Educational Leadership Handbook

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership (Ed.D.)

WEST COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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Vision

The Educational Leadership program has adopted the National Educational Leadership Program (NELP) standards as the framework of the knowledge and skills for its graduates. The NELP standards for district-level leadership preparation address the most critical knowledge and skills areas for beginning educational leaders at the district level. The standards align to national leadership practice standards and are supported by research on effective leadership practice and input from key stakeholder communities.

Texas Administrative Code Educators' Code of Ethics

Faculty, candidates, and staff must adhere to the Educators' Code of Ethics as found in 19 TAC §247.2 of the Texas Administrative Code. These standards cover 1) professional ethical conduct, practices, and performance, 2) ethical conduct toward professional colleagues, and 3) ethical conduct toward students. All faculty, candidates, and staff must understand, acknowledge, and adhere to the Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators.

Program Code of Ethics

The Educational Leadership Department, its faculty, and its doctoral candidates adhere to the University Code of Conduct and the State of Texas licensure laws and regulations. The program has a professional responsibility to ensure that all candidates display ethical, professional, and personal behaviors that comply with these guidelines. Candidates are strongly encouraged to review, understand, and consult the website for details related to these guidelines: **Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators**

Assumptions

Preparation programs are the heart of educational leaders' pre-professional growth and professional advancement. The following assumptions are embedded within the NELP district-level leadership preparation standards:

1. Improving student learning is the central responsibility of district-level leadership. Because district-level leaders must support all learners to achieve at high levels, the standards purposefully do not name specific sub-groups of students. Strong preparation of district-level leaders includes attention to learning and the needs of all student sub-groups as well as individual students.

2. The standards represent the fundamental knowledge, skills, and commitments intrinsic to district-level leadership that supports improved student learning.

3. The standards conceptually apply to a range of district-level leadership positions. They are intended to define what an entry-level district-level administrator should know and be able to do. While specific content and application details will vary depending upon the leadership role, the fundamental, enduring tenets are the same.

4. Each standard begins with the stem, "Candidates who successfully complete a district-level educational leadership preparation program understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to …" in order to emphasize three things: (1) the importance of beginning-level leaders gaining the knowledge, skills, and commitments to both understand and have the capacity to undertake the leadership

described in each of the standards; (2) the importance of leadership work to both the current and future experiences of the students and educational staff who leaders influence; and (3) the importance of attending to both the education and well-being of students and adults.

5. While there is a purposeful emphasis on leading to support student learning, an understanding and acceptance of district-level leaders' responsibility for managing the resources and operations of the district are also embedded.

6. The practice of district-level leadership is well-established as a research-based body of knowledge. This research base helps inform the preparation of district-level leaders.

7. The preparation of district-level leaders requires overt connections and bridging experiences between research and practice.

8. The preparation of district-level leaders requires comprehensive practice in, and feedback from, the field over an extended period of time.

9. District-level leadership preparation programs must provide ongoing experiences for candidates to examine, refine, and strengthen the ethical platform that guides their decisions—especially during difficult times.

10. While district-level leadership preparation programs are ultimately an institutional responsibility, the strength of the design, delivery, and effectiveness of these programs will be significantly enhanced by participation and feedback from PK-12 institutions.

11. Performance-based measures are most effective in evaluating candidate outcomes.

Student Learning Outcomes

The faculty of the Educational Leadership program have identified 7 student (candidate) learning outcomes aligned to NELP standards which define the marketable knowledge and skills of an entry-level district leader. Those SLO's are:

SLO #1

A graduate will understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to collaboratively lead, design, and implement a district mission, vision, and process for continuous improvement that reflects a core set of values and priorities that include data use, technology, values, equity, diversity, digital citizenship, and community.

SLO #2

A graduate will understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and demonstrate the capacity to advocate for ethical decisions and cultivate professional norms and culture.

SLO #3

A graduate will understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop and maintain a supportive, equitable, culturally responsive, and inclusive district culture.

SLO #4

A graduate will understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to evaluate, design, cultivate, and implement coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, data systems, supports, assessment, and instructional leadership.

SLO #5

A graduate will understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to understand and engage families, communities, and other constituents in the work of schools and the district and to advocate for district, student, and community needs.

SLO #6

A graduate will understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to develop, monitor, evaluate, and manage data-informed and equitable district systems for operations, resources, technology, and human capital management.

SLO #7

A graduate will understand and demonstrate the capacity to promote the current and future success and well-being of each student and adult by applying the knowledge, skills, and commitments necessary to cultivate relationships, lead collaborative decision making and governance, and represent and advocate for district needs in broader policy conversations.

Admissions

- A bachelor's degree from a regionally accredited institution. The McAda Graduate School must receive an official transcript, including one on which a bachelor's degree is posted, directly from each institution the applicant has attended.
- A cumulative undergraduate GPA of at least 3.0 from the student's graduating institution.
- An undergraduate background judged by the graduate faculty of the student's intended major to be adequate for success in the student's intended major.

The following are the application criteria and requirements for admission to the Educational Leadership (Ed.D.) doctoral program:

- Applicants must hold at least a Master's degree in Education Administration/Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction, or other related field in education.

- All applicants are required to complete and submit the following items to the Office of Graduate Admissions:
    - Graduate application and processing fee ($50 for domestic and international students)

    - Official transcripts from all higher education institutions attended by the applicant
    - Official TOEFL, IELTS, ITEP, or PTE scores (international students only)
    - Complete program application form
    - Curriculum Vitae
    - Three reference letters (One letter should be from a college or university professor.)
    - 1) a letter of aspiration including a discussion of past experiences that led the applicant to graduate study; and 2) a response to a case study where candidates respond to a leadership dilemma in a way that allows the program administration to evaluate critical writing and thinking skills required in the program.

- Applicants will be required to complete an admissions interview.

A committee of two faculty members will review all applicant submissions and interview scores to determine applicant admission to the program. The committee will use applicant information to assess the applicant's communication skills, professional knowledge, and level of motivation as indicators of student readiness. Candidates are selected for admission as a cohort. All students will be considered full-time students, as they will take two courses per semester/session (6 Student Credit Hours (SCH)) to stay on track with their cohort.

Credit earned at another institution is not automatically accepted, but in general, a maximum of 6 semester hours of approved graduate work completed at another accredited graduate school may be accepted for credit.

The graduate coordinator, dean of the college, and Dean of the McAda Graduate School may make exceptions. Only courses with a grade of B or better are acceptable for transfer. In such cases, however, credits accepted in transfer shall not exceed 12 hours. The graduate student must also secure the approval of the appropriate graduate coordinator at Midwestern State University prior to registration for any course(s) taken at another institution. Correspondence courses and military educational experience (American Council on Education (ACE) credit) do not receive graduate credit.

Curriculum and Program Design

The Ed.D. program design is rooted in the guiding principles of the Carnegie Project on the Education Doctorate (CPED). The vision of a CPED professional doctorate in education is one that prepares educators for the application of appropriate and specific practices, the generation of new knowledge, and for the stewardship of the profession.

The course and culminating capstone experiences build upon identified CPED design concepts, which include:

Scholarly Practitioner: Scholarly Practitioners blend practical wisdom with professional skills and knowledge to name, frame, and solve problems of practice. They use practical research and applied theories as tools for change because they understand the importance of equity and social justice. They disseminate their work in multiple ways, and they have an obligation to resolve problems of practice by collaborating with key stakeholders, including the university, the educational institution, the community, and individuals.

