

Promises to Keep:

Transforming Educator Preparation to Better Serve a Diverse Range of Learners

Leveraging the Policy Recommendations of CCSSO's *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* Report



THE COUNCIL OF CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

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CCSSO

Chris Minnich, Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School Officers

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700 • Washington, DC 20001-1431
Phone (202) 336-7000 • Fax (202) 408-8072 • www.ccsso.org

THE COLLABORATION FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATOR DEVELOPMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND REFORM

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CEEDAR

Mary Brownell, Ph.D., Center Director of CEEDAR

CEEDAR Center • P.O. Box 117050 • Gainesville, FL 32611

This content was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Award No. H325A120003. Bonnie Jones and David Guardino serve as the project officers. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned in this website is intended or should be inferred.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A greater than ever moral imperative exists today to create an education system that addresses the complex needs of a diverse range of learners. Increased rigor in college- and career- ready standards, changing demographics, and persistent achievement gaps among subgroups of learners demand a system that prepares educators to be effective in addressing the needs of students who are most likely to struggle to succeed.

Struggling learners, including students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL), or students with other unidentified learning and behavior needs, can succeed in meeting college- and career-ready standards only if educators are prepared to meet their needs. General education teachers must provide core instruction that is accessible and differentiated. Special education teachers, ELL specialists, and other school personnel must be ready to provide the increasingly intense academic and behavioral instruction that these students require. Early intervention and successful prevention that addresses academic and behavioral needs depends on a multi-tiered system of support.

The Council of Chief State School Officers ([CCSSO](#)) in partnership with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center ([CEEDAR](#)), is pleased to release the following potential actions states can take to build on current progress to transform educator preparation and produce teachers and leaders who have the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners.

This paper expands upon the recommendations contained in [Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Education Profession](#), released by CCSSO in December 2012. *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* urged states to use their authority to ensure policies work together to create conditions that support preparation program providers as they transform how they are preparing our nation's workforce. These policies include regulating licensure, preparation program decisions around effectiveness, approval to operate in a state, and data reporting system integration. This paper is intended to honor the work states are already doing based on recommendations from both CCSSO and CEEDAR.

Our audience remains the same: chiefs and state education agencies. Chiefs play a critical role in promoting the cultural and political conditions necessary for preparation programs, districts, and schools to advance the capacity of educators to meet students' most challenging needs.

The CEEDAR/CCSSO Policy Framing Working Group that drafted this paper urges chief state school officers, in partnership with the teaching profession, to commit to implementing the following recommendations to ensure the education workforce is prepared to meet the learning needs of a diverse range of learners including students with disabilities:

1. Beginning in the preparation stage, define and integrate across the educator career continuum the knowledge and skills all educators need to implement differentiated, high-quality, core content instruction to meet the needs of all learners, monitor student progress, and identify and provide increasingly intensive supports.
2. Provide multiple opportunities for deliberate practice and feedback to educators, including access to a range of meaningful practical experiences, as they learn and implement differentiated core instruction, monitor student progress, and apply evidence-based practices to meet the needs of all students within a tiered system of support.

3. Ensure that the outcomes of all students – including students with disabilities – are an integral part of preparation program approval and educator evaluation systems.
4. Create an infrastructure that prepares candidates for enabling and promoting shared ownership, collaboration, and teamwork among all educators for all students – including students with disabilities.
5. Hold educator preparation programs accountable and provide feedback on how to improve programs to ensure candidates are prepared with the knowledge, skills, and practice opportunities necessary to teach and lead diverse learners within tiered systems of support.

Successful implementation will require the leadership and political will of the chief state school officer and strong partnership and commitment of key stakeholders in each state, especially educator preparation providers. It will also require resources and support from many different levels of the state education system. CCSSO and CEEDAR have agreed to pool their expertise and resources to lead this work and pledge their support for states to move on this agenda.

INTRODUCTION

OUR OPPORTUNITY

With the recent adoption of more rigorous college- and career- ready standards, states across the country have increased expectations for what our educational system can achieve and what our students can learn. State education agencies are now responsible for ensuring *all* learners have access to well-prepared teachers and leaders who can provide the instruction and learning conditions that will enable students to reach these high expectations. Given the increasing diversity of student needs in classrooms today, especially for students with disabilities, teachers need to be prepared to provide differentiated, high-quality, core instruction, and team with fellow educators to provide intensive supports so that all students can reach higher learning standards.

The Council of Chief State School Officers ([CCSSO](#)) in partnership with the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform Center ([CEEDAR](#)), is pleased to release the following recommended actions states can take to build on current progress made to transform educator preparation and produce teachers and leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners¹, including students with disabilities.

This paper expands upon the considerations contained in [Our Responsibility, Our Promise: Transforming Educator Preparation and Entry into the Education Profession](#), released by CCSSO in December 2012. *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* urged states to use their authority to ensure policies work together to create conditions that support preparation program providers as they transform how they prepare our nation's workforce. These policies include regulating licensure, preparation program decisions around effectiveness, approval to operate in a state, and data reporting system integration. Today, 45 state education agencies have taken action against at least one of the ten recommendations in that report.

This document is targeted to the same audience: chiefs and their state education agencies. We focus specifically on ensuring that reform efforts include the development of pre-service professional learning systems that prepare all teachers and leaders to function in a tiered system of instructional and behavioral support, and meet the needs of all students.

Struggling learners, including students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL), or students with other unidentified learning and behavior needs, can meet college- and career- ready standards only if educators are prepared to meet their needs. General education teachers must provide accessible and differentiated core instruction. Special education teachers, ELL specialists, and other school personnel must be ready to provide the increasingly intense academic and behavioral instruction that these students require. Early intervention and successful prevention that addresses academic and behavioral needs depends on a multi-tiered system of support.

It is important to note that this document addresses the preparation of both general and special education teachers and leaders, and the individual needs of all students. Every teacher works with diverse learners every day, and every adult in a school shares ownership of student learning.

¹ For purposes of this paper, "diverse learners" refers to students with learning differences who, because of language, cultural background, differing ability level, disabilities, learning approaches, gender and/or socioeconomic status, may have academic or behavioral needs that require varied instructional strategies to ensure their learning. Adapted from the Glossary included in *InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0 (2013)*

Students deserve a highly effective team of experts who design curriculum and instruction to give all students equal opportunity to learn and master college- and career-ready standards. And, teachers deserve leaders who can create the necessary conditions to collaborate and provide such instruction.

