## TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ENDORSEMENT AT ADAMS STATE UNIVERSITY

**PREPARED BY:** DR. BRITTANY LANE, DIRECTOR, EDUCATOR PREPARATION

**I. SUMMARY**

This consent item recommends approval for **Adams State University** (ASU) to offer the Special Education educator endorsement.

**II. BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to C.R.S. §23-1-121, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education considers approval of all educator preparation programs at public and private institutions of higher education after receiving an affirmative recommendation from the State Board of Education regarding the program content.

The process for initial approval of new educator preparation program is as follows:

* The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) conducts a review of the endorsement program, to ensure its content is designed and implemented in a manner that will enable a candidate to meet the requirements for licensure in Colorado (C.R.S. §22-60.5)
* CDE makes a recommendation to the State Board of Education (SBE) for consideration.
* If the SBE approves the program, the approval is forwarded to DHE
* Upon receiving an approval from SBE, DHE reviews the proposed program for alignment to the statutorily required performance-based standards. [C.R.S. §23-1-121(2)]
* DHE forwards a recommendation for to CCHE for action.

**III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

The Colorado State Board of Education approved the content of Adams State University’s Special Education endorsement program at its meeting on April 12, 2022, and CDE staff transmitted its affirmative recommendations to the department.

Department staff has analyzed the proposed program, according to the statutory performance-based standards set forth in C.R.S. §23-1-121(2) and confirmed it meets the criteria. The following evidence is summarized from the institution’s proposal:

1. **Program Design**: The SPED program was designed through intentional partnerships and consultation with local partner districts around their students’ needs. Candidates are moved through the program with an eye on serving those districts at the beginning of the school year and experiences occur in co-teaching models to allow for maximum efforts in mentorship of educators new to the endorsement area.
2. **Educator Knowledge and Competencies**: Coursework in the SPED program is aligned with state standards and course assignments and observational data provide a framework for assessment of candidate competency of the skills and knowledge therein. Instruction and feedback around standards and domains bookend each course and field experience so that candidates constantly know their own expectations and standing within the program.
3. **Clinical Experiences**: Candidates are fully supported by multiple members from the university, local BOCES, and district staff in their clinical placements through regular observations and monthly seminars. Additionally, course modules, assignments, and artifacts are purposefully constructed to provide assessment and reflection tools for candidates and the staff who are there with them throughout the program.
4. **Program Impact and Continuous Improvement:** Assessment of the program occurs on multiple levels, with current procedures in place that will form the framework for ongoing assessment and updates which include BOCES partners and mentor teachers as part of the feedback loop. There are formal and informal data gathering mechanisms in place that will allow ASU to fully evaluate the effectiveness of the SPED program.

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §23-5-129(6)(b), department staff finds the proposed program is consistent with the institution’s statutory role and mission and meets the educator preparation requirements in §23-1-121, C.R.S. Upon the Commission’s approval, this program will be reevaluated during the institutions next regularly scheduled reauthorization.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommends that the Commission** **approve the Special Education educator preparation program at Adams State University**

**V. STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

**C.R.S. §23-1-121-Commission directive - approval of educator preparation programs**

(2) The commission shall adopt policies establishing the requirements for educator preparation programs that include:

(a) Program design around a shared vision of candidate proficiency and professionalism that supports decision-making about partnerships and the integration of curricula, learners, and course work and clinical experiences;

(b) Mapping, planning, development, assessment, and support of candidate proficiencies, including candidates’ deep understanding of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, the content knowledge required for educating, and the dispositions and professional qualities necessary to be successful;

(c) With regard to teacher and principal preparation programs, courses that provide content knowledge as described in part 10 of article 7 of title 22, specifically in teaching to the state preschool through elementary and secondary education standards adopted pursuant to section 22-7-1005;

(d) Intentional clinical experience, early and throughout preparation, relating to predetermined state content standards, which experiences afford candidates multiple, intentional experiences to learn from practice. Clinical experiences must be aligned with program curricula so that candidates develop pedagogical skills and pedagogical content knowledge. Teacher preparation candidates must complete a minimum of eight hundred hours, and principal and administrator candidates must complete a minimum of three hundred hours, of clinical practice. A teacher candidate must complete the hours of clinical practice while enrolled in an approved educator preparation program; except that a program, after review, may accept clinical practice hours completed before enrolling in the program. A majority of the clinical practice hours must be completed through a continuous placement. For every additional endorsement or advanced degree, a candidate must complete an appropriate period of supervised field experiences that relate to predetermined standards, including best practices and relevant national norms related to the candidate’s endorsements.

(e) A requirement that each candidate, prior to graduation, must demonstrate the skills required for licensure, as specified by rule of the state board of education pursuant to section 22-2-109 (3), in the manner specified by rule of the state board;

(f) A requirement that preparation program faculty, to improve their work, must engage in continuous evidence-based cycles of self-reflection and review regarding the impact of their programs on their candidates’ development throughout the programs. These cycles must include data on current candidates throughout the program and available data on program completers.