Signature Pedagogy: Signature Pedagogy is the pervasive set of practices used to prepare scholarly practitioners for all aspects of their professional work: "to think, to perform, and to act with integrity"

(Shulman, 2005, p.52). Signature pedagogy includes three dimensions, as articulated by Lee Shulman (2005):

- Teaching is deliberate, pervasive and persistent. It challenges assumptions, engages in action, and requires ongoing assessment and accountability.

- Teaching and learning are grounded in theory, research, and in problems of practice. It leads to habits of mind, hand, and heart that can and will be applied to authentic professional settings.

- Teaching helps students develop a critical and professional stance with a moral and ethical imperative for equity and social justice.

Inquiry as Practice: Inquiry as Practice is the process of posing significant questions that focus on complex problems of practice. By using various research, theories, and professional wisdom, scholarly practitioners design innovative solutions to address the problems of practice. At the center of Inquiry of Practice is the ability to use data to understand the effects of innovation. As such, Inquiry of Practice requires the ability to gather, organize, judge, aggregate, and analyze situations, literature, and data with a critical lens.

Laboratories of Practice: Laboratories of Practice are settings where theory and practice inform and enrich each other. They address complex problems of practice where ideas—formed by the intersection of theory, inquiry, and practice—can be implemented, measured, and analyzed for the impact made. Laboratories of Practice facilitate transformative and generative learning that is measured by the development of scholarly expertise and implementation of practice.

Dissertation in Practice: The Dissertation in Practice is a scholarly endeavor that impacts a complex problem of practice.

Problem of Practice: A Problem of Practice is a persistent, contextualized, and specific issue embedded in the work of a professional practitioner, the addressing of which has the potential to result in improved understanding, experience, and outcomes.

Mentoring and Advising: Mentoring and Advising in Ed.D. programs should be guided by:

- Equity and justice that fosters responsive mentoring regardless of age, ability, ethnicity, culture, race, religion, gender, or identity;
- Mutual respect that ensures candidates, advisers, and mentors are respected for their practical knowledge and understanding of research and inquiry; each capable of providing guidance and support to advance everyone's ability to apply mutually constructed knowledge across a variety of practical and theoretical contexts;
- Dynamic learning that provides open communication, critical friendships, and peer-to-peer support with reciprocal interactions and responsibilities that form a community of learners inclusive of adviser, mentor, and peer relationships;
- Flexibility that allows mentoring/advising to occur by all program faculty, in candidates' work contexts, and in their available time;
- Intellectual space that supports candidates' professional passions and needs by expanding their use of scholarship, inquiry, professional knowledge, and technology (when appropriate) to address problems;
- Supportive and safe learning environments that are developmental, directed, growth-oriented, team-oriented and scaffolded so candidates are mentored/advised from the beginning of to the end of their programs while demonstrating an understanding of the needs of the adult learner;

- Cohort and Individualized attention that centralizes candidates' needs and problems of practice in learning while valuing the practitioner candidate as unique;
- Rigorous practices that set high expectations through a shared sense of responsibility and accountability and offer challenges for candidates to conduct inquiry as practice aimed at improvement and the development of new knowledge;
- Integration that aligns with adult learner needs while reflecting a program's values, norms, and the CPED Framework.

Midwestern State University – Ed.D. Educational Leadership Course Rotation Spring 2021 Cohort				
Term	***Year One*** ***18 Units***	***Year Two*** ***18 Units***	***Year Three*** ***12 Units (+3 optional)***	***Year Four*** ***6 Units***
Fall	EDLE 6003 District Level Leadership* *DIP: Actionable Problems of Practice* EDLE 6083 Evidence Informed Perspectives on Practice *DIP: Reviewing the Literature*	*EDLE 6103* Leading through Crisis *EDLE 6143* Theories of Leadership, Administration, and Organizational Management *DIP: Driver Diagrams and a Theory of Improvement*	*EDLE 6063* Advanced Educational Law *EDLE 6023* Program Evaluation *DIP: Developing Improvement Measures*	*EDLE 6203* Dissertation *DIP: Testing the theory of change and final write up*
Spring	EDLE 6073 Data-based Decision Making *EDLE 6113* Educational Accountability and Student Assessment	*EDLE 6153* District Financial Leadership * *EDLE 6123* Qualitative Decision Analysis	*EDLE 6133* Writing and Research Design for Educational Leadership *Capstone Proposal and Hearing* *EDLE 6053* Superintendent Practicum* (Optional- for Superintendent Certification students only)	*EDLE 6203* Dissertation *DIP: Testing the theory of change and final write up*
Summer	*EDLE 6013* Politics and Community Relations* EDLE 6093 Cultural Foundations in Educational Leadership *DIP: Social Justice Context*	*EDLE 6043* Understanding teachers and teaching.* *EDLE 6033* School Organization and Management*	*EDLE 6203* Dissertation *DIP: Testing the theory of change and final write up*	

*****Denotes core class for superintendent certificate

Course Descriptions

EDLE 6003 District Level Leadership - Examination of the direction and issues of a school district and the impact of various levels of district leadership.

EDLE 6013 Politics and Community Relations - This course is an in-depth study of political and community relations issues faced by the public school superintendent. Communications, partnerships, consensus-building, media relations, working with diverse groups, and superintendent-board working relationships will be studied.

EDLE 6023 Program Evaluation - This course will focus on evaluating district programs designed to improve student achievement and well-being. There will also be an emphasis on the evaluation of professional learning from multiple sources to make judgments about its efficacy.

EDLE 6033 School Organization and Management - This course will prepare superintendent candidates to apply principles of effective leadership and management in relation to district budgeting, facilities, finances, and technology usage. Other topics will be organizational change, group processes, decision-making, and personal time management.

EDLE 6043 Understanding Teachers & Teaching - This course focuses on the improvement of teachers based upon performance observation, professional learning communities, and data-driven decision making from a district wide perspective utilizing laboratories of practice and the opportunity to mentor new school leaders.

EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum - Superintendent candidate will work closely with the mentor superintendent, concentrating on intensive study in one or more standard. The Texas State Superintendent's Exam will be reviewed and 160 practicum hours will be completed.

EDLE 6063 Advanced Education Law - Focuses on legal and policy issues of particular concern to top-level educational policymakers and administrators. Topics include such complex issues as the role of the state in education, parental rights, school choice and vouchers, privatization, religion on campus, and legal liability for constitutional wrongs.

EDLE 6073 Data-Based Decision Making - Objective of this course is to prepare educational leaders to understand how to use data to solve problems in schools. Data sets utilized emerge from school and district level problems. The tools presented are oriented toward understanding what the data means, how to properly evaluate it and also present the data in a usable format. The course includes a section of presenting complex information to a broader, community-based audience, rather than an academic audience.

EDLE 6083 Evidence Informed Perspectives on Practice - An introduction to the problems of practice, roles of scholarly practitioners, inquiry in the field, and the culminating experience of the Dissertation in Practice.

EDLE 6093 Cultural Foundations in Educational Leadership - Doctoral seminar on issues of policy, structures and practices in educational leadership specific to cultural diversity in a P-12 setting. Explores the cause and consequences of inequities in society and in P-12 specifically and the effect on educator/student and family relationships and academic success.

EDLE 6103 Leading through Crisis - This course focuses on methods for crisis leadership. The topic will flex to reflect current societal and educational issues.

EDLE 6113 Educational Accountability and Student Assessment - The course provides students an in-depth understanding of large-scale assessment and educational accountability. An understanding of test scores and standards for the development and use of educational and psychological tests will provide a foundation for examining and evaluating large-scale assessment practices today. Applied measurement and assessment issues are examined with regard to topics such as standards-based reform, annual yearly progress, identification of students at-risk, and program effectiveness.

