



**Teacher Preparation Approval and Accreditation
Advisory Committee**

Final Report

**Maryland State Department of Education
Division of Certification and Accreditation**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On September 27, 2005, State Superintendent Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick established the Teacher Preparation Approval and Accreditation Advisory Committee to study current program approval and national accreditation requirements and practices in Maryland and to make recommendations for these critical accountability systems. Committee members represented Maryland's public and private four-year institutions of higher education that prepare teachers and other professional educators.

The charge to the Committee was:

To explore facets of Maryland's educator preparation accountability system and make recommendations for potential changes to Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools. It is expected that the Committee will recognize that Maryland's extremely rigorous PreK-12 education accountability system should be mirrored in higher education programs that prepare teachers.

To pursue this charge, the Committee was guided by principles that concerned; 1) the need for adherence to state and federal mandates, 2) the importance of maintaining a rigorous accountability system, 3) the recognition of reporting burdens and, 4) the possibility of giving state recognition to the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) as an option to the National Council of Accreditation for Teacher Education (NCATE) for Maryland's institutions of higher education.

The Committee engaged in thoughtful deliberations about current program approval and national accreditation requirements, as well as the state's new alternative preparation initiative. While a variety of opinions were expressed, the process culminated with the development of six recommendations and suggested steps for effective implementation.

The recommendations, with major discussion points, are as follows:

RECOMMENDATION #1:

It is recommended that both NCATE and TEAC should be endorsed by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as national accreditation agencies. The approved accreditation agreements should include those state processes that ensure proper public accountability. A new state agreement with TEAC should very clearly incorporate state requirements as determined by the state and required by the state's seminal teacher education document known as the *Redesign of Teacher Education*.

Major discussion point: It was believed by most, though not all, of the members that it is time to recognize TEAC, the nation's much newer accrediting agency. Examination of TEAC's current status pointed to the need to draw upon the strengths of NCATE, as well as the state program approval system, in the development of the state agreement with TEAC, should TEAC be endorsed.

RECOMMENDATION #2:

It is recommended that MSDE should advise NCATE on the development of a document that would guide reasonable, fair, and ethical practices by the Specialized Professional Associations (SPAs); such a document would be important in serving as a fair and ethical practices protocol.

Major discussion point: NCATE's recently revised program review process has caused major frustrations for Maryland's teacher educators. While NCATE's approach is still new, it is an important time for Maryland to advise NCATE on the implications of certain practices and requirements, and how to address them.

RECOMMENDATION #3:

It is recommended that MSDE explore the feasibility, including costs in time and money, of establishing a state program review process, based on national standards, that would provide an alternative to NCATE's SPA program review process.

Major discussion point: Members stressed that this recommendation should be viewed as a request for MSDE to conduct a feasibility study and not as a preference for MSDE to make the change to a state-conducted process of program review.

RECOMMENDATION #4:

It is recommended that MSDE communicate with its current (and future) national accreditation agencies to request reports, based on data, that show the value of the accreditation process for the preparation of quality educator candidates. There should be special emphasis on the costs, the process, and the outcomes for the institutions that participate in national accreditation.

Major discussion point: Consistent with the concept of performance assessment, the Committee believed that accreditors should disseminate more information on the value that their accreditation adds to education, i.e., their contributions to the public good.

RECOMMENDATION #5:

It is recommended that MSDE help institutions of higher education to address cost issues by (a) requesting annually a state appropriation to meet statutory requirements of Maryland Annotated Code – Education Article §11-208, and (b) developing a framework for identifying costs of national accreditation.

Major discussion point: While it is understood that accreditation is costly, the Committee believed that the state must do more to assist with costs.

RECOMMENDATION #6:

It is recommended that all Maryland alternative teacher preparation programs should be held to Maryland accountability standards and rigorous review procedures, in order to achieve and maintain approved program status.

Major discussion point: Members expressed their perception that MSDE has different, i.e., more rigorous, standards for Maryland approved programs at their institutions than it has for alternative preparation programs. MSDE staff clarified state policies and assured members that the state approval process has consistency across types of programs, including the new alternative preparation programs.

In sum, these recommendations provide six important ways that MSDE and Maryland's teacher education community can work together in a continuous improvement process aimed at ensuring that Maryland's schools are staffed with well-prepared teachers. The Committee met its charge to explore current program approval and national accreditation policies and practices in Maryland and to suggest potential changes.

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

On September 27, 2005, State Superintendent Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick established the Teacher Preparation Approval and Accreditation Advisory Committee to examine Maryland's national accreditation requirements and the program approval policies and procedures that are related to these procedures. The Committee, consisting of representatives of Maryland's public and private higher education community, included a university president, the president of the Maryland Independent Colleges and Universities Association, a university provost, and deans and directors of teacher education from across the state. With administrative views at both the institutional and professional education unit level, the Committee was called together to examine the Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) accountability system regarding what works well, what could work better, and what recommendations might improve the system for all.

Since 1995 when Maryland's *Redesign of Teacher Education* was adopted, the State of Maryland has implemented numerous initiatives to improve the quality of teacher preparation. In 1998, the Maryland General Assembly adopted the National Accreditation statute, Education Article §11-208, requiring that teacher preparation institutions become nationally accredited. In 2002, *Achievement Matters Most: The Final Report of the Visionary Panel for Better Schools* urged that policy be developed around the principle that, "teacher quality matters – *it matters more than anything else.*" Also in 2002, the State Board of Education's Quality Teacher Work Group issued a report on critical teacher quality issues, including ways to increase the rigor of program approval and accreditation. Most recently in 2005, the State Board and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board adopted *Guidelines for Implementing Alternative Preparation Programs* and revised the Code of Maryland Regulations 13A.12.01.07 -- Resident Teacher Certificate, efforts that are consistent with both the major tenets of the *Redesign of Teacher Education* and the report of the Visionary Panel.

