility building to two weeks of full responsibility. Onsite, 54 percent (n=51) of Candidates/Completers agreed that they felt ready to take full responsibility in their licensure role during the practicum. One Candidate/Completer shared, “They start you with pre-practicum in your first year. It was really important we got the chance to start things so soon and build on that experience so by the time I got to my practicum I felt really prepared.” Another added, “I have spent every semester with some form of field-based experience and that has been critical to my feeling of success in my future as a teacher.” While most Candidates shared they had frequent field-based experiences that built to their readiness in the practicum, some described “uncertainty between expectations and reality” in what their Supervising Practitioners allowed them to do during field-based experiences that impacted their readiness. There was some consensus among Candidates/Completers that recent changes in pre-practicum structure would address these challenges. All (n=6) Program Supervisors and 79 percent (n=14) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that the pre-practicum and early practicum experiences prepared the candidate to take full responsibility in the licensure role by the end of the practicum. One Supervising Practitioner shared, “Most candidates have been outstanding! They have been well-prepared to enter my classroom for their pre-practicum or practicum experiences.”
- ✓ FBE 5: Sponsoring Organization secures and/or verifies placement(s) that meet regulatory requirements and the SO’s expectations for a high-quality placement for all candidates.
 - Fitchburg State explained that they connect with principals to recommend appropriate Supervising Practitioners, who then complete an application. The Placement Coordinator and Program Supervisor then review a classroom description to ensure the placement will meet the needs of the license. Supervising Practitioners are expected to meet several criteria, including having an ability to mentor, provide opportunities for candidates to implement best practices, provide feedback, and have recognized excellence in teaching based on the principal recommendation. Eighty percent (n=51) of Candidates/Completers agreed that their practicum placement was high quality. All (n=6) Partners agreed that student teachers are intentionally

matched with site-based Supervising Practitioners that meet Fitchburg State’s expectations for a high-quality placement. All (n=6) Partners and all (n=6) Program Supervisors agreed that placements meet Fitchburg State’s expectations for a high-quality placement for candidates. One Partner explained, “There are multiple conversations about matching the student teacher to the appropriate supervising teacher. I have been impressed with the attention that is paid to this aspect of the process.”

- ✓ FBE 8: Supervising Practitioner qualifications meet regulatory requirements set forth in [603 CMR 7.02](#) and in [Guidelines for Program Approval](#).
 - In a review of candidate artifacts, all (n=20) included documentation verifying that Supervising Practitioners’ qualifications met regulatory requirements, except in one instance where a waiver was issued and appropriately documented.
- ✓ FBE 9: Supervising Practitioners and Program Supervisors receive training, support and development from the SO that impacts candidate effectiveness.
 - All (n=6) Program Supervisors and 71 percent (n=14) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that they receive training from Fitchburg State to be an effective supervisor. One Program Supervisor shared, “In the last couple of years with the CAP platform, they have been extensive with their training. They provided exemplars, gave advice, and were easy to get in touch with for anything.” Another said, “One of the pluses is that they designed training with supervisors and candidates present so they can experience all of the information in their context. Those meetings make us feel like a group.” A Supervising Practitioner added, “I have always appreciated the first formal meeting, and I love the thumb drive and having digital access to the many, many resources [Fitchburg State shared].” All (n=6) Program Supervisors and 71 percent (n=14) of Supervising Practitioners also agreed that they receive support and development from Fitchburg State that helps them be an effective supervisor. One Program Supervisor explained, “The support is immediate, thorough, and thoughtful.” Another added, “The latest you would get a response would be in an hour. The communication is incredible.”
- ✓ FBE 10: Candidates receive high-quality, targeted feedback during field-based experiences that improves their practice.
 - While Fitchburg State explained in their offsite submission that all candidates receive targeted feedback on both course assignments and during field-based experiences. Onsite, 56 percent (n=27) of Candidates/Completers agreed that they received high-quality, targeted feedback from their Supervising Practitioner during the field-based experience that improved their practice; 62 percent (n=26) agreed regarding their Program Supervisor. There was consensus when one Candidate/Completer shared, “The feedback was one of the best parts. It wasn’t just boxes that were ticked off, it was a sit down conversation after lessons were observed. It was fresh in our minds, so we could really touch on not only what worked well but here’s why that worked well or how you could implement that in another situation. That made it very usable for me.” Another Candidate/Completer added, “My practicum was an amazing experience. Fitchburg State’s model of the coordination between my Program Supervisor and Supervising Practitioner allowed them to meet and discuss my lessons to give targeted and purposeful feedback.” A third shared, “My feedback was extremely targeted and was followed up on in future observations and meetings.” Agreement rates in DESE-issued Stakeholder Surveys were as follows:

		% Indicating “Agree”		
		2016-17	2017-18	2018-19

My Supervising Practitioner provided feedback that improved my practice	Candidates	96 (n=25)	86 (n=43)	68 (n=22)
	Completers	78 (n=9)	87 (n=15)	92 (n=13)
My Program Supervisor provided feedback that improved my practice	Candidates	76 (n=25)	93 (n=43)	78 (n=22)
	Completers	92 (n=9)	86 (n=15)	64 (n=13)

