**Section 25.115 Educator Preparation Providers**

In order for an institution to offer one or more programs that prepare professional educators, that institution (educator preparation provider (EPP)) must be recognized by the State Superintendent in consultation with SEPLB. Each program that is offered by a recognized institution must also be individually approved by the State Superintendent in consultation with SEPLB. Electronic transmission of written materials pursuant to this Subpart C is required.

a) In order to be considered for recognition, a degree-granting institution of higher education shall:

1) be regionally accredited;

2) be approved by the Illinois Board of Higher Education to operate as a postsecondary degree-granting institution under the provisions of the Academic Degree Act [110 ILCS 1010] or, if the out-of-state institution is not required to seek authorization to operate from the Illinois Board of Higher Education, be approved to offer educator preparation programs by the state that granted it operating authority; and

3) sponsor a course of study leading to a license issued under Article 21B of the Code and this Part.

b) In order to be considered for recognition, an eligible not-for-profit EPP shall conduct or propose to conduct at least one approved program that will prepare professional educators and leads to a license issued pursuant to Article 21B of the Code and this Part, and the not-for-profit EPP shall meet the definition of "institution" set forth in Section 25.110.

c) In the case of a not-for-profit entity, all advertising materials, candidate handbooks, catalogues, and candidate contracts shall display prominently the fact that the entity does not offer higher education credit and that there is no guarantee that the Illinois license or any endorsement affixed to that license earned by the candidate will be honored or accepted for exchange in another state.

d) The procedures set forth in this subsection (d) shall apply to initial recognition of an institution and the concurrent recognition of the EPP. The initial approval of the educator preparation programs within that institution shall follow the procedures set forth in Section 25.120.

1) An institution shall notify the State Board of its desire to initiate the initial recognition process by submitting a letter of intent to the State Superintendent. Within 30 days after receipt of the notification, the State Superintendent shall respond to the institution, identifying the staff member who will be responsible for assisting the institution and inviting the institution to submit an institutional report to that individual.

2) The institution shall submit an institutional report to the State Superintendent, in the quantity and format specified by the State Superintendent, that includes:

A) evidence indicating that the institution meets the conditions described in subsection (a) or (b);

B) a written description that addresses each of the components set forth in this subsection (d)(2)(B):

i) identification of the EPP; its mission, purposes, or goals; its authority and responsibilities for professional education; and its coordination of the institution's various educator preparation programs;

ii) identification of the dean, chair, or director who is officially designated to represent the EPP and is assigned the authority and responsibility for its overall administration and operation;

iii) evidence of the institution's commitment and resources for the proposed program, to include the EPP's operational budget, and evidence that the institution's president or provost supports the educator programs being proposed;

iv) a chart of the administrative and organizational structure of the EPP;

v) the written policies and procedures that guide the operations of the EPP;

vi) the EPP's policies for monitoring and evaluating its operations, the quality of its offerings, performance of candidates, and effectiveness of its graduates; and

vii) the EPP's published criteria for admission to and exit from all preparation programs for professional educators, and process for development and submission of summary reports of candidate performance at the time they exit the program.

3) State Board staff shall review the institutional report and, within 60 days, either:

A) find the institutional report to be adequate and invite the institution to submit a proposal that meets the requirements of Section 25.120 for each of the programs the institution wishes to implement; or

B) find the institutional report not to be adequate, at which time no further review of the institution shall occur unless the institution submits a revised institutional report addressing the deficiencies identified.

4) The State Superintendent may authorize the scheduling of an on-site review visit to the institution at the mutual convenience of the affected institution and State Board staff when the program proposal required under Section 25.120 is submitted and found adequate. If the program proposal is found not to be adequate, a site visit may be scheduled to determine if the deficiencies identified are such that it is unlikely the institution will be recognized.

A) For visits conducted in Illinois, the institution will be required to provide housing (including a work room) for the personnel conducting the review visit; or

B) For visits conducted out of state, the institution will be required to provide housing (including a work room), transportation, and meals for the personnel conducting the review visit.

e) From a pool of individuals (i.e., State Board staff and, if applicable, others external to the agency) who have been trained in the applicable standards and procedures, rules, and statutes, the State Superintendent shall empanel a team to conduct the review to verify the information provided by the institution as required by subsection (d)(2). If the team members are not employees of the State Board, a staff member of the State Board or designee (individual who State Board staff requests to serve as a reviewer who is trained to perform duties that could constitute a conflict of interest for State Board staff) shall accompany the team to ensure that applicable standards, procedures, rules, and statutes are addressed.

f) The team may gather necessary information via an in-person visit or via virtual means. The review team shall prepare a draft report within 30 business days after the conclusion of the review, and the institution shall have 30 business days to correct any factual errors. The team shall review the institution's suggested revisions and make appropriate changes. The review team shall provide the final report to the State Superintendent within 30 business days after receipt of the institution's factual corrections. The State Superintendent shall provide the final report to the institution within 10 business days after receiving it.

g) Within 30 business days after receipt of the final report, the institution shall submit to the State Superintendent either a letter stating agreement with the report's findings or, if not in agreement, a rebuttal to those findings.

1) The rebuttal must indicate the grounds for disagreement with one or more of the review team's findings and include documentation to support the institution's position.

2) All documentation must describe conditions that existed at the time of the review visit. (Changes made by the EPP after the review will not be considered.)

3) All documentation must relate directly to the standards, rules and procedures that applied at the time of the review.

h) No later than 30 days after receipt of the rebuttal, the review team shall submit to the State Superintendent a response to the institution's rebuttal. The State Superintendent shall provide to the institution the response to the rebuttal no later than 10 business days after receiving it. Staff of the State Board shall convey to SEPLB a recommendation, accompanied by the review team's final site visit report; the institution's letter of agreement or rebuttal; a response to that rebuttal provided by the review team; and any other relevant documentation that was available to the staff.

i) SEPLB, after reviewing all the relevant materials, shall convey its recommendation to the State Superintendent that the State Superintendent take one of the following actions:

1) Recognize the institution and EPP; or

2) Deny recognition of the institution and EPP.

j) Actions following upon the recommendation of SEPLB to the State Superintendent shall be as described in Section 25.160.

k) After recognition of an institution and EPP, SEPLB shall review one or more proposed educator preparation programs as described in Section 25.120.

l) A recognized EPP shall obtain approval of at least one educator preparation program within three years after the date it gained initial recognition. EPPs that do not obtain approval of at least one educator preparation program shall no longer be considered recognized and must reapply for recognition.

m) As a final step prior to receiving recognition, an EPP must participate in an SBE-conducted training to orient it to policies, rules and procedures for licensure and entitlement in Illinois. All recognized EPPs shall enter each candidate for licensure into ELIS upon entry into the preparation program. Candidates shall be placed in a pre-completion status until recommended for licensure.

n) If all of an EPP's educator preparation programs are discontinued, the EPP shall no longer be considered recognized and must reapply for recognition.

(Source: Amended at 48 Ill. Reg. 7729, effective May 9, 2024)