Maryland's teacher education accountability system is complex and rigorous. It integrates state mandates, national accreditation requirements, and federal Higher Education Act requirements. An effect of the system in Maryland is that it creates reporting burdens and costs at institutions of higher education (IHEs). Dr. Grasmick convened this Committee to advise her on the overall accountability system with the purpose of producing recommendations that maintain rigor while minimizing burden and possibly cost to Maryland IHEs as they prepare teachers and face their multitude of reporting requirements. As one aspect of their charge, Dr. Grasmick invited the Committee to explore the question of a second national teacher education accreditation agency, the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC), which could be an alternative to the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE).

Guiding Principles

- 1) The following mandates and policies form the regulatory framework of the Committee's deliberations and recommendations:
 - *The Redesign of Teacher Education*
 - *Maryland Institutional Performance Criteria based on the Redesign of Teacher Education*
 - The Teacher Preparation Improvement Plan (TPIP) Template
 - COMAR 13A.07.06.01 – Program Approval
 - Education Article §11-208 – National Accreditation
 - The (federal) Higher Education Act – Title II – Teacher Quality
- 2) To help ensure the highest level of quality among Maryland's teachers, Maryland must maintain high standards in teacher preparation and conduct a rigorous accountability system.
- 3) To assist colleges and universities in meeting accountability requirements, stakeholders recognize that reporting and accountability requirements can result in unduly burdensome impacts on teacher preparation.
- 4) Since the Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) has been recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as a national teacher education accreditation agency, consideration may now be given to the possibility of TEAC's being recognized by the Maryland State Department of Education.

Charge

With full consideration given to the above stated guiding principles, the Teacher Preparation Approval and Accreditation Advisory Committee is asked to explore facets of Maryland's educator preparation accountability system and make recommendations for potential changes to Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick, State Superintendent of Schools. It is expected that the Committee will recognize that MSDE's extremely rigorous PreK-12 education accountability system should be mirrored in higher education programs that prepare Maryland's teachers.

Meetings and Process Activities

From November, 2005 to April, 2006, MSDE staff facilitated five meetings, all held on campuses of Maryland institutions of higher education (IHEs) that were represented on the committee. The following chart displays the dates, locations, and many of the process activities that were used to generate recommendations to Dr. Grasmick:

DATES	LOCATIONS	PROCESS ACTIVITIES
11/2/05	College of Notre Dame of Maryland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charge the Committee. • Provide content background. • Hold general discussion of the topic. • Plan a strategy for exploring the topic and developing recommendations.
1/17/06	Morgan State University	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore NCATE with President Art Wise and Sr. Vice President Donna Gollnick. • Explore performance-based regional accreditation with Middle States Executive Associate Director Elizabeth Sibolski.
2/15/06	Johns Hopkins University Columbia Campus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore TEAC with President Frank Murray and Vice President Sue Fuhrmann. • Explore TEAC with IHE representatives Lori Knapp from Long Island University and Sandra Cohen from the University of Virginia, both of whom have had experience with TEAC.
3/17/06	Villa Julie College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review accreditation-related documents. • Discuss presentations on NCATE and TEAC on the questions of 1) What are positive aspects? 2) What are the issues/challenges? 3) What questions do you still have?
4/18/06	University of Maryland Eastern Shore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review notes from the March meeting. • Draft recommendations for the final report. • Plan report development procedures using email.

Consistent with the Committee's plan, MSDE staff refined the recommendations that were drafted on April 18, 2006, and submitted them electronically for the Committee's review and revision. Next, MSDE staff prepared the discussion points that clustered around the draft recommendations as points for consideration in rationales. Finally, MSDE staff drafted the report in its entirety and submitted it electronically for Committee review, comment, and approval.

Overview of Report

To provide a contextual background for the recommendations, this report is organized in several sections. First, the **Background** section provides the policy context at state and federal levels. Next, the **Discussion of Issues** section summarizes the major topics the Committee discussed as it prepared to develop recommendations. The **Recommendations** section follows, with each recommendation accompanied by a rationale and several suggested steps for effective implementation. Finally, the report ends with the **Conclusion**.

BACKGROUND

State Program Approval

For an IHE to offer a program of study in a professional educator preparation area leading to certification, MSDE must first approve the program, using state approved national or Maryland standards. The term *program* has various meanings. For initial teacher preparation, it pertains to a single certification area, e.g., elementary education, and to a dual certification offering, e.g., secondary history/social studies. It also pertains to a group of certification area offerings at the post-baccalaureate level for individuals who did not complete undergraduate programs in education; e.g., Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs usually have numerous certification area offerings that might include secondary English, secondary biology, elementary education, etc. *Program* also refers to graduate specialty offerings such as reading specialist and school counseling programs. Finally, the term *program* is often used to refer to an IHE's entire teacher education department, school, or college. To provide quality assurance to the public, MSDE uses standards and procedures for approving programs of each of these types and at each of these levels.

Every IHE with state-approved educator preparation programs maintains approval status through a combination of annual reporting and periodic on-site reviews. The annual reporting consists of submitting institutional data to MSDE through the Teacher Preparation Improvement Plan (TPIP). The TPIP template is adjusted periodically to help the state collect specific information for state reports, e.g., professional development school data, and to help minimize reporting requirements for deans and directors of teacher education. On-site reviews are normally conducted on a five-seven year cycle, with more frequent reviews conducted when an IHE has a limited form of state approval.