- ✓ FBE 11: Sponsoring Organization ensures that Program Supervisors and Supervising Practitioners are measurably contributing to and effectively evaluating the readiness of candidates.
 - Fitchburg State indicated that they monitor Program Supervisors and Supervising Practitioners via the online platform, surveys to collect feedback on supervisors, and through informal conversations. Seventy-two percent (n=53) of Candidates/Completers agreed that their Supervising Practitioner contributed to their readiness for the licensure role; 76 percent (n=51) agreed with regard to their Program Supervisor. One Candidate/Completer shared, “My Program Supervisor was honestly amazing. She is very supportive. If I didn’t have her as my supervisor, I honestly probably wouldn’t have my job now. Everything I learned from her prepared me for my job now.” All (n=6) Program Supervisors and 92 percent (n=13) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that Fitchburg State ensures that they effectively evaluate candidates’ readiness for the licensure role.
- ✓ FBE 12: Candidate readiness for the licensure role is measured using a performance assessment (e.g. Candidate Assessment of Performance) that is implemented consistently across/within programs and rigorously such that only candidates who are ready to make a positive impact for PK-12 students in the licensure role complete the program.
 - According to their offsite submission, Fitchburg State provides training to Program Supervisors, Supervising Practitioners, and Teacher Candidates are provided training on CAP requirements, expectations, and forms. No description was provided in the offsite submission of the how Fitchburg State ensures performance assessments in the Reading Specialist, School Guidance, or Administrator programs are consistently and rigorously implemented. In a review of candidate artifacts (n=20), 75 percent included evidence supporting the ratings indicated. Among those with insufficient evidence, two were files from several years ago and included a note acknowledging the level of evidence referenced would not meet current expectations. The remaining files that included insufficient evidence in support of their ratings were from Administrator program completers. Onsite, all (n=6) Program Supervisors and 85 percent (n=13) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that candidates’ ratings on the end-of-practicum assessment reflect their readiness for the licensure role. Program Supervisors explained, “We’ve had meetings where we’ve looked at videos together and scored them. We’ve looked at lesson plans and scored them and shared our results. It’s been very helpful.” Program Supervisors also added that the Licensure Officer reviews all CAP forms and reaches out with questions or concerns about ratings. All (n=6) Program Supervisors and 62 percent (n=13) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that only candidates who are ready to make a positive impact for PK-12 students in the licensure role complete the program. Despite their lower agreement rates, there was consensus among Supervising Practitioners when one shared, “Are they ready? We have had candidates be so ready they were able to fill right into positions as they became available.”

**The n size of candidates/completers varies because some indicated 'Not Yet Applicable' for questions in the Field-Based Experiences section and/or partial candidate/completer surveys were submitted. In the case of partial surveys, DESE reviewed duplicate surveys from candidates/completers and only included responses where each candidate/completer made the most progress.*

Findings

- FBE 6: Candidates participate in field-based experiences that cover the full academic year.
 - Fitchburg State shared in their Field-Based Experiences Staff Interview that field-based experiences are embedded in courses that occur across both the Fall and Spring semester to ensure that Candidates see a range of time periods throughout the year. While Candidates/Completers agreed that they had field-based experiences across many courses, leading to seeing different time periods across the year, there was inconsistency in candidates' experiences at the beginning of the school year. There was some consensus when one explained, "A lot of field experiences ended up being from October through late November/December with the courses I had." Another added, "I would say most of my experiences occurred at the start of the middle of the year, more so than the beginning or end of the year." Sixty-nine percent (n=54) of Candidates/Completers agreed that they have had field-based experiences that cover a range of time periods throughout the full school year.

Overall Domain Recommendation	✓	Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory
		Exemplary

Domain Summary

Overall, Fitchburg State ensures that candidates have the necessary field-based experiences to prepare them for the licensure role. Several practices help strengthen field-based experiences for candidates. Fitchburg State's commitment to clearly defining and providing all candidates access to experiences with students with diverse needs demonstrates its commitment to preparing educators for their roles. Additionally, Fitchburg State has strong communication and selection practices for Supervising Practitioners that help ensure they are effectively supervising candidates, including sharing course assignments, requiring an application and principal recommendation, and providing training with Supervising Practitioners, Program Supervisors, and Candidates together to ensure aligned expectations. One Completer shared, "I contribute my success in getting a job in my field directly to my supervisors and the practicum experience. I got a job in the district where I completed my practicum." As a result, this domain is rated Proficient.

Professional Suggestions

None

Domain: Instruction

Do candidates have the necessary knowledge and skills to be effective educators?

