## TOPIC: REAUTHORIZATION OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAMS AT UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

**PREPARED BY: SAM FOGLEMAN, INTERIM DIRECTOR OF EDUCATOR PREPARATION PATHWAYS**

**I. SUMMARY**

This consent item recommends approval of reauthorization of the following Educator Preparation Programs at the **University of Colorado Boulder** (UCB):

* Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (K-12)
* Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Bilingual Education Specialist (K-12)
* Elementary Education/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Dual Program (K-6)
* English Language Arts (7-12)
* Mathematics (7-12)
* Middle School Mathematics (6-8)
* Music (K-12)
* School Audiologist (0-21)
* Science (7-12)
* Social Studies (7-12)
* World Languages (K-12)

The item recommends approval of conditional reauthorization of:

* School Speech Language Pathologist (0-21)

**II. BACKGROUND**

Pursuant to C.R.S. §23-1-121, the Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) reviews and considers for reauthorization all educator preparation programs at public and private institutions of higher education. The process for reauthorization of educator preparation programs is as follows:

* The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) conducts a review of the content of endorsement programs to ensure alignment with the requirements for licensure pursuant to C.R.S. §22-2-109.
* The Colorado Department of Higher Education (CDHE) reviews the unit and its programs for alignment to the statutorily required performance-based standards [C.R.S. §23-1-121(2)].
* CDHE and CDE then jointly conduct an on-site visit of the unit and its educator preparation programs.
* CDE staff provide a recommendation to the State Board of Education (SBE) for consideration and then forward the board’s decision to CDHE.
* CDHE staff incorporate the SBE decision alongside staff analysis in their recommendation to CCHE.

**III. STAFF ANALYSIS**

At its February 8, 2023, meeting, the Colorado State Board of Education approved the content of UCB’s educator preparation programs and voted to conditionally reauthorize the School Speech Language Pathology program and fully reauthorize the remaining programs. CDE staff transmitted the Board’s decision and recommendations to the department.

Department staff have analyzed the relevant programs at UCB, according to the statutory performance-based standards set forth in C.R.S. §23-1-121(2) and confirmed the criteria are met as outlined in the areas below. The following evidence is summarized from the institution’s reauthorization report, which was co-authored by CDE and CDHE staff:

1. **Program Design**: The University of Colorado Boulder’s vision and values are purposefully embedded throughout its programs in coursework, assignments, and candidates’ clinical experiences.  There is a logical and developmental sequence of strong coursework that promotes content and pedagogical knowledge, while clinical field experiences occur early and often throughout the programs.  Both past and present students indicated that their early and shared experiences in the field were formative and highly enriching.  The School of Education seeks out mentor teachers for their candidates who embrace the school’s ideology and engage in a co-teaching model with candidates.  The school also makes concerted efforts to serve its local partners’ needs through candidate placements, and the school collaborates with colleagues in the College of Arts and Sciences to recruit UCB students in content areas into the teaching pathway.
2. **Educator Knowledge and Competencies**: The Colorado Department of Education engaged with UCB to peer review endorsement matrices for all program areas.  The program’s focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion was seen throughout the program, while course structures showed a commitment to growing candidates’ knowledge of content and pedagogical strategies.  UCB’s endorsements were found to be aligned to and meeting state standards.  Through a deep dive into the science of reading as part of the program, CDE’s findings show the program’s commitment to scientifically-based reading instruction.  Candidates demonstrated a clear understanding of evidence-based reading instruction and could speak to the developmental progression of foundational reading skills and how those skills are taught and observed during their practicum experiences.
3. **Clinical Experiences**: As mentioned previously, UCB purposefully designs field experiences to take place early and often throughout its programs.  According to program completers, those experiences were highly constructive, well-supported, and developmentally sequenced, allowing them to gradually assume more responsibility in their classrooms.  With an emphasis on equity, inclusion, and social justice in the program, candidates are able to connect their students to academic material no matter the subject area.  Program mentors expressed that they feel confident in their work with candidates, especially when using a co-teaching model to plan, instruct, and assess their students.  Many candidates also spoke to the strength of learning alongside their mentors.  All of this points to the fact that the clinical experience piece in UCB’s programs is strong and leads to highly capable educators in the field.
4. **Program Impact and Continuous Improvement:** The educator preparation programs at UCB rely heavily on quantitative surveys and feedback systems.  This data can inform how to better meet the needs of individual candidates, but they are also aggregated to create a picture of student achievement and opportunities for growth in the program.  The school also solicits feedback from partnership stakeholders in order to improve clinical experiences.  Results of such data collection are shared with program leadership, faculty, and staff for intensive discussion and improvement planning.  The School of Education is also in the midst of continuous efforts to improve data gathering tools and evaluation methods in order to meet overall goals for its programs, which is to say that they have a consistent eye on feedback mechanisms and continue to engage in a continuous improvement cycle.

