
Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The General Assembly should amend state law for Education Preparation Program accountability by adding an employment performance standard that measures the employment and retention of beginning teachers.

As discussed in Finding 2, state law directs the State Board of Education to adopt rules to establish performance standards to govern the continued accountability of Education Preparation Programs (EPPs). The performance standards identified in state law include four areas of EPP data—annual teacher evaluations of EPP graduates, the proficiency and growth of students taught by EPP graduates, the satisfaction of EPP graduates with their programs after their first year of teaching, and the quality of students entering EPPs. Although these four performance standards mirror other states that direct their EPPs to report outcome-based data, the list does not include a category common in other states related to employment outcomes for EPP graduates. Adding this category to the performance standards list parallels North Carolina current data collection efforts that require EPPs to report graduate licensure rates, employment rates, and retention rates for EPP graduate cohorts four years after graduation.

Producing and retaining teachers in North Carolina is a primary objective of state EPPs and of great interest to the State. Therefore, the General Assembly should amend state law to add an employment performance standard to the other four performance standards. The Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission should develop appropriate employment performance measures at the direction of the State Board of Education along with the other measures. The employment performance measures should be included in the annual performance reports beginning with the most recent year after this legislation changes.

Recommendation 2. The General Assembly should direct the State Board of Education to adopt rules to establish a small group exception for sanctioning Education Preparation Programs to address issues that may result from data disaggregation requirements.

As discussed in Finding 2, new state law introduces a sanctioning process for Educator Preparation Programs based on disaggregated student demographic data. This process may unintentionally punish entire EPPs for the poor performance of small demographic groups. A small group exception similar to the one used by the Texas State Board of Educator Certification could mitigate some of the challenges associated with accountability enforcement based on student demographics.

To address potential problems resulting from disaggregated student data and related sanctions, the General Assembly should direct the State Board of Education to adopt rules that address EPPs with small disaggregated demographic groups. The threshold of 'small' should be determined by the State Board of Education as should the specific sanctioning adjustments.

The Texas State Board of Educator Certification offers a potential model to mitigate the issue of small sample sizes connected to sanctions. In the Texas model, an EPP demographic group must exceed 10 people to be eligible for performance assessment and sanctioning. EPPs with groups that do not exceed 10 for a given year use a three-year average and that group is measured against the standards present in the third year, regardless of how small the cumulated number of group members may be. The North Carolina State Board of Education could also choose to construct an approach that differs from the Texas model to address the disaggregation of demographic groups and related sanctions.

The State Board of Education should be directed to complete rule-making for the small group exception by October 1, 2019 so the exception can be applied to data from the 2018–19 school year, which is released in a report in 2020.

Recommendation 3. The General Assembly should direct the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina, in consultation with the State Board of Education and the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission, to develop a plan that addresses the issues of sharing all education preparation program data with the UNC Educator Quality Dashboard and the subsequent management of that data.

As discussed in Finding 2, new state law requires the State Board of Education to provide information from each Educator Preparation Program annual performance report to the UNC Educator Quality Dashboard. The intent of the new law is to provide greater accessibility and comparability of data on the performance of all EPPs in North Carolina.

To ensure that the UNC Educator Quality Dashboard effectively incorporates performance information from private EPPs, the General Assembly should direct the UNC Board of Governors to convene a working group to develop an implementation and management plan to address the administrative and logistical issues associated with adding private EPP data to the Dashboard. The working group should include representatives from the UNC system, public EPPs, private EPPs, and the Department of Public Instruction. It may be appropriate to use the Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission with UNC personnel for this task. The group should consider

- data-sharing agreements or memoranda of understanding within the UNC system and with private EPPs that addresses who can access the information and how they can use it,
- legal and process-based requirements and parameters for external groups to access Dashboard information for research purposes, and
- the rebranding process for the Dashboard website to reflect the inclusion of data for all EPPs instead of just those in the UNC system, and
- the cost of implementing the expanded Dashboard, including sources of funding to cover any additional costs.

The General Assembly should direct the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina to submit the implementation plan to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee by November 15, 2019.

Recommendation 4. The General Assembly should direct the State Board of Education, Department of Public Instruction, and Professional Educator Preparation and Standards Commission to transform the current, required reporting efforts into a streamlined, weighted, performance-based model.

As discussed throughout this report, North Carolina Educator Preparation Programs currently collect and report a great deal of data to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in order to comply with legislative and rule-based data reporting requirements. This data provides the basis for the annual Performance Report and the Report Card required under state law and produced by DPI for each EPP. Each report presents descriptive information per EPP, but as discussed in Finding 1, these reports lack benchmarks or comparative information to guide the assessment of EPP performance and to hold EPPs accountable to policy makers and the public for their performance.

As shown in Finding 3, a performance-based reporting system guided by a formula that attaches weights to measures of importance enables policy makers and the public to more fully assess how well EPPs are producing teachers according to state law. State law already specifies certain performance standards and data categories that EPPs must provide to DPI; these requirements could guide the development of a weighted, performance-based model. The General Assembly should direct the SBE, DPI, and PEPSC to build a model like the ones presented in this report to replace the Performance Report and Report Card. The Program Evaluation Division model may serve as a starting point for the group to tailor.

To make this transition, the SBE, PEPSC, and DPI should

- identify what types of information would be most helpful to a) meet legislated requirements, b) hold EPPs accountable for standards, c) help EPPs improve performance, and d) communicate EPP performance to policy makers and the public;
- identify and select measures for each performance domain specified in state law;
- weigh each performance domain and the respective measures within each domain, including making rounding decisions for awarding points;
- determine the number of years of data used to calculate measures (three or five years);
- examine reasons for excluding EPPs from the reporting (e.g., missing or too few data points for a certain number of measures in the domains);

- establish targets and minimum standards based on 90th/10th percentile or other criteria;
- consider whether to use the weighted performance-based approach solely for public accountability and to inform decision makers or to also use them as a corrective or compliance tool;
- identify how and in what ways the current laws regarding EPP reporting should be adjusted to support the new reporting approach; and
- discuss how the UNC Educator Quality Dashboard fits into reporting.

The State Board of Education should report on the transformation of reporting to a performance-based, weighted formula for EPPs, including any implementation recommendations, to the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee no later than November 15, 2019.

Appendices

Appendix A: Example of Point Calculation for One Measure in a Performance-Based, Weighted Assessment

Agency Response

A draft of this report was submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) and State Board of Education (SBE) for review. DPI's response, which was reviewed by SBE, is provided following the appendix.

Program Evaluation Division Contact and Acknowledgments

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