The intent of this document is to leverage the current focus of state education agencies on revising policy, and transform educator preparation to meet the needs of a diverse range of learners, especially students with disabilities. The link to the CCSSO chiefs' task force report is deliberate. Too often, special education issues remain isolated, rarely moving outside the special education office in state agencies or departments of special education in colleges of education. This guidance document is written for educators and policy makers who are responsible for licensure, program approval, and data system policy. Chiefs play a critical role and can promote the cultural and political conditions needed in preparation programs, districts, and schools to advance the capacity of educators to meet the most challenging learning needs of students. In April 2014, CEEDAR and CCSSO convened a Policy Framing Working Group composed of deans, teacher educators and researchers, teachers, and state education agency staff from both general and special education, to identify and discuss key issues at the intersection of educator preparation, implementation of college- and career-ready standards, and the needs of students with disabilities. Their goal was to align our current education system to what we know works based on research and promising practices. Currently, evidence-based practices, universal design for learning, differentiated instruction, and tiered systems of increasingly intensive supports are not being implemented in classrooms across the country in a systematic or comprehensive way.

AN IMPERATIVE

State chiefs have prioritized closing achievement gaps and addressing inequities in education. For chiefs, this goal has become a moral imperative.

An achievement gap persists between students with disabilities and their same age peers, as well as ELLs and their same age peers. The gap has existed for decades with little improvement. Unless action is taken now to prepare an education workforce to address these kinds of performance gaps, they are likely to widen even more. In addition, the increased rigor of college- and career-ready standards increases the likelihood that more students who struggle will need to access high-quality, differentiated core content instruction and intensive supports.

Research indicates that evidence-based practices developed for special education benefit all learners who struggle. Thus, these practices should be leveraged and built into one system to support all learners. To build this system, states can draw on existing state initiatives such as those outlined below.

First, states are preparing [new equity plans](#) for submission to the U.S. Department of Education (the Department or USED) in June 2015 detailing how they will ensure equitable access to effective teaching to underserved groups of students. As states examine their state-specific data, work with stakeholders to conduct a root-cause analysis, and draft actions steps, they should address the role that educator preparation and ongoing professional learning systems can play in building a workforce that equitably addresses all student needs.

Second, states can ensure that the teacher development systems (both evaluation and support components) align to recommendations in this paper, especially those relating to key knowledge and skills that educators need to function effectively in a system of tiered supports to meet student

needs. Change is successful and sustained when it is embedded in assessments that provide both accountability and feedback for educators to improve.

Third, states now face more transparent accountability for learning gaps that can be used to support the reforms outlined in this paper. In May 2014, USED implemented a revised accountability system under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act known as Results-Driven Accountability ([RDA](#)), which shifts the Department's accountability efforts from a primary emphasis on compliance to a framework that focuses on improved results for students with disabilities. RDA emphasizes student outcomes such as performance on assessments, graduation rates, and early childhood outcomes. States are now required to develop a State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) that outlines how they will use data to identify gaps in student performance, analyze state systems, and then implement targeted, evidence-based reforms to mitigate gaps and advance achievement.

Finally, [new draft regulations](#) under Title II of the Higher Education Act (HEA) will go into effect in 2015, requiring states to continue reporting on the quality of their teacher preparation programs and create data systems to track program graduate performance and report back for accountability and improvement. States can follow the lead of Tennessee, where the state education agency (SEA) now ensures that these new reporting systems track educator knowledge and skills in teaching diverse learners as a way of addressing equity gap issues.

GUIDING ASSUMPTIONS FOR TRANSFORMING EDUCATOR PREPARATION FOR TEACHING DIVERSE LEARNERS

This set of guiding assumptions, consistent with CCSSO's *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* taskforce report, form the basis for the Call to Action steps and potential policy actions outlined later in this document.

First, every teacher addresses the needs of diverse learners in their classrooms every day and though some students may receive additional intensive supports, all teachers, school staff, and leaders share ownership and responsibility for the academic and behavioral growth of all students.

All teachers have a diverse group of learners in their classroom. Most students receive core instruction in the general education classroom, some with additional accommodations. Other learners might be pulled out to resource rooms or self-contained classrooms to receive targeted skill interventions. Regardless of the location or context, all teaching and professional staff in a school should possess shared ownership for the learning and progress of all students.

Second, all students deserve access to high-quality core content instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, grounded in research, and provides increasingly intensified tiered levels of instructional and behavioral support.

Each student deserves a teacher who can provide access to a curriculum of high-quality core content instruction based on universally designed principles and to a team of educators who are adequately prepared and supported to meet his/her needs in core and intervention instruction. General education teachers must be prepared to implement high-quality core content instruction that is evidence-based and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners. Special education teachers, instructional coaches, and teachers providing English language support must be

prepared to assist with designing this core instruction and provide intensive intervention instruction using evidence-based practice and data to inform instructional decisions in concert with the general education teachers.

This will not become the norm unless leaders support teamwork, ongoing professional learning, the scheduling and deploying of staff to enable effective core instruction and intervention, and bringing staff together to create a school-wide system of effective behavior management that enables each student to succeed.

Third, core content instruction paired with progress monitoring that includes tiered levels of support (e.g., Response to Intervention, Multi-tiered Systems of Support) should be recognized as a pivotal framework for closing achievement gaps.

Forty-four states report that they are currently implementing or are considering implementing some form of a tiered support system.² Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) show promise for addressing the needs of all students and personalizing learning. The National Center on Intensive Intervention defines MTSS as:

A prevention framework that organizes building-level resources to address each individual student's academic and/or behavioral needs within intervention tiers that vary in intensity. MTSS allows for the early identification of learning and behavioral challenges and timely intervention for students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes. The increasingly intense tiers (i.e., Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3), sometimes referred to as levels of prevention (i.e., primary, secondary, intensive prevention levels), represent a continuum of supports.

The core of MTSS is data-based decision-making. This involves collecting data, monitoring each student's individual performance, and designing and implementing strategies and levels of support necessary so each learner can succeed. This system is fluid and students can move between tiers and levels of support as their needs change. MTSS provides a new way of addressing the needs of students who struggle and need intervention, despite the presence or absence of disability.

Fourth, the vision of a learner-centered approach to education articulated in the chiefs' task force report is at the core of the special education field and this experience and expertise should be leveraged to support the education of all students.

A key principle shared by CCSSO and CEEDAR is that **an education system should be driven by the needs of PK-12 students, thus evolving into a competency-based system.** The Individualized Education Program (IEP) process utilized within the special education community is grounded in individual student strengths and needs. Likewise, the progress monitoring and problem solving approaches used within tiered systems of support are learner-centered. School teams that are prepared to identify and address student strengths, interests, and needs are likely to empower students and provide individualized supports that lead to increased student achievement. The work of special educators within agencies is currently based on compliance and accountability to special education regulations, which overlooks their contributions as a source of expertise and innovation in moving toward personalized and competency-based instruction for all students.

² Hoover, J. J., Baca, L., Wexler-Love, E. & Saenz, L. (2008). National implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI): Research summary. University of Colorado, Boulder.

Chiefs have asserted that preparing students for a lifetime of learning and diagnosing learning challenges are essential skills that all teachers must have.³ In fact, the knowledge and skills required of today's teachers are so extensive that it makes creating teacher teams more necessary than ever.

Finally, if teachers and leaders are to achieve the vision put forth in this document and create schools that are learner-centered within a system of tiered supports, they must be supported in developing a high level of expertise over time.