Program Level: Domain Recommendations

Program Name	Exemplary	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Unsatisfactory
Initial, Baccalaureate Teacher Programs		✓		
Initial, Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Programs		✓		
Reading Specialist Program		✓		
All Administrator Programs		✓		
All School Support Professional Programs			✓	
New Program: Autism Endorsement	Not Approved			

Instruction: Initial, Baccalaureate Teacher Programs

Instruction Domain Criteria Determinations

Commendations

None

Met

- ✓ INS 1: Completers have the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role.
 - According to their offsite submission, Fitchburg State uses Lesson Plan Rubrics and Teacher Work Sample Rubrics to assess candidates' content knowledge. Onsite, 78 percent (n=27) of Baccalaureate Teacher Candidate/Completers agreed that Fitchburg State ensured they have the content knowledge necessary to be an effective educator. Among Supervising Practitioners, 67 percent (n=9) agreed that completers have the content knowledge necessary to be effective in the licensure role. One Candidate/Completer shared, "There was a good amount of variety. I got a little bit of everything, which was important for special education because you need a solid base knowledge. Those all came together." Thirty-two percent (n=168) of Fitchburg State completers from 2016-2021 required an MTEL retake, compared with 29 percent (n=3881) statewide.
- ✓ INS 2: Completers have the pedagogical skills (PST/PSI) to be effective in the licensure role.
 - Sixty-seven percent (n=27) of Candidates/Completers agreed that coursework provided them with the instructional skills necessary to be effective in their licensure role. One Candidate/Completer shared, "I felt like I was exceptionally well prepared to teach diverse learners and English Learners." Another added, "I'm really proud of Fitchburg State for piloting an additional CAP unit on anti-bias elements. That was a great way they [are helping prepare us] to address diverse needs." When asked about specific PSTs, Candidates/Completers (n=27) indicated the following:

- 67 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to design effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measurable outcomes.
 - 48 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to analyze data from assessments, draw conclusions, and share them appropriately.
 - 59 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to employ a variety of strategies to assist students to develop social emotional competencies.
 - 63 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to employ a variety of classroom management strategies.
 - 44 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to engage in regular, two-way, and culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance.
 - 74 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to reflect on their practice to improve teaching and learning.
 - 48 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to meet the needs of English Learners.
 - Among Supervising Practitioners, 78 percent (n=9) agreed that completers have the pedagogical skills necessary to be an effective educator. Fifty-six percent (n=9) of Supervising Practitioners agreed completers are well-prepared to meet the needs of English Language Learners and completers are well-prepared to employ a variety of classroom management strategies.
- ✓ INS 3: Completers have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students.
- Seventy-eight percent (n=27) of Candidates/Completers agreed that, as a result of their program, they are prepared to have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. Eighty-nine percent (n=9) of Supervising Practitioners agreed that this program prepares candidates to have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. Evidence was not provided by Fitchburg State to specify impact on PK-12 students, and Edwin data was not available to substantiate the impact of completers from Initial Baccalaureate teacher programs on PK-12 students.

Findings

None

Overall Domain Recommendation		Exemplary
	✓	Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

The Instruction domain for Initial, Baccalaureate Teacher programs has a rating of Proficient because evidence indicates candidates are well-prepared through these programs. Overall, 85 percent (n=27) of Candidates/Completers agreed that they would recommend the program to others and 81 percent (n=27) agreed that their experience in the program has prepared them to be an effective educator. All (n=9) Supervising Practitioners agreed that they would recommend this program to others and 89 percent (n=9) agreed that candidates who complete this program are prepared to be effective educators.

Additionally, Candidates/Completers (n=27) indicated their agreement with whether the following practices were done at a consistently high-level:

- 63 percent agreed the sequence of preparation coursework supports/ed their increased knowledge and skills.

- 74 percent agreed there are/were clear connections between the different courses in the program.
- 70 percent indicated faculty regularly model/ed pedagogical and content practices of the discipline.
- 78 percent indicated faculty regularly model/ed practices and strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners.
- 70 percent indicated during coursework they regularly receive/ed targeted feedback that improved their practice.

Professional Suggestions

None

Instruction: Initial, Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Programs

Instruction Domain Criteria Determinations

Commendations

None

Met

- ✓ INS 1: Completers have the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role.
 - In their offsite submission, Fitchburg State included evidence from Lesson Plan Rubrics and Teacher Work Sample Rubrics used to assess candidates’ content knowledge. Onsite, 92 percent (n=26) of Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Candidate/Completers agreed that Fitchburg State ensured they have the content knowledge necessary to be an effective educator. One Candidate/Completer shared, “The instruction was high quality, and a lot of the resources they provide I use in my curriculum today.”
- ✓ INS 2: Completers have the pedagogical skills (PST/PSI) to be effective in the licensure role.
 - Eighty-five percent (n=26) of Candidates/Completers agreed that coursework provided them with the instructional skills necessary to be effective in their licensure role. One Candidate/Completer shared, “The SEI course was one of my favorites. The professor used all of the strategies on us in class, so we were able to see how that scaffolded our learning within the content of that course and then were able to meet with our students and come up with lesson plans. I loved that course.” Another added, “I would like to recognize Dr. D’Agostino for providing rigorous and effective instruction regarding the provision of support for English Learners. I felt adequately prepared to tier instruction appropriate per my future students’ language abilities.” When asked about specific PSTs, Candidates/Completers (n=26) indicated the following:
 - 77 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to design effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measurable outcomes.
 - 77 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to analyze data from assessments, draw conclusions, and share them appropriately.
 - 85 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to employ a variety of strategies to assist students to develop social emotional competencies.
 - 69 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to employ a variety of classroom management strategies.
 - 69 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to engage in regular, two-way, and culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance.