EDLE 6123 Qualitative Decision Analysis - Course focuses on the tools of qualitative research including problem identification, analysis, and interpretation of information relevant to the problem. However, it will be in the context for formal and informal inquiry process for practitioners where questions are answered from multiple perspectives.

EDLE 6133 Writing and Research Design for Educational Leadership - Development of a proposal for research in the field of educational leadership. Students are guided in conceptualizing and designing a study and will draft a paper that includes a rationale, a literature review, and a description of proposed research design and methods.

EDLE 6143 Theories of Leadership, Administration, and Organizational Management - Study of major theories of organizational development and change that provide foundations for educational administration and leadership. Connections are made among theory, research and practice, and a contemporary inquiry in educational administration. Examines the impact of positivism, subjectivism and functionalism and their critics on recent research on school organization and administration.

EDLE 6153 District Financial Leadership - This course provides an in-depth examination of public-school finances. Some topics to be examined include: reading account ledgers, developing budgets, income paths, and leading bond proposals, among others.

EDLE 6203 Dissertation - To be scheduled only with consent of department. Nine hours credit required. No credit assigned until dissertation has been completed and filed with the graduate school. Doctoral students must maintain continuous enrollment in this course subsequent to passing qualifying examination for admission to candidacy.

Assessment Plan

The West College of Education at Midwestern State University is currently accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The Ed.D. program in educational leadership will undergo a Specialized Professional Association (SPA) accreditation process through CAEP using the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards at least three years before the subsequent CAEP renewal cycle. The NELP standards were developed by a committee comprised of essential stakeholder communities from across the country. These preparation standards, formerly known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC standards), have been renamed the National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) standards and will be used to guide program design, accreditation review, and state program approval.

Data collected for both Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) and National Educational Leadership Preparation (NELP) accreditation will include key assessments created to track candidates' level of meeting state and national educational leadership standards. Additionally, upon completion of the third year from the program inception, the university will post the data as required regarding the *Characteristics of Texas Doctoral Programs*. This data, along with continuously collected CAEP/NELP data, is used for program evaluation and continuous improvement. Each year the program will

use the collected data as a part of the West College of Education's Continuous Improvement Plan. This includes collaboratively examining data and using it to make program decisions.

CAEP STANDARDS

CAEP requires evidence collected and analyzed based upon the following advanced standards:

Candidate Knowledge, Skills, and Professional Dispositions. A.1.1 Candidates for advanced preparation demonstrate their proficiencies to understand and apply knowledge and skills appropriate to their professional field of specialization so that learning and development opportunities for all P-12 are enhanced through:

- Applications of data literacy;
- Use of research and understanding of qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed methods research methodologies:
- Employment of data analysis and evidence to develop supportive school environments;
- Leading and/or participating in collaborative activities with others such as peers, colleagues, teachers, administrators, community organizations, and parents;
- Supporting appropriate applications of technology for their field of specialization; and
- Application of professional dispositions, laws and policies, codes of ethics, and professional standards appropriate to their field of specialization.

Professional Responsibilities. A.1.2 Providers ensure that advanced program completers have opportunities to learn and apply specialized content and discipline knowledge contained in approved state and/or national discipline-specific standards.

Clinical Experiences. A.2.2 The provider works with partners to design varied and developmental clinical settings that allow opportunities for candidates to practice applications of content knowledge and skills that the courses and other experiences of the advanced preparation emphasize. The opportunities lead to appropriate culminating experiences in which candidates *demonstrate* their proficiencies, through problem-based tasks or research (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, action) that are characteristic of their professional specialization as detailed in component in each of these areas.

- Applications of data literacy;
- Use of research and understanding of qualitative, quantitative and/or mixed methods research methodologies;
- Employment of data analysis and evidence to develop supportive school environments;
- Leading and/or participating in collaborative activities with others such as peers, colleagues, teachers, administrators, community organizations, and parents;
- Supporting appropriate applications of technology for their field of specialization; and
- Application of professional dispositions, laws and policies, codes of ethics and professional standards appropriate to their field of specialization.

Admission of Diverse Candidates who Meet Employment Needs. A.3.1 The provider sets goals and monitors progress for admission and support of high-quality advanced program candidates from a broad range of backgrounds and diverse populations to accomplish their mission. The admitted pool of candidates reflects the diversity of America's teacher pool and, over time, should reflect the diversity of P-12 students.

The provider demonstrates efforts to know and address community, state, national, regional, or local needs for school and district staff prepared in advanced fields.

Candidates Demonstrate Academic Achievement and Ability to Complete Preparation Successfully. A.3.2 The provider sets admissions requirements for academic achievement, including CAEP minimum criteria, the state's minimum criteria, or graduate school minimum criteria, whichever is highest, and gathers data to monitor candidates from admission to completion. The provider determines additional criteria intended to ensure that candidates have, or develop, abilities to complete the program successfully and arranges appropriate support and counseling for candidates whose progress falls behind.

Selectivity during Preparation. A.3.3 The provider creates criteria for program progression and uses disaggregated data to monitor candidates' advancement from admissions through completion.

Selection at Completion. A.3.4 Before the provider recommends any advanced program candidate for completion, it documents that the candidate has reached a high standard for content knowledge in the field of specialization, data literacy and research-driven decision making, effective use of collaborative skills, applications of technology, and applications of dispositions, laws, codes of ethics and professional standards appropriate for the field of specialization.

Satisfaction of Employers. A.4.1. The provider demonstrates that employers are satisfied with completers' preparation and that completers reach employment milestones such as promotion and retention.

Satisfaction of Completers. A.4.2 The provider demonstrates that advanced program completers perceive their preparation as relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job, and that the preparation was effective.

The program operates a quality assurance system to collect and analyze data based upon the following CAEP standards:

Quality and Strategic Evaluation. A.5.1 The provider's quality assurance system is comprised of multiple measures that can monitor advanced program candidate progress, advanced completer achievements, and provider operational effectiveness. Evidence demonstrates that the provider satisfies all CAEP standards.

A.5.2 The provider's quality assurance system relies on relevant, verifiable, representative, cumulative and actionable measures, and produces empirical evidence that interpretations of data are valid and consistent.

Continuous Improvement. A.5.3 The provider regularly and systematically assesses performance against its goals and relevant standards, tracks results over time, tests innovations and the effects of selection criteria on subsequent progress and completion, and uses results to improve program elements and processes.

A.5.4 Measures of advanced program completer outcomes, are summarized, externally benchmarked, analyzed, shared widely, and acted upon in decision-making related to programs, resource allocation, and future direction. Outcomes include completion rate, licensure rate, employment rate in field of specialty preparation, and consumer information such as places of employment and salaries.

A.5.5 The provider assures that appropriate stakeholders, including alumni, employers, practitioners, school and community partners, and others defined by the provider, are involved in program evaluation, improvement, and identification of models of excellence.

The West College of Education has operated its continuous improvement system meeting the standards described above since 2010. It currently is fully accredited through CAEP and NELP (ELCC) due to compliance with the required continuous improvement system.

Superintendent Certification

Ed.D. candidates may choose the superintendent certification option within the Ed.D. Students will not receive a recommendation for superintendent certification until the principal certification is complete. Students are not required to possess a principal certification for admission to the program. The superintendent certification option requires candidates to complete a 160-hour superintendent practicum beyond the established Ed.D. requirements.

Practicum

The State of Texas requires a practicum in order for a candidate to receive certification as a superintendent of schools. A practicum allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom to a real-school environment. Practicums help provide professional skills related to the field.

The "Practicum" requirements of the program require considerable time management to acquire 160 hours required by TEA. Practicum is defined as "Structured, field-based training." Practicum hours will occur during *EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum*.