Our current system of preparation, induction, and professional development falls short of implementing the seamless, ongoing, effective learning opportunities that are needed for teachers and leaders to develop expert knowledge and performance over time. Every branch of the educational system must own this problem and act on it to ensure better outcomes for each student. Research indicates it takes seven to ten years to develop professional expertise.⁴ This means preparation providers must build a solid foundation of competent performance that school districts can improve upon. Additionally, teachers need access to learning opportunities that will allow them to develop the knowledge and skills needed to help each student learn rigorous content, and leaders need opportunities that prepare them to lead schools that are focused on individual student learning.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Addressing persistent achievement gaps requires bold action, innovative policy, and effective implementation. It requires systemic change led by chiefs and their agencies, in partnership with educator preparation programs, local educational agencies, education professionals, and a range of key stakeholders.

The CEEDAR/CCSSO Policy Framing Work Group outlined the following five bold steps that chiefs and SEAs can take to move closer toward an education system that supports all learners and achieves the values outlined in the assumptions above.

1. Define and integrate across the educator career continuum, beginning in preparation, the knowledge and skills all educators need to implement high-quality core content instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, that monitors student progress, and that identifies and provides increasingly intensive supports.
2. Provide multiple opportunities for deliberate practice and feedback to educators, including access to a range of meaningful practical experiences, as they learn and implement differentiated core instruction, monitor student progress, and apply evidence-based practices to meet the needs of all students within a tiered system of support.
3. Ensure that the outcomes of all students – including students with disabilities – are an integral part of preparation program approval and educator evaluation systems.
4. Prepare candidates and create infrastructure to enable and promote shared ownership, collaboration, and teamwork among all educators for all students – including students with disabilities.

³ Council of Chief State School Officers, (2012) *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* p.2

⁴ Ericsson, K. A., (2008). Deliberate Practice and Acquisition of Expert Performance: A General Overview, *Academic Emergency Medicine*, 15 (11), 988-994.

5. Hold educator preparation programs accountable and provide feedback for improvement on preparing candidates to teach and lead diverse learners within tiered systems of support.

Strategies for how SEAs can accomplish these action steps through key state policy levers are addressed in the next section.

STATE AGENCY POLICY LEVERS

State education agencies, or state professional educator standards boards, have three key policy levers they can use to drive implementation of the five action steps above: licensure; program approval; and data collection, analysis, and reporting. This is the framework in the chiefs' *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* task force report. Each section below begins with the overall recommendation for that policy lever, followed by the next step to ensure the policy lever addresses the preparation needs to best educate a range of diverse learners. This is followed by potential policy actions that address the five action steps above. See Appendix A for a summary chart that aligns these three policy levers and their corresponding policy actions.

LICENSURE

Standards

RECOMMENDATION #1: States will revise and enforce their licensure standards for teachers and principals to support the teaching of more demanding content aligned to college- and career-readiness and critical thinking skills to a diverse range of students.

NEXT STEP: Ensure that revised standards include the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed to implement differentiated core instruction, monitor student progress, and apply evidence-based practices to meet the needs of all students within a tiered system of support.

The key purpose of licensure standards is to outline the knowledge and skills educators should have on “day one” of entry into the profession when they receive their initial license, and how they should grow and develop as they move through advanced licensure. A description of this knowledge is provided through definitions of a learner-ready teacher and a school-ready principal, based on the InTASC⁵ and ISLLC⁶ standards, in the *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* task force report. The key is to identify and distinguish the knowledge and skills needed within a tiered system of support, such that educators are prepared and licensed to provide the level of intensity needed across and within the tiers.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

5 Council of Chief State School Officers. (2013, April). *Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0: A Resource for Ongoing Teacher Development*. Washington, DC: Author. See www.ccsso.org/intasc for more information.

6 Council of Chief State School Officers. (2015, forthcoming). *Interstate School Leader Licensure Consortium ISLLC 2015 Standards*. Washington, DC: Author. See www.ccsso.org/Resources/Programs/Developing_and_Supporting_School-Ready_Leaders.html for more information.

▪ **Define and implement a core threshold of knowledge and skills necessary for licensure for all teachers on how to provide high-quality core instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners within a tiered system of support. Key skills at Tier 1 or core instruction might include:**

- Understanding of a range of student needs and learner profiles, influenced by student diversities (e.g., language, culture, disability), various ways students learn, and emphasizing the strengths and assets of each learner
- Knowledge of content and developmental learning progressions
- Knowledge and ability to implement evidence-based instructional practices
- Knowledge of types and purposes of assessments within a multi-tiered framework
- Ability to design, deliver and analyze assessments to determine student progress, gauge effectiveness of instructional practices, and identify students that would benefit from additional instructional support
- Ability to use student performance data to inform instructional decisions
- Ability to implement culturally responsive practices
- Knowledge of strategies to differentiate instruction based on student need
- Understanding of the role of self-determination and self-regulation in learning

▪ **Define a knowledge and skill base for teachers to implement evidence-based instruction at the supplemental (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) levels within a tiered system of support for students in need of more intense, individualized instruction. In addition to the skills needed at Tier 1 to identify the need for more intensive services and to coordinate/collaborate with specialized educators, key skills might include:**

- Understanding of disability characteristics and various learning preferences (i.e., visual, auditory)
- Understanding of levels of instructional intensity and how to intensify instruction (i.e., change group size, increase session frequency, change instructional delivery method, change environment)
- Ability to choose, develop, and administer assessments that are culturally and linguistically responsive and targeted on students' specific area of need
- Ability to use student data to inform decisions about which intervention to implement and for how long
- Ability to choose, develop, and implement evidence-based interventions that are targeted and aligned to grade-level standards
- Ability to identify and administer evidence-based progress monitoring tools
- Ability to frequently monitor student progress and analyze student data to determine responsiveness to intervention and instruction

- o Ability to coordinate and collaborate with other educators to ensure intensive interventions are aligned and integrated with core (Tier 1) instruction
 - o Ability to communicate with families across a range of cultures, as well as other teachers and stakeholders about student data
 - o Ability to use data to adapt and modify instructional practice or intervention
 - o Ability to individualize interventions for students who are persistently non-responsive to supplemental intervention
 - o Ability to integrate strategies that support cognitive processing
- **Clarify expectations for base content knowledge for all teachers at the elementary and secondary levels within a tiered system of support.**
 - o Require teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities, and other groups of students with disabilities who have historically received little or no academic instruction, to demonstrate the same core threshold and content knowledge base as their peers.
- **Define and implement a core threshold knowledge base for all school leaders for initial administrator licensure that includes what they need to know and do to provide the instructional leadership and infrastructure to employ a tiered system of support, including:**
 - o Ability to use student performance data to make school-wide decisions about instructional focus and resource allocation
 - o Ability to analyze data and communicate needs to families and stakeholders across a range of cultures and languages
 - o Ability to develop systems to monitor fidelity of instructional practices and interventions
 - o Ability to create a culture of data-sharing
 - o Ability to advocate for and adhere to the legal requirements for disability determination and education of students with disabilities
 - o Actively lead and develop systems that encourage collaboration between teachers around student needs and instructional practices
 - o Understand and support a continuum of instructional support for students
 - o Facilitate professional development opportunities and communities around multi-tiered systems of support, evidence-based practices for struggling learners, and data-based decision-making
 - o Ability to create a shared vision and mission around educating students who struggle and students with disabilities
 - o Ability to create an infrastructure to enable multi-tiered systems of support (i.e., schedules, data-teams, data reviews, fidelity checks)

Performance Assessments

RECOMMENDATION #2: States will work together to influence the development of innovative licensure performance assessments that are aligned to revised licensure standards and include multiple measures of educators' ability to perform, including the potential to impact student achievement and growth.