**Special Note:** Regarding the recommendation for conditional reauthorization of the School Speech Language Pathology program, it should be noted that this specific program is housed in the Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences (SLHS) Department of the College of Arts and Sciences, which is outside of the School of Education.  Because candidates completing that program are able to receive Colorado licensure, it still falls under the umbrella of this state reauthorization process.  The context for this recommendation is as follows:

* During an interview session with current School Speech Language Pathology candidates, state team members heard from two students who shared concerning information regarding the behavior of a faculty member in the program, including a number of examples of alleged objectionable, confrontational, and unethical behavior by that instructor.
* State team members made the students aware of steps that they should explore within the university’s support structures and immediately informed School of Education leadership, the institution’s Title IX coordinator, the chancellor, and the provost, all of whom made assurances that an immediate investigation was underway.
* During a separate session, state team members also spoke with program faculty and were presented with similar stories regarding the same faculty member, the details of which appeared to illustrate a pattern of negative behavior over time.
* Given the significance of the concerns related to student and staff well-being, CDHE staff sent a letter to university leadership detailing those concerns and requesting a formal response.  The letter explained that while CDHE does not have a role in investigating the allegations, it does have the authority to evaluate student supports and the overall learning environment as part of the reauthorization process.  A response was received from leadership that outlined processes in place for such matters and provided details about follow-up on this particular situation, including internal mechanisms to address the faculty member’s behavior and outreach to affected individuals.
* While this matter did not involve the academic curriculum or content of the educator preparation program, and thus would not ordinarily be a circumstance to trigger a conditional authorization recommendation by CDE, staff from the two departments were in agreement that the seriousness merited such a recommendation to the State Board of Education and then to the Commission of Higher Education.
* CDHE staff are therefore recommending that the University of Colorado Boulder School Speech Language Pathology program be placed on conditional authorization until such time as a follow-up visit is conducted, no later than October 31, 2023.  That focus of that visit will be to monitor the institution’s efforts to prevent and address such problematic behavior and also the integrity of support structures for such situations, the timeline of events and steps forward for the affected individuals, and systems for outreach so that students and faculty are aware of the steps to receive support should such issues with faculty occur in the future.

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes §23-5-129(6)(b), Department staff find that with the exception of the School Speech Language Pathologist program, educator preparation programs at UCB are consistent with the institution’s statutory role and mission and meet the educator preparation requirements in §23-1-121, C.R.S. Upon the Commission’s approval, these programs will be reevaluated during the institution’s next regularly scheduled reauthorization, which generally occurs within 5-7 years.

**IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

**Staff recommend the full** **reauthorization of the following educator preparation programs at the University of Colorado Boulder:**

* **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Education (K-12)**
* **Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Bilingual Education Specialist (K-12)**
* **Elementary Education/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Dual Program (K-6)**
* **English Language Arts (7-12)**
* **Mathematics (7-12)**
* **Middle School Mathematics (6-8)**
* **Music (K-12)**
* **School Audiologist (0-21)**
* **Science (7-12)**
* **Social Studies (7-12)**
* **World Languages (K-12)**

**Staff recommend conditional reauthorization of the following educator preparation program at the University of Colorado Boulder:**

* **School Speech Language Pathologist (0-21)**

**V. STATUTORY AUTHORITY**

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

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(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;

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(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.

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