The site supervisor is an educator who has at least three years of experience in the aspect(s) of the certification class being pursued by the candidate; who is collaboratively assigned by the campus or district administrator and the educator preparation program (EPP); who is currently certified in the certification class in which the practicum candidate is seeking certification; who has completed training by the EPP, including training in how to coach and mentor candidates, within three weeks of being assigned to a practicum candidate; who is an accomplished educator as shown by student learning; who guides, assists, and supports the candidate during the practicum; and who reports the candidate's progress to the candidate's field supervisor.

It is necessary for candidates to:

- Complete and log 160 hours of field-based experience tied to Texas Superintendent Certification Standards;
- Complete required key assessments within the practicum;
- Complete three observations with the following requirements:
    - A written reflection with each,
    - Minimum of 45 minutes each,
    - Have a pre-conference,
    - Have a post-conference within 72 hours and with substantive feedback for each observation,
    - One within each third of the practicum duration, and
    - Written candidate reflection for each observation.

The Practicum must be taken in a long semester (i.e., spring or fall) that a candidate is enrolled before dissertation hours or in conjunction with the first semester of dissertation hours. It may be taken simultaneously with another course.

The following steps are required before a student is permitted to take certification exams.

Take initial practice exam-Certify Teacher.

1. If the student scores less than 80% in each domain and competency, complete study tracker program in Certify Teacher. Once study tracker program is completed, retake practice exam.

2. If the second practice exam is less than 80% in each domain and competency, repeat the process until 80% is reached in each domain and competency.

3. Students must have at least 10 hours of study time total at the end of the practice exam process. If 10 hours is not reached through the practice exams process, then additional study hours must be completed to reach the minimum requirement of 10 hours in Certify Teacher.

4. Once students met the requirements above and would like to be released for testing, please complete the following **form**.

Upon completion of the form, you will be notified within 24-48 hours of your ability to schedule your certification exam. Please view the following **document** for assistance creating your testing account, registering for your exam, and scheduling your exam.

For students who are not successful in passing their certification exams, the following requirements must be met before the student will be allowed to repeat the exam.

1. Complete a practice exam-Certify Teacher.

2. If the student scores less than 80% in each domain and competency, complete study tracker program in Certify Teacher. Once study tracker program is completed, retake practice exam.

3. If the second practice exam is less than 80% in each domain and competency, repeat the process until 80% is reached in each domain and competency.

4. Students must have at least 10 hours of study time total at the end of the practice exam process. If 10 hours is not reached through the practice exams process, then additional study hours must be completed to reach the minimum requirement of 10 hours in Certify Teacher.

5. Work with an assigned professor on test readiness and exam preparation. The Certification Officer will assign a professor to work with the student. Please email Kayla Meaders at **kayla.meaders@msutexas.edu** for instructions on this step of the protocol. The assigned professor will decide what course of action you must complete before letting the Certification Officer know that you are ready to retest.

6. After completing steps 1-5, please contact Kayla Meaders at **kayla.meaders@msutexas.edu** to request access to take retake certification exams.

MSU WCOE Policy for Returning Finishers

Graduate

Advanced Certification Returners

If an advanced certification candidate is seeking test approval for an advanced certification and the standards and/or test has changed since the candidate completed the advanced program at MSU, the candidate will be required to:

- Repeat the WCOE certification exam testing policy
- Be assigned to and work with MSU College of Education Faculty Member(s)
- Complete up to an additional 15 hours of coursework from MSU and/or MSU training modules before test approval

If an advanced certification candidate has returned to MSU after a period of five or more years following the academic year of completion and the candidate is seeking test or retest approval for advanced certification the candidate will be required to:

- Repeat the WCOE certification exam testing policy
- Be assigned to and work with MSU College of Education Faculty Member(s)
- Complete up to an additional 18 hours of coursework from MSU before test approval

Process

- Candidate should contact Certification Officer
    - Candidate must purchase Certify Teacher. Candidate must complete at least 10 hours of total study time and pass each domain and competency with at least 80%.
    - Certification Officer refers candidate to Faculty member for content area/testing preparation after the candidate completes the Certify Teacher training according to the WCOE certification exam testing policy.
        - See Faculty Test Tutoring Expectations document for tutoring/guided training process.
- Certification Officer, in conjunction with the program coordinator, will identify course(s) or training modules that must be taken. This will be done upon the student completing the Certify Teacher test preparation.
    - Candidate must be approved by Certification Officer based on recommendation from a faculty member in order to be released to test with supporting evidence.

Designated Faculty for Test Tutoring

Graduate

- Superintendent (Grades EC-12) – Acuña, Frazier, Capps
- Principal as and Instructional Leader (Grades EC-12) – Robles, Acuna, Frazier, Capps
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Faculty Test Tutoring/Guided Training Expectation

In order to help candidates prepare for a certification test that they have already failed (or that the test has changed since the candidate completed), a faculty member (tutor) will be assigned to work with that candidate on test preparation skills and content area. This will take the form of tutoring or guided training. Once a candidate is assigned, the candidate must contact the faculty member to set a time to meet with them. The tutoring is in addition to any courses or training modules that are indicated for the student.

The tutor should meet with the candidate in person or virtually (eg. via Zoom) for the content and test preparation. The following are suggestions for tutoring that have been very successful:

- Look at the areas in which candidate received less than 70% at the competency level on the failed test (or on the practice test if it is a candidate that needs tutoring because the standards changed or five years have passed since completing the program)
- Work on each competency using an inquiry approach using test question examples.
- Unpack each question.
- Ask candidate to read the prompt and then ask them to highlight the keyworks.
- Make sure they know what the key words mean
- Read through each answer choice and force the candidate to say yes, no, or maybe if they believe the choice could be the answer. Ask them why.
- Have the candidate eliminate all but two answers.
- As you work through the answers with the candidate, identify content knowledge that may be lacking.
- Study the identified needed content knowledge with the candidate.
- If test anxiety is identified by the candidate as one of the factors contributing to problems with the test, provide and discuss strategies to address test anxiety. There are resources for this in the Counseling Center. You can contact Pam Midget to obtain the resources.
- Consider spending about an hour on each identified competency. Tutoring will probably need to be divided into 45-minute to an hour sessions.
- Keep in mind that if there are not enough released test questions for a competency, you might need to find more questions or create some on your own.
- After you have completed tutoring with the candidate, have them retake the Certify Teacher practice test or a TExES content test. If they pass all competencies with at least and 80%, let the Certification Officer know that they candidate has completed tutoring. If the candidate does not pass all of the competencies with at least an 80%, continue working with them on those competencies.
- For Constructed Response questions:
    - Have candidates read through the question and highlight key words. Ensure they understand the key words.
    - Have candidate write a construct response.
    - Assess candidate's response using the rubric.

- Discuss with the candidate why they received the rubric score for each criterion.
- Help candidate reshape the structured response so that it would receive a 4 on each criterion.

The Guided training modules are self-paced and specifically designed to assist the candidate to increase their conceptual understanding.

- The faculty member will assess the TExES results and design a study plan that addresses any competency that the candidate scores below 80%.
- The candidate will be provided a study plan that will focus on those deficits.
- The self-paced modules include graphic organizers, note-taking strategies, practice mini-quizzes, and open-ended responses to help them accommodate the content.
- The modules will unpack the content into small chunks and allow immediate feedback with the mini-quizzes.
- Each module open-ended assignments and graphic organizers will be shared through google drive with the faculty member for more in-depth feedback.
- After the candidate has completed the modules, they will take a TExES content test. If the candidate passes all competencies with at least and 80%, the faculty member will let the Certification Officer know that they candidate has completed the test preparation. If the candidate does not pass all of the competencies with at least an 80%, continue working with them on those competencies.