- 88 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to reflect on their practice to improve teaching and learning.
 - 69 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to meet the needs of English Learners.
- ✓ INS 3: Completers have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students.
 - Eighty-five percent (n=26) of Candidates/Completers agreed that, as a result of their program, they are prepared to have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. Evidence was not provided by Fitchburg State to specify impact on PK-12 students, and Edwin data was not available to substantiate the impact of completers from Initial Post-Baccalaureate teacher programs on PK-12 students.

Findings

None

Overall Domain Recommendation		Exemplary
	✓	Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

Overall, 96 percent (n=26) of Candidate/Completers agree that they would recommend the program to others and that their experience in the program has prepared them to be an effective educator. One Candidate/Completer shared, “Fitchburg State and all of my courses prepared me well for my current placement. I feel like all of the courses worked off each other well and whenever I was taking multiple classes in one semester, the teachers interacted and made coursework able to crossover and work together.” Because evidence indicates candidates are well-prepared through these programs, the Instruction domain for the Initial, Post-Baccalaureate Teacher programs is rated Proficient.

Additionally, Candidates/Completers (n=26) indicated their agreement with whether the following practices were done at a consistently high-level:

- 85 percent agreed the sequence of preparation coursework supports/ed their increased knowledge and skills.
- 85 percent agreed there are/were clear connections between the different courses in the program.
- 88 percent indicated faculty regularly model/ed pedagogical and content practices of the discipline.
- 88 percent indicated faculty regularly model/ed practices and strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners.
- 88 percent indicated during coursework they regularly receive/ed targeted feedback that improved their practice.

Professional Suggestions

None

Instruction: Reading Specialist Program

Instruction Domain Criteria Determinations

Commendations

None

Met	
✓	<p>INS 1: Completers have the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In their offsite submission, Fitchburg State included evidence from their Licensure Specific Evaluation Questionnaire used to assess candidates' content knowledge. Onsite, 75 percent (n=4) of Reading Specialist Candidate/Completers agreed that Fitchburg State ensured they have the content knowledge necessary to be an effective educator. One Candidate/Completer shared, "The content knowledge that was taught really progressed and started at the beginning of the development of language. It was really scaffolded and worked its way up to a more professional level. There was a great sequence to how the information was presented."
✓	<p>INS 2: Completers have the pedagogical skills (PST/PSI) to be effective in the licensure role.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All (n=4) Candidates/Completers agreed that coursework provided them with the instructional skills necessary to be effective in their licensure role. When asked about specific PSTs, Candidates/Completers (n=4) indicated the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 75 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to design effective and rigorous standards-based units of instruction consisting of well-structured lessons with measurable outcomes. 75 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to analyze data from assessments, draw conclusions, and share them appropriately. 75 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to employ a variety of strategies to assist students to develop social emotional competencies. 50 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to employ a variety of classroom management strategies. 75 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to engage in regular, two-way, and culturally proficient communication with families about student learning and performance. 75 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to reflect on their practice to improve teaching and learning. 75 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to meet the needs of English Learners.
✓	<p>INS 3: Completers have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fifty percent (n=4) of Candidates/Completers agreed that, as a result of their program, they are prepared to have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. Evidence was not provided by Fitchburg State to specify impact on PK-12 students, and Edwin data was not available to substantiate the impact of completers from the Reading Specialist program on PK-12 students.

Findings

None

Overall Domain Recommendation		Exemplary
	✓	Proficient
		Needs Improvement
		Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

The Reading Specialist Instruction domain is rated Proficient because evidence indicates that, overall, candidates are well-prepared through this program. Overall, 86 percent (n=7) of Candidates/Completers agree that they would recommend the program to others and that their experience in the program has prepared them to be an effective educator. One Candidate/Completer shared, "Many of the professors did a

really great job with feedback. They were explicit about what you should fix moving forward. It was not often that I felt the feedback wasn't helpful or a grade wasn't warranted. They really backed up the rubrics, compared to courses I've taken at other universities. They did a great job letting you know what's expected of you in each of the courses."

Additionally, Candidates/Completers (n=7) indicated their agreement with whether the following practices were done at a consistently high-level:

- 86 percent agreed the sequence of preparation coursework supports/ed their increased knowledge and skills.
- 86 percent agreed there are/were clear connections between the different courses in the program.
- 86 percent agreed coursework is/was differentiated for their specific subject area and grade level.
- 86 percent indicated during coursework they regularly receive/ed targeted feedback that improved their practice.