In teacher preparation, the *Redesign of Teacher Education* guides all program approval processes. A state document called the *Maryland Institutional Performance Criteria based on the Redesign of Teacher Education* (Appendix A) serves as the review framework. Components reflect Maryland priorities and link Maryland requirements to NCATE, currently the only recognized national teacher education accreditation agency. The document also ties program approval status to federal reporting that is required by the Higher Education Act – Title II – Teacher Quality.

National Accreditation

NCATE. NCATE describes itself as “the profession’s mechanism” for promoting and ensuring high quality professional preparation. Through a systematic assessment process, NCATE uses performance data from numerous sources to determine if professional education units and content area programs meet national standards. The on-site peer review process is guided by nationally developed and validated rubrics that are associated with each standard. NCATE documents state that its performance-based system of accreditation “fosters competent classroom teachers and other educators to work to improve the education of all PreK -12 students,” believing that “every student deserves a caring, competent, and highly qualified teacher.” The fundamental NCATE accreditation question is: Are professional educators being prepared to have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to help all PreK-12 students learn?

As a membership organization, NCATE is a coalition of 33 teacher, professional, and policy organizations representing over 3 million individuals. Constituent members contribute to the development and revision of standards and serve on the governance, operational, and reviewer boards. Functioning with two integrated processes, NCATE’s unit accreditation and program review employ national standards. At present, 623 IHEs are NCATE accredited; 48 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico have NCATE partnerships; and 39 states use the NCATE Specialized Professional Association (SPA) program review process as part of their overall accreditation.

NCATE has accredited professional educator preparation in Maryland IHEs for over 50 years. In the past 15 years, a number of important events involving NCATE have occurred, including:

- The Maryland – NCATE state partnership agreement was finalized in 1991. (Appendix B is the current state partnership protocol.)
- The Annotated Code of Maryland Education Article §11-208 became law in 1998, requiring national accreditation of teacher education programs with a waiver provision for IHEs with fewer than 2,000 full-time equivalent students and those specializing in the arts.
- Beginning in 1998, MSDE aligned the *Redesign of Teacher Education* IHE requirements with NCATE standards; this alignment is a continuous process.
- Since 1998, MSDE and NCATE have conducted joint approval/accreditation on-site reviews, involving both state and national team members. The joint teams review national and state-specific evidence.
- Since 2001, NCATE has been performance-based, requiring educator preparation providers to produce evidence at both the content and unit level that candidates have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions for the educator roles for which they are preparing. Coppin State University participated in the pilot process.

- In 2003, Maryland became the only state to fully integrate the assessment of professional development schools with NCATE on-site review. Both NCATE and Maryland provide standards-based national leadership in the professional development school model of teacher preparation.
- Since 2005, NCATE has conducted content area, e.g., elementary education, program reviews using its revised SPA program review process. Salisbury University participated in the pilot process.
- In December, 2005, MSDE sponsored a statewide SPA workshop for all four-year IHEs to learn from NCATE representatives and experienced colleagues how to prepare successfully for SPA review.

In 1998 when Education Article §11-208 became Maryland law, three Maryland IHEs were NCATE accredited. In 2006, 14 IHEs are accredited; one more is in candidacy; two more are in an exploratory phase. Five of the smallest IHEs, including the two arts institutions, have fewer than 2,000 full-time equivalent students and are not seeking, nor are they required to seek, national accreditation. (Note: Education Article §11-208 is clear that the 2,000 full-time equivalent students criterion pertains to the size of the institution, not to the size of the teacher education program.)

Education Article §11-208 and TEAC. Education Article §11-208 defines “national accreditation” as provided “by an accrediting agency recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and endorsed by the [Maryland State] Department [of Education].” With the 2003 recognition of TEAC by the U.S. Department of Education as the second national accreditor of educator preparation, the potential for TEAC to meet the definition of the Maryland statute now exists. All that remains is endorsement by MSDE.

Founded in 1997, TEAC describes itself as “dedicated to improving academic degree programs for teachers and other professional educators . . . to ensure the public that there is solid evidence to support a teacher education program’s claim that it prepares competent, caring, and qualified professional educators.” TEAC’s accreditation system requires programs to meet its “quality principles” and “standards of capacity for program quality.” TEAC requires that programs submit evidence in a number of areas, e.g., content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching skills, for TEAC on-site auditors to verify. The process focuses on whether “the evidence of graduates’ accomplishments is valid and persuasive.” The fundamental TEAC accreditation question is: Is the faculty’s evidence accurate and is it consistent with the faculty’s claims?

TEAC membership, which may include IHEs not seeking accreditation, consists of a range of IHEs from across the country, from small liberal arts colleges to large research universities, as well as a number of professional organizations. At present, programs at 26 IHEs are TEAC accredited.

TEAC explains that it accredits “the education program, not the college, school, department or other administrative unit of the institution.” While the meaning of *program* is not entirely clear

from TEAC materials and remarks, it does seem clear that TEAC is willing to work with states to achieve agreements, including agreements about program identity, that meet state policy needs.

Federal Higher Education Act – Title II – Teacher Quality

The federal Higher Education Act – Title II – Teacher Quality requires that states use federally approved criteria to assess program quality and to inform the U.S. Department of Education of IHEs that are “low performing” or are “at risk” for being declared “low performing.” States must provide technical assistance to IHEs that are in either of these categories. Additional annual requirements specify that IHEs must report to their state education agencies, e.g., MSDE, annually; that states must report to the U.S. Department of Education; and that the U.S. Secretary of Education must report to the U.S. Congress. For IHEs, non-compliance may result in ineligibility for funding from the U.S. Department of Education. Failure to report “in a timely and accurate manner” may result in a fine to the IHE not to exceed \$25,000.

