Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

November 18, 2026

Agenda Item:	Loras College Educator Preparation Program Approval
State Board Goal(s):	Goal 3
State Board Role/Authority:	The State Board sets standards and approves practitioner preparation programs based on those standards. Iowa Code section 256.7(3) and Iowa Administrative Code chapter 281-79.
Presenter(s):	Maryam Rod Szabo, Administrative Consultant Office of Educator Quality Lindsay Harrison, Education Program Consultant Office of Educator Quality Aryn Kruse, Director of Teacher Education Loras College Kimberly Tuescher, Director of School Counseling Program Loras College
Attachment(s):	Two
Recommendation:	It is recommended that the State Board award full approval to Loras College's educator preparation programs through the next review scheduled for the 2032-33 academic year.
Background:	Loras College offers a teacher preparation and a professional school counseling program. The programs were reviewed by the Educator Quality Team and the curriculum was evaluated by the Bureau of Educational Examiners and content experts.

Educator Preparation Program Approval Report

Loras College

Site Visit: February 1-4, 2026

Presented to the State Board of Education:
November 18, 2026

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Department of Education

State of Iowa

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Des Moines, IA 50319-0146

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Review Team Members

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Dr. Carrie Thonstad, Northwestern College
Dr. Benjamin Forsyth, University of Northern Iowa
Ms. Stephanie Erps, St. Ambrose University
Dr. Linda Lind, Iowa State University
Dr. Sharon Dentlinger, University of Northern Iowa
Dr. Paula Ganzveld, Mount Mercy University

Recommendation to the Board

Program	Recommendation
Teacher Preparation Program	Full Approval
Professional School Counselor	Full Approval

Loras College Program Representatives

Dr. Aryn Kruse, Director of Teacher Education and Assistant Professor of Education

Dr. Kimberly Tuescher, Director and Professor School Counseling Program

Executive Summary

Recommendation

It is recommended that the State Board of Education grant full approval for the educator preparation programs at Loras College.

Governance and Resources Standard

The Governance and Resources standard is considered met. In response to concerns, the unit more clearly delineated its leadership structure and defined roles and responsibilities across educator and counselor preparation. The unit also developed a joint conceptual framework, aligned unit standards and course outcomes to that framework and formalized these expectations in the Educator Preparation Guidebook. To strengthen curricular oversight, the unit identified content-area experts and established a process for ongoing curriculum review. Finally, the unit allocated staffing through release time for key leadership, assessment and literacy roles, as well as added administrative support.

Two repeat concerns were noted related to resource allocation and curricular oversight. While these areas will require continued attention, the unit has demonstrated how it will manage each concern moving forward through defined staffing and resource commitments, clearly established roles and an ongoing process for qualified content-area oversight.

Diversity Standard

The Diversity standard is considered met. There were no findings in this area.

Faculty Standard

The Faculty standard is considered met. In response to four concerns, the unit more clearly defined faculty leadership roles and responsibilities, established a process to ensure clinical supervisor and adjunct assignments align with supervisors' knowledge, preparation and experience and related expectations for adjunct faculty professional development. The unit also formalized the 40-hour teaching requirement and established an annual review process to ensure experiences are documented and aligned with courses taught.

The team commends both veteran and new faculty for their dedication and collaboration throughout the accreditation process. Faculty worked together to devote the time and resources needed to respond to the review and make meaningful program improvements.

Assessment Standard

The Assessment standard is considered met. The team identified two concerns. The first focused on assessment within endorsement areas, particularly special education, where the unit needed a stronger way to identify gaps in candidates' knowledge and skills. In response, Loras College developed more specific assessments within the endorsement and a process to review results. The second concern focused on regularly using assessment data for program improvement. Loras College established a process for reviewing data by standard and implementing improvements.

Teacher Clinical Practice Standard

The Clinical Practice standard is considered met. The team identified one concern related to consistently tracking biweekly student teaching observations and feedback. In response, Loras created a site where supervisor feedback is submitted and revised the observation form to provide more meaningful feedback. The unit also responded thoughtfully to several recommendations in this area. The team noted as a strength Loras College's longstanding relationships with area schools.

Teacher Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions Standard

The Teacher Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions standard is considered met. The team commends Loras for its strong focus on literacy and the Science of Reading. Faculty used the Iowa Literacy Workbook to revise curriculum and made program changes so that all elementary education majors receive the reading endorsement as part of their program. The improved performance of Loras candidates on the Foundations of Reading Test reflects the work underway to strengthen literacy preparation within the program.

The team identified two concerns, both of which Loras College addressed. The unit added preparation for secondary candidates on behavior intervention plans. Loras College also added preparation related to behaviors associated with substance abuse.

Professional School Counselor – Division Five Standards

The Professional School Counseling standards are considered met. The team noted several strengths, including candidates' strong sense of community, accessible faculty and practical, real-world learning experiences.

The team identified two recommendations and two concerns. In response to the recommendations, the School Counseling program increased collaboration with Clinical Mental Health Counseling and revised its assessment system to more clearly connect portfolio artifacts to the Professional School Counselor Standards. In response to a concern about sufficient resources and administrative support, Loras added administrative support and restructured assessment responsibilities. The program also formalized practicum and internship expectations, including a process for tracking candidates' experiences with a variety of student populations and clearer communication of expectations to candidates and supervisors.

Loras College Overview

Sources: U.S. Department of Education Scorecard, Loras College; Loras College Institutional Report; 2025 Annual Report

General Information

Type:	Private Nonprofit
Size:	Small
Location:	City

Cost

Avg. Annual Cost:	$21,057 (midpoint for 4-year colleges is $19,730/year)

Acceptance Rate, Enrollment, Retention and Graduation Rate

Acceptance Rate:	92%
Enrollment:	1,087 undergraduate students
Retention Rate:	80% (% of students returning after the first year)
Graduation Rate:	68% (midpoint for 4-year colleges is 58%)

Student and Faculty Ratio

Student-to-Faculty Ratio:	12:1

Programs and Endorsements Offered

Awards Offered:	Bachelor's and Master's Degrees, Graduate/Professional Certificates
Main Campus:	Dubuque, IA
Alternative Paths:	N/A
Online Programs:	N/A

Education Programs:

Elementary Education
Secondary Education
Professional School Counseling

Endorsements Offered

Table 1: Loras College Endorsements Offered

Birth-3	Birth-Grade 3 Inclusive Settings (1001)
K-6	Teacher Elementary Classroom (102)
K-8	Language Arts (119) Spanish (133) Math (142) Music (145) Reading (148) History (162) Social Studies (164) Instructional Strategist 1 (260)
5-12	English/Language Arts (120) Spanish (134) Math (143) Biology (151) Chemistry (152) Physics (156) American Government (157) American History (158) Psychology (163) World History (166) Social Sciences -All (186) Social Sciences Basic (1861) Sociology (165)
K-12	English Language Learners
K-8; 5-12	Professional School Counselor

Note: In this program review, Loras will discontinue K-8 Science (150) and Music 5-12 (145). These will finish in spring 2027 as the last cohort graduates.

Partnerships

The Loras College program partners with the following:

- External Advisory Board
    - The Loras College Teacher Education Program (TEP) meets each fall and spring semesters with board members. Assessment data is shared and input sought from members for a continuous cycle of improvement. Here is a link to External Advisory Board (EAB) members, meeting agendas, minutes and communication.
- Content Area Faculty and Chairs
    - Frequent informal meetings and formal conversations take place between Loras TEP and content area faculty. Secondary education faculty members have met formally with those in English, Spanish and Math recently while Elementary has engaged particularly with science.
- K-12 community school districts
    - Alta Vista Campus
    - Jefferson Middle School
    - Prescott Elementary School
    - Meeting notes from Prescott Community Council Meeting
    - Marshall Elementary School
    - Holy Family Catholic Schools (Formal PDS Relationship)
        - Kathleen Konrardy, Our Lady of Guadalupe Elementary School principal and adjunct
        - St. Columbkille Elementary School
- Clarke University
- University of Dubuque (Capstone students take Ethics Training)
- Iowa Association for Colleges of Teacher Education

Program Initiatives

- Loras College initiatives reported from the 2023-2024 annual report, institutional report and communication with faculty.
    - The reading endorsement was integrated into the Elementary Education major, ensuring all graduates also earn the K-8 Reading Endorsement.
    - CHE 395: *Science for Elementary Teachers* was developed to meet state requirements and strengthen science instruction. The course reflects collaboration across campus.
    - Microsoft OneNote was implemented to organize agendas and minutes for all program meetings, improving access and continuity.
    - At the February 2025 retreat, facilitated by Dr. Aryn Kruse, faculty re-envisioned the program's conceptual framework and strengthened alignment with InTASC standards.
    - Loras revised the clinical coordinator position to meet program needs and support the Early Childhood program.

Program Trends

The tables provide an overview of program trends.

Program Enrollment

Table 2: Loras College Education Enrollment

Semester	# FTE Candidates	# Graduates
2024-25	89	24
2023-24	69	19
2022-23	73	18
2021-22	107	36
2020-21	91	27

Source: Title II Reports

Program Completers

Table 3: Loras College Teacher Program Completers

Academic Year	Elementary Only	Secondary Only	Combined K-6 and 7-12	Total
2024-25	16	8	-	24
2023-24	10	9	-	19
2022-23	9	7	2	18
2021-22	20	14	2	36
2020-21	16	7	1	27

Source: Annual Reports

Table 4: Loras College School Counselor Program Completers

Academic Year	Elementary Professional School Counselor	Secondary Professional School Counselor	Total
2024-25	5	5	5
2023-24	5	5	5
2022-23	12	12	12
2021-22	16	16	16
2020-21	20	20	20

Source: Annual Reports

Placement Rates

Table 5: Loras College Teacher Placement Rates

Academic Year	# Graduates	# Teaching Jobs	# Grad School
2024-25	24	15	3
2023-24	19	12	
2022-23	18	15	
2021-22	36	32	
2020-21	24	17	2

Source: Annual Reports

Table 6: Loras College School Counselor or Other Placement Rates

Academic Year	# Graduates	# Education Jobs
2024-25	5	4
2023-24	5	5
2022-23	12	12
2021-22	33	29
2020-21	21	21

Source: Annual Reports

Clinical Faculty, Adjunct and Cooperating Teacher Totals

Table 7: Loras College Clinical Faculty, Adjuncts and Cooperating Teachers

Academic Year	#FT Faculty	# Adjunct Faculty	# Cooperating Teachers	# Candidates in a Supervised Clinical Experience
2024-25	5	2	65	98
2023-24	7	2	77	100
2022-23	8	6	111	73
2021-22	8	4	102	107
2020-21	5	14	48	70