Professional Suggestions

None

Instruction: All Administrator Programs

Instruction Domain Criteria Determinations

Commendations

None

Met

- ✓ INS 2: Completers have the pedagogical skills (PST/PSI) to be effective in the licensure role.
 - Eighty-two percent (n=17) of Administrator Candidates agreed that coursework provided them with the instructional skill necessary to be effective in their licensure role. One Candidate/Completer shared, "We did a lot of role-playing and brainstorming when dealing with staff and students. Some situations I see in my job relate back to those. Giving feedback is hard especially in a school where you previously worked [as a teacher]. In one class we watched a video and brainstormed collaboratively what we would say. That was helpful." All (n=4) Supervising Practitioners agreed that completers have the pedagogical skills necessary to be an effective educator. From 2016-2021, 93 percent (n=27) of Fitchburg State Principal Completers received an overall rating of Pass on PAL, compared with 96 percent (713) statewide. When asked about specific PSI, Candidates/Completers (n=17) indicated the following:
 - 88 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to ensure instructional practices reflect high expectations, engage all students, and are personalized to accommodate diverse learning styles and need.
 - 41 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to support teachers to meet the needs of English Learners.
 - 71 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to provide effective supervision and evaluation in alignment with state regulations and contract provisions.
 - 65 percent agreed they are/were well-prepared to establish routines that give staff and students a sense of order, discipline, and predictability and address a full range of safety, health, and student needs.
- ✓ INS 3: Completers have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ninety-four percent (n=17) of Candidates/Completers agreed that, as a result of this program, they are prepared to have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. All (n=4) Supervising Practitioners agreed that this program prepares licensure candidates to have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. Evidence was not provided by Fitchburg State to specify impact on PK-12 students, and Edwin data was not available to substantiate the impact of completers from the Administrator programs on PK-12 students. 	
Findings	
None	
Not Applicable	
<input type="checkbox"/> INS 1: Completers have the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Principal/Assistant Principal licensure, there are no Subject Matter Knowledge Requirements and this criterion is not applicable. 	
Overall Domain Recommendation	Exemplary
	✓
	Needs Improvement
	Unsatisfactory
Domain Summary	
<p>Overall, 84 percent (n=19) of Candidates/Completers agree that they would recommend the program to others and that their experience in the program has prepared them to be an effective educator. One Candidate/Completer shared, “What separates this program from others that friends have taken are the people - the faculty and candidates. The faculty set the tone by being open in sharing their experiences and decisions that they made. Not only their successes, but decisions that didn't work as intended. They always provided why they made the decision they did at the time and whether they would do it again, or whether they would adjust. Creating that environment made candidates feel free to share as well.” All (n=4) Supervising Practitioners agreed that they would recommend this program to others and that candidates who complete this program are prepared to be effective educators. Because the overall evidence indicates that candidates who complete these programs are well-prepared, this domain is rated Proficient.</p> <p>Additionally, Candidates/Completers (n=19) indicated their agreement with whether the following practices were done at a consistently high-level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 63 percent agreed the sequence of preparation coursework supports/ed their increased knowledge and skills. 74 percent agreed there are/were clear connections between the different courses in the program. 79 percent indicated faculty regularly model/ed pedagogical and content practices of the discipline. 74 percent indicated faculty regularly model/ed practices and strategies for meeting the needs of diverse learners. 68 percent indicated during coursework they regularly receive/ed targeted feedback that improved their practice. 	
Professional Suggestions	
None	

Instruction: All School Support Personnel Programs

Instruction Domain Criteria Determinations

Commendations

None

Met

- ✓ INS 3: Completers have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students.
 - All (n=5) Candidates/Completers agreed that, as a result of this program, they are prepared to have a positive impact on outcomes for PK-12 students. Evidence was not provided by Fitchburg State to specify impact on PK-12 students, and Edwin data was not available to substantiate the impact of completers from the School Support Personnel programs on PK-12 students.

Findings

- INS 1: Completers have the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role.
 - Onsite, 40 percent (n=5) of Candidates/Completers agreed that coursework provided them with knowledge about federal, state, municipal, and school laws and regulations. Forty percent (n=5) agreed that coursework provided them with knowledge about the diagnosis and treatment of learning and behavior disorders. Sixty percent (n=5) agreed that coursework provided them with the necessary skills to consult with parents, teachers, and administrators. There was consensus when one Candidate/Completer explained, “As one example, for classes that mental health students and school counseling candidates take together, they are more focused on mental health than school counseling. There were some things so focused on diagnosing versus supporting or applying school counseling techniques that it was frustrating for me.”

Not Applicable

- INS 2: Completers have the pedagogical skills (PST/PSI) to be effective in the licensure role.
 - For School Support Professional Programs, this criterion is not applicable.

Overall Domain Recommendation	Exemplary
	Proficient
	✓ Needs Improvement
	Unsatisfactory

Domain Summary

The Instruction domain for the School Support Personnel programs is rated Needs Improvement because evidence indicates there are some gaps or inconsistencies in the program, particularly in the subject matter knowledge covered in coursework and in the consistency of instructors. There was consensus when a Candidate/Completer said, “[Among instructors] there wasn’t enough consistency to rate it agree.” Despite these concerns, overall, 80 percent (n=5) of Candidates/Completers agree that they would recommend the program to others and all (n=5) agreed that their experience in the program has prepared them to be an effective educator. One Candidate/Completer shared, “Overall, I believe Fitchburg State has a strong educator preparation program. What stands out the most to me is the connections that are built between the faculty and students. I feel today that I could reach out to multiple of my previous professors with any questions or to seek advice.”

Additionally, Candidates/Completers (n=5) indicated their agreement with whether the following practices were done at a consistently high-level:

- 40 percent agreed the sequence of preparation coursework supports/ed their increased knowledge and skills.
- 0 percent agreed there are/were clear connections between the different courses in the program.
- 20 percent agreed coursework is/was differentiated for their specific subject area and grade level.
- 0 percent agreed content delivery is/was consistently high-quality regardless of different instructors.
- 80 percent indicated during coursework they regularly receive/ed targeted feedback that improved their practice.