NEXT STEP: States will work together to influence the development of innovative licensure performance assessments that assess each candidate's ability to perform within a tiered system of support, including the potential to impact all students' achievement and growth.

Licensure tests and performance assessments are strong policy levers that can be used to drive change in preparation curricula. Performance assessments for all teacher candidates should capture a candidate's ability to create universally designed curriculum, provide quality core content instruction that is differentiated, monitor student progress, employ evidence-based instruction and interventions with fidelity, and collaborate with families and other professionals.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

- **Require all teacher candidates to include evidence in their licensure tests or performance assessments that demonstrates they have the professional judgment, mindset, and ability to:**
 - Provide high-quality core content instruction
 - Understand a Universal Design for Learning framework
 - Identify the essential components of differentiated instruction
 - Implement accommodations and use technology successfully
 - Collect and use data to monitor student progress and identify needs for evidence-based instructional practices and intensive interventions and support
 - Coordinate and collaborate with other educational personnel to align and integrate intensive supports where necessary
- **Require administrator candidates to include evidence in their licensure tests or performance assessments that demonstrate they can create conditions for success of a diverse range of learners within a tiered system of support, including how to create a culture of inclusion and teamwork where all educators share responsibility for all learners.**
- **Create robust measures that accurately capture a range of student performance to inform effective teaching of diverse learners, including students with disabilities.**
- **Design a certification and licensure process that assesses educator capacity to function effectively within a tiered system of support (e.g., understanding of roles and teamwork). Potentially develop a unique and/or tiered licensing assessment or suite of assessments that addresses each educator's ability to provide services within and across a tiered instructional and support model.**

- **Review assessment rubrics and evaluator training for bias that may inadvertently discount best practices with diverse learners or diminish an educator’s success when working with struggling learners (e.g., penalizing the appropriate use of direct instruction to develop key skills and self-regulated learning; ensuring that student growth models used in educator evaluations capture the smaller grain size of student improvement for struggling learners).**

Tiered Licensure

RECOMMENDATION #3: States will create multi-tiered licensure systems aligned to a coherent developmental continuum that reflects new performance expectations for educators and the implementation of those expectations in the learning environment and to assessments that are linked to evidence of student achievement and growth.

NEXT STEP: Ensure that new systems reflect the performance expectations to work within and across tiered systems of support, and promote ongoing growth through strategies of deliberate practice and feedback.

The state’s goal in building a tiered licensure system is to promote a continuum of professional growth and development and not just provide a mechanism for automatic renewal or for acquiring an ad hoc collection of endorsements. At its best, a tiered licensure system is a strategy for talent development and deployment of educator expertise designed to address student needs within a tiered system of support.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

- **Use multi-tiered licensure systems to create a pathway that can develop the talent and “expertise required to deliver instruction to a diverse range of learners at all tiers of support”. Address how best to use “endorsements” or “micro-credentialing”⁷ for domain specific, competency-based expertise within and across tiers.**
- **Align tiered licensure for both teachers and school leaders to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) tiers. “Tier 1” knowledge should be established as a threshold for an initial license and additional support tiers should inform the acquisition of expertise as educators seek additional or advanced credentials.**
- **Consider the creation of a tiered licensure system that is tied explicitly to the varying expertise and responsibilities of taking a team approach to meeting student needs within a tiered system of support.**
- **For a master teacher credential, require demonstration of effectiveness in working with students with disabilities and struggling learners, either through teacher evaluation results and/or a performance assessment task.**

⁷ Micro-credentialing provides teachers with the opportunity to gain recognition for skills they master throughout their careers. To earn a micro-credential, teachers submit artifacts such as classroom videos, student work, or project plans that demonstrate their competence in a particular skill. For more info, see Digital Promise at <http://www.digitalpromise.org/initiatives/educator-micro-credentials#educator-micro-credentials>.

- **Tie financial incentives to the acquisition of advanced credentials for educators who provide increasing levels of intensive supports within a tiered system of support.**

Portability of Licenses

RECOMMENDATION #4: States will reform current state licensure systems so they are more efficient, have true reciprocity across states, and so that their credentialing structures support effective teaching and students' college- and career-readiness.

NEXT STEP: Ensure new credentialing structures address the delivery of effective teaching and leading within multi-tiered systems of support.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities

- **Work to develop statewide agreement on the knowledge and skills needed by all teachers and leaders to support a diverse range of learners, especially students with disabilities, and the evidence that will demonstrate effective performance.**
- **Leverage cross-state authority to influence the design and development of licensing assessments that all states can adopt that will measure effective performance in teaching diverse learners.**
- **Develop common guidelines for quality and reciprocity of multiple preparation pathways that cross state lines regarding teaching diverse learners, including students with disabilities.**

PROGRAM APPROVAL

Standards for Program Approval

RECOMMENDATION #6: States will adopt and implement rigorous standards for programs to ensure that education preparation programs recruit candidates based on supply and demand data, have highly selective admissions and exit criteria including mastery of content, provide high-quality clinical practice throughout a candidate's preparation that includes experiences with the responsibilities of a school year from beginning to end, and that produce quality candidates capable of positively impacting student achievement.

NEXT STEP: Ensure program approval standards produce quality candidates capable of positively impacting the achievement of all student populations.

States that are successfully integrating Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) are implementing this as a framework that serves all students, and have moved the work outside of the special education offices where earlier Response to Intervention efforts have traditionally resided.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) defines MTSS as a framework designed to ensure each and every learner that enters a classroom will have his or her individual needs met through high-quality instruction. In addition, the integration of an MTSS framework within the Michigan Continuous Improvement Process is an essential component for improving academic achievement for all learners. To effectively implement the eleven essential elements of the Michigan MTSS framework, the MDE Office of Education Improvement and Innovation (OEII) partnered with the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA). This grant-based partnership focused on efforts to build sustainability around MTSS within the regional service agencies that support LEAs.

Similarly, the Utah State Office of Education moved its Utah Multi-Tiered System of Supports (UMTSS) initiative from being housed solely in the Special Education Division to being included in the sections of Teaching and Learning and Federal Programs. The goal was to promote cross-pollination across federal programs and educator effectiveness initiatives, and to help the Special Education Division better integrate college- and career-readiness into its efforts. The UMTSS State Implementation Team consists of staff members from the Teaching and Learning, Special Education, and Title III Divisions, to foster alignment, visibility, and capacity.