Additional Resources for Tutoring:

- Khan Academy
- Quizzizz
- STAAR Released Tests https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/testing/staar/staar-released-test-questions Contains test form, answer key and rationales.
- Quizlet

Transition Points for Superintendent Certification

ADMISSION	Key Assessment or Activity	CAEP	TEA
an application on file (forms available in Graduate School Office)	Application, Principal Certification	✓	✓
Master's degree from accredited university;		✓	✓
Grade point average of 3.0 in previous education courses; and		✓	✓
Successful committee screening on selected criteria.	Written Goals statement and Case Study responses, Admissions Interview	✓	✓
Approval of Advanced Program Council		✓	✓
Criminal Records – Right to Preliminary Background Check	Signed policy acknowledgement submitted with admission acceptance to Tk20	✓	✓
Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators	Signed acknowledgement and agreement to abide by the code submitted with admission acceptance to Tk20	✓	✓
ORIENTATION	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**CAEP**	**TEA**

WCOE Ed.D. Handbook	Signed Handbook Acknowledgement submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Dyslexia Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Mental Health Texas Behavior Support Initiative Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Substance Abuse Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Youth Suicide Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	✓	✓
Criminal Records – Right to Preliminary Background Check	Reaffirmation of understanding submitted to D2L	✓	✓
Privacy and Confidentiality Pledge	Privacy Pledge Quiz	✓	✓
Educator Ethics	Ethics Quiz	✓	✓
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting	Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Quiz	✓	✓
Human Trafficking	Human Trafficking Quiz		✓

COURSES (@ indicates Core Course)	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**CAEP**	**TEA**
@EDLE 6003 District Level Leadership	• Superintendent Interview Assessment • Understanding Intentional Leadership	* *	*
@EDLE 6013 Politics and Community Relations	• Current Events Based Equity Plan	*	*
@EDLE 6043 Understanding Teachers and Teaching	• Principals as Leaders of Learning	*	*
@EDLE 6033 School Organization and Management	• Mapping District Safey, Efficiency, and Effectiveness	*	*
@EDLE 6153 District Financial Leadership	• District Budget Presentation	*	*
@EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum	• Ethics and Equity Issues Identification	*	*
EDLE 6083 Evidence Informed Perspectives on Practice	• Final Exam-Evidence Based Improvement	*	
EDLE 6093 Cultural Foundations in Educational Leadership			
EDLE 6113 Educational Accountability and Student Assessment			
EDLE 6073 Data-Based Decision Making	• Midterm Exam	*	
EDLE 6103 Leading through Crisis			
EDLE 6143 Theories of Leadership, Administration, and Organizational Management			
EDLE 6123 Qualitative Decision Analysis			
EDLE 6063 Advanced Educational Law	• Final School Law Application	*	
EDLE 6023 Program Evaluation			
EDLE 6133 Writing and Research Design for Educational Leadership			
EDLE 6203 Dissertation	• Dissertation in Practice	*	

PRACTICUM	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**CAEP**	**TEA**
1. Candidate Info and Site Supervisor Qualification Form (CISSQ) distributed.	**Accreditation Specialist** distributes training to site supervisors and monitors completion of training within the three-week timeline.	✓	✓
2. Program Coordinator collaborates with district to assign qualified Site Supervisor (min 3 years exp and certified in field)	**Accreditation Specialist** tracks receipt of CISSQ documentation, verifies site supervisor qualifications and uploads to assessment system.	✓	✓
3. 15-week practicum placement	• Candidate documents 160 practicum hours tied to Texas Superintendent Certification Standards	✓	✓

	• 1 observation in each 3rd of practicum • First contact, pre-conference, observation, post-conference with substantive feedback • Signatures of candidate, site supervisor, and university supervisor • Completed time logs		
4. Site Supervisor completes summative evaluation of candidate	WCOE Practicum Evaluation	*	*
5. University Supervisor completes summative evaluation of candidate	WCOE Practicum Evaluation	*	*
6. Pass Practice Test with at least 80% in each competency and 10 hours of practice	Certify Teacher Superintendent Practice Test	#	#
RECOMMENDATION FOR CERTIFICATION	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**CAEP**	**TEA**
1. Passing score on the Texas Superintendent Exam (195)	Assessment of Content and Professional Knowledge	#	#
2. Satisfactory Practicum	Earn grade of at least a 'C'	*	*
3. Apply to State Board for Educator Certification	Application for certification is made by applying online at http://www.tea.state.tx.us.	✓	✓
4. State review	Upon receipt of the University recommendation, the State Board for Educator Certification screens all applicants for Texas certificates for a record of felony or misdemeanor conviction through the Texas Department of Public Safety.	✓	✓

POST GRADUATION	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**CAEP**	**TEA**
1. Satisfaction of employer	Survey emailed for first 3 years of employment in field of certification	✓	
2. Satisfaction of completer	Survey emailed for first 3 years of employment in field of certification	✓	

Minimum Performance Criteria for Superintendent Certification

ADMISSION	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**Performance Criteria**
Grade point average		3.0
Successful committee screening on selected criteria.	Written Goals statement and Case Study Responses, Admissions Interview	80% Proficient
Criminal Records – Right to Preliminary Background Check	Signed policy acknowledgement submitted with admission acceptance to Tk20	P/F
Code of Ethics and Standard Practices for Texas Educators	Signed acknowledgement and agreement to abide by the code submitted with admission acceptance to Tk20	P/F
ORIENTATION	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**Performance Criteria**
WCOE EdD Handbook	Signed Handbook Acknowledgement submitted to Tk20	P/F
Dyslexia Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	P/F

Mental Health Texas Behavior Support Initiative Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	P/F
Substance Abuse Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	P/F
Youth Suicide Training	Certificate of Completion submitted to Tk20	P/F
Criminal Records – Right to Preliminary Background Check	Reaffirmation of understanding submitted to D2L	P/F
Privacy and Confidentiality Pledge	Privacy Pledge Quiz	P/F
Educator Ethics	Ethics Quiz	P/F
Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting	Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Quiz	P/F
Human Trafficking	Human Trafficking Quiz	P/F

COURSES (@ indicates Core Course)	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**Performance Criteria**
@EDLE 6003 District Level Leadership	• Superintendent Interview Assessment	80% Proficient
@EDLE 6013 Politics and Community Relations	• Current Events Based Equity Plan	80% Proficient
@EDLE 6043 Understanding Teachers and Teaching	• 3-Year Professional Development Plan	80% Proficient
@EDLE 6033 School Organization and Management	• Mapping District Safey, Efficiency, and Effectiveness	80% Proficient
@EDLE 6153 District Financial Leadership	• District Budget Presentation	80% Proficient
@EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum	• Ethics and Equity Issues Identification	80% Proficient

PRACTICUM	**Key Assessment or Activity**	**Performance Criteria**
15-week practicum placement	• Candidate documents 160 practicum hours tied to Texas Superintendent Standards • 1 observation in each 3rd of practicum • First contact, pre-conference, observation, post-conference with substantive feedback • Signatures of candidate, site supervisor, and university supervisor • Completed time logs	80% Proficient
Pass Practice Test with at least 80% in each competency and 10 hours of practice	Certify Teacher Superintendent PracticeTest	80% Proficient

Advanced Program Advisory Council (APAC)

Each of the three advanced programs maintain advisory councils comprised of WCOE program faculty and professional practitioners/community members. The purpose of the APACs is to advise the West College of Education on assessment, policies, and procedures related to enhancing graduate quality and capacity, and supporting sustained and evidence-based continuous improvement of all course and field-based learning experiences impacting P-12 student learning and development and/or professional placement.