Professional Suggestions

None

Instruction: New Program – Autism Endorsement

Instruction Domain Program Approval

Program Approval Decision		Approved
	✓	Not Approved

Domain Summary

Gaps in required content knowledge were identified based on Fitchburg State’s submission for their proposed Autism Endorsement program. Specifically, coursework on the Collaboration & Communication competency lacked sufficient content on communicating and collaborating with students and families. Additionally, gaps were identified across the Foundations & Characteristics of Autism and Programs, Services, and Supports competencies. Also, the sequencing of courses was found to not likely be supportive of candidate’s increased depth in knowledge and skills. The cumulative impact of these findings resulted in a Not Approved determination for this program. Fitchburg State should plan to address these concerns if they wish to pursue approval in the future.

Professional Suggestions

None

Appendix A: COVID-19 Response

Since March 2020, all approved Sponsoring Organizations had to shift practices in response to the coronavirus outbreak. During the onsite portion of the review, DESE provided an opportunity for stakeholders to share their experience with Fitchburg State University during this time, if applicable. In doing so, DESE hopes to support organizations in understanding the impacts of the Sponsoring Organization’s response on different stakeholder groups. No comments shared by stakeholders signaled larger concerns regarding Fitchburg State University’s ability to support and sustain practices to support the candidate experience. In cases where recent examples were relevant, they have been highlighted in the report. Below, DESE highlights some direct quotes from stakeholder groups relative to Fitchburg State University’s response during the pandemic, some of which may be specific and relate directly to criteria for program approval, while others may be more general.

Stakeholder Group	Direct Quotes Showcasing Positive Reactions to COVID-19 Response
Arts & Sciences Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think Fitchburg State has taken strong measures to allow students to attend in person as much as possible (safely). • Very well prepared. We created new tools to address placement issues and provided opportunities to still experience authentic teaching. • I have been impressed with the level of empathy that the University has displayed. The University has been very student-focused during this unfortunate crisis.
Full-time Education Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitchburg State University has done an excellent job supporting faculty as they transitioned to a virtual learning environment. • I think our university has come together strongly to support students academic success during this pandemic. Multiple measures of outreach have occurred (such as phoning individual students to see what their needs are), as well as support for challenges to participation and learning. Resources around mental health supports have been substantial. Lastly, access to technology, hot spots and laptops have been critical strategies employed. • Fitchburg State did an outstanding job responding to the pandemic. Courses were quickly switched online and a lot of support was given to faculty to help with this transition. Students in practicum were given the support needed to finish their CAP and complete the practicum. Students were also given technology support through lending a computer and/or wifi if needed. • On the positive, I am so appreciative that the university has allowed all faculty to design what mode they would like to teach. I can choose hybrid, onsync, or online. I am allowed to change partway through the semester if I need to. Overall, they are doing a great job in the midst of a costly and difficult situation. • Although we are all adapting to life during a new "normal" I have found that leadership at FSU has been cognizant of the struggles in dealing with students on both an academic and personal level. Dealing with the mental health of faculty is another challenge that is being addressed with faculty forums.
Part-time Education Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have seen that Fitchburg State has provided many resources and support systems for both students and faculty as they adapt to COVID induced situations. There are laptop loan programs, IT support, and teaching resources provided that relate to remote teaching.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University has done well to keep the faculty informed and has incorporated feedback in their planning process. • I feel as though FSU has worked really hard to ensure that students and staff can work safely and continue with programming. I am currently teaching a class with face to face meetings and I feel safe. • FSU has been very transparent about what to expect since we couldn't return to campus. The President, Provost and Vice Presidents kept us fully informed throughout the spring, summer and fall. There have been protocols in place and very clear guidelines. I am truly impressed with how the students handled the many changes and thank them each time they come to class when we meet F2F and wearing a mask. They care about their families and the community. I appreciated the fact that faculty had a say in what modality their class would be held in. We have also been offered free COVID testing as well as random testing, which I eagerly took part in.
Program Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSU has responded well, providing training and support virtually. • I have found that they have a "we can do this" attitude. I have three students in three very different models of teaching this semester. The licensure office has helped me problem-solve with the SP ways in which we can maximize our gathering of evidence. • FSU was very responsive in helping Program Supervisors complete the CAP for all of the students. • FSU has set up all their trainings virtually, and then provided time for questions. They have virtual office hours for both students and Program supervisors.
Supervising Practitioners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitchburg State University has been very available via email and online meetings. They are on top of sending all updates and announcements and hosting meetings to answer any questions we may have. They have been very responsive and supportive. • Our experience has been positive this semester. I am still able to work with pre-practicum students and their professor. Before they were able to join our Google Meets, the pre-practicum students were putting together literacy kits with activities students could use at home. Now they are able to meet with small groups of students in Google Hangouts where they teach the lessons they have prepared. • FSU has been wonderful with the COVID 19, very responsive and check ins are frequent.
Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FSU reached out proactively at several points to plan how to continue placements. They were open and flexible to what those could look like, while also setting clear expectations about that they needed to remain valid and valuable experiences with strong mentoring for the students. They also stated that they understood these were preliminary conversations and that changes in the situation could mean that we might not be able to follow through exactly as initially thought.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the spring when the schools had to shut down quickly, there was a great deal of flexibility and creativity to complete observations and requirements. Staff from the university were very supportive of students and teachers. • All positive. Very impressed with the students and their technology experience. They have connected quickly/easily with the teacher and the students. Relationships are comfortable and students consider these FSU students their teachers. Well done! • They have been responsive and very flexible during these difficult times. We have had to adjust the pre-practicum and student teacher experience and they have been very understanding.
<p>Candidates (and Completers, if applicable)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitchburg State has done a great job of applauding students for their efforts in slowing the spread of COVID-19. They also push out important information about campus updates with detailed information while still maintaining privacy. • I think FSU did a great job transitioning to fully remote because the hybrid model was already being used in my program - it wasn't a big leap and I felt like it was pretty much normal for me. • It's overall been a positive experience. Professors are being really supportive and making sure things go as smoothly as they can. They are also being creative to give us the field experience that we need without being able to actually go into the field • Fitchburg State has been extremely sensitive to the unique challenges the pandemic has caused with extending deadlines, offering support groups, calling to check on students who live alone, etc. • The pandemic started during my OSI placement and my PS did a great job providing me with alternative assignments to complete and was extremely flexible! My PS during the practicum has also been flexible and same with my professors last semester and this semester. • In the moment, I was so frustrated with the response to the pandemic (March-May, I am a May 2020 graduate) but, in hindsight they did their best for what was going on. Now as a teacher, I see how hard it is to teach online. During the months of March and May I truly think FSU did the best with what they had. • The university jumped in to support us through the pandemic. They helped us to manage the remaining components of our degree and supported us with completing the requirements despite the change to remote learning. Jason was an invaluable resource in managing this process and my supervisor was always available to help! • Overall, I was satisfied with the university's clear and open communication regarding their response to the pandemic. As a May 2020 graduate, I appreciated their genuine and continued attempts to organize an in-person ceremony. I also felt that the trainings they provided to the professors allowed for a smoother transition to online learning. • FSU went above and beyond to be sure that my TWS was complete, my practicum hours, and my overall educational experience were still worthy and valid.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I believe that Fitchburg State University has had a positive response to the COVID-19 pandemic. They have come up with creative ways to still have students in the classroom, as well as increasing online learning.
--	--