Source: Title II Reports

Program Review Fast Facts

Duration

Self-Study/Process Review Meeting: January 19, 2024

Cohort Meetings: 2024-2025

Institutional Report Received: September 29, 2025

Preliminary Review: November 5, 2025

Program Response Received: January 15, 2026

Site Visit: February 1-4, 2026

Out Brief to Program: February 4, 2026

Draft Report: February 27, 2026

Review Team

Five Iowa Department of Education program consultants

Fourteen faculty from Iowa educator preparation programs with five site visit volunteers and nine state panel volunteers, representing the following institutions:

- Briar Cliff University
- Iowa State University
- Luther College
- Northwestern College
- St. Ambrose University
- University of Dubuque
- University of Northern Iowa
- Upper Iowa University
- Mount Mercy University
- William Penn University

Stakeholder Input

Surveys: 10-12 questions per survey

Includes short response, Likert scale and open-ended questions

Responses: 148 responses from the following stakeholders:

Teacher Preparation:

Adjuncts (4)

Alumni (26)

Candidates (31)

Cooperating Teachers (23)

Content Area Faculty (12)

Supervisors (9)

Professional School Counseling:

Adjuncts (4)

Alumni (11)

Candidates (3)

Mentor/Supervisors (13)

Education unit:

Advisory Committee (12)

Interviews: Program overview presentation, program assessment presentation, individual faculty (4), classroom visits (5), content faculty (5), institutional administration (3), educator preparation administration/leadership (2), support staff (4) and student folder review

Class Visits: Variety of courses, grade levels, majors and endorsements including:

Learning/Behavior Strategies

Foundations of Early Childhood

Beginning Reading

Multicultural Education

Student Teaching Meeting

Continuous Improvement

Previous Site Visit Concerns (2018-19) and Correlations to Recent Review (2025-26).

1. Governance Standard

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns:

1. **79.10(7)a** The team found evidence that curricular resource needs are not adequate. Course consumables and supportive literature were two areas not being provided by the institution. The curriculum library is outdated and under-utilized by faculty and students. The team requires the unit to develop a plan to support curriculum resources and needs, such as current PK-12 curriculum resources, children and young adult literature, and consumables for course needs.

2. **79.10(7)a** The team found insufficient human resources allotted to the work required of a state-approved teacher education program. This concern is manifested in three areas:
   - There are a number of management responsibilities that require resources applied to them to operate an approved program. Current gaps include adjunct faculty and college supervisor evaluations, managing program evaluation and planning for continuous program improvement.
   - The team found a lack of faculty leadership specific to the endorsement areas of special education and early childhood inclusive education. The most recent review of the ECSE endorsement was completed by faculty and staff who do not hold licensure in this area. Courses are offered exclusively by adjunct faculty with no program faculty expertise or oversight. This has led to a lack of unit oversight of the curriculum, assessments and evaluation of preparation in these endorsements. Further, there is no evidence that the ECE/SE adjunct faculty meet on a regular basis for program planning and improvement.
   - The team finds that administrative assistant resources are not adequate for a state-approved program that recently added counselor preparation. Gaps were found within the following tasks: consistent advising specific to requirements and checkpoints from all faculty, consistent documentation of field experience placements with student files and other tracking systems, effective communication regarding course and field experience requirements, timely placements arranged by college staff, etc.

   The team requires the unit and institution to examine and adjust human resources to provide adequate resources for program oversight and operations.

2025-26 Site Visit Correlation:

- A repeat concern was found related to resource allocation. The unit was in a time of transition and demonstrated a strong plan for moving forward with new hires and redefined roles.
- A repeat concern was found related to the oversight of curricular areas.

2. Diversity Standard

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns: No concerns.

2025-26 Site Visit Concerns: No concerns.

3. Faculty Standard

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns:

1. **79.12(2):** The team does not find evidence that all unit faculty are qualified in knowledge, preparation and experience for their teaching assignments:

    a. One faculty member teaches elementary and secondary music methods, including preparation for vocal and instrumental music teaching. Evidence indicates his preparation and experience is limited to secondary level instrumental music.
    b. One faculty member teaches secondary math methods and elementary math methods as a component of his J-term MATH 110 course. There is no evidence of knowledge or preparation in PK-12 math teaching. His experience is as a non-licensed part-time elementary teacher of TAG math at grades 5 and 6.

    The team requires the unit to ensure all unit faculty are qualified for their teaching assignments.

2. **79.12(3).** The team found no evidence that adjunct faculty are evaluated. The team requires the unit to establish and implement evaluations for adjunct faculty teaching and use of evaluations to inform support for adjunct faculty for continuous program improvement.

3. **79.12(5)c** There is no evidence that three part-time faculty members completed 40 hours of team teaching. The team requires the unit to ensure all candidates complete 40 hours of team teaching.

2025-26 Site Visit Correlation:

- The correlation was minimal with the unit already clarifying policies to align supervisor with candidate endorsement areas and one adjunct, who was already planned for replacement, teaching outside of their appropriate preparation and experience.
- There was a repeat concern, this time with inconsistent documentation of activities related to 40 hours of teaching or co-teaching.

4. Assessment Standard

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns:

1. **79.13(1)** Evidence indicates a lack of a clearly defined, cohesive assessment system used by faculty, staff and students for either the school counseling or teacher education program. The following statements describe evidence or lack of evidence to articulate this concern:

    - **79.13(5)a** The team did not find evidence of how the unit determines if student assessment measures/tools are fair, reliable and valid. The team requires the unit to develop and implement methods of determining all assessment measures are valid, fair and reliable.

    - **79.13(6)a** The team did not find evidence that individual assessment data on unit standards is analyzed. The team requires the unit to implement policy for analyzing assessment data for program assessment.

    - **79.13(6)c** The team did not find evidence of the unit using aggregated assessment/performance data to inform program decisions and make program improvements. The team requires the unit to implement policy for aggregating and using candidate performance data for programmatic decisions.

    - **79.13(8)** The team did not find evidence that the unit regularly reviews, evaluates and revises the assessment system. The team requires the unit to implement policy for regularly reviewing and revising the assessment system.

The team requires the unit to develop and document policies, standards alignment, action steps and timelines for implementation of a coherent assessment system. The plan should address resources for oversight/management of an assessment system, mechanisms for data collection, aggregation and analysis, development of valid and reliable measure of candidate performance, policy for evaluating data for program improvement, and policy for reviewing the effectiveness of the assessment system.

2025-26 Site Visit Correlation:

- A concern in this site visit was tangentially related in that the assessment system needed revision in order to identify concerns within specific endorsement areas compared to the core curriculum as whole.

5. Teacher Clinical Standard

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns:

1. **79.14(7)a.** The team notes the policy for planned absences in student teaching has been construed by faculty and students to allow student athletes (and other students) to miss student teaching for events, which results in their not completing 14 consecutive weeks of student teaching. The policy also removes oversight for absence approval from full-time faculty and/or unit administrators. The team requires the unit to clarify the policy and ensure the requirement for 14 consecutive weeks of full-time student teaching.

2025-26 Site Visit Correlation: No Correlation.

6. Teacher Education Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions Standard

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns: No concerns.

7. Counselor Clinical Practice

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns:

1. **79.20(6).** The team finds cooperating schools are given forms to complete intended as contracts, but they do not serve the intended purpose of contracts. The team requires the unit to implement appropriate contracts that will provide protections for candidates, the college and the partner school. To resolve this concern, team suggests the unit use, or at least model after, the contracts used in the teacher preparation program.

2025-26 Site Visit Correlation: No Correlation.

8. Professional School Counselor (PSC) Knowledge Skills and Dispositions

2018-19 Site Visit Concerns:

1. **79.21(2)** The team finds evidence that PSC candidates who have not previously been teachers do not receive adequate knowledge in the professional teaching core. The team requires the unit to examine and adjust curriculum to ensure all candidates from a non-teaching background are able to demonstrate this knowledge.

2025-26 Site Visit Correlation: No Correlation.

Loras College

Team Report

Preliminary Review: November 5, 2025

Site Visit: February 1-4, 2026

Final Report: February 27, 2026

Presented to the State Board of Education on: November 18, 2026

Iowa Department of Education

Acknowledgements

Team members would like to express their gratitude to Loras College for their hospitality and assistance in facilitating the team's work. The tasks associated with the review process necessitate intense focus by reviewers during a concentrated period of time. Everyone we encountered graciously responded to our questions and requests for materials. We interacted with a wide variety of individuals who demonstrated enthusiasm, professionalism and dedication to this program.

The team expresses its appreciation for the work of all involved with a special thank you to those whose roles were integral in the success of this visit, particularly Kate McCarthy-Gilmore and Aryn Kruse.

2026 Site Visit Findings

Governance and Resources Standard

281—79.10(256) *Governance and resources standard. Governance and resources adequately support the preparation of practitioner candidates to meet professional, state and institutional standards in accordance with the following provisions.*

79.10(1) *The professional education unit has primary responsibility for all educator preparation programs offered by the institution through any delivery model.*

79.10(2) *The unit's conceptual framework and governance structure establishes the shared vision for the unit and provides the foundation for all components of the educator preparation programs.*

79.10(3) *The unit demonstrates alignment of unit and program standards with current national professional standards for educator preparation; teacher preparation aligns with InTASC standards; and each unit defines unit and program standards and embeds them in courses and field experiences.*

79.10(4) *The unit provides evidence of ongoing collaboration with appropriate stakeholders. There is an active advisory committee that is involved semiannually in providing input for program evaluation and continuous improvement.*

79.10(5) *When a unit is a part of a college or university, there is ongoing collaboration with the appropriate departments of the institution, especially regarding content knowledge.*

79.10(6) *The institution provides resources and support necessary for the delivery of quality preparation program(s). The resources and support include the following:*

- ***a.*** *Financial resources; facilities; appropriate educational materials, equipment and library services; and commitment to a work climate, policies and faculty/staff assignments that promote/support best practices in teaching, scholarship and service;*
- ***b.*** *Resources to support professional development opportunities;*
- ***c.*** *Resources to support technological and instructional needs to enhance candidate learning;*
- ***d.*** *Resources to support quality clinical experiences for all educator candidates;*
- ***e.*** *Commitment of sufficient administrative, clerical and technical staff;*
- ***f.*** *Equitable resources and access for all program components, regardless of delivery model or location; and*
- ***g.*** *The use of part-time faculty and graduate students in teaching roles is purposeful and is managed to ensure integrity, quality, and continuity of all programs.*

79.10(7) *The unit has a clearly articulated appeals process, aligned with the institutional policy, for decisions impacting candidates. This process is communicated to all candidates and faculty.*

Initial Team Findings - Governance and Resources

Strengths

- Faculty members of the Loras education department and the site visit team commends Dr. McCarthy Gilmore for her strong leadership during institutional changes and a challenging time when the department handled turnovers, hiring and onboarding new faculty and staff and leading the program's self-study while addressing many of the concerns prior to the site visit.
- The team commends Danielle Neyens for her dedication to support the educator preparation program during the transitions, building a path forward and facilitating a variety of support functions.