In Maryland, Title II institutional performance criteria, which have U.S. Department of Education approval, were developed through MSDE leadership with representatives of all teacher preparation IHEs as well as the Maryland Higher Education Commission. Tied directly to the *Redesign of Teacher Education* and linked to NCATE performance, Maryland Title II performance requirements integrate all major state teacher education mandates. The introductory portion of the *Maryland Institutional Performance Criteria based on the Redesign of Teacher Education* (Appendix A) makes clear the State Superintendent’s authority to inform IHE presidents and deans and directors of teacher education of the performance of their programs. Should TEAC become endorsed by MSDE as a national accreditation option, the institutional performance criteria document will be revised, as it is periodically, to remain current.

DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

During the course of the five Committee meetings, participants raised numerous issues for discussion. Major topics included TEAC as an accreditation option, NCATE’s new SPA program review process, accreditation costs, and MSDE’s expanded alternative preparation initiative. While the overall topic of reporting burden for IHEs was part of the contextual background, it was not a separate discussion issue. One example of reporting burden concerned the TPIP process, and participants expressed their gratitude to MSDE for making some needed adjustments to the TPIP template which now reduces deans and directors’ processing time.

Participants engaged in brief discussions concerning language in Education Article §11-208 that gives small IHEs the opportunity to seek a waiver from national accreditation from the State Superintendent. Opinions varied from the view that the statute should say that *all* IHEs are required to be nationally accredited to the view that the above 2,000 full-time equivalent students criterion should pertain to students enrolled in teacher education rather than enrolled in the IHE. Since possible legislative revision of the statute was not within the scope of the Committee’s charge, the Committee did not produce a recommendation in this area.

TEAC as an Alternative Accreditation Option

In discussions about TEAC as a possible accreditation agency, participants overall expressed two important views. First, their remarks respected the U.S. Department of Education's decision to recognize TEAC. Second, they made numerous comments about the value of competition. They felt that discussions about TEAC are useful, and that considering the merits of each of the accreditors might help to develop "buy-in" and a sense of autonomy on IHE faculties, no matter which accrediting agency the IHE chooses. They commented that the expense of TEAC might be less than that of NCATE, but they also observed that having the choice itself might promote lower costs.

As discussions ensued, participants expressed generally favorable comments about both TEAC and NCATE. They appreciated the scholarly nature of preparation for both. They talked, however, about a number of features that TEAC might borrow from NCATE, such as requiring a conceptual framework and having a unit – not just program – focus. Committee members also commented upon the importance of having more interviews during reviews than TEAC currently provides; this requirement would ensure that reviewers have opportunities to hear from diverse stakeholders. Participants recognized that they still need to know more about TEAC, particularly associated costs.

While the Committee's remarks were generally in favor of recognizing TEAC, a minority view favored maintaining NCATE as the single teacher education accreditor. These members did not believe that allowing TEAC accreditation to meet the intent of Education Article §11-208 would be in the best interest of the state. They, as well as others who supported endorsing TEAC, stressed the importance of including teachers and other PreK-12 representatives in the accreditation process, and the importance of including diverse stakeholders, especially PreK-12 representatives, in the on-site interviews. As the Committee concluded its deliberations, all agreed upon a recommendation with implementation steps that included a number of NCATE requirements, e.g., a conceptual framework; a unit focus, rather than just a program focus; interviews with diverse stakeholders, including PreK-12 representatives; and inclusion of PreK-12 participants on review teams. These elements would need to be included in a Maryland-TEAC agreement.

NCATE's New SPA Program Review Process

The topic that received the greatest attention was NCATE's new SPA program review process, which is causing frustration on Maryland campuses. Participants called the process "flawed" and commented that NCATE needs to improve its coordination of the system. The two most problematic issues are (1) the consulting fees that some SPA representatives seek to "ensure that programs are reviewed successfully," and (2) the frequently changing requirements of some of the SPAs, creating "moving targets" during the first years of the transition to the new system. Participants spoke of the time-consuming and data intensive work required for the preparation of SPA program reports. Some participants stated that the only reason for having any interest in TEAC is that NCATE's SPA process is so unsatisfactory at this time. Participants did not, however, generalize their frustration to include the NCATE unit review process, except for the cost factor.

During discussions of NCATE's SPA program review process, various ways to address problems were expressed. Importantly, when MSDE suggested that MSDE could pursue developing a state-conducted system to be used in lieu of NCATE's system, IHE representatives expressed reservations. Their concerns pertained to the requirements of a model that MSDE might develop, which could cause similar or greater problems than IHEs face now. They also were concerned about the feasibility of MSDE's being able to develop and conduct a content approval process while still trying to run a strong state technical assistance system with IHEs. They expressed their awareness of the many responsibilities that MSDE program approval staff already have.

Accreditation Costs

Participants were concerned about costs, both in terms of work time and actual dollar costs. Though there seems to be the potential of lower costs associated with TEAC, participants spoke about vague documentation. They saw both accreditors as costly. They spoke of cost as related to equity, and of the potentially disparate impacts on IHEs of different sizes. They said that costs are not always quantifiable, so it is hard to judge costs and benefits. Participants decided that MSDE could help IHEs by providing reimbursement for some of their costs through the reinstatement of funding provisions of Education Article §11 – 208, and also by developing a cost analysis framework to help them better anticipate and document accreditation costs.