Stakeholder Group	Additional Considerations
Full-time Education Faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On the negative, they have offered some technological workshops, but it would be nice to have more. I would like a set of constantly available videos (and they have some of these) for various technological applications and situations. Also, I think that we could have better apps for some situations. Specifically, I can use the discussion board for peer feedback, but I would prefer an app just for that. If I am expected to teach in person and project by video, it would be great to have better technology to support doing so.
Candidates (and Completers, if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I wish we had more training with online tools, such as Google Classroom. Our field experience due to COVID is not very good at preparing us for practicum, it is watching videos and no real student interaction. I don't feel prepared at all for practicum because all my field experience is watching others teach and not actually teaching. I feel like Fitchburg State has made some last minute discussions when it has come to how to handle/ adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made it hard for me at times to plan and make a way for myself to be success due to unknowns. Online learning is very challenging and I am struggling. The only area in which I thought more could have been done concerned communication with other teacher candidates during my practicum experience. I would have greatly benefited from an opportunity to connect with other cohort members through an online class or meeting of the sort wherein our experiences and concerns could be shared. However, I had no such opportunity through my seminar course, and thusly felt a bit like being on an island, experiencing the whole thing by myself with countless questions.

Appendix B: Findings Requiring Action

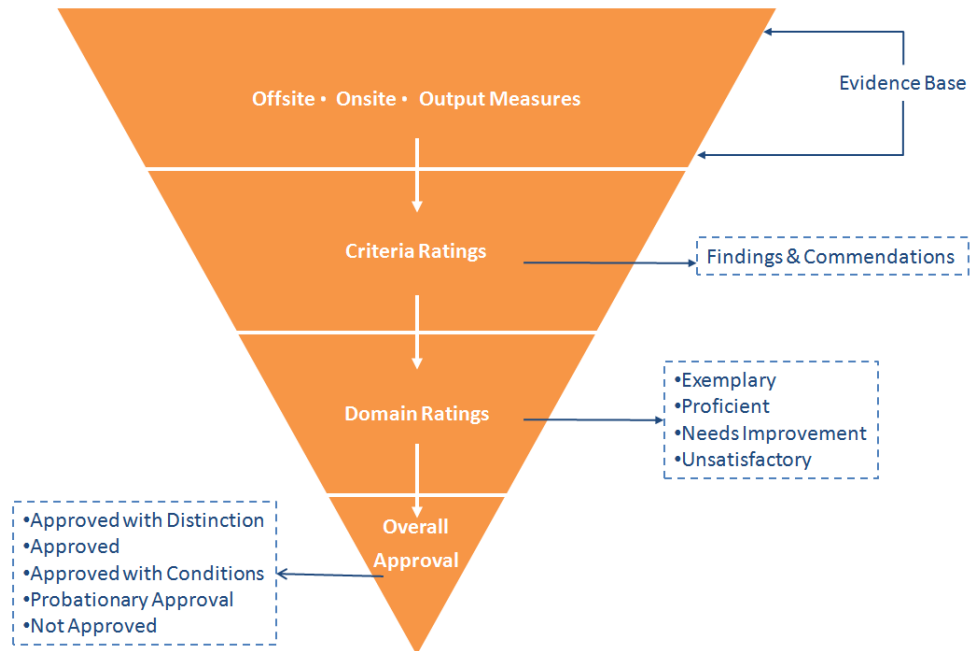
Outlined below are the actions required by the Sponsoring Organization in order to address the findings identified as a result of the 2019-2020 review. DESE considers several factors when determining the required actions, including the context of the review and the significance of the finding on overall program quality. Required actions are descriptive of expectations, not prescriptive of approaches.