Recommendations

1. **79.10(2)** The site team found, through the opening presentation and institutional report, a revised and updated conceptual framework for teacher education. It is recommended that teacher education continue this work by considering the alignment of courses and unit standards to reflect the newly defined framework.

   Unit Response.

   Unit standards have been aligned to the conceptual framework. Additionally, the staff are required to review the framework in each of their courses, demonstrating the alignment of the framework to their course outcomes. This expectation has been explicitly stated in the 26-27 Educator Preparation Guidebook to formalize this expectation.

   Evidence Reviewed: Conceptual Framework, Educator Preparation Program Guidebook.

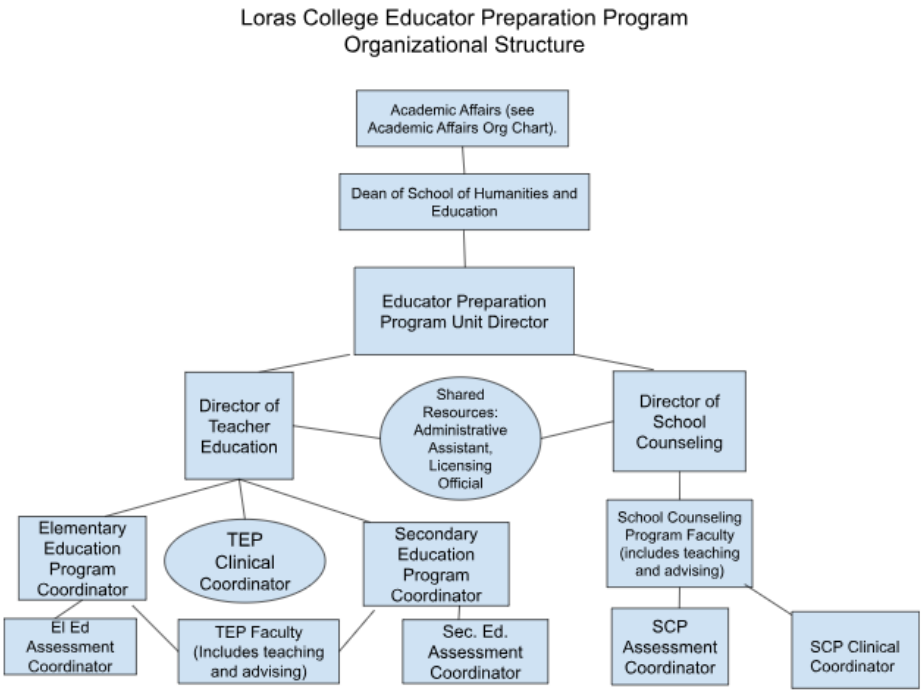
Concerns

1. **79.10(1) unit organization.** The team found there is not a clear, transparent plan which delineates the leadership structure for various components of all the programs oversight, including school counseling. It is required that the institution defines the unit, including providing a clear structure to oversee, maintain and improve all the preparation functions.

   Unit Response.

   In response to this concern, the unit has defined the leadership structure. The unit is overseen by the Dean of the School of Humanities and Education, as determined by the Office of Academic Affairs. The Dean of the School of Humanities and Education is responsible for the supervision of faculty within the unit as outlined by the Loras College Faculty Handbook. The Education Preparation Program (EPP) Director leads the Teacher Education Program and the School Counseling Program.

   At Loras, the EPP Director also assumes the role of the Teacher Education Program Director and supports the School Counseling Program Director. The figure below outlines the organizational structure of the EPP unit (this figure is also now included in the Educator Preparation Guidebook to assure clarity of organization among all faculty and staff in the unit):



The Educator Preparation Program Guidebook outlines all roles within the unit, the responsibilities for each role, and timelines for responsibility completion. The unit completed a crosswalk of the requirements of Chapter 79 with the responsibilities of the roles included in the document to assure the maintenance of all preparation functions. This guidebook is a resource to all faculty, including adjunct faculty, to ensure clear communication of responsibilities and maintenance of program functions in the event of program staffing changes.

A provided letter from the provost outlines College-level policies that support the oversight of the Teacher Education Program. This letter includes policies for course syllabi review, instructor observations for both full-time faculty and part-time faculty, assessment support, and the College's student grievance policy. The Educator Prep unit Director may be involved in the evaluation of full-time faculty if concerns arise. Specifically, the letter from the Provost states, "If instructional concerns arise, school deans and, if needed, senior faculty in the program, can observe faculty teach and hold targeted conversations to discuss the specific concern and area of improvement."

Regarding adjunct faculty specifically, the College has a policy that describes evaluation components (syllabi review, classroom observations, IDEA student feedback, and a review meeting) along with the timeline during which these components occur. The policy states," A review meeting between the Division Chair and the adjunct instructor should occur at the conclusion of each of the first three semesters of employment and every fourth semester thereafter.

The review meeting is guided by the *Adjunct Faculty Review Form* and should focus on identifying strengths, areas for improvement, and opportunities for professional development. Key areas of focus will include course syllabi, classroom observations, and IDEA Student Ratings of Instruction. Adjunct faculty are required to submit an updated Curriculum Vitae at the time of the review meeting. Final Adjunct Faculty Review forms will be kept in the instructor's file in the Office of the Academic Dean." The TEP program has included full-time faculty as

individuals who observe adjunct faculty to support the requirements of Chapter 79 and alignment with the Iowa Academic Standards.

Evidence Reviewed: Educator Prep Program Guidebook; Letter from Loras College Provost regarding institutional support for program oversight; LC Adjunct Faculty Policy from the Adjunct Faculty Resource Guide; Full LC Adjunct Faculty Resource Guide Document.

2. **79.10(2)** The team found little evidence of a research-based conceptual framework for Professional School Counseling and also did not find evidence that the conceptual framework and governance structure establishes a shared vision between the education and counseling areas. The unit is required to ensure the frameworks are research-based and a future consideration is to define a shared vision and philosophy of the Loras Education unit.

   Unit Response.

   In response, the Director of School Counseling and the Director of Teacher Education worked together to align research-based evidence and the professional standards of School Counseling to create a joint conceptual framework for the Educator Preparation unit.

   Evidence Reviewed: Revised Conceptual Framework.

3. **79.10(5)** The team did not find evidence of qualified experts with K-12 background in certain curricular areas within the unit. The education unit is required to utilize qualified professionals to regularly oversee and ensure candidates' preparation in the content areas (i.e., math, science, Spanish, music, etc.). This oversight must ensure alignment with preparation requirements, including core and endorsement competencies, knowledge, and skills, as well as the Iowa Academic Standards, and must be supported through the use of revised assessment tools to monitor candidate progress.

   Unit Response.

   The unit has identified PK-12 content area consultants to collaborate with the EPP. There is a detailed description in the Educator Prep Guidebook. These experts were chosen based on content area or developmental expertise. Content-area experts qualifications include a) Currently employed in a PK-12 education setting and b) Are currently or have recently been employed as a curriculum leader (example: instructional coach).

   The Educator Preparation Guidebook outlines the role description of content-area experts. The guidebook also includes a description of how these experts will collaborate with the program. The curriculum will be reviewed on a cycle, the cycle schedule is posted on the "curriculum review cycle" tab of the Loras Ed Prep Curriculum & Assessment Mapping Tool (also found in the Educator Preparation Guidebook).

   The program has identified a faculty member to serve as a liaison between district content-area experts and the program. The Director of TEP and the elementary and secondary assessment coordinators are responsible for the oversight of the curriculum review; this is included in the role description in the Educator Prep Guidebook as well as the program annual calendar.

   Additionally, campus faculty have been identified as content-area experts. Program coordinators, in collaboration with the TEP Director, are responsible for communicating endorsement requirements in the Iowa Administrative Rules. This responsibility is listed in the role description of program coordinators in the Educator Prep Guidebook.

   Additionally, curriculum changes must be approved by the TEP Director prior to submission to the College's Curriculum Committee. It is a responsibility of the TEP Director to review the alignment of endorsement requirements with submitted curriculum. This responsibility is listed in the role description of the Educator Prep Guidebook.

The documents below:

1. Demonstrate the defined roles of these content area consultants;
2. A listing of each individual who has agreed to serve in this role and
3. A table of program faculty who will continue to serve as content experts to oversee EPP curriculum.

Experts will complete the curriculum review form. These forms will then be reviewed during the monthly assessment meetings when coursework related to assessed program outcomes are reviewed (this has been added to the assessment calendar in the EPP Guidebook) to inform data analysis and continuous improvement plans (a tab for housing the feedback given each year has been added to our Assessment Data Analysis Master Document). The form for these assessment meetings is included.

Evidence Reviewed: Role description to use with email invite; List of content experts and curriculum review form found in the "content area expert" tab of the *Educator Preparation Guidebook*; Monthly assessment analysis; TEP Assessment Data Analysis Master Document.

4. **79.10(6a,e)**

a. The team found evidence of the institution's commitment to evaluate, revise and provide resources for the education unit; however, with the prospect of future structural change there is ambiguity in resource allocation. The unit is required to examine resources and clearly define unit roles as outlined in 79.12(1). This is important when faculty members are assigned administrative responsibilities so that the justification for faculty and staff release time and stipends is clearly communicated, ensuring appropriate compensation, effective use of expertise, and compliance with preparation program requirements.

Unit Response.

In response to this requirement, we have developed an Educator Preparation Guidebook that explicitly outlines the organizational structure of the unit, as well as detailed role descriptions and role functions. This document includes position responsibilities for the entire unit, including elementary, secondary and school counseling programs. It also incorporates essential functions like the school dean, administrative assistant, advisors and the clinical coordinator. This document offers clarity of positions and will support the unit in any requests for or adjustments to institutional support.

Evidence Reviewed: Organizational structure and role description in the Educator Preparation Program Guidebook.

e. The team found evidence that the unit is in a state of transition with the definition of new institutional structures and thus is required to evaluate and provide justification to show sufficient commitment to administrative, clerical and technical staff to support the work for the unit including teacher education and professional school counseling.

Unit Response.

In response to this feedback several steps have been taken:

- Beginning in AY 2026-2027 the Elementary Program Assessment Coordinator will receive a release of 3 credits (1 course) to support ongoing program assessment activities and a one-credit summer stipend. This is an increase from zero credits from the previous year.