MSDE's Expanded Alternative Preparation Initiative

Participants expressed their perception that MSDE uses substantially less rigorous standards of accountability for its alternative preparation programs than for Maryland approved programs. This view held by several participants sparked much discussion. MSDE reviewed current aspects of alternative preparation, clarified areas of misunderstanding, and discussed the rigorous approaches to be used to hold alternative preparation programs accountable. During the course of several meetings, MSDE addressed IHE concerns about when alternative preparation candidate assessment data would be included in institutional assessment systems (after moving from alternative preparation to a graduate level completer program). MSDE stated that the federal Higher Education Act – Title II – Teacher Quality requires the states, not the IHEs, to report on alternatively trained teachers who are still preparing for their standard professional certificates. Committee participants demonstrated their interest in having regular conversations with MSDE about the ongoing development of the alternative preparation initiative.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Thorough examination of issues, including discussions with the NCATE and TEAC leadership, as well as with institutional representatives who have experience with TEAC, helped to prepare the Committee for producing its recommendations. A participant commented that Dr. Grasmick had given the Committee a unique opportunity to provide input into policy decisions that will affect all IHEs in Maryland with teacher preparation programs. The timing of this Committee work was viewed as critical for Maryland IHEs. Clearly, all of the suggestions for improving

NCATE's SPA system are timely for NCATE and for Maryland IHEs: The system is still new, and many more IHEs are now preparing their SPA program reviews.

The Teacher Preparation Approval and Accreditation Advisory Committee respectfully submits these recommendations to State Superintendent Dr. Nancy S. Grasmick. Taken together, implementation of these recommendations promises to assist Maryland's IHEs with their leadership and administrative responsibilities. The Committee appreciates Dr. Grasmick's concerns regarding state accountability requirements and thanks her for this opportunity to offer these recommendations.

Recommendation #1

It is recommended that both NCATE and TEAC should be endorsed by the Maryland State Department of Education as national accreditation agencies. The approved accreditation agreements should include those state processes that ensure proper public accountability. A new state agreement with TEAC should very clearly incorporate state requirements as determined by the state and required by the state's seminal teacher education document known as the *Redesign of Teacher Education*.

Rationale

For many years NCATE was the sole teacher education accrediting agency. Now both NCATE and TEAC are recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U. S. Department of Education, and both organizations must maintain this recognition status through regular five-year review cycles. With these endorsements, both NCATE and TEAC have eligibility for meeting the Maryland Education Article §11-208 definition of accrediting agency. NCATE, through its long standing state partnership agreement with MSDE, has held MSDE recognition since the adoption of the statute in 1998. MSDE's endorsement of TEAC, plus a Maryland - TEAC agreement, would provide Maryland IHEs with an accreditation option, which is an interest that has been expressed to Dr. Grasmick.

The possibility of choice is beneficial. For IHEs, weighing the advantages and disadvantages of NCATE and TEAC to make a decision would, in itself, promote deep analysis of the strengths and areas for improvement of their professional education units and specific program areas. Such study would involve reflection upon the accreditation approaches that best match the IHE's mission and individual character. IHEs considering the two options would compare potential costs, and possibly find new ways to reduce costs. IHEs also would compare costs of time and labor and perhaps find more efficient approaches. They would examine institutional infrastructure needs, e.g., for data management systems required by each accreditor. They would compare the potential impacts internally in the unit and on the campus, as well as externally in the marketplace of public opinion. Finally, choice in itself is beneficial, as it provides autonomy.

For MSDE to endorse and maintain active endorsement of TEAC as it has with NCATE, TEAC will have to maintain its federal recognition status. It also must, like NCATE, develop an agreement with MSDE that meets state accountability requirements. These federal and state processes are in themselves beneficial to the state as they seek to maintain high and rigorous standards and accountability procedures.

As MSDE is considering endorsing TEAC and developing a Maryland - TEAC agreement, TEAC's formal agreements with eight other states give MSDE a sound basis for exploring this potential new accreditor. It is expected that TEAC will continue to evolve in a continuous improvement cycle over time, as NCATE does. Clearly, MSDE must pursue a number of important implementation steps with TEAC if state endorsement is to be granted. Such steps must be grounded in the *Redesign of Teacher Education*, as well the knowledge of what works well in the partnership with NCATE.

Suggested Steps for Effective Implementation

For MSDE:

Continue to work collaboratively with Maryland IHEs.

Explore other states' agreements with TEAC, both the process of developing the agreements and the products themselves.

Continue to learn about the experiences other states and IHEs have had with TEAC.

Seek TEAC's clarification on the subject of what constitutes a program, and address program review issues in a state agreement.

Determine which state recognized national standards and/or state standards are to be used for program reviews in TEAC accreditation, since these are not specified by TEAC.

If TEAC is to become an option, review NCATE, TEAC, and state review procedures for important accreditation elements to be included in a Maryland - TEAC agreement.

Compare NCATE and TEAC accreditation status categories, and align them with state program approval status categories.

Ensure that, in Maryland, accreditation status by TEAC, like NCATE, is based upon successful levels of performance data, and is consistent with the *Redesign of Teacher Education* and the *Maryland Institutional Performance Criteria Based on the Redesign of Teacher Education*.

Meet with TEAC representatives to discuss this recommendation and suggested steps for effective implementation.

Pursue the development of a Maryland – TEAC agreement that at a minimum includes the following:

- The provision that certification area programs will be reviewed using national standards.
- Incorporation of the *Maryland Institutional Performance Criteria based on the Redesign of Teacher Education*.
- The inclusion of public school practitioners on review teams.
- The inclusion of stakeholder interviews during reviews.

- The requirement of a “conceptual framework” as the basis of all program elements.
- The assurance that decisions to accredit are based upon agreed upon satisfactory levels of performance data.
- An accreditation timeframe that is consistent with Maryland’s review cycle of five-seven years.
- The provision of a plan for MSDE to hold a review process jointly or concurrently with program reviews.
- The development of a protocol through which TEAC, with MSDE’s collaboration, will report during and following the accreditation process to IHE administrators and to MSDE to promote unit level and institutional communication.
- A provision for agreement renewal with MSDE on a regular basis, e.g., five years.

For IHEs:

Continue to work collaboratively with MSDE.

If interested in TEAC, begin comparing NCATE and TEAC in terms of time and financial costs, value to the institution and its students, and how to implement the accreditation procedures.