Educational Leadership Advisory Council

The Educational Leadership Advisory Council chaired by the EDLE program coordinator assists in the design, delivery, evaluation, and major policy decisions of the Educational Leadership principal and superintendent preparation programs. Membership is comprised of public school professionals, the director of educator preparation (TEA), certification officer, accreditation specialist, department chair, and dean of the West College of Education. The council meets regularly at least two times per year.

EDLE APAC Roles and Responsibilities

- Advise, review, evaluate, recommend and co-construct policies and procedures related to the evaluation and continuous improvement of the EDLE programs including: program evaluation/satisfaction, key assessments, student recruitment, student quality, and program impact on student learning leading to advanced certification.
- Advise, review, evaluate, recommend, co-construct, and implement policies and procedures related to the placement and evaluation of EDLE program graduate candidates in field and/or clinical experiences.
- Review and vote on applicant admissions to EDLE certification programs (2 to 4 times per year).
- Identify and address issues and concerns related to EDLE graduate and program quality and capacity, continuous improvement, and field-based/clinical experiences.
- Review qualifications for university supervisors, mentors, clinical supervisors, practicum supervisors or any other certification personnel who either host or supervise candidates seeking advanced certification.
- In this capacity, the EDLE Advisory Council may make recommendations in areas above for approval by WCOE College Council. University level changes must also be approved by MSU Graduate Council and/or MSU Academic Council, Board of Regents, THECB and SACS.

Where to Turn for Questions/Resources

The following persons/offices should be contacted as resources for the common questions/issues below:

- Catalog: The requirements listed in the catalog are the primary source of all rules and procedures, and it is the responsibility of the student to read and familiarize themselves with its contents.

- Required coursework or planned program: Program required course work, your Academic Advisor, or the Program/Clinical Coordinator as a secondary resource

- Degree requirements: Academic Advisor, or the Program/Clinical Coordinator as a secondary resource

- Program-related issues/concerns: Academic Advisor, or the Program/Clinical Coordinator as a secondary resource

- Graduation procedures/forms/requirements : Graduate School Website

- Practicum: Student Handbook, or Program/Clinical Coordinator as a secondary resource

- Course registration problems: Dept Administrative Assistant, Academic Advisor, or the Office of the Registrar

Practicum Guidelines

The "Practicum" requirements of the program require considerable time management to acquire 160 hours required by TEA. Practicum is defined as "Structured, field-based training." Practicum hours will occur during EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum.

It is necessary for candidates to:

- Complete and log 160 hours of field-based experience tied to Texas Superintendent Certification Standards.
- Complete required key assessments within the practicum.
- Complete 3 observations and a written reflection with each.

The Practicum must be taken in the full semester (i.e., spring or fall) that a candidate is enrolled before dissertation hours or in conjunction with the first semester of dissertation hours. It may be taken simultaneously with another course.

School-Based Educator Information

Approval of Mentors/Placements

The candidate must complete 160 clock hours of practicum in a TEA accredited school. The semester before practicum is taken, the clinical coordinator and the cooperating school will collaborate to assign the MSU Practicum Candidate a mentor who will serve as the site supervisor. This person must have a Superintendent Certification and have practiced for a minimum of three years. The candidate will be assigned a University Supervisor who will conduct 3 observations during Practicum.

Training

Each mentor will be provided training covering the contents of the handbook as well as training for the performance evaluations completed during the semester. This web-based training will occur within three weeks of the beginning of placement. All mentors are required to verify the training; documentation of training will be placed in student's file. Professional development will also be provided throughout the semester by the university supervisor as needed.

Mentor Expectations

Mentors are expected to provide a wide range of experiences directly related to the superintendent standards and to provide frequent and systematic feedback. In addition, the mentor will help monitor progress by examining and approving the candidate's practicum hours and discussing the standards. The mentor will indicate, virtually, that they can verify the candidates work and subsequent discussion.

- **Guiding the field experience:** the mentor will work closely with the candidate to provide experiences that build on the skills previously learned and will provide the appropriate supervision for the task.
- **Giving feedback to the candidate:** informal feedback will occur throughout the semester as well as formal feedback via the practicum evaluation.

Practicum Evaluation

Practicum experiences: Candidates will receive extensive field experiences which encompass each of the 10 Texas Superintendent Certification Competencies. Candidates are required to document 160 hours of experience using the Texas Superintendent Standards as a guide for each experience. By the end of Practicum, candidates must have activities logged into Tk20 meeting each Texas Educational Standard. This is in addition to the hands-on experience gained from the other courses and will ensure candidate's competency and confidence as an educational leader. Texas Superintendent Certification Domains and Competencies:

- Domain I: Leadership of the Educational Community
    - Competency 001: The superintendent knows how to act with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner in order to promote the success of all students.
    - Competency 002: The superintendent knows how to shape district culture by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the educational community:
    - Competency 003: The superintendent knows how to communicate and collaborate with families and community members, respond to diverse community interests and needs and mobilize community resources to ensure educational success for all students.
    - Competency 004: The superintendent knows how to respond to and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal and cultural context, including working with the board of trustees, to achieve the district's educational vision.
- Domain II: Instructional Leadership
    - Competency 005: The superintendent knows how to facilitate the planning and implementation of strategic plans that enhance teaching and learning; ensure alignment among curriculum, curriculum resources and assessment; use the current accountability system; and promote the use of varied assessments to measure student performance.
    - Competency 006: The superintendent knows how to advocate, promote and sustain an instructional program and a district culture that are conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.
    - Competency 007: The superintendent knows how to implement a staff evaluation and development system and select appropriate models for supervision and staff development to improve the performance of all staff members.
- Domain III: Administrative Leadership
    - Competency 008: The superintendent knows how to apply principles of effective leadership and management in relation to district budgeting, personnel, resource utilization, financial management and technology applications.

- Competency 009: The superintendent knows how to apply principles of leadership and management to the district's physical plant and support systems to ensure a safe and effective learning environment.
- Competency 010: The superintendent knows how to apply organizational, decision-making and problem-solving skills to comply with federal and state requirements and facilitate positive change in varied contexts.

All 160 hours must be submitted into Tk20 and approved by mentor for candidate to receive credit for the Practicum course. **Since this is a TEA requirement, no exceptions will be made.**

Completion of Practicum

Faculty reserve the professional responsibility to guarantee that our graduates meet the minimum level of competency required to be a superintendent. As such, a candidate may be required to take additional practicum hours to improve skills.

Documentation of Practicum Log, On-site Evaluation, and Summary will be placed in candidates' permanent records for use in replying to requests for references and licensure/accreditation audits.

Key Assessments

Assessment Name	Course
Superintendent Interview Assessment	EDLE 6003 District Level Leadership
Current Events Based Equity Plan	EDLE 6013 Politics and Community Relations
3-Year Professional Development Plan	EDLE 6043 Understanding Teachers and Teaching
Mapping District Safey, Efficiency, and Effectiveness	EDLE 6033 School Organization and Management
District Budget Presentation	EDLE 6133 District Financial Leadership
Ethics and Equity Issues Identification	EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum

Additional Assessments

Assessment	Course
Standards Based Candidate Assessment and Recommendation	EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum
195 State Certification Exam	State Testing Certification Requirement

Certify Teacher Practice Exam	EDLE 6053 Superintendent Practicum

Notification of Criminal Conviction, Denial of Certification, and Criminal Background Checks

Condition of Certification

As required by Texas Occupations Code (TOC), Section 53.152, candidates should be aware that an individual who has been convicted of any offense, in any state, may be denied an initial or advanced certificate. By completing the admission process into an initial or advanced program, each individual is aware that even after completion of a degree, if at any point that individual was convicted of any crime, of any degree, he/she may still graduate from the program but may be denied a certificate by the State Board of Educator Certification.