Program approval is the process used by states to first determine if a program seeking to operate an educator preparation program meets standards and criteria to operate, and then to evaluate the effectiveness of educator preparation programs and grant approval to continue. Standards for program approval are used to review the content of programs and serve as a key lever for states to ensure quality. Standards for program approval can also be used to encourage innovation in addressing how programs provide candidates with three key elements of preparation: content knowledge and skills; opportunities for deliberate practice of skills; and the sequencing and structure of the program to ensure appropriate scaffolding of knowledge and skills.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

- **Require evidence that teacher preparation programs include development of a candidate’s ability to assess and address multiple types of learner diversity and to provide high-quality core instruction that is evidence-based and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners within a tiered system of support (see licensure section for detailed skills).**
- **Require evidence that administrator preparation programs include development of the leadership skills needed to create school structures that will facilitate and support evidence-based instruction and data-based decision making within a tiered system of support (see licensure section for detailed skills).**
- **Provide incentives for stronger partnerships between preparation programs, schools, and districts that encourage multiple high-quality authentic field experiences and placements for educator candidates, including opportunities to interact with a diverse range of learners and collaboratively plan, implement, and analyze data to inform instruction within a tiered system of support.**
- **Provide guidance in program approval regulations on the range of clinical practice experiences that can develop skills for working with diverse learners, including students with disabilities. Include guidance on how to sequence practice opportunities so that they increase in complexity and are paired with specific feedback and coaching. These can include opportunities such as:**
 - Observing and analyzing videos of teaching that uses evidence-based practices
 - Analyzing videos and case studies of teachers collaborating and making data-based decisions
 - Participating in virtual simulations of evidence-based practices, data discussions, and other scenarios
 - Participating in structured coaching experiences
 - Exploring other educational or community contexts besides schools where candidates can secure practice opportunities that will enable them to collaborate and teach effectively

- **Require that teachers cooperating on special education placements be effective teachers who have worked with students with disabilities or have earned National Board Certification in Exceptional Needs.**
- **Highlight and share best practices of educator preparation providers that implement collaborative teacher education programs that prepare candidates to work effectively in team-based tiered systems of support.**
- **Align program approval expectations for educator performance related to teaching diverse learners with those used in educator evaluations to provide a seamless continuum.**

Program Alignment to PK-12 Student Standards

RECOMMENDATION #7: States will require alignment of preparation content standards to PK-12 college- and career-ready standards for all licensure areas.

NEXT STEP: Ensure preparation program standards align to PK-12 student standards and provide explicit knowledge and skills for candidates needed to provide all learners access to a college- and career- ready curriculum.

States can use their program approval authority to ensure that preparation programs align their curriculum and clinical experiences to state standards for PK-12 students. This ensures that the needs of learners stay at the forefront of the preparation experience.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that effectively serves all students, including students with disabilities:

- **Ensure all teacher candidates are prepared with the core knowledge base required for initial licensure, including foundational content knowledge appropriate for their level (elementary or secondary) and needed to provide high-quality core instruction.**
- **Incorporate into program approval standards the requirement that all teachers, regardless of pathway into the profession, are able to ensure learner access to college- and career- ready standards by teaching each student within a tiered system of support using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), evidence-based practices (EBPs), and data-based decision making.**
- **Identify and incorporate into program approval standards high leverage practices that cut across content domains and are essential for working effectively with struggling learners (e.g., explicit instruction, collaboration skills, data-based instructional decision making, differentiating instruction, communicating with students and families about their learning).**
- **Identify and incorporate into program approval standards high leverage content practices needed to teach within a tiered system of support (e.g., teaching students to summarize text, providing evidence-based instruction in fractions).**

Program Accountability: Evaluation, Feedback, and Accreditation

RECOMMENDATION #5: States will hold preparation programs accountable by exercising the state’s authority to determine which programs should operate and recommend candidates for licensure in the state, including establishing a clear and fair performance rating system to guide continuous improvement. States will act to close programs that continually receive the lowest rating and will provide incentives for programs whose ratings indicate exemplary performance.

RECOMMENDATION #8: States will provide feedback, data, support, and resources to preparation programs to assist them with continuous improvement and to act on any program approval or national accreditation recommendations.

NEXT STEP: States will hold preparation programs accountable for ensuring they prepare candidates who can address the needs of a wide range of learners through use of differentiation, evidence-based practices, and data-based decision making within tiered systems of support.

By collecting and analyzing evidence that the preparation program provides in the evaluation process, states can determine quality of the program, make accountability decisions, and provide focused feedback for improvement.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that can serve all students, including students with disabilities:

- **Require that preparation programs provide a robust body of evidence regarding their performance in preparing candidates to teach diverse learners, including students with disabilities, using multiple measures and triangulated data. Include assessments of:**
 - The effectiveness of all candidates in providing high-quality core instruction to struggling learners such as students with disabilities
 - The quality of the partnerships among state education agencies, preparation programs, and schools or districts, particularly around clinical experiences in diverse settings
 - The effectiveness of cooperating teachers in teaching of diverse learners, including students with disabilities, within a tiered system of support
 - Availability and quality of the learning opportunities provided to educators to work within inclusive settings and to participate in teacher teams within a tiered system of support
- **Provide actionable feedback to preparation programs from the program review process including guidance on how to address challenges related to teaching diverse learners.**
- **Require districts to demonstrate supports they are providing to educator candidates as part of the accountability system (e.g., the process used to ensure effective mentoring by cooperating teachers).**
- **Work with the national accretor to align the state program approval and accreditation processes to lessen the burden of providing evidence of performance relating to teaching diverse learners, including students with disabilities.**

DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

RECOMMENDATION #9: States will develop and support state-level governance structures to guide confidential and secure collection, analysis, and reporting of PK-20 data and how it informs educator preparation programs, hiring practices, and professional learning. Using stakeholder input, states will address and take appropriate individual and collective action on the need for developing unique educator identifiers, providing links to non-traditional preparation providers, and sharing candidate data among organizations and across states.

RECOMMENDATION #10: States will use data collection, analysis, and reporting of multiple measures for continuous improvement and accountability of preparation programs.

NEXT STEP: Ensure refined state-level governance structures to guide confidential and secure data collection, analysis, and reporting of PK-20 data and how it informs educator preparation programs, hiring practices, and professional learning, including specific data around teaching diverse learners and students with disabilities.

Many states are currently in the process of building comprehensive data systems which presents an opportunity to include indicators relevant to teaching struggling learners. This data is not only valuable for program improvement and accountability but also for recruiting and hiring educators to serve high need populations.