Recommendation #2

It is recommended that MSDE should advise NCATE on the development of a document that would guide reasonable, fair, and ethical practices by the SPAs; such a document would be important in serving as a fair and ethical practices protocol.

Rationale

There is recognition that NCATE has just completed its first phase of the transition to the new SPA program review process. Three Maryland IHEs participated in the new process in preparation for the on-site unit reviews that NCATE/MSDE conducted during 2005-2006. Other IHEs are currently preparing their program reports for SPA review. In this context, numerous problems concerning reasonable, fair, and ethical practices occurred for Maryland IHEs that have been discussed with MSDE and with the Committee. Problems include:

- Consulting fees that are charged by SPA representatives, including fees for assistance provided over the telephone.
- Timeliness of SPA feedback prior to the unit review, and adequate time for completing the revision process prior to the Unit Accreditation Board meeting.
- The altering of requirements by the SPAs with little notice, sometimes occurring repeatedly and sometimes occurring shortly before SPA deadlines for receiving program reports, i.e., the problem of a “moving target.”
- Difficulties understanding the expectations of the SPAs.
- The likelihood of two similar program reports from two different IHEs receiving different outcomes because there were different SPA reviewers, i.e., the problem of inter-rater reliability or possible subjectivity.
- NCATE’s overall coordination of the SPA process.
- Potential threat to state program approval if programs fail to meet SPA requirements.

As a voice in NCATE's ongoing improvement, MSDE would play an important advisory role in assisting with the new SPA transition process. While it is clear that Maryland IHEs need better safeguards and supports, it is expected that the IHEs in other states also need better safeguards and supports. The recent experiences of just a few of Maryland's IHEs point to the importance of a SPA fair and ethical practices protocol to be developed by NCATE and posted on its website. Such a document would improve the SPA program review process. The spirit of the document would be consistent with the recent revision that brought standardization and streamlining to the review process. This document would provide clear guidelines pertaining to consulting, including sanctions for abusive practice. It would specify SPA processing timelines and give the steps NCATE would take to support IHEs if timelines are not met. It would assure that SPA standards and reporting requirements would remain consistent for a specified period of time to coincide with the regular standards revision timeline. It would promote, through published models and rubrics, standards for achieving higher inter-rater reliability and controlling for rater subjectivity. It would specify the steps that NCATE would take to coordinate effectively with the SPAs, as well as the steps that might be taken to communicate directly with IHEs going through the SPA process; this listing, updated annually, would inform IHEs of established dates for learning more about the SPA process. This part of the document would also provide a list of suggestions that IHEs and states might pursue to better understand and work with the SPA process.

Importantly, improving the NCATE SPA program review process is seen as assisting NCATE with its overall mission of accrediting IHEs that prepare professional educators. The unit review process is seen as strong and important to Maryland IHEs. Improving the SPA program review process is urgently needed, but doing so is viewed as making a critical correction to an otherwise sound accreditation system.

Suggested Steps for Effective Implementation

For MSDE:

Continue working directly with NCATE regarding effective accreditation practices.

Convey the concerns of the Committee to NCATE and offer to provide suggestions and assistance with the preparation of a written SPA fair and ethical practices protocol.

Check the status of IHEs going through the SPA program review process and document their experiences for reports to NCATE.

Building upon the successful SPA Workshop that MSDE held December, 2005, conduct future statewide SPA workshops to be held at least annually during which NCATE and national SPA leaders, as well as experienced Maryland IHE representatives, provide extensive opportunities for IHE teams to learn about current requirements and successful practices in report preparation. These workshops would provide presentation time, so that all of the program area coordinators can hear what the current requirements are. They would also provide small group and one-on-one conversation time for discussion and problem solving with NCATE and SPA national leaders.

Because the stakes for SPA approval are so high – they are directly associated with maintaining state program approval – consider accepting the outcomes as *recommendations*, rather than decisions, for state approval, with the continuation of approval to be determined by Dr. Grasmick and staff. Include this change in a revision of the Maryland – NCATE partnership agreement.

For IHEs:

Provide MSDE with updates regarding SPA issues of reasonable practice, fairness, and ethics.

Participate in MSDE-sponsored SPA Workshops and promote participation among colleagues and faculty members.

Work through the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to help in the ongoing improvement processes at NCATE, especially for the improvement of the SPA program reviews.

Recommendation #3

It is recommended that MSDE explore the feasibility, including costs in time and money, of establishing a state-conducted program review process, based on national standards, that would provide an alternative to NCATE’s SPA program review process.

Rationale

In light of the current problems that Maryland IHEs have experienced with NCATE’s SPA program review process, it is a good time to explore various potential solutions to the problems. One approach, expressed in Recommendation #2, pertains to achieving improvements to NCATE’s SPA process while at the same time providing greater state support to the needs of IHEs as they go through the SPA process and learn of the results. A second approach would be to revise the NCATE state partnership agreement to allow for the state itself to conduct program reviews using national program standards and having representatives of Maryland’s national SPA affiliates serve as reviewers.

Because it is well known that program review is complicated, especially when program data need to integrate with IHEs’ performance assessment systems, it is important that MSDE explore very carefully the feasibility of such a major change to the Maryland accountability system, and with it, the partnership agreement with NCATE. Several considerations must be weighed judiciously, including: cost in time and money, scope of work in terms of numbers of programs, numbers of reviewers needed, and reviewer training that would be needed to meet national SPA requirements. Another important question is the availability of MSDE staff time, and the possibility of a reduction of their time and resources for other mandated job responsibilities. Currently, MSDE staff members provide high levels of technical assistance to IHEs, the continuation of which could be jeopardized. Finally, great care needs to be given to the implications of such a change for IHEs. Clearly this recommendation calls for exploration of feasibility and not a definite change to the Maryland partnership agreement.