- Beginning in AY 2026-2027 the Secondary Program Assessment Coordinator will receive a release of 3 credits (1 course) and a one-credit summer stipend, to support ongoing program assessment activities. This is an increase from zero credits in the previous year.
- Beginning in AY 2026-2027 the Director of Teacher Education will receive a release of 6 credits; this is an increase of 3 credits. This role will also continue to receive a summer stipend equivalent to one month pay.
- Beginning in AY 2026-2027 the Literacy Coordinator will receive a release of 3 credits (1 course). This is a new release to support the program's work around literacy and the FORT exam.
- The institution has provided funding for a student worker to support the School of Humanities and Education (SOHE). This student will work 10-15 hours per week and be supervised by the SOHE administrative assistant. In this way, the administrative assistant will be relieved of laborious tasks like scanning and copying and will be better positioned and empowered to support the Education Preparation unit. The administrative assistant will be assigned .5 release dedicated to the teacher education program, and this work will be overseen by both the School Dean and Teacher Education Program Director.

Evidence Reviewed: Letter with commitment of assessment release.

Sources of Information

Interviews with: Assessment coordinator, dean of humanities and education/director of teacher education, admissions staff, unit and content faculty, field placement coordinator and licensing officer, academic secretary for school of humanities and education, director and professor of the school counseling program

Review of: Institutional Report, program response to the Preliminary Review, surveys, handbooks, program opening presentation, assessment system overview, assessment paperwork

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Diversity Standard

281—79.11(256) Diversity standard. *The environment and experiences provided for practitioner candidates support candidate growth in knowledge, skills and dispositions to help all students learn in accordance with the following provision: the institution's and unit's plans, policies and practices document their efforts in establishing a supportive environment and maintaining a diverse faculty and student body.*

Initial Team Findings – Diversity

Strengths

None.

Recommendations

None.

Concerns

None.

Sources of Information

Interviews with: unit faculty, dean of humanities and education/director of teacher education, administrative assistant, students

Review of: Institutional report, program response to the preliminary review, surveys, handbooks, assessment paperwork

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Faculty Standard

281—79.12(256) Faculty standard. *Faculty qualifications and performance will facilitate the professional development of practitioner candidates in accordance with the following provisions.*

79.12(1) The unit defines and communicates the roles and requirements for faculty members by position. The unit describes how roles and requirements are determined.

79.12(2) The unit documents the alignment of teaching duties for each faculty member with that member's preparation, knowledge, experiences and skills.

79.12(3) The unit holds faculty members accountable for teaching prowess. This accountability includes evaluation and indicators for continuous improvement.

79.12(4) The unit holds faculty members accountable for professional growth to meet the academic needs of the unit.

79.12(5) Faculty members collaborate with:

a. Colleagues in the unit;

b. Colleagues across the institution;

c. Colleagues in PK-12 schools/agencies/learning settings. Faculty members engage in professional education and maintain ongoing involvement in activities in preschool and elementary, middle or secondary schools. For faculty members engaged in teacher preparation, activities include at least 40 hours of teaching or co-teaching at the appropriate grade level(s) during a period not exceeding five years in duration.

Initial Team Findings - Faculty

Strengths

- Veteran education faculty members (Scott Scheuerell and Hilarie Welsh) who collaborated above and beyond their regular responsibilities to ensure unit's alignment with the educator preparation standards, supporting onboarding new members, and Loras leadership.
- New faculty members Aryn Kruse, Alli Steepleton and Kara Steffan recognized missing components of candidates' preparation and developed plans and processes to support candidates who missed essential skills during the transition. Their positive impact on candidates' preparation was recognized in both candidates' and the cooperating teacher's feedback.
- The team commends the unit's elementary teaching faculty for participating in LETRS training.

Concerns

1. **79.12(1)** The team found through the review of the institutional report and site visit that while some faculty members have defined roles, the team has identified that greater detail is needed to create sustainable systems and to add clarity to the role to ensure transparency and sustainability during transitions expected in fall 2026. The team requires that the unit delineate the roles of various faculty who are responsible for leadership as well as other duties such as oversight of curriculum, unit assessment, curriculum library, communicating with adjuncts, revising systems and other faculty service.

   Unit Response.

   The unit has cross-walked the requirements of Chapter 79 and the roles within the EPP and have outlined the responsibilities of each role. The details for each role can be found in the "Roles & Responsibilities" section of the Educator Preparation Guidebook. This guidebook was created to ensure transparent and sustainable systems.

   Evidence Reviewed: Role descriptions and task calendar in the Educator Preparation Guidebook.

2. **79.12(2)** Throughout the process, the unit recognized struggles when adjunct and clinical supervisors' knowledge, skills and preparation did not align with their assigned duties, and the unit implemented new methods to ensure this requirement is met. This included the team finding, through faculty curriculum vitae and faculty records review, that a Physical Education adjunct did not have formal preparation or experience needed to align with the physical education methods course or supervision of clinical experiences.

   The team requires the unit to develop and implement procedures to document and track the alignment of teaching responsibilities with faculty members' education, experience and expertise to provide instruction in those areas. The unit is required to develop a clear protocol that ensures supervisors' credentials and experience align to the candidates' grade level and content area whom they are supervising. Further, the unit is required to clearly communicate the protocol with those responsible for hiring and selection of the supervisors and faculty to ensure ongoing compliance.

   Unit Response.

   The unit has created a document to track the alignment between college supervisor assignments with their knowledge, skills, and preparation. The expectation of this task has also been included in the role of the Clinical Coordinator and the role of the Director of Teacher Education and has been included on the program task calendar. The deadline to complete this

task is mid-August and mid-December for each semester. When returning to campus in August, the clinical coordinator and Director will complete this document for the Fall 2026 supervisors.

The protocol is described in the Educator Prep Guidebook in the “Faculty Requirements” tab. It reads, “Additionally, College Supervisors for student teaching must also have aligned credentials to supervising duties. College Supervisors must have held a teaching license in the area (content, grade-level span) for the area/grade-level span for which they are supervising. If the teaching license is not aligned, supervisors must submit college transcripts that show coursework completion aligned with the supervising assignment and a current resume that describes experience with the population/content aligned with the assignment.”

To address the concern of the preparation and experience for the physical education methods course, the unit hired a faculty member with a PE background, including PK-12 experience. Furthermore, the Teacher Education Program Director will be involved in the review of faculty qualifications during the pre-employment process. This expectation has been added to the role descriptions and responsibilities timelines in the Educator Preparation Guidebook in both the TEP Director and Clinical Coordinator Duties.

Evidence Reviewed: Clinical Supervisor alignment check document; Educator Preparation Guidebook (includes role descriptions and program task calendar).

3. **79.12(4)** From the institutional report, CVs, resumes and faculty interviews, the team found that the program is not encouraging, tracking or recording adjunct faculty professional development. The team requires the unit to support professional development through institutional policies and set a system of accountability that will track professional development opportunities for adjuncts (and faculty) so they remain current in the areas where they teach.

   Unit Response.

   The unit has discussed this concern, and we have spoken to our External Advisory Board for guidance. As a result of those conversations, we have decided to require adjunct faculty to submit a summary of professional development they have engaged in related to their expertise on the 40-hour log. The unit will also distribute communication in the form of a newsletter to faculty that contains PD opportunities twice a semester (September, November, February, April).

   Administrators on our External Advisory Board have offered to open their school-based PD opportunities to Loras full-time and adjunct faculty. The unit will also ensure that adjunct faculty are aware of the PD offered at Loras. The EPP newsletter communication will outline these and other opportunities. The requirement for professional development has been included in the Educator Preparation Guide Book.

   Evidence Reviewed: 40 hour and Professional Development Log; Educator Preparation Program Guidebook.

4. **79.12(5)c** The team found inconsistent documentation of activities related to 40 hours of teaching or co-teaching. While specific faculty issues were resolved prior to or during the site visit, the unit is required to implement policies and administrative oversight of collection and review of logs to ensure alignment of professional involvement and correlation to courses taught.

   Unit Response.

   In response to this concern, the unit has included the 40-hour teaching requirement as a component to faculty contracts (completion of 8 hours per academic year). This expectation is now included in the Educator Preparation Guidebook as another source of explicitly stating this

expectation. The Director of Teacher Education will review the 40-hour logs at the conclusion of the spring semester to assure alignment with courses taught. The periodic check (yearly) rather than at the time of the self-study will help support this process, providing an intentional time for the Director to communicate with faculty if changes to their hour accumulation or locations need to be adjusted to align with courses taught. The responsibility of the Director to complete this work has been added to the roles/responsibilities of the Director and the Task Calendar in the Educator Preparation Guidebook.

The program has updated the expectation to complete 8-hours of teaching/co-teaching each academic year after consulting with a peer institution with a similar policy. Initially, the program had discussed four hours a semester but were concerned about adjunct faculty or college supervisors that may only be employed with the College for one semester of the year. To ensure that all 40 hours are complete, the program then changed the requirement to eight hours each year. The contract listed below states the expectation in the “Remarks” section of the contract. In addition to the contract, this expectation is updated in the Educator Prep Guidebook under “Faculty Requirements” as well as on the log itself. The language in the EP Guidebook was also updated to specify that co-teaching and teaching should occur in state-approved schools and educational facilities and instructional settings rather than coverage of school duties or private tutoring.

Evidence Reviewed: Copy of faculty contract; Faculty Contract with 8-hour requirement; 40-hour log.

Sources of Information

Interviews with: Dean of humanities and education/director of teacher education, assessment coordinator, unit faculty, dean of humanities and education, admissions staff, administrative assistant, students, clinical coordinator and licensure officer, director and professor of the school counseling program

Review of: Institutional report, program response to the preliminary review, surveys, handbooks, program opening presentation, assessment system overview, assessment paperwork

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Assessment Standard

281—79.13(256) *Assessment system and unit evaluation standard. The unit's system of assessment will appropriately monitor individual candidate performance and use that data in concert with other information to evaluate and improve the unit and its programs in accordance with the following provisions.*

79.13(1) *The unit has a clearly defined, cohesive system of assessment that includes both individual candidate assessment and comprehensive unit assessment.*

79.13(2) *The assessment system is based on unit standards.*

79.13(3) *The unit tracks and communicates the following criteria for candidates:*

- *a. Entrance into the program.*
- *b. Continuation in the program with clearly defined checkpoints/gates.*
- *c. Admission to clinical experiences (for teacher education, this includes specific criteria for admission to student teaching).*
- *d. Program completion.*

79.13(4) *Individual candidate assessment includes all of the following:*

- *a. Measures used for candidate assessment are fair, reliable and valid.*
- *b. Candidates are assessed on their demonstration/attainment of unit standards.*
- *c. Multiple measures are used for assessment of the candidate on each unit standard.*
- *d. Candidates are assessed on unit standards at different developmental stages.*
- *e. Candidates within designated endorsement areas, as determined on the department website (educate.iowa.gov), complete the foundations of reading assessment.*
- *f. Candidates are provided with formative feedback and opportunities to utilize the feedback to reflect upon and guide their development and growth toward attainment of unit standards.*

79.13(5) *The unit will document regular reviews, evaluation and revision to the system of assessment.*

- *a. The collection, aggregation, analysis and evaluation of assessment data described in this subrule will take place on a regular cycle.*
- *b. Comprehensive unit assessment includes all of the following:*
  - *1) Individual candidate assessment data on unit standards, as described in subrule 79.13(4), are analyzed.*
  - *2) Preparation programs will annually report assessment data from the Foundations of Reading assessment, as described in subrule 79.13(4), and services provided for candidates to the department. Analysis of aggregated state data will be utilized to determine Iowa's average passage rate.*
  - *3) The aggregated assessment data are analyzed to evaluate programs.*
  - *4) Findings from the evaluation of aggregated assessment data are shared with stakeholders and utilized for program improvement decisions.*

79.13 (6) *The unit shall conduct a survey of graduates and the graduates' employers to ensure that the graduates are well prepared and use the data for program improvement.*

Initial Team Findings - Assessment

Strengths

The director of assessment, Scott Scheuerell, is devoted to the institutional assessment processes and is commended for his dedication of time to ensuring data is organized, even with rapid changes in tools.