Proposed Policy Actions to build a workforce that can serve all students, including students with disabilities:

- **Ensure the data collection process includes data on performance in teaching diverse learners, including students with disabilities, which can be fed back to preparation programs for improvement. Indicators might include how well candidates felt prepared to teach struggling learners, what specific skills they were lacking, and their ability to collaborate and work in teams within a tiered system of support.**
- **Identify and incorporate metrics for preparation program performance that are based in part on the impact of teacher graduates on the outcomes of diverse learners, particularly students with disabilities. This will require creating unique identifiers for the range of professionals who work with struggling learners.**
 - Develop a clear policy for teacher attribution when working with students with disabilities in general education, co-teaching, or other team contexts.
 - Consider developing metrics for team accountability to reflect and incentivize shared ownership of student learning.
 - Provide educator preparation programs with student growth data and other evaluation data linked to their graduates for program improvement.
 - Work with preparation programs to appropriately interpret data regarding graduates' impact on the achievement of students with disabilities by openly addressing challenges of using different student growth models (e.g., value added, student learning objectives) and understanding growth for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

Tennessee produces an annual *Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs*. The *Report Card* provides public information on multiple measures of effectiveness, including recent graduate performance on value-added measures, by each teacher preparation program in the state. Currently the report does not disaggregate by program graduate performance for students with disabilities. However, over the past year, each teacher preparation program in the state has been given access to a web portal providing program performance on value-added measures by individual teachers for up to three years after-program completion. This portal includes disaggregation by student types including students with disabilities, and low, middle, and high performing students.

- **Build data systems that integrate data for teachers from the beginning of pre-service to post-initial licensure to progress teacher monitoring and support their development across the continuum.**
- **Provide preparation providers with supply and demand data on the need for special educators in the state, and ask them to share data on their graduates. Work together to prepare the necessary number and kind of teachers and leaders that districts and schools need.**

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to the three key policy levers outlined above, state education agencies (SEAs) have convening and facilitation authority that they can leverage to support this work.

Taken in its entirety, this will require systemic changes and collaboration between state education agencies (SEAs), institutes of higher education (IHEs), and local education agencies (LEAs). Inherent in this work is the opportunity to forge new partnerships and capitalize on the value of each agency. This engagement work is a requirement of most federal plans that SEAs prepare (e.g. Every Student Succeeds Act, State Systemic Improvement Plan, equity plans and new Higher Education Act regulations) thus SEAs likely have strong foundations upon which to build.

SEAs are well suited to be the convener and facilitator of action-oriented partnerships that bring together agencies and other key stakeholders to examine data, conduct root cause analyses, consider the proposed policy actions to address priority issues, and design and implement a strategy. As part of this work, SEAs, IHEs and LEAs must carefully consider how existing policies and structures might serve as barriers or create unintended consequences to the work.

A critical part of this process will require each agency to not only work across organizations but to address the need for internal cross-departmental collaboration. For SEAs, this means the work should not be situated solely in the special education division but must involve staff from offices of educator licensure, program approval, curriculum and instruction, and data systems. Similarly, IHEs must involve both general and special education programs and engage their president or provost.

Suggested State Convening Actions to support the reform work:

- **Establish an ongoing stakeholder group or leverage an existing PK-20 council that meets periodically to advise the SEA on issues related to addressing the needs of struggling learners. Explore how to leverage stakeholder resources to support this work.**

- **Convene a working group to revisit the state’s educator licensure standards to ensure that those standards outline knowledge and skills for teaching a diverse range of learners, including students with disabilities, within a tiered system of support. This should be facilitated by the state agency division responsible for licensure, and should reflect a core set of knowledge and skills for all teachers.**
- **Convene a diverse group of students (e.g., from local schools or organizations like Eye to Eye) to identify strategies that helped them achieve college- and career- readiness despite learning challenges.**
- **Conduct focus groups across the state to collect feedback on draft policy ideas and to develop key stakeholder buy in.**
- **Highlight and celebrate exemplary preparation programs and practices with IHEs and the public. Note how these strategies are helpful for all students.**

CONCLUSION

Led by chief state school officers in partnership with educator preparation and the teaching profession, the important work of reforming educator preparation in this country has begun in earnest. Already 45 states have taken some action against the ten recommendations in the chiefs’ *Our Responsibility, Our Promise* report. The CEEDAR Center is also leading similar reform efforts through their intensive work with 13 states, supplemental work with an additional seven states, and work with institutions of higher education to ensure that teachers and leaders are well prepared to support a diverse range of learners, particularly students with disabilities, in meeting the new demands of college- and career-ready standards. An opportunity and an imperative exists to leverage these efforts in order to address the most persistent challenge in education today—how to effectively address the needs of learners who require differentiated supports to succeed.

NEXT STEPS

Successful implementation of these action steps will require strong leadership of chief state school officers and the partnership and commitment of key stakeholders in each state, especially educator preparation providers. CCSSO and CEEDAR have agreed to pool their expertise and resources to lead this work. CCSSO’s Network for Transforming Educator Preparation (NTEP), a network of seven states, has been actively working for the past year to transform educator preparation based on the chiefs’ task force recommendations and will expand this work to more states this coming year. CEEDAR has grown its network of states receiving intensive technical assistance from five to 13 this

Over the summer and fall of 2014, Louisiana engaged in stakeholder outreach to inform and provide subsequent feedback on a variety of teacher preparation program and licensure reforms.

In August, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) took a first step with a survey to all teachers, district Human Resources (HR) directors, principals, and preparation program faculty to learn about new teachers’ classroom readiness on “day one”; what these stakeholders prioritized and valued from a preparation experience; and how preparation program-district partnerships could better meet local supply and demand needs.

This was followed up with stakeholder-specific focus groups to test some of the findings and emerging trends. In September - October 2014, the LDOE conducted focus groups across the state with:

- Elementary and secondary teacher candidates
- New teachers (1-3 years of experience)
- Principals
- District personnel, including HR directors
- Preparation program faculty
- Teacher organizations
- Advocacy groups (e.g., special education, business and industry)

The results of this outreach was presented in a policy framing meeting in December 2014, held by the state superintendent during the state board of education’s monthly meetings. Potential policy actions that addressed the findings were presented for discussion and set the stage for the next round of forums with the state superintendent to collect feedback for final policy recommendations for changes in program approval and initial licensure decisions.

year. The CCSSO/CEEDAR collaboration has great potential for impact by leveraging their shared agendas and systems for technical assistance.

As a next step, CCSSO and CEEDAR will support the recommended actions outlined here and integrate them into the existing technical assistance mechanisms currently in use with our networks of states. States will receive a guided self-assessment tool they can use to examine current policies and determine what is needed to move forward on the action steps or integrate them into existing work. Policy briefs and additional tools will be provided to help states think through the complexities of system change that each action step sets in motion. States will craft their own state-specific blueprints for action and will have structured opportunities to learn from each other as they implement the work.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Evidence-based Practices

Evidence-based practices are instructional techniques with meaningful research support that represent critical tools in bridging the research-to-practice gap and improving student outcomes. (Cook, B. G., & Cook, S. C. (2011). [*Thinking and communicating clearly about evidence-based practices in special education*](#). Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.)