Suggested Steps for Effective Implementation

For MSDE:

Discuss the possibility of changing the state partnership agreement with NCATE, asking about timelines, and about the possibility of giving IHEs a choice of a state-conducted program review process or the NCATE-conducted SPA process.

Discover the practices of other states which conduct their own program reviews. Find out about the magnitude of their systems, including costs in time and money.

Make it clear to IHEs that using a new state-conducted program review process might no longer result in national program recognition through NCATE.

Prepare an analysis that lists the advantages and disadvantages of a state-conducted program review system.

Pursue the following two steps *first stated with Recommendation #2* and assess the benefit of these steps for IHEs, given that it might be more beneficial in Maryland to improve the NCATE SPA process than to replace it:

- Building upon the successful SPA Workshop that MSDE held December, 2005, conduct future statewide SPA workshops to be held at least annually during which NCATE and national SPA leaders, as well as experienced Maryland IHE representatives, provide extensive opportunities for IHE teams to learn about current requirements and successful practices in report preparation. These workshops would provide presentation time, so that all of the program area coordinators can hear what the current requirements are. They would also provide small group and one-on-one conversation time for discussion and problem solving with NCATE and SPA national leaders.
- Because the stakes for SPA approval are so high – they are directly associated with ongoing state program approval – consider accepting the outcomes as *recommendations*, rather than decisions, for state approval, with the continuation of approval to be determined by Dr. Grasmick and staff. Include this change in a revision of the Maryland – NCATE partnership agreement.

For IHEs:

Participate with MSDE in an examination of the issues and in the production of an analysis that expresses advantages and disadvantages.

If a possible state model will result in losing the opportunity for earning national recognition through NCATE, determine with faculty and IHE administration if this outcome would be acceptable.

Be prepared to volunteer and bring many volunteers along as program reviewers should MSDE initiate this change.

Recommendation #4

It is recommended that MSDE communicate with its current (and future) national accreditation agencies to request reports, based on data, that show the value of the accreditation process for the preparation of quality educator candidates. There should be special emphasis on the costs, the process, and the outcomes for the institutions that participate in national accreditation.

Rationale

As accreditors, NCATE and TEAC have a responsibility to IHEs, to state partners, and to the general public to regularly report on their accomplishments and the value of their services. The value added by their services needs to be documented as worth the cost and effort for IHEs and states who work diligently and with great effort to achieve positive outcomes.

It is known that NCATE leaders speak of NCATE's contributions to the public good and that NCATE reports its accomplishments and contributions on its website. It is expected that with a more extensive record of accreditation reviews, TEAC will report similarly on the value it adds to professional educator preparation. It may be that future reports from NCATE and TEAC will address candidate knowledge, skills, and dispositions, as well as impact on PreK–12 learning with greater precision. In this regard, MSDE's role would be to request more comprehensive reporting from NCATE and TEAC, if TEAC gains MSDE endorsement.

MSDE's effective partnership with NCATE since 1991 has produced a relationship in which discussions of continuous improvement are ongoing. They occur during the NCATE State Partnership Clinic annually, as well as in numerous meetings throughout the year. IHEs recognize the value of this relationship in assisting with the communication issues that surfaced during deliberations of this Committee. Should MSDE endorse TEAC, it is hoped that MSDE and TEAC will maintain an ongoing relationship during which matters of cost, process, and outcomes are discussed and issues are addressed.

Suggested Steps for Effective Implementation

For MSDE:

Submit this report to NCATE and TEAC with a transmittal letter that points to this recommendation.

Continue working on behalf of Maryland IHEs to promote comprehensive value-added reporting from NCATE and TEAC.

For IHEs:

Regularly consult NCATE and TEAC websites to stay up-to-date on their reporting on the value of their services. If more specific information is needed to respond to stakeholders' inquiries, contact NCATE and TEAC directly for answers; copy MSDE so that MSDE receives updates simultaneously.

Collaborate with MSDE and with the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education to request comprehensive reporting from NCATE and TEAC.

Recommendation #5

It is recommended that MSDE help IHEs to address cost issues by (a) requesting annually a state appropriation to meet statutory requirements of Maryland Annotated Code – Education Article §11 - 208, and (b) developing a framework for identifying costs of national accreditation.

Rationale

The Annotated Code of Maryland Education Article §11-208 states:

“(d) *Technical support; expenses.* – (1) In conjunction with accrediting agencies, the Department shall develop and administer a program of technical support to assist institutions of higher education in the State that seek accreditation under this section.

(2) In addition to the technical support provided to an institution of higher education under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Department shall pay:

(i) Any fee that an accrediting agency charges an institution of higher education in connection with the accreditation process;

(ii) Any training fee that an accrediting agency charges a State representative who serves with a review team of an accrediting agency in conjunction with an accreditation visit to an institution of higher education in the State; and

(iii) One-half of the expenses incurred by an institution of higher education in connection with the accreditation visit of a review team of an accrediting agency.”

The statute concludes: “(f) *Funding.* – The Governor shall provide sufficient funds in the Department’s annual budget for the additional costs incurred by the Department under this section.”

In 1998, the Maryland General Assembly codified the provision of financial support to Maryland IHEs seeking national accreditation, in recognition that the mandate would incur additional costs. While MSDE was successful at appropriating funding for a period of years following the adoption of this statute, MSDE has not had funds in its budget in recent years. The “shall” language makes clear the statutory requirement of the funding each year.