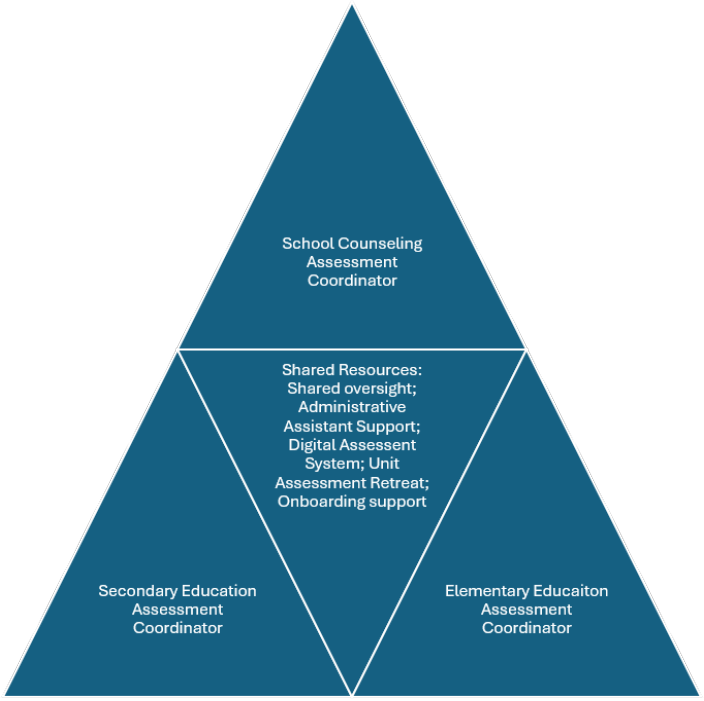
Recommendations

1. **79.13(1)** Through the review of the institutional report, preliminary response and interviews with faculty, the team found inconsistencies with a comprehensive unit assessment. The team recommends developing a plan for incorporating new systems and using the expertise of new faculty to ensure artifacts are purposeful for all standards for all levels. The team recommends resources allocated to this effort if it extends beyond normal contract duties. Further, as required in 79.13(5) the unit should create a plan for the assessment system to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is meeting the needs of the unit.

   Unit Response.

   The unit recognizes the heavy "lift" of the TEP assessment duties on one faculty member who was completing these duties within his normal contract duties. To address this, the unit requested (and was granted) two 3-credit course releases for assessment. The unit has designed the assessment system to be more collaborative among the different programs in the unit and has split the two 3-credit course releases between an elementary faculty and a secondary faculty. In creating these roles, the unit created a crosswalk of Chapter 79 requirements with assessment coordinator duties (found in the document linked below). We have also intentionally begun working with School Counseling to better align our assessment practices. Additionally, the Director of Teacher Education will have oversight of the assessment process, providing support to the assessment coordinators.

   The figure below demonstrates this assessment structure:



   We held an assessment retreat in March where School Counseling shared how they leverage College technology resources to create a portfolio system that is working well for the

program. At the retreat and in the months following, a “Level 1 Portfolio” (pre-student teaching) was created to use as an assessment tool with students to assess InTASC standards of coursework artifacts. (See link below for screenshots of the portfolio system that uses the institution’s secure Microsoft OneNote application within the College’s intranet.)

During the creating process, elementary and secondary teams worked together to create and form consensus around artifact identification and rubric creation and definition. Links to these meetings can be found below. Additionally, the team has dedicated one Assessment meeting per month to review assessment data and make program decisions. The next steps to this assessment plan include implementation of the portfolio in the fall of 2026, assessment meetings once per month to discuss AY 25-26 data, and interrater reliability activities for our rubrics after the submission of fall 2026 data.

Evidence Reviewed: Initial Assessment Meeting Notes; Spring Assessment Retreat Agenda; April Assessment Meeting; Assessment Plan for Educator Preparation Guidebook; Screenshots of Portfolio System; Video with information on the Level 1 portfolio.

Concerns

1. **79.13(1)** After reviewing survey data, as well as faculty and candidate interviews, the team found a lack of the comprehensive program assessment system to bring timely attention to candidates’ preparation in special education as required by KSD [Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions] standard 79.15(4)b, learner differences. Also, a survey of cooperating teachers and candidates indicated that prior special education faculty did not prepare or assess candidates in competencies required in the special education endorsement, including writing and implementing an Individualized Education Plan. The program is required to develop a regular curriculum review process informed by the candidate’s assessment data. Program assessment and curriculum revision need to not only address candidates’ performance in core education competencies such as InTASC standards, but also assessment of their preparation to teach content aligned with current national standards and Iowa academic standards.

   Unit Response.

   The unit recognizes the concern of content preparation, specifically in special education content prior to the 24-25 Academic Year. Upon employment of Aryn Kruse and Alli Steepleton, the unit made significant improvements in curriculum changes to EDU 205 (Foundations of Inclusive Education) and EDU 340 (Differentiated Instruction) as well as courses within the Instructional Strategist Endorsement. To ensure maintenance of these changes, formal assessments have been established in these courses, specifically, a Mock IEP process in EDU 205, Foundations of Inclusive Education (introductory level) and then again during the senior year during EDU 340, Differentiated Instruction (taken the semester prior to student teaching).

   This assessment requirement which occurs across developmental levels and across different faculty members supports the assurance that this content is being addressed and assessed. Additionally, students completing the Instructional Strategist 1 endorsement participate in a culminating oral exam process through a Mock Special Education Teacher interview which assesses candidate knowledge and skills at the completion of their Instructional Strategist 1 Coursework. On the 26-27 Assessment Calendar, the team has dedicated the May Term 2027 assessment meeting to analyzing the year’s special education data (to include data from EDU 205, EDU 340, and EDU 348).

   To further assure adherence to curriculum requirements for special education content, the program made the decision to reassign EDU 340 (Differentiated Instruction) from an adjunct instructor to a full-time faculty member. This would allow for more frequent conversations around student data and curriculum improvement. Faculty met in the spring to revise the EDU 340

curriculum to include intentional instruction and assessment in IEP and BIP development. The revised syllabus for this course is linked below.

The program has developed a curriculum review process with both campus- and community-based content area experts. This process is highlighted in the Educator Preparation Guidebook. The curriculum will be reviewed on a cycle to assure alignment with Iowa Academic Standards with the partnership of campus and community experts. Community experts have been identified and were chosen because of 1) Their connection to content areas and 2) Their experience working in PK-12 systems with some type of curriculum leadership experience (for example, instructional coaches).

To consider assessment of other content areas, the unit plans to include these discussions throughout the year at the assessment meetings. A portfolio assessment system has been built and includes artifacts from content-area methods at both the secondary and elementary level. These artifacts will be used to assess content areas as well as the candidate's pedagogical growth. The data from these artifacts will be examined during dedicated monthly assessment meetings.

Additionally, content-area experts have been invited to 26-27 assessment meetings to engage in conversations with us regarding how to continually strengthen content-area assessments within our portfolio systems. We will share with them the existing artifacts used related to content-areas and data that has been collected, and we will ask for insight on how to strengthen these artifacts.

Finally, the unit has created a KSD curriculum fidelity checklist as a tab within the curriculum and assessment mapping tool. This checklist was designed to 1) Intentionally remind program faculty of curriculum requirements, 2) Provide space for conversations around needed curriculum changes and updates more frequently than self-study accreditation cycles and 3) Provide a measure of accountability for implementing program curriculum, specifically as it relates to the KSD requirements of Chapter 79. This fidelity checklist will be completed at two points in the academic year, once during the fall semester and then again during the spring semester.

Evidence Reviewed: Assessment Calendar on Program Assessment Tab of the Educator Preparation Guidebook; EDU 205 Mock IEP Project Description and Rubric; EDU 205 Interview Project; Mock IEP rubric for use in EDU 340 and EDU 205 to allow for data comparison of cohort development overtime; Revised EDU 340 Differentiated Instruction Syllabus; Cumulative Special Education Endorsement Assessment; KSD Fidelity Document.

2. **79.13(5)b3** A review of the institutional report and the preliminary response to the report, the team found evidence that while data is aggregated, a report is shared, and some decisions are made based on assessment data, the process is not formalized and there are not standard follow-up steps after the report is shared with faculty members. The unit is required to revisit the assessment plan and provide opportunities to review the report, apply changes and follow up on action steps.

Unit Response.

The unit has created an assessment plan that includes regular review of assessment data. This plan is outlined in the Educator Preparation Guidebook (linked below). At each meeting, the unit will complete the Monthly Assessment Analysis and Action Plan for each unit standard. This protocol includes a review of data, reflection on strengths and challenges, goal statements, action steps, and follow-up requirements. Follow-up requirements will be noted on the Assessment Calendar as the year progresses. These documents will all be housed in the TEP Assessment Data Analysis Master Document. This document is designed to use as a tool during our monthly assessment meetings and retreats. It includes the assessment calendar and tabs for each standard that we are analyzing. It was designed to help the program be intentional with

data analysis and to use data for continuous growth and improvement. The TEP Assessment Data Analysis Master Document includes the action form for each standard as well as a follow-up tracker to ensure follow-through on action steps determined during assessment meetings. The program has dedicated two separate course releases for a secondary and elementary assessment coordinator. These coordinators will be responsible for preparing the data for the assessment meetings and completing the TEP Assessment analysis documents.

Evidence Reviewed: Monthly Assessment Analysis and Action Plan (NOTE: this is just a template for the form that you will see embedded on each tab of the TEP Assessment Data Analysis Master Document; it is not a separate process); TEP Assessment Data Analysis Master Document with assessment calendar on the “program assessment” tab of the Educator Preparation Guidebook.

