



January 6, 2025

Dear Sponsoring Organization Leader,

In accordance with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's [Educational Vision](#), we are pleased to elevate updates to guidance and tools for defining, developing, and supporting effective teaching practice in the Commonwealth. These updates, shared in June 2024, center the evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices necessary include the [Standards of Effective Practice](#), the [2024 Guidelines for the Professional Standards for Teachers \(PSTs\)](#) and the [2024 Guidelines for the Candidate Assessment of Performance \(CAP\)](#). Together, these frameworks reflect a critically important shift in focus towards the evidence-based, culturally and linguistically sustaining practices necessary to support *all students* to attain academic knowledge and skills, understand and value themselves and others, and engage with the world.

The PSTs mirror the Standards of Effective Teaching Practice and define the pedagogical knowledge and skills required of all teacher candidates in approved Massachusetts teacher preparation programs. The PSTs and corresponding performance assessment (CAP, which is required for all teacher candidates in Massachusetts) work together to ensure support beginning teachers to develop the knowledge and skills needed to serve all of their students, particularly those from systemically marginalized groups and communities.

While updating teacher programs to align with the 2024 PST and CAP Guidelines may require significant effort and coordination, it is of the utmost importance that teacher candidates be prepared using the revised expectations as soon as possible in order to benefit all Massachusetts students. As such, implementation of the 2024 PST and CAP Guidelines is required by the 2025-2026 academic year for all approved Initial Teacher programs. This will be monitored at your sponsoring organization's next Formal Review, the mechanism by which sponsoring organizations maintain DESE approval to prepare Massachusetts licensed educators.

During the 2024-2025 academic year, DESE expects that sponsoring organizations prepare to implement the 2024 PST and CAP Guidelines. To that end, DESE is providing various supports to sponsoring organizations, which can be found on [DESE's website](#). Implementation of the revised PSTs and CAP will require updates that may impact all components of teacher preparation programs. Coursework revisions will require communication and collaboration between educator preparation leadership and faculty to align coursework to the PSTs such that candidates have opportunities to learn and practice the knowledge and skills specified in the PST Guidelines. Fieldwork revisions will require educator preparation leadership and field-based experience coordinators to plan for updated expectations for practicum and pre-practicum through additional training for field supervisors and ongoing support for candidates. Many teacher preparation programs have been making updates towards these goals already; the specific updates required will vary depending on the structure and needs of individual sponsoring organizations.

Thank you for your ongoing support of educator preparation faculty and candidates and for your demonstrated commitment to effectively preparing educators for Massachusetts' students. If you



have any questions, please contact me directly or reach out to our DESE Educator Preparation team at educatorpreparation@mass.gov.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Zorich
Assistant Director of Educator Preparation