



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF

**EDUCATION**

**OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION**

**NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUANCE**

**Temporary Suspension of Educator Preparation Program Approval  
and  
Announcement of an Intent to Suspend Approval of Educator Preparation Providers Pending  
Rulemaking**

**Effective Date: February 21, 2020**

The purpose of this notice is to announce that the Office of State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) intends to impose an 18-month discretionary suspension of educator preparation provider (EPP) approvals and renewals pending the promulgation of new regulations. The new regulations would outline procedures for EPP approval and renewal with the goal of ensuring fidelity of implementation and reducing administrative burden on applicants. Further, promulgating regulations for EPP approval will support the improvement 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.

OSSE will continue to accept applications for approval 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. During the suspension period, OSSE will also hold in abeyance any actions related to the renewal of providers or programs currently operating in the District under a previous approval that has expired or is set to expire during the suspension period. Any provider or program that was duly approved by OSSE in the past and is scheduled for renewal in the next 18 months, will be held harmless and allowed to continue operating until such time as OSSE resumes renewals. All EPPs that are scheduled for renewal will be notified directly by OSSE regarding their status during the suspension period and will be notified again when OSSE resumes renewals following the promulgation of the new regulations.

**I. 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* D.C. Official Code § 38-2602<sup>2</sup>. Ensuring the preparation of high-quality teachers for the District of Columbia is

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<sup>1</sup> 5-A District of Columbia Municipal Regulations § 1601.

<sup>2</sup> DC 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 § 38-2652, pursuant to Chapter 5 of Title 2 [§ 2-501 et seq.]. In turn, DC 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.”

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 biggest 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, and well-trained teachers, then student learning and achievement will increase. 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. Further, as the state education agency, OSSE has an interest in ensuring that families have educational options staffed with highly effective teachers. To accomplish this aim, OSSE must ensure the programmatic excellence of all EPPs that it approves.

State approval of an educator preparation program means that OSSE has examined the quality of programs preparing teachers for District of Columbia P-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 policies should be clearly set forth in regulations that can be implemented and enforced with fidelity. However, the current policies do not have the force of law; there are not yet regulations governing EPP approval. 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.

## **II. Authority**

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

## **III. Procedures**

As of the effective date of this notice, OSSE will suspend approval of EPP applicants pending forthcoming notice and comment rulemaking. OSSE will also hold in abeyance all pending renewals of programs or providers during this suspension period. This suspension will remain in effect until August 21, 2021 or until a final rule is published in the D.C. Register, whichever comes first. This notice will be published in the D.C. Register, posted on the OSSE website and provided to any EPP applicants while it remains in effect.

### ***SO ORDERED:***

Hanseul Kang  
State Superintendent  
Office of the State Superintendent of Education