Sources of Information

Interviews with: Vice president/dean for academic affairs, dean of humanities and education/director of teacher education, assessment director, students, field placement coordinator and licensing officer

Review of: Institutional Report, program response to the preliminary review, handbooks, surveys

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Teacher Preparation Clinical Practice Standard

281—79.14(256) Teacher preparation clinical practice standard. The unit and its school partners shall provide field experiences and student teaching opportunities that assist candidates in becoming successful teachers in accordance with the following provisions.

79.14(1) *The unit ensures that clinical experiences occurring in all locations are in high-quality instructional programs for PK-12 students in a state-approved school or educational facility and are well-sequenced, supervised by appropriately qualified personnel, monitored by the unit and integrated into the unit standards. These expectations are shared with teacher candidates, college/university supervisors and cooperating teachers.*

79.14(2) *Cooperating teachers and college/university supervisors share responsibility for evaluating the teacher candidates' achievement of unit standards. Clinical experiences are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program.*

79.14(3) *Teacher candidates experience clinical practices in multiple settings that include diverse groups and diverse learning needs.*

79.14(4) *Teacher candidates admitted to a teacher preparation program must complete a minimum of 80 hours of pre-student teaching field experiences, with at least 10 hours occurring prior to acceptance into the program.*

79.14(5) *Pre-student teaching field experiences support learning in context and include all of the following:*

a. *High-quality instructional programs for students in a state-approved school or educational facility.*
b. *Opportunities for teacher candidates to observe and be observed by others and to engage in discussion and reflection on clinical practice, planning, instruction and assessment.*

79.14(6) *The unit is responsible for ensuring that the student teaching experience for initial licensure:*

a. *Shall be a minimum of 14 weeks in duration during the teacher candidate's final year of the teacher preparation program.*
b. *Takes place in the classroom of a cooperating teacher who is appropriately licensed in the subject area and grade-level endorsement for which the teacher candidate is being prepared.*
c. *Includes prescribed minimum expectations and responsibilities, including ethical behavior, for the teacher candidate.*
d. *Involves the teacher candidate in communication and interaction with parents or guardians of students in the teacher candidate's classroom.*
e. *Requires the teacher candidate to become knowledgeable about the Iowa teaching standards and to experience a mock evaluation, which shall not be used as an assessment tool by the unit, performed by the cooperating teacher or a person who holds an Iowa evaluator license.*
f. *Requires collaborative involvement of the teacher candidate, cooperating teacher and college/university supervisor in candidate growth. This collaborative involvement includes biweekly supervisor observations with feedback.*
g. *Requires the teacher candidate to bear primary responsibility for planning, instruction and assessment within the classroom for a minimum of two weeks (ten school days).*
h. *Includes a written evaluation procedure, after which the completed evaluation form is included in the teacher candidate's permanent record.*

79.14(7) *The unit annually offers one or more workshops for cooperating teachers to define the objectives of the student teaching experience, review the responsibilities of the cooperating teacher and provide the cooperating teacher other information and assistance the unit deems necessary. The duration of the workshop will be equivalent to one day.*

79.14(8) *The institution enters into a written contract with the cooperating school or district providing clinical experiences, including field experiences and student teaching.*

79.14(9) *For teacher candidates with prior experience as a substitute teacher or a paraeducator, the terms of Iowa Code section 256.16(1)"c" apply. The unit will record evidence of prior experiences accepted under this subrule toward the student teaching experience.*

Initial Team Findings – Teacher Preparation Clinical Practice

Strengths

- Loras has longstanding relationships with schools in the area. The Professional Development School model serves to connect educators with faculty and preservice teachers.

Recommendations

1. **79.14** Through review of records, survey responses and interviews, the team found that clinical experiences are well-sequenced and supervised. In the recent past, record keeping, communication and placement documentation was not well organized and transparent. The team found new systems are developing and recommends careful consideration of best processes and tools to coordinate and digitize practices to facilitate communication and assessment of clinical experiences. Specifically in the following areas:

- The team recommends considering different electronic data management systems and possibly consulting with an expert to ensure efficiency of operations.

    a. **79.14(2)** Documentation of observations are kept in different formats. The team recommends evaluating how records are stored (perhaps moving to fully digital) for better organization and communication with stakeholders.
    b. **79.14(8)** It is recommended the unit centralize contract collection between the professional school counseling program and teacher education program.
    c. **79.14(6)d** The team found an assignment requiring communication and interaction between parents or guardians but did not find consistent documentation collected on how this standard was met.
    d. **79.14(6)e** The unit recognizes inconsistent record keeping related to mock evaluations and the team recommends continuing with the newly established process of mock evaluations.
    e. **79.14(7)** The team found evidence of a one-day workshop for cooperating teachers. The team recommends continuing to organize and update the content for relevancy with current demands in the teaching profession. The team recommends collecting feedback from cooperating teachers to best inform revision.

Unit Response.

a. **79.14 (2)** The team acknowledges the recommendation to store observation records of students during the clinical experience. The team has developed a consolidated digital folder for elementary students to track and record their progress and feedback through their clinical semester. Elementary candidates enroll in the clinical experience in the fall semester while secondary candidates enroll in the spring semester. The elementary team will pilot the digital folder in the fall semester 2026 and will share an update with the team in an October TEP meeting. At this meeting, the secondary team can consider adopting the process as a result of the pilot experience.

   An assignment for student teachers has been added to EDU 490-Capstone to ensure communication between candidates and parents or guardians is documented each semester. Candidates will upload their communication to eLearn. To ensure the communication is occurring prior to the student teaching semester, students are required to correspond with families in the PDS semester (secondary) and in Intermediate Clinical (elementary).

   Evidence Reviewed: Copy of the digital folder that elementary students will complete throughout the clinical semester; EDU 490 schedule; EDU 350 (PDS); EDU 334.

b. **79.14(8)** Thank you for the recommendation. The College has instituted a process among all programs for contract coordination. The contracts must be approved by the School Dean first, and then are forwarded to "AVP of Technology and Contracts" who supports both teacher education and school counseling with contract language and communication with the school district. Once the school district and unit have agreed to the terms of the contract, the contract is then forwarded to the College's VP of Finance who signs the contract. While the contracts are then kept within that office, our unit keeps copies of these contracts on file as well. In response to this recommendation, our program office does not collect contracts. Contract collection for both the teacher education program and professional school counseling is the responsibility of Academic Affairs, and contracts are housed there.

c. **79.14(6)d** The team reviewed courses that include field experiences and assembled assignment descriptions into the Level 1 Portfolio Shell where students will attach their parent communication evidence as they engage in the field experience work. Additionally, an assignment for student teachers has been added in EDU 490 to ensure communication between candidates and parents or guardians is documented each semester. Candidates will upload their communication to eLearn.

d. **79.14(6)e** The Mock Evaluation Completion form is discussed and distributed to College Supervisors during the initial triad meeting, and reminders are provided to students throughout the student teaching semester. School evaluators sign the completion form and return to College Supervisors. They are then sent to the clinical coordinator and stored.

   Evidence Reviewed: Mock Evaluation Completion Form.

e. **79.14(7)** The team acknowledges this recommendation and has developed a shared storage location for workshop PowerPoints in the Teacher Education Program OneNote. Surveys were given after the fall 2024 triad meeting then paused after moving in a different direction. Results of that survey indicated that cooperating teachers were seeking professional learning connected to their current classroom needs. The team moved to a choice podcast assignment for student teachers and cooperating teachers to complete together during the student teaching placement and submitted to the EDU 490 coursework. This recommendation encourages us to resume survey distribution after each triad workshop (start of student teaching semesters) to remain current with the needs of our cooperating teachers.

   Evidence Reviewed: Program OneNote where documents are organized.

2. **79.14(6)f** The team recommends review of clinical rubrics to afford more detailed feedback focused on supporting candidate growth.

   Unit Response. The clinical rubrics have been revised to include quantitative feedback and comments for each standard rather than the previous form that only asked for overall comments across all standards. This rubric also requires goal setting and a statement of previous goals in order to engage in a feedback loop with the candidate. The numeric data gathered from these new forms will allow for more opportunities to support candidate growth and allow for program analysis and improvement decisions.

   Evidence Reviewed: Loras Observation and Goal Setting Form.

3. **79.14(3)** The team found evidence that teacher candidates participate in clinical experiences across multiple settings, but a majority are in a single district. The team recommends that the unit evaluate goals related to the Professional Development school and how it relates to exposure to different groups and learning needs.

   Unit Response.

   The unit acknowledges this recommendation and had preliminary discussions about potential action plans. The unit will continue to discuss this recommendation at future meetings and retreats. Elementary Education has begun conversations with principals and hopes to move some courses that are currently connected with Holy Family into Dubuque Community School District. Secondary Education will explore avenues to create a Professional Development School site in a Dubuque Community middle or high school.

   Restructuring and consolidation of DCSD schools is currently being explored, so the unit is keeping this in mind as they consider potential collaboration until decisions have been finalized. Those decisions will be taken to the DCSD School Board in October 2026 with consolidation plans set to begin in 2027-2028. Alli Steepleton and Hilarie Welsh are on the DCSD External Advisory Committee, which will make the recommendation that will go to the School Board in October 2026. Until then, the unit will continue to ensure the candidates meet the State's diversity guidelines and the policy set by the unit for field placements.

Concerns

1. **79.14(6)f** The team did not find consistent tracking of biweekly student teaching supervisor observations. The team requires the unit to devise a mechanism for logging observations.

   Unit Response.

   The unit met with the College's Instructional Designer and has created an eLearn site (Moodle/LMS) specifically for college supervisors. This eLearn site will hold dropboxes for each biweekly observation (as well as a space to hold appropriate handbooks and professional development opportunities). The form (as recommended above) has also been revised to provide more intentional and quantitative feedback, as well as an opportunity to engage in a feedback/improvement loop with the candidate. The dropbox will also allow for communication about deadlines to be more consistent and clear with the dropbox announcement and calendar functions.

   Evidence Reviewed: Loras Observation and Goal Setting Form; College Supervisor eLearn Site.