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

The National Center on Intensive Intervention defines MTSS as a “prevention framework that organizes building-level resources to address each individual student’s academic and/or behavioral needs within intervention tiers that vary in intensity. MTSS allows for the early identification of learning and behavioral challenges and timely intervention for students who are at risk for poor learning outcomes. The increasingly intense tiers (e.g., Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3), sometimes referred to as levels of prevention (i.e., primary, secondary, intensive prevention levels), represent a continuum of supports. Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) are examples of MTSS.” (Retrieved from <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/ncii-glossary-terms#MTSS> on November 17, 2014.)

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)

Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) is a tiered behavior support framework for enhancing the adoption and implementation of a continuum of evidence-based interventions to achieve behaviorally important outcomes for all students. PBIS provides a decision-making framework that guides the selection, integration, and implementation of preventive and instructive behavioral practices. (Retrieved from <http://www.intensiveintervention.org/ncii-glossary-terms#MTSS> on November 17, 2014.)

Response to Intervention (RTI)

Response to Intervention (RTI) is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. The RTI process begins with high-quality instruction and universal screening of all children in the general education classroom. Struggling learners are provided with interventions at increasing levels of intensity to accelerate their rate of learning. These services may be provided by a variety of personnel, including general education teachers, special educators, and specialists. Progress is closely monitored to assess both the learning rate and level of performance of individual students. Educational decisions about the intensity and duration of interventions are based on individual student response to instruction. RTI is designed for use when making decisions in both general education and special education, and creating a well-integrated system of instruction and intervention guided by child outcome data. (Retrieved from <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti> on November 17, 2014.)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

(UDL) is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone—not a single, one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs. (Retrieved from <http://www.cast.org/udl/> on November 17, 2014.)

CEEDAR POLICY FRAMING WORKING GROUP

David Chard, Co-Chair, Dean at Southern Methodist University

Chris Koch, Co-Chair, Illinois Department of Education

Kathleen Airhart, Tennessee Department of Education

Linda Blanton, Florida International University

Mary Brownell, University of Florida, CEEDAR Center

Teri Clark, California Commission on Teacher Credentialing

Sydnee Dickson, Utah State Office of Education

Karen Erickson, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Emily Feistritz, National Center for Education Information

Toby King, Colorado Department of Education

Charles MacArthur, University of Delaware

Desiree Pointer Mace, Alverno College

Patty Alvarez McHatton, Kennesaw State University

Fayneese Miller, University of Vermont

Nancy Reder, National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)

David Rose, Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST)

Michelle Shearer, 2011 National Teacher of the Year, Urbana High School, Maryland

Jane West, American Association for Colleges of Teacher Education (AACTE)

John Woodward, University of Puget Sound

CEEDAR Staff

Paul Sindelar

Lynn Holdheide

Dan Conley

Dia Jackson

Lauren Artzi

CCSSO Staff

Janice Poda

Mary Dean Barringer

Kathleen Paliokas

Katrina Miller

Angie Andersen

Sandra Warren

APPENDIX A

Proposed State Policy Actions Organized by Recommended Actions

Recommended Action	Proposed Policy Actions			
	Licensure	Program Approval	Data	Stakeholder Engagement
<p>1. Define and integrate across the educator career continuum, beginning with preparation, the knowledge and skills all educators need to implement high-quality core content instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners, monitors student progress, and identifies and provides increasingly intensive supports.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and implement a core base of knowledge and skills for all teachers for initial licensure on how to provide high-quality core instruction that is differentiated to meet the needs of all learners within a tiered system of support. Define a knowledge and skill base for teachers to implement differentiated instruction at the supplemental (Tier 2) and intensive (Tier 3) levels within a tiered system of support for students in need of more intense, individualized instruction. In addition to the knowledge and skill base above, define expectations for content knowledge for all teachers at the elementary and secondary levels within a tiered system of support. Define and implement a core threshold knowledge base for all school leaders for initial administrator licensure that includes what they need to know and do to provide the instructional leadership and infrastructure to employ a tiered system of support. Design a certification and licensure process that assesses educator capacity to function effectively within a tiered system of support (e.g., understanding of roles and teamwork). Potentially develop a unique and/or tiered licensing assessment or suite of assessments that addresses each educator's ability to provide services within and across a tiered system of support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require evidence that teacher preparation programs include development of a candidate's ability to assess and address multiple types of learner diversity and to provide high-quality core instruction that is evidence-based and differentiated to meet the needs of all learners within a tiered system of support. Require evidence that administrator preparation programs include development of the leadership skills needed to create school structures that will facilitate and support evidence-based instruction and data-based decision making within a tiered system of support. Ensure all teacher candidates are prepared with the knowledge base required for all teachers for initial licensure, including foundational content knowledge appropriate for their level (elementary or secondary) and needed to provide high-quality core instruction. Incorporate into program approval standards the requirement that all teachers, regardless of pathway into the profession, are able to ensure learner access to college- and career- ready standards by being prepared to teach each student within a tiered system of support using principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL), evidence-based practices (EBPs), and data-based decision making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the data collection process includes data on performance in teaching diverse learners, including students with disabilities, which can be fed back to preparation programs for improvement. Indicators might include how well candidates felt prepared to teach struggling learners, what specific skills they think they were lacking, and their ability to collaborate and work in teams within a tiered system of support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Convene a working group to revisit the state's educator licensure standards to ensure that those standards outline knowledge and skills of all teachers for teaching a diverse range of learners, including students with disabilities, within a tiered system of support. This should be facilitated by the state agency division responsible for licensure, and should reflect a core set of knowledge and skills for all teachers.