Criminal Background Checks

Pursuant to the Texas Education Code (TEC), §22.083, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to employment as an educator; and pursuant to the TEC, §22.0835, candidates must undergo a criminal history background check prior to clinical teaching.

Preliminary Checks

All candidates enrolled in an educator preparation program are eligible to request a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation. A Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation is a non-mandatory, non-binding evaluation of an individual's self-reported criminal history. Information on Preliminary Criminal History Evaluations can be found on the TEA Texas Education Agency website.

Entrance to Public Schools

Candidates are required to complete a criminal background check for entrance into public schools. There is variation in the degree of background checks across school districts. These background checks may take as many as 3 weeks to complete before a candidate may enter a public-school classroom. It is at the discretion of the district, not the EPP, as to how, when, and where these background checks are conducted. In addition, a school district reserves the right to deny entry to any person, regardless of the result of the background check.

Reporting Suspicion or Incidence of Child Abuse

Texas law says anyone who thinks a child, or person 65 years or older, or an adult with disabilities is being abused, neglected, or exploited must report it to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). A person who reports abuse in good faith is immune from civil or criminal liability. DFPS keeps the name of the person making the report confidential. Anyone who does not report suspected abuse can be held liable for a misdemeanor or felony. Time frames for investigating reports are based on the severity of the allegations. Teacher candidates should report abuse to the building administrator, WCOE school-based educator, and the Texas Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400) (Report Child Abuse Website).

Fitness for the Education Profession and Counseling Out of Program

Admitted superintendent candidates are expected to meet specified non-academic standards that are necessary to be competent educators. The intent is to ensure that the students recommended for superintendent-certification are able to effectively and independently carry out the duties for which they are being prepared. The fitness criteria include personality characteristics, responsibility characteristics, communication skills, social relationships, and commitment to the education profession. Candidates who have been identified with a demonstrable discrepancy by one or more professors or site supervisors will meet with the Fitness Alert Committee to discuss options and develop a growth plan. The Fitness Alert Committee consists of faculty members in the West College of Education appointed by a department chair. Failure to make satisfactory progress on the growth plan may result in removal from the program. In extreme cases, the student may be immediately removed.

Professional Fitness Alert Policy and Procedure Policy

If any WCOE degree candidate demonstrates inappropriate behavior leading a faculty member to question the candidate's fitness for assuming a professional role, the professor will warn the student that said behavior is unacceptable and will document the warning/s. If the candidate's behavior and/or response to warnings do not demonstrate a change, the faculty member will complete the *Professional Fitness Alert Form* and inform the candidate of the following steps that will occur.

If a candidate shows an egregious lack of judgment suggesting lack of professional fitness, a fitness form may be issued without a previous warning. The five-member fitness alert committee is appointed by the dean and, includes at least one representative from outside the candidate's department.

Procedure

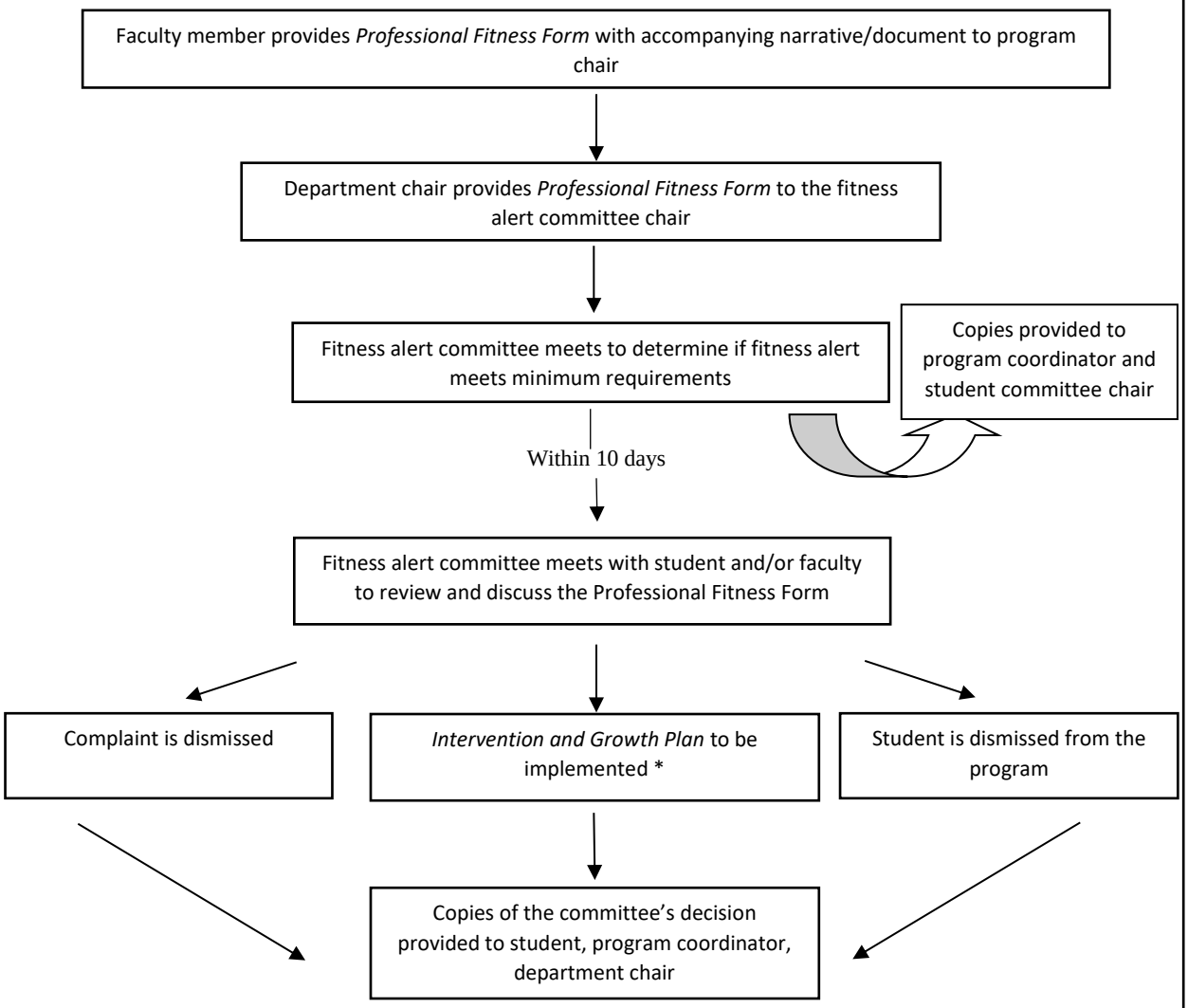
Issuing the Professional Fitness Alert Form requires the following action.

1. Professor issuing professional fitness alert form will attach accompanying narrative to document the situation or incident and give both to his/her department chair.
2. Department chair will give the professional fitness alert to the fitness alert committee chair.
3. Fitness alert committee will meet to determine if professional fitness alert documentation meets minimum requirements.
4. The candidate's program coordinator and the student will receive a copy.
5. Within ten days from the time the *Professional Fitness Form* was submitted, the committee will convene and meet with the candidate and the reporting faculty member.
6. The situation will be described and discussed. The committee can dismiss the complaint, issue the *Intervention and Growth Plan*, or dismiss the candidate from the academic program.
7. The candidate, the program coordinator, and the department chair will receive a copy of the decision of the committee.
8. During the intervention period, if credible information of continued inappropriate behavior is brought to the attention of the committee in writing, the professional fitness alert committee will reconvene to consider further action.