Sources of Information

Interviews with: Provost, dean of humanities and education/director of teacher education, faculty, field placement coordinator and licensing officer; alumni, registrar's office staff, academic secretary for school of humanities and education

Review of: Institutional Report, program response to the preliminary review, student records, student folders, surveys, course syllabi, handbooks, program opening presentation, assessment system overview

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Teacher Candidate Knowledge Skills and Dispositions Standard

281—79.15(256) *Teacher candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions standard. Teacher candidates are to demonstrate the content, pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn in accordance with the following provisions:*

79.15(1) *Each teacher candidate demonstrates the acquisition of a core of liberal arts knowledge, including English composition, mathematics, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities.*

79.15(2) *Each teacher candidate receives dedicated coursework and demonstrates competency related to the study of human relations, cultural competency and diverse learners, such that the candidate is prepared to work with students from diverse groups as defined in rule 281—79.2(256). The unit shall provide evidence that teacher candidates develop the ability to identify and meet the needs of all learners, including:*

a. *Students from diverse ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.*
b. *Students with disabilities. This will include preparation in developing and implementing individualized education programs and behavioral intervention plans, preparation for educating individuals in the least restrictive environment and identifying that environment, and strategies that address difficult and violent student behavior and improve academic engagement and achievement.*
c. *Students who are struggling with literacy, including those with dyslexia.*
d. *Students who are gifted and talented.*
e. *English learners.*
f. *Students who may be at risk of not succeeding in school. This preparation will include classroom management addressing high-risk behaviors, including behaviors related to substance use disorder.*

79.15(3) *Literacy instruction and practical application include all of the following:*

a. *All teacher candidates demonstrate competency in literacy, including reading theory, knowledge, and evidence-based reading strategies and approaches, and integrating literacy instruction into content areas. The teacher candidate demonstrates competency in responsive teaching and making appropriate accommodations for students who struggle with literacy. Demonstrated competency shall address the needs of all students, including students with disabilities; students who are at risk of academic failure; students who have been identified as gifted and talented or English learners; and students with dyslexia, whether or not such students have been identified as children requiring special education under Iowa Code chapter 256B. Literacy curriculum shall include evidence-based reading instruction, determined by research, including those practices identified within the statewide literacy plan, and institutions ensuring the preparation shall not include instruction or practical application on teaching foundational reading that incorporates the three-cueing system.*
b. *Each teacher candidate in specified endorsement areas listed on the department website (educate.iowa.gov), determined by the department, demonstrates competency in direct and explicit strategies and systematic and sequential approaches to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and text comprehension. Literacy instruction and practical application shall include evidence-based reading instruction and shall not include instruction or practical application on teaching foundational reading that incorporates the three-cueing system.*

79.15(4) *Each teacher candidate demonstrates competency in all of the following professional core curricula:*

a. ***Learner development.*** *The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across*

the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.

b. ***Learning differences.*** *The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.*
c. ***Learning environments.*** *The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning and self-motivation.*
d. ***Content knowledge.*** *The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry and structures of the discipline(s) being taught and creates learning experiences directly related to the Iowa core that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to ensure mastery of the content.*
e. ***Application of content.*** *The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.*
f. ***Assessment.*** *The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress and to guide the teacher's and learners' decision-making.*
g. ***Planning for instruction.*** *The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of the learners and the community context.*
h. ***Instructional strategies.*** *The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.*
i. ***Professional learning and ethical practice.*** *The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate the teacher's practice, particularly the effects of the teacher's choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals and the community) and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.*
j. ***Leadership and collaboration.*** *The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.*
k. ***Technology.*** *The teacher candidate effectively integrates technology into instruction to support student learning.*
l. ***Methods of teaching.*** *The teacher candidate understands and uses methods of teaching that have an emphasis on the subject and grade-level endorsement desired*

79.15(5) *Each teacher candidate must complete a 30-semester-hour teaching major that minimally includes the requirements for at least one of the basic endorsement areas, special education teaching endorsements or secondary level occupational endorsements. Additionally, each elementary teacher candidate must also complete a field of specialization in a single discipline or a formal interdisciplinary program of at least 12 semester hours. Each teacher candidate is to meet all requirements established by the BOEE for any endorsement for which the teacher candidate is recommended.*

Initial Team Findings - Teacher Candidate Knowledge Skills and Dispositions

Strengths

- The team commends Loras for its strong focus on aligning coursework with the Science of Reading. Loras used the Iowa Literacy Workbook peer review process to adapt curricula and aligned syllabi with International Dyslexia Association (IDA) standards. Faculty are continuously updating the program, reflecting on Foundations of Reading test data to make improvements.
- The team recognizes recent program changes that ensure all elementary education majors will get reading endorsement upon program completion at Loras.

Recommendations

1. **79.15** Artifacts were found to support introduction of concepts in this standard. The team recommends a deeper analysis in particular areas to increase tools and strategies to ensure best practices and strong preparation in the following areas:
    - **79.15(2)b** A review of cooperating teacher survey data indicates concerns regarding the preparation of candidates to support students with disabilities, specifically developing and implementing individualized education plans. The unit has recognized this as an area of growth. The team recommends that the unit continue to implement the changes to ensure adequate preparation.
    - **79.15(2)c** Elementary candidates are well prepared to support students who struggle with literacy, including those with dyslexia. The team recommends analysis of curricula for secondary students with the goal of moving beyond introductory level content.
    - **79.15(2)d** Curricula to support students who are gifted and talented.
    - **79.15(4)c** After interviews with students and alumni survey review, the team recommends explicit integration of classroom management strategies with intentional opportunities for candidates to demonstrate skill.
    - **79.15(4)f** Specifically secondary candidates in relation to the ability to use multiple methods of assessment for decision-making.

Unit Response.

79.15(2)b–As described in 79.13(1), the unit has identified curriculum and assessment improvements in the areas of supporting students with disabilities, specifically in the development of Individualized Education Programs. Students will be introduced to and assessed in the beginning phase of the program (EDU 205) and then again prior to student teaching during their Differentiated Instruction course. Data from these assessments is included on the assessment meeting cycle as the unit continues to improve. While EDU 205 curriculum changes began in AY 24-25 when we welcomed two new faculty experts in special education, the unit has made the decision to reassign the Differentiated Instruction course to also be taught by a full-time faculty member rather than an adjunct to assure that curricular needs in this area are addressed with fidelity.

79.15(2)c–The literacy coordinator plans to collaborate with the instructor of the secondary Reading in the Content Areas course to provide resources and support in advancing the curriculum related to supporting students who struggle with reading, specifically dyslexia.

79.15(2)d–Both levels (elementary and secondary) of the Differentiated Instruction Course (EDU 340 and EDU 339) have included students identified as gifted and talented more intentionally in each course.

Evidence Reviewed: EDU 339 syllabus (Secondary Differentiated Instruction); EDU 340 (Elementary Differentiated Instruction).

79.15(4)c–The unit has decided to include a classroom management tab in the Level 1 portfolio for students to intentionally gather and reflect on management strategies and examples learned throughout the program. This will help students connect these issues across content-area curriculum and instruction coursework and field experiences. This tab will also include a classroom management philosophy that they will write in Differentiated Instruction.

Evidence Reviewed: EDU 339 syllabus (Secondary Differentiated Instruction); EDU 340 (Elementary Differentiated Instruction).

79.15(4)f–The Secondary Education faculty have brainstormed strategies to integrate into EDU 350, 339, and 357. They include:

- Develop data sets for students to analyze.
- Develop Case Studies that present complex student profiles that include quiz scores, writing samples, behavior logs, attendance data, and standardized test scores. The assignment will require students to identify discrepancies (e.g., high oral ability, low written scores) and decide instructional next steps.
- Create an Assessment Audit Assignment where candidates examine how diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments are used in real classrooms.
- Identify field or classroom opportunities prior to student teaching for students to participate in Collaborative Learning Communities that focus on data-driven decision making.

2. **79.15(4)** The team recommends development of a curriculum map to align InTASC standards with courses, syllabi and assessment tools that are reliable and valid. This process would bring clarity to how the unit is ensuring that candidates meet the InTASC standards, particularly 79.15(4)g and h. The unit may consider using the literacy curriculum map as a guide.

   Unit Response.

   The unit created a curriculum map to align InTASC standards, using the literacy curriculum map as a guide as suggested. This map is also located in the Educator Preparation Program Guidebook in the “program curriculum” tab so that all faculty have easy access to this curriculum map.

   Evidence Reviewed: Curriculum & Assessment Map; Educator Preparation Program Guidebook.

3. **79.15(3) a-b** After review of the literacy curricula, the team recommends the unit continue with the planned changes described in the literacy workbook to include the reading endorsement for all elementary majors. This will allow for the renewed focus on some areas of weakness such as content area reading and responsive teaching practices. The unit is recommended to take note of reviewer feedback in the literacy workbook and implement changes in alignment with the examination of data from Foundations of Reading test (FORT) as required by the provisions set by the Iowa State Board of Education in the January 2026 meeting.

   Unit Response.

   The unit plans to continue the changes as noted in the recommendation and will use reviewer feedback as a source of data for curriculum changes.

Concerns

1. **79.15(2)b** The unit recognized that preparation needs to be adapted so that secondary candidates are prepared to develop and implement behavior intervention plans. The team requires the unit to modify coursework accordingly.

   Unit Response.

   The unit has included Behavior Intervention Plan design and implementation in Foundations of Inclusive Education (EDU 205). Additionally, the unit has modified the secondary Differentiated Instruction course (EDU 339) to include Behavior Intervention Plans. The unit has three full-time faculty employed with deep experiences in special education and BIP planning and implementation who will serve as resources to the instructors of the EDU 339 course. Finally, the unit has developed a KSD fidelity checklist for inclusion of content within the KSD standards, including content related to Behavior Intervention Plans. This will ensure that faculty are intentionally examining course content annually for these requirements.

   Evidence Reviewed: EDU 339 syllabus (Secondary Differentiated Instruction); EDU 205 Syllabus (Foundations of Inclusive Education); KSD Fidelity Checklist Tab located at the bottom of curriculum map.

2. **79.15(2)f** Based on its review of preliminary responses, syllabi, and student interviews, the team found insufficient evidence that candidates are prepared to address behaviors related to substance abuse and therefore requires the unit to ensure such preparation.

   Unit Response.

   The unit has now included content related to address behaviors related to substance abuse in the capstone EDU 490 course. The unit has collaborated with Loras Assistant Professor in Counselor Education Dr. Tracy Lipinski to address the concern related to substance abuse. Beginning fall 2026, Dr. Lipinski will be a regular guest speaker in EDU 490-Capstone to address behaviors related to substance abuse. Dr. Lipinski is a former elementary school teacher, school counselor, and expert in this content. Her credentials are documented in the CV link below.

   Evidence Reviewed: EDU 490 schedule; CV (credentials).

