Teacher-Prep Accréditeur Adopte des standards de résultats

Programs must prove their value

By Stephen Sawchuk

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The board of the national accréditeur pour les programmes de formation des enseignants a unanimement approuvé de nouveaux standards qui mettent une emphasis plus lourde sur les résultats des programmes.

Parmi d'autres critères, les programmes souhaitant obtenir le sceau d'accréditation de l'Accreditation of Educator Preparation seront attendus de montrer que les candidats et les districts sont satisfaits de la qualité de la formation et de documenter que les diplômés contribuent à augmenter l'acheminement des élèves.

Les programmes devront également, pour la première fois, assurer que la moyenne du niveau académique des cohortes d'entrée de candidats est à un niveau prescrit.

Un panel sélectionné par CAEP a terminé le processus de rédaction des standards en juillet. Les membres du conseil ont recommandé que les accréditateurs suivent de près l'implémentation des nouveaux standards et les modifient si nécessaire.

Ce sentiment a été reflété par le domaine aussi.

"C'est un triomphe de consensus professionnel qui est un important tournant," Sharon P. Robinson, la présidente de l'American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, a dit dans un déclaration. "En tant que fournisseurs naviguent dans un terrain peu charté, il sera important de faire les ajustements requis basés sur les observations et les données collectées dans le domaine.

D'ores et déjà, certains programmes de formation ont commencé à prendre en compte où ils se situent par rapport aux standards. CAEP débutera l'accréditation de tous les programmes avec les nouveaux standards en 2016.

À leur réunion du 28-29 août, les membres du conseil ont également approuvé le choix de la présidente du conseil Mary Brabeck, la dean of the Steinhardt School of Education at New York University, et du vice-président Christopher Koch, l'illinois state superintendent of education.

Gradual Shift

Les actions finales des standards de l'an dernier marquent un nouveau tournant pour la formation des enseignants, qui a été soumise à l'ların l'attention de diverses entités non gouvernementales et de la U.S. Department of Education.

En un sens, c'est également la conclusion d'un tournant graduel vers les résultats dans l'accréditation nationale.
Teacher-educators and interest groups, nevertheless, have been deeply divided about some of the ideas that were eventually incorporated into the CAEP standards, such as candidate-selection benchmarks and the place of "value added" test-score-based approaches in teacher preparation. In fact, such issues helped to scuttle a 2012 federal attempt to negotiate new teacher-prep-accountability rules with the field, which ended in an impasse.

The Education Department's version of those rules is purported to be still under review by the White House Office of Management and Budget.

Some provisions with no federal counterparts were also controversial, including the elimination of a stand-alone standard on diversity and the addition of a new "gold standard" level of accreditation reserved for only the best programs.

Nicholas Michelli, a presidential professor of education at the graduate school at the City University of New York, questioned the need for such a feature, though he added that he generally supports the standards.

"I don't understand how you can be accredited and then special-accredited," he said. "It’s like being pregnant—you either are or you aren’t."

**New Responsibilities**

CAEP, formed in 2010 from the merger of two former accreditors, covers nearly two-thirds of university-based teacher-preparation programs. The organization went into full operation in July.

Whether accreditation will remain attractive in the future remains to be seen. Unlike in other professions, teacher-college accreditation is still largely a voluntary enterprise in the United States. While CAEP receives financial support from a number of entities, it is dependent on colleges seeking accreditation.

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**Recent History**

Since the inception, in 1954, of a national accreditor for teacher education programs, the standards for winning the seal of approval have changed several times. Some of the revisions over the past 30 years include:

**1981**
The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education approves standards requiring education programs to maintain specific student-faculty ratios and funding levels.

**1985**
NCATE adopts standards requiring students in teacher education programs to have a 2.5 college GPA and to take a basic-skills test.

**1994**
A revision to the standards emphasizes multicultural education and the use of technology. They also require programs to begin to assess candidate progress through the preparation program.

**1997**
A rival accreditor, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council, is formed. Rather than reviewing programs using a fixed set of standards, TEAC requires programs to submit an inquiry brief outlining their goals, course of study, and proffered evidence. It then audits the programs to see whether they have met the goals.

**2000**
NCATE approves a major standards revision, this time moving candidate performance to the forefront. Under the standards, programs must provide evidence that candidates successfully teach children, based on artifacts, performance assessments, and employer results.

**2010**
NCATE and TEAC approve plans to merge, a process completed in July 2013. In the meantime, institutions can seek accreditation through either body.

**2013**
The newly created Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation approves its first set of standards. Among other things, the standards look at the academic achievement of students taught by each program's teachers, including evaluation results and "value added" measures where applicable. It also sets escalating entry requirements for each cohort of teacher-candidates.

—Stephen Sawchuk & Holly Peele
Board members at the meeting last month spoke openly about the implementation lift. Programs and the districts they serve will need to work in closer proximity than ever before, noted Blake West, a teacher and information-technology director at Blue Valley High School in Kansas.

"I think it will be up to us to show that the quality of the partnership shows up not merely on paper," he said. "We have to think about the policy decisions we can make that will encourage those quality partnerships to be developed that really get the best teachers working with the candidates."

The accreditor will also have to watch whether programs carry out the standards in good faith, said Camilla Benbow, the dean of the Peabody College of Education and Human Development at Vanderbilt University, who chaired the committee that crafted the standards.

Despite the intent of the rules, she said, "whenever you set up new policies, there are always ways to game the system, and people will figure them out."