In addition to meeting all current and future preparation program requirements, all findings included in this report must be addressed at the time of the next visit in order for Fitchburg State University to continue operating educator preparation programs leading to MA licensure. DESE reserves the right during this approval period to conduct an interim review should additional or continual concerns arise.

Domain	Criteria	Timeline
The Candidate	CAN 1: Systems to recruit and admit candidates result in the increased racial and ethnic diversity of completers in the workforce.	March 2023 (allows for at least 2+ years of evidence collection prior to next review)
Field-Based Experiences	FBE 6: Candidates participate in field-based experiences that cover the full academic year	March 2023 (allows for at least 2+ years of evidence collection prior to next review)
Instruction: School Support Personnel	INS 1: Completers have the Subject Matter Knowledge (SMK) to be effective in the licensure role.	March 2023 (allows for at least 2+ years of evidence collection prior to next review)

Appendix C: Formal Review Decision Making

Decisions and recommendations occur at several different levels during the process.



Criteria Ratings: During the review, an individual reviewer’s summative criteria ratings are challenged and corroborated by the entire review team. The review team, under the guidance of the DESE Ed Prep Specialist, must work towards agreement for each finding and/or commendation cited in the report. DESE reserves the right to change a criterion rating based on an in-depth understanding of regulatory requirements or in order to maintain consistency across reviews. Criteria recommendations result in:

- *Commendation:* Commendations are reserved for truly exceptional, innovative or outstanding practices.
- *Finding:* Findings are areas of concern that require corrective action. Findings impact an SO’s overall approval status.
- *Professional Suggestions:* Professional suggestions serve as recommendations for continuous improvement. They do not require a mandatory response/action.

Domain Recommendations: Once the review team has rated all criteria in a domain, the team will make an overall recommendation weighing the cumulative impact and significance of the findings and commendations within that domain. Domain recommendations result in one of the following descriptions:

- *Exemplary:* The Exemplary level represents the highest level of performance. It exceeds the already high standard of Proficient. A rating of Exemplary is reserved for performance on a domain that is of such a high level that it could serve as a model for other providers in the organization, state, or nation.
- *Proficient:* Proficient is the expected, rigorous level of performance for SOs. It is a demanding, but attainable level of performance.
- *Needs Improvement:* SOs whose performance on a domain is rated as Needs Improvement may demonstrate inconsistencies in implementation or weaknesses in a few key areas. They may not yet have fully developed systems to provide preparation in an effective way.

- *Unsatisfactory:* SOs whose performance on a domain is rated as Unsatisfactory is significantly underperforming as compared to the expectations.

Approval Determinations: Once all domain recommendations have been determined, the review team again weighs the cumulative impact and significance of all the domain ratings on an organization’s ability to effectively prepare educators and recommends one of the following approval determinations:

- *Approval with Distinction:* A Sponsoring Organization or program granted approval with distinction has exceeded the already high bar for approval, demonstrating exemplary performance. The Sponsoring Organization or program is operating at such a high level that it could serve as a model for other providers in the state or nation. Programs approved with distinction are authorized by the state to endorse candidates for licensure with full reciprocity benefits.
- *Approval:* A Sponsoring Organization that has been granted full approval is recognized by the state to have met all standards for preparing effective educators in Massachusetts. An approved determination signals that candidates are well-served by this organization or program and receive a high-quality preparation experience. Approved programs are authorized by the state to endorse candidates for licensure with full reciprocity benefits.
- *Approval with Conditions:* Approval with conditions may be granted after a formal or informal review. Sponsoring Organizations who have demonstrated overall program readiness and commitment to improvement, despite findings in a report, will be granted approval with conditions. Conditional approval signals that there are significant areas that must be addressed in order to meet state standards. Findings indicate that areas of concern impact candidates.
- *Probationary Approval:* A Sponsoring Organization or program that is granted probationary approval has insufficiently met state standards. Probationary approval signals that there are significant areas that must be addressed and candidate efficacy and/or experience in the program is not consistently assured to be high quality. Findings indicate that areas of concern impact candidates.
- *Not Approved:* Approval will not be granted if findings outlined in either a formal or informal review are determined to be significant, and therefore neither full approval nor approval with conditions is granted.

Commissioner Determination: The review team’s recommendations and determinations are assessed by an internal DESE panel to ensure that the proper review protocols were followed and that sufficient evidence exists in support of all judgements. Upon the panel’s agreement, the approval status recommendation goes to the Commissioner for a final determination with a report detailing the evidence collected during the review.