Sources of Information

Interviews with: Dean of humanities and education/director of teacher education, faculty, field placement coordinator and licensing officer, alumni, academic secretary for school of humanities and education

Review of: Institutional Report, program response to the preliminary review, handbooks, course syllabi, assessment system overview, alumni surveys, cooperating teacher surveys, student surveys

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Professional School Counseling: Division 5 Standards

281—79.18(256) Purpose. *This division addresses preparation of an individual seeking a license based on school-centered preparation for employment as one of the following: school guidance counselor, school audiologist, school psychologist, school social worker, speech-language pathologist or supervisor of special education (282—Chapter 27 contains more information regarding licenses for service other than as a teacher).*

281—79.19(256) Clinical practice standard. *The unit and its school, AEA and facility partners will provide clinical experiences that assist candidates in becoming successful practitioners in accordance with the following provisions.*

79.19(1) *The unit ensures that clinical experiences occurring in all locations are well sequenced, purposeful, supervised by appropriately qualified personnel, monitored by the unit and integrated into Education unit standards. These expectations are shared with candidates, supervisors and cooperating professional educators.*

79.19(2) *Cooperating professional educators and college/university supervisors share responsibility for evaluating the candidate's achievement of unit standards. Clinical experiences are structured to have multiple performance-based assessments at key points within the program to demonstrate the candidate's attainment of unit standards.*

79.19(3) *Clinical experiences include all of the following criteria:*

- *a. Take place in the context of providing high-quality instructional programs for students in a state-approved school, agency or educational facility;*
- *b. Take place in educational settings that include diverse populations and students of different age groups;*
- *c. Provide opportunities for candidates to observe and be observed by others and to engage in discussion and reflection on clinical practice;*
- *d. Include minimum expectations and responsibilities for cooperating professional educators, school districts, accredited nonpublic schools or AEAs and for higher education supervising faculty members;*
- *e. Include prescribed minimum expectations for involvement of candidates in relevant responsibilities directed toward the work for which they are preparing;*
- *f. Involve candidates in communication and interaction with parents or guardians, community members, faculty and staff and cooperating professional educators in the school.*

79.19(4) *The institution annually delivers one or more workshops for cooperating professional educators to define the objectives of the field experience, review the responsibilities of the cooperating professional educators, build skills in coaching and mentoring and provide the cooperating professional educators other information and assistance the institution deems necessary. Each workshop incorporates feedback from participants and utilizes appropriate delivery strategies.*

79.19(5) *The institution shall enter into a written contract with the cooperating school districts that provide field experiences for candidates.*

281—79.20(256) Candidate knowledge, skills and dispositions standard. *Candidates will demonstrate the content knowledge and the pedagogical and professional knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to help all students learn in accordance with the following provisions:*

79.20(1) *Each professional educator program will define program standards (aligned with current national standards) and embed them in coursework and clinical experiences at a level appropriate for a novice professional educator.*

79.20(2) *Each candidate will demonstrate, within specific coursework and clinical experiences related to the study of human relations, cultural competency and diverse learners, that the candidate is prepared to work with students from diverse groups as defined in rule 281—79.2(256). The unit shall provide evidence that candidates have developed the ability to meet the needs of all learners, including:*

- *a. Students from diverse ethnic, racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.*

b. Students with disabilities. This will include preparation in developing and implementing individualized education programs and behavioral intervention plans, preparation for educating individuals in the least restrictive environment and identifying that environment, and strategies that address difficult and violent student behavior and improve academic engagement and achievement.
c. Students who are struggling with literacy, including those with dyslexia.
d. Students who are gifted and talented.
e. English learners.
f. Students who may be at risk of not succeeding in school. This preparation will include classroom management addressing high-risk behaviors, including behaviors related to substance use disorder.

Initial Team Findings – Professional School Counseling

Strengths

- Candidates reported a strong sense of community, supportive leadership, accessible faculty and practical, real-world learning experiences.
- Adjunct faculty working in the PSC program report that the institution provides excellent opportunities for candidates and that they are well supported with access to professional development and reliable support from the director which includes strong syllabi and frequent communication.
- Dr. Tuescher is to be commended for her exceptional leadership as Program Director, maintaining clear and consistent communication of program standards and outcomes while providing strong support to both students and faculty. Many comments were recorded about her such as, “Dr. T is amazing. Probably single handedly the best instructor I had in my 6 years of postsecondary education. She takes the time to get to know each and every student and helps them with the u[t]most care and professionalism.”

Recommendations

1. **79.10(5)** The site team notes that, now that the programs are more established, the institution may consider collaboration between the professional school counseling program and the mental health components of the program to better align experiences for students. Such collaboration could provide both financial benefits and enhanced educational opportunities for students. While this review may ultimately support maintaining the programs as separate entities, the site team believes there may be value in revisiting this topic given the programs’ current level of development.

   Unit Response.

   The program appreciates the site team’s recommendation to explore potential collaboration between the Professional School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs. In response, the School Counseling Program Director met with Loras College administration and Clinical Mental Health Counseling faculty to examine opportunities for integrating elements of the shared core curriculum. The purpose of these discussions was to enhance educational opportunities for students while also identifying ways to reduce program operational costs. As part of this effort, the core courses under consideration for shared delivery will be taught primarily by a doctoral-level faculty member with extensive experience in school counseling, ensuring that course content remains highly relevant to the preparation of Professional School Counselors. Collaborative meetings were held in spring 2026 to examine syllabi and shared resources. Core curriculum integration will begin fall 2026.

2. **79.13(4)** Through interviews and review of the institutional report, portfolio guidelines and practicum handbook, the team found that because other elements are measured as part of the data collection process, the alignment of standards to artifacts can be clearer. The team recommends the assessment system is revised to include measurable objectives and clarify within artifacts how specific components are directly aligned to standards. It is recommended that the portfolio reflection include more opportunities for direct links to the standards.

   Unit Response.

   In response to the team’s recommendation, the assessment system has been revised to provide clearer and more explicit alignment between portfolio artifacts and the BOEE Professional School Counselor Standards. The updated Documentation and Reflection Sheet now requires

candidates to identify measurable objectives for each artifact, specify the exact standards addressed, and explicitly explain how individual artifact components demonstrate alignment to those standards. Additionally, the reflection section has been strengthened to include direct opportunities for candidates to connect their professional learning and demonstrated competencies back to specific standards. These revisions enhance transparency within the assessment process and provide clearer evidence of candidate proficiency and standards mastery.

Evidence Reviewed: Documentation and Reflection Sheet.

3. **79.19(1)** The site team found through interviews and review of curriculum that candidates must wait until later in their program for exposure to school counseling field experiences. It is recommended that the program provide earlier exposure to clinical settings so candidates can make more informed decisions about program continuation and determine earlier whether the career is an appropriate fit.

   Unit Response.

   While the review team recommends earlier exposure to school counseling field experiences, the program has determined that implementing this change is not feasible or advisable at this time. The current program sequence intentionally requires candidates to complete foundational coursework in counseling theory, ethics, professional identity, and legal considerations before entering clinical settings. This preparation is essential for working with vulnerable populations and managing sensitive or confidential information appropriately.

   Candidates already enter field experiences relatively early in the program, after their first two semesters, allowing adequate opportunity to assess their fit with the profession. Additionally, as graduate students, candidates apply with an informed understanding of the school counseling profession and program expectations through the admissions process and discussions with the Program Director.

   Practical constraints also limit earlier exposure. Access to school counseling environments requires formal agreements, clearances, and strict adherence to student privacy protections, which are designed for officially placed practicum or internship students.

   For these reasons, including necessary academic preparation, ethical and confidentiality considerations, the already early timing of field experiences, informed admissions processes, and logistical constraints, the program will maintain its current sequencing

Concerns

1. **PSC 79.10(6)e** Through review of the institutional report, preliminary response and interviews, the team did not find resources and support necessary to sustain the work of the Professional School Counseling program. The unit is required to evaluate and align the administrative duties of the program, considering how the work is compensated and who is best to do it.

   Unit Response.

   The Educator Preparation unit has taken deliberate steps to strengthen the administrative infrastructure and support available to the Professional School Counseling Program in response to the site team's recommendation regarding program sustainability and the alignment of administrative responsibilities.

   Since the accreditation visit, the institution has implemented several organizational changes designed to distribute administrative responsibilities more effectively and provide greater operational support. First, we have intentionally developed job descriptions for every role in the Teacher Preparation Program. This structure and alignment will ensure appropriate expectations,

completion of tasks and appropriate use of resources. In tandem with this work, we have intentionally separated the Director of Teacher Education from the Director of Educator Preparation. While the same person currently fills both roles, the separation of these positions works to further support all programs that exist within Educator Preparation. Further, this position enhances coordination, facilitates strategic planning, and ensures consistent administrative support for program operations, assessment, and accreditation activities.

Second, administrative support within the Educator Preparation unit has been expanded. The unit continues to share an Administrative Assistant across programs, and the institution has provided support for a student worker for 10-15 hours each semester. This additional support will allow the Administrative Assistant to hand off less complex tasks like scanning, filing and collecting the mail to the student worker. By extension, the Administrative Assistant will have additional time to focus on the needs of the Educator Preparation program and the more detailed and complex needs they often have.

Finally, responsibility for the assessment system has been restructured to create a more sustainable model. Oversight of the assessment system is now shared between the Teacher Education Program and the Professional School Counseling Program, with dedicated administrative support assisting in the management of assessment processes, data collection, reporting and continuous improvement activities. This collaborative approach strengthens institutional capacity while ensuring that assessment responsibilities are distributed across the Educator Preparation unit rather than residing primarily within a single program.

Collectively, these changes demonstrate the institution's commitment to addressing the team's recommendation by strengthening leadership, increasing administrative support, and distributing key responsibilities across the Educator Preparation unit. These improvements provide a more sustainable framework for supporting the ongoing quality, assessment, and continuous improvement efforts of the Professional School Counseling Program.

2. **79.19(3)** During the site visit process, the Professional School Counseling program was working to strengthen the practicum student log to more accurately document the diverse populations in 79.20(2) with whom candidates interact in order to strengthen evidence that clinical experience take place in educational settings that include diverse populations. The team requires, along with tracking measures, the unit devise policies and communication structures to inform Loras practicum expectations. At the one year follow-up, review of these changes will be checked for sustainability.

Unit Response.

In response to the team’s recommendation, the Loras School Counseling Program has developed and implemented a formal practicum and internship policy that clearly defines placement expectations and establishes communication structures to ensure candidates and cooperating supervisors understand program requirements. The policy outlines expectations for candidate exposure to grade levels across the K–12 continuum and diverse student populations, while documenting tracking and monitoring procedures through program placement approval and clinical hour review processes. Expectations are communicated through program documents, syllabi, the Internship Manual, candidate orientation materials and ongoing collaboration among program faculty, candidates and cooperating supervisors. These measures provide both the formal policy framework and consistent communication structures required to support candidate preparation and alignment with accreditation expectations.

Evidence Reviewed: Policy: Practicum and Internship Grade-Level and Diverse Experiences Exposure.

Sources of Information

Interviews with: Vice president/dean for academic affairs, department chair, dean of humanities and education/director of teacher education, alumni, students, director of teacher education, director and professor of the school counseling program

Review of: Institutional Report, program response to the Preliminary Review, student records, surveys, course syllabi, handbooks, program opening presentation, assessment system overview