



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

**ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICE:**

**Extension of Temporary Suspension of Educator Preparation Program Approval**

Effective Date: August 17, 2021

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**I. Purpose**

The purpose of this notice is to announce that the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) intends to extend its 18-month discretionary suspension of educator preparation provider (EPP) approvals pending the promulgation of new regulations adopting standards for educator preparation and developing procedures for EPP approval that ensure that said standards are applied consistently and rigorously.

OSSE will continue to accept new applications from EPPs during the suspension period and will resume approvals in the order in which they were received once the new regulations have been promulgated.

Promulgating regulations for EPP approval will strengthen the quality and consistency of EPPs in the District by creating legally enforceable requirements that are based upon current research, stakeholder input, expert advice and aligned to the most current state and national professional standards of practice for teachers and school administrators.

**II. Background**

OSSE is responsible for the initial and continued state-level approval of educator preparation providers that lead to certification to teach in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS)<sup>1</sup>. See *generally* D.C. Official Code § 38–2602<sup>2</sup>. Ensuring the preparation of high-quality teachers for the District of Columbia is fundamental to the mission of the Office of State Superintendent of Education to close the achievement gap and improve outcomes for all DC students. Research has found that the most important in-school factor in strengthening student achievement is teacher quality. OSSE recognizes that high-quality teachers come from high-quality teacher preparation programs. The underlying assumption is that if EPPs are producing skilled, motivated,

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<sup>1</sup> 5A DCMR §1601.

<sup>2</sup> DC Official Code § 38–2602 (b) (11) provides OSSE with authority to “[f]ormulate and promulgate rules necessary to carry out its functions, including rules governing the process for review and approval of state-level policies by the State Board of Education under DC Official Code §38-2652, pursuant to Chapter 5 of Title 2 [§ 2-501 et seq.]. In turn, DC Official Code § 38-2652 (a)(6) provides that the State Board of education shall: [a]pprove standards for accreditation and certification of teacher preparation programs of colleges and universities or teacher preparation academies.”

and well-trained teachers, then student learning and achievement will grow. Thus, OSSE is committed to increasing access to high quality educator preparation programs that prepare diverse educators who are uniquely equipped for long term success in the teaching profession, expanding consumer choice, and ensuring programmatic excellence in all EPPs approved OSSE.

State approval of an educator preparation program means that OSSE has examined the quality of programs preparing teachers for District of Columbia PK-12 schools and has determined that the programs meet state standards for preparing candidates to enter the profession. The goal of the state approval system is to ensure a steady flow of high-quality candidates for roles as teachers, administrators, and other school personnel in District of Columbia schools by allowing multiple routes for educator preparation.

The District of Columbia's system for EPP approval should be based on high standards and selectivity for teacher, administrator, and other school personnel candidates. These standards should be clearly set forth in regulations that can be implemented and enforced with fidelity. However, the current standards for EPP approval are established in policies developed by OSSE that do not have the force of law; there are no regulations governing EPP approval. Pursuant to DC Official Code § 38-2602, OSSE has the legal authority to issue regulations, with approval by the State Board of Education under DC Official Code § 38-2652 (a)(6). In the absence of legal authority stemming from duly promulgated regulations, OSSE's ability to ensure consistent quality and robust compliance with the established standards is jeopardized.

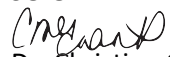
### **III. Authority**

D.C. Official Code §§ 38-2601.01, 38-2602(b)(11), (12), and (17); D.C. Official Code § 47-2853.04(a)(22), (36) and (c)(3).

### **IV. Procedures**

As of the effective date of this notice, OSSE will extend its suspension of approval of EPP applicants pending forthcoming notice and comment rulemaking. This suspension will remain in effect until February 18, 2022 or 30 days after a final rule is published in the DC Register, whichever comes later. This notice will be published in the District of Columbia Register, posted on the OSSE website and provided to any EPP applicants while it remains in effect.

#### **SO ORDERED:**



Dr. Christina Grant

Acting State Superintendent of Education

Office of the State Superintendent of Education