Recommended Action	Proposed Policy Actions			
	Licensure	Program Approval	Data	Stakeholder Engagement
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to develop cross-state agreement on the knowledge and skills needed by all teachers to teach and leaders to support a diverse range of learners, especially students with disabilities, and the kinds of evidence that will demonstrate effective performance. • Leverage cross state authority to influence the design and development of licensing assessments that will measure effective performance in teaching diverse learners that all states have the option of adopting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and incorporate into program approval standards high leverage practices that cut across content domains and are essential for working effectively with struggling learners (e.g., explicit instruction, collaboration skills, data-based instructional decision making, differentiating instruction, communicating with students and families about their learning). • Identify and incorporate into program approval standards high leverage content practices needed to teach within a tiered system of support (e.g., teaching students to summarize text, providing evidence-based instruction in fractions). 		
<p>2. Provide multiple opportunities for deliberate practice and feedback to educators, including access to a range of meaningful practical experiences, as they learn and implement differentiated core instruction, monitor student progress, and apply evidence-based practices to meet the needs of all students within a tiered system of support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use multi-tiered licensure systems to create a pathway that can develop the workforce talent and “learner expertise” required to deliver instruction to a diverse range of learners at all tiers of support. Address how best to use “endorsements” or “micro-credentialing” for domain-specific expertise, and competency-based expertise within and across tiers. • Align tiered licensure for both teachers and school leaders to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) tiers. Tier 1 should be established as a threshold for an initial licensure and additional support tiers should inform the acquisition of expertise as educators seek additional or advanced credentials. • For a master teacher credential, establish requirement to demonstrate effectiveness in working with students with disabilities and struggling learners, either through teacher evaluation results and/or a performance assessment task. • Tie financial incentives to the acquisition of advanced credentials for educators who provide increasing levels of intensive supports within a tiered system of support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide incentives for stronger partnerships between preparation programs, schools, and districts that encourage multiple high-quality authentic field experiences and placements for educator candidates, including opportunities to interact with a diverse range of learners and collaboratively plan, implement, and analyze instruction within a tiered system of support. • Provide guidance in program approval regulations on the range of clinical practice experiences that can develop skills for working with diverse learners, including students with disabilities. Include guidance on how to sequence practice opportunities so that they increase in complexity and pair them with specific feedback and coaching. • During special education placements, require that cooperating teachers be effective teachers who have worked with students with disabilities or have earned National Board Certification in Exceptional Needs. • Align program approval expectations for educator performance related to teaching diverse learners with expectations used in educator evaluations to provide a seamless continuum between preparation and evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build data systems that integrate data from the beginning of pre-service to post-initial licensure teaching in order to progress monitoring of teachers and supporting their development across the continuum. 	

Recommended Action	Proposed Policy Actions			
	Licensure	Program Approval	Data	Stakeholder Engagement
3. Ensure that the outcomes of all students – including students with disabilities – are an integral part of preparation program approval and educator evaluation systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require all teacher candidates to include evidence in their licensure tests and performance assessment that demonstrates they have the professional judgment, mindset and ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide high-quality core content instruction ○ Understand a Universal Design for Learning framework ○ Identify the essential components of differentiated instruction ○ Implement accommodations and use technology successfully ○ Collect and use data to monitor student progress and identify needs for evidence-based instructional practices and intensive interventions and support ○ Collaborate with other educational personnel to align and integrate intensive supports where necessary • Require administrator candidates to include evidence in their licensure tests or performance assessments that demonstrate they can create conditions for success for a diverse range of learners within a tiered system of support, including how to create a culture of inclusion and teamwork where all educators share responsibility for all learners. • Create robust measures that capture a range of student performance that can be used to inform the effectiveness of teaching practice with diverse learners, including students with disabilities. • Review assessment rubrics and evaluator training for bias that may inadvertently discount best practices with diverse learners or diminish an educator’s success when working with struggling learners (e.g., penalizing the appropriate use of direct instruction to develop key skills and self-regulated learning; ensuring that student growth models used in educator evaluations capture the smaller grain size of student improvement for struggling learners). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require preparation programs to provide a robust body of evidence regarding their performance in preparing candidates to teach diverse learners, including students with disabilities, which includes multiple measures and triangulated data. Include assessment of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the effectiveness of candidates in teaching struggling learners such as students with disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and incorporate metrics for preparation program performance that are based in part on the impact of teacher graduates on the outcomes of diverse learners, particularly students with disabilities. This will require creating unique identifiers for the range of professionals who work with struggling learners. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Develop a clear policy that addresses the challenge of attribution when working with students with disabilities in general education, co-teaching, or other teaming contexts. ○ Consider developing metrics for team accountability to reflect and incentivize shared ownership of student learning. ○ Provide educator preparation programs with student growth data and other evaluation data linked to their graduates for program improvement. ○ Work with preparation programs to appropriately interpret data regarding graduates’ impact on the learning of students with disabilities by openly addressing challenges of using different student growth models (e.g., value added, student learning objectives) and understanding growth for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene a diverse group of students (e.g., from local schools or organizations like Eye to Eye) to identify strategies that helped them achieve college-and career- readiness despite learning challenges.

Recommended Action	Proposed Policy Actions			
	Licensure	Program Approval	Data	Stakeholder Engagement
4. Prepare candidates for and create infrastructures that enable and promote shared ownership, collaboration, and teamwork among all educators for all students – including students with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the creation of a tiered licensure system that is tied explicitly to the varying expertise and roles and responsibilities of a team approach required to meet student needs within a tiered system of support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highlight and share best practices of educator preparation providers that implement collaborative teacher education programs that prepare candidates to work effectively in team-based tiered systems of support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure the data collection process includes data on performance in teaching diverse learners, including students with disabilities, which can be fed back to preparation programs for improvement. Metrics might include how well candidates feel prepared to teach struggling learners, specific skills they were lacking, and candidates’ ability to collaborate and work in teams. Identify and incorporate metrics for preparation program performance that are based in part on the impact of teacher graduates on the outcomes of diverse learners, particularly students with disabilities. Consider developing metrics for team accountability to reflect and incentivize shared ownership of student learning. 	
5. Hold educator preparation programs accountable and provide them feedback for improvement on how to prepare candidates with the knowledge and skill and practice opportunities they need to teach and lead diverse learners within tiered systems of support.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop common guidelines for quality and reciprocity of multiple preparation pathways that cross state lines regarding the teaching of diverse learners, including students with disabilities. Require preparation programs to provide a robust body of evidence regarding their performance in preparing candidates to teach diverse learners, including students with disabilities, which includes multiple measures and triangulates data. Include assessments of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The effectiveness of candidates in teaching struggling learners such as students with disabilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide preparation providers with supply and demand data on the need for special educators in the state, ask them to share data on their graduates, and work together to prepare the number and kind of teachers and leaders that districts and schools need. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish an ongoing stakeholder group or leverage an existing PK-20 council that meets periodically to advise the SEA on issues related to addressing the needs of struggling learners. Explore how to leverage stakeholder resources to support this work. Conduct focus groups across the state to collect feedback on draft policy ideas and to develop key stakeholder buy-in.

Recommended Action	Proposed Policy Actions			
	Licensure	Program Approval	Data	Stakeholder Engagement
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The quality of the partnerships among state education agencies, preparation programs, and schools or districts, particularly around clinical experiences in diverse settings o The effectiveness of the cooperating teachers in supporting the teaching of diverse learners o Availability and quality of the learning opportunities provided to educators to work within inclusive settings and to participate in teaming within a tiered system of support • Provide actionable feedback to preparation programs from the program review process including guidance on how to address challenges related to teaching diverse learners. • Require districts to demonstrate the supports they are providing to educator candidates as part of the accountability system (e.g., the process used to ensure effective mentoring by cooperating teachers). • Work with the national accretor to align the state program approval and accreditation processes to lessen the burden of providing evidence of performance relating to teaching diverse learners, including students with disabilities. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight and celebrate the public exemplary preparation programs and practices with IHEs and the public. Note how these strategies are helpful for all students.



Council of Chief State School Officers
One Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Suite 700 | Washington, DC 20001-1431 | voice: 202.336.7000 | fax: 202.408.8072