Regarding the development of a cost analysis framework by MSDE, the Committee was clear that such a tool would be helpful to IHEs. While it is very difficult to know all of the actual

costs, a cost framework would organize costs in meaningful categories, including those identified in the Maryland statute, as well as those that might be less standardized and determined by each IHE, such as release time for faculty. By working with IHEs that have held accreditation visits recently, MSDE could compute the range of costs in several areas, as well as list the types of factors that influence IHE planning. This computation and explanation would be helpful.

Not only would a cost analysis framework assist with specific planning at IHEs, it would have other benefits as well. The information about expenditures would assist deans and directors of teacher education in their budgetary negotiations on their campuses. The information also would be helpful to them when other stakeholders, such as legislators, ask them about costs of accreditation. Finally, a cost framework that displays what is known and can be estimated about both NCATE and TEAC review would assist IHEs as they assess their accreditation options, if TEAC becomes endorsed by MSDE.

Suggested Steps for Effective Implementation

For MSDE:

Dr. Grasmick has included national accreditation funding in the FY 2008 MSDE budget request, and will inform the Committee and Maryland IHEs of the outcome of this request. The next step will be for MSDE to continue making this request every year.

Establish a Cost Analysis Committee on National Accreditation, and develop a framework that is organized in categories and includes both NCATE and TEAC. In the case of TEAC, compute the costs an IHE might have when each certification area program is reviewed.

For IHEs:

When MSDE budget appropriations provide for the cost reimbursement specified in statute, follow MSDE procedures for reimbursement.

Work collaboratively with MSDE to construct the framework and provide cost ranges and factors that influence planning, so that the document will have benefit for all of the types of IHEs in Maryland that seek accreditation.

Recommendation #6

It is recommended that all Maryland alternative teacher preparation programs should be held to Maryland accountability standards and rigorous review procedures, in order to achieve and maintain approved program status.

Rationale

Alternative preparation programs are an emerging initiative in Maryland. In 2005 the State Board and the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board adopted *Guidelines for Implementing Alternative Preparation Programs* and revised the Resident Teacher Certificate regulation. These changes are consistent with the 2002 report of the State Board's Quality Teacher Work Group, which recommended that "all newly hired teachers will have completed an

approved program” by July 1, 2009. When “credit count” is eliminated, or used only “sparingly” and in “unusual circumstances,” as explained in the *Quality Teacher Work Group Final Report*, Maryland local school systems will require a replacement system for augmenting their four-year IHE-prepared pool of newly prepared teachers. Maryland’s IHEs never have produced the number of teachers Maryland schools need, and the need for highly qualified teachers has been heightened through the requirements of the federal law No Child Left Behind.

As MSDE takes a strong leadership role in promoting alternative preparation programs to meet local school system hiring needs, IHEs have important questions regarding where such programs fit into the state’s teacher education accountability structure. A primary concern is whether the alternative preparation program approval and accountability requirements are equitable with those required for the existing Maryland Approved Programs offered at IHEs. For the protection of Maryland’s PreK-12 students, a concern is whether alternative programs prepare teachers with the knowledge and skills they need for their students to perform well.

Clearly, the changes to the Resident Teacher Certificate, now requiring the state-recognized national standards and/or state standards, and the inclusion of supervision and/or mentoring during internships and residency promote quality. It remains important, though, for MSDE to hold all programs, regardless of type, accountable. Common standards and procedures promote equity and ensure quality, and are viewed as critical for initial and continuing program approval.

Suggested Steps for Effective Implementation

For MSDE:

Develop annual reporting and on-site review procedures that are consistent with those now being used in Maryland, using common standards and review teams that conduct thorough data-based reviews on-site.

Keep IHEs well-informed about developments with the state’s alternative preparation program initiative. For example, showcase successful IHE models at deans and directors meetings.

Provide IHEs with assurances that collaborating with local school systems to provide alternative programs will not negatively impact NCATE reviews, especially the SPA program review process and the assessment systems.

Collect and analyze alternative preparation data regularly, especially regarding candidate performance and retention, and, as possible, PreK-12 student performance.

Provide information on alternative preparation programs to IHEs that promotes understanding and innovation.

For IHEs:

Continue to engage in discussions with MSDE about alternative preparation programs to explore concerns as well as innovative ideas.

Consider working with one or more local school systems to develop alternative preparation programs, particularly for career changers and recent non-education graduates who want to teach in critical shortage areas.

CONCLUSION

The Committee met during the 2005-2006 academic year to discuss issues and make recommendations about state accountability requirements that affect each Committee member and the Maryland IHEs that they represent. During this time, the issues discussed were among the most relevant state issues that they face in their own leadership roles.

Deliberations of the Committee produced six recommendations with suggested steps for implementation. The recommendations include endorsing a new accrediting agency, TEAC, so that Maryland IHEs will have an option. The recommendations speak of making several important improvements in NCATE's SPA program review process, as well as pursuing the feasibility of developing a state-run program review process. A recommendation points to the publication by NCATE of a fair and ethical practices protocol for its SPAs. A recommendation asks MSDE to request data-based information from accrediting agencies regarding their added value in public education. The Committee asks that MSDE request annually the funding authorized by Education Article §11 – 208 to help cover accreditation costs, and to develop a cost analysis framework. Finally, the Committee urges MSDE to employ a common accountability system for all kinds of teacher preparation programs.

In sum, the Committee met its charge to explore facets of Maryland's educator preparation accountability system and make recommendations for potential changes. The process produced rich discussion of what works well, what could work better, and what options might lead to overall improvements in Maryland's teacher education community. With the recommendations and the highly pragmatic steps for effective implementation suggested in this report, MSDE and IHE colleagues have a clear road map for their continuous improvement approach to change.

APPENDICES

A: Maryland Institutional Performance Criteria based on the Redesign of Teacher Education

B: State/NCATE Partnership Protocol for Initial/Continuing/Probation Reviews of Professional Education Units in the State of Maryland