*During the intervention period if credible information of continued inappropriate behavior is brought to the attention of the committee in writing, the fitness alert committee will reconvene to consider further action.

Counseling – candidates who have repeated issues with Fitness Alerts or concerns forwarded to a department chair, certification officer or dean, may receive counseling regarding the appropriateness of the teaching/education profession. WCOE concerns may be based upon the knowledge; skills and/or disposition outlined in syllabi and the conceptual framework, but may also include engagement in the profession. WCOE is ultimately responsible for the performance of its completers and reserves the right to determine who is identified as a WCOE teacher/educator professional.

Procedure: Issuing the *Professional Fitness Form* requires the following actions:



WCOE Complaint Process Policy

In this policy, the terms "complaint" and "grievance" shall have the same meaning.

Other Complaint Processes:
Stakeholder complaints shall be filed in accordance with this policy, except as required by the policies listed below. Some of these policies require appeals to be submitted in accordance with this complaint policy after the relevant complaint process:

1. Complaints alleging discrimination or harassment based on race, color, gender, national origin, disability, or religion shall be submitted in accordance with policy.

2. Complaints concerning retaliation related to discrimination and harassment shall be submitted in accordance with policy.
3. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504 shall be submitted in accordance with policy and the procedural safeguards handbook.
4. Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act shall be submitted in accordance with policy, and the procedural safeguards handbook.

Notice to Stakeholders:
The West College of Education (WCOE) shall inform stakeholders of this policy by information posted in the physical facility, on the website or, upon request, written information.

Guiding Principles: Informal Process:
WCOE encourages stakeholders to discuss their concerns with the appropriate employee who has the authority to address the concerns. Concerns should be expressed as soon as possible to allow early resolution at the lowest possible level. Informal resolution shall be encouraged but shall not extend any deadlines in this policy, except by mutual written consent.

Formal Process:
A stakeholder may initiate the formal process described above by timely filing a written complaint form. Even after initiating the formal complaint process, stakeholders are encouraged to seek informal resolution of their concerns. A stakeholder whose concerns are resolved may withdraw a formal complaint at any time. The process described in this policy shall not be construed to create new or additional rights beyond those granted by law or WCOE policy, nor to require a full evidentiary hearing or "mini-trial" at any level.

Freedom from Retaliation:
Neither the WCOE nor any WCOE employee shall unlawfully retaliate against any stakeholder for bringing a concern or complaint.

General Provisions Filing:
Complaint forms and appeal notices may be filed by hand-delivery, by electronic communication, including e-mail and fax, or by U.S. Mail. Hand-delivered filings shall be timely filed if received by the appropriate WCOE employee by the close of business on the deadline. Filings submitted by electronic communication shall be timely filed if they are received by the close of business on the deadline, as indicated by the date and time shown on the electronic communication. Mail filings shall be timely filed if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline and received by the appropriate WCOE employee no more than three days after the deadline.

Scheduling Conferences:
WCOE shall make reasonable attempts to schedule conferences at a mutually agreeable time. If a stakeholder fails to appear at a scheduled conference, the WCOE may hold the conference and issue a decision in the stakeholder's absence.

Response:
At Levels One and Two, "response" shall mean a written communication to the stakeholder from the appropriate employee. Responses may be hand-delivered, sent by electronic communication to the stakeholder's e-mail address of record, or sent by U.S. Mail to the stakeholder's mailing address of record. Mailed responses shall be timely if they are postmarked by U.S. Mail on or before the deadline.

Days:
"Days" shall mean university business days. In calculating time lines under this policy, the day document is filed is "day zero." The following business day is "day one."

Representative:
"Representative" shall mean any person who or organization that is designated by the stakeholder to represent the stakeholder in the complaint process. The stakeholder may designate a representative through written notice to the WCOE at any level of this process. If the stake- holder designates a representative with fewer than three days' no- tice to WCOE before a scheduled conference or hearing, the WCOE may reschedule the conference or hearing to a later date, if desired, in order to include the WCOE's counsel. The WCOE may be represented by counsel at any level of the process.

Consolidating Complaints:
Complaints arising out of an event or a series of related events shall be addressed in one complaint. A stakeholder shall not file separate or serial complaints arising from any event or series of events that have been or could have been addressed in a previous complaint.

Untimely Filings:
All time limits shall be strictly followed unless modified by mutual written consent. If a complaint form or appeal notice is not timely filed, the complaint may be dismissed, on written notice to the stakeholder, at any point during the complaint process. The stakeholder may appeal the dismissal by seeking review in writing within ten days from the date of the written dismissal notice, starting at the level at which the complaint was dismissed. Such appeal shall be limited to the issue of timeliness.

Costs Incurred:
Each party shall pay its own costs incurred in the course of the complaint.

Complaint and Appeal Forms:
Complaints and appeals under this policy shall be submitted in writing on a form provided by the WCOE. Copies of any documents that support the complaint should be attached to the complaint form. If the stakeholder does not have copies of these documents, copies may be presented at the Level One conference. After the Level One conference, no new documents may be submitted by the support unless the stakeholder did not know the documents existed before the Level One conference. A complaint or appeal form that is incomplete in any material aspect may be dismissed but may be re-filed with all the required information if the re-filing is within the designated time for filing.

Level One:
Complaint forms must be filed:

a. Within 15 days of the date the stakeholder first knew, or with reasonable diligence should have known, of the decision or action giving rise to the complaint or grievance; and

b. With the lowest level WCOE employee who has the authority to remedy the alleged problem. If the only WCOE employee who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the WCOE legal authority or de- signee whom the complaint is about, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One. If the complaint is not filed with the appropriate employee, the receiving employee must note the date and time the complaint form was received and immediately forward the complaint form to the appropriate employee.

The appropriate WCOE employee shall investigate as necessary and schedule a conference with the stakeholder within ten days after receipt of the written complaint. The WCOE employee may set reasonable time limits for the conference. Absent extenuating circumstances, the WCOE employee shall

provide the stakeholder a written response within ten days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the WCOE employee may consider information provided at the Level One conference and any other relevant documents or information the WCOE employee believes will help resolve the complaint.

Level Two:
If the stakeholder did not receive the relief requested at Level One or if the time for a response has expired, the stakeholder may re- quest a conference with the WCOE legal authority or designee to appeal the Level One decision. The appeal notice must be filed in writing, on a form provided by the WCOE, within ten days of the date of the written Level One response or, if no response was received, within ten days of the Level One response deadline. After receiving notice of the appeal, the Level One WCOE employee shall prepare and forward a record of the Level One com- plaint to the Level Two Program legal authority or designee. The stakeholder may request a copy of the Level One record.

The Level One record shall include:

1. The original complaint form and any attachments.
2. All other documents submitted by the stakeholder at Level One.
3. The written response issued at Level One and any attachments.
4. All other documents relied upon by the Level One Program employee in reaching the Level One decision.

The Program legal authority or designee shall schedule a conference within ten days after the appeal notice is filed. The conference shall be limited to the issues and documents considered at Level One. At the conference, the stakeholder may provide information concerning any documents or information relied upon by the Program employee for the Level One decision. The Program legal authority or designee may set reasonable time limits for the conference. The Program legal authority or designee shall provide the stakeholder a written response within ten days following the conference. In reaching a decision, the WCOE legal authority or designee may consider the Level One record, information provided at the Level Two conference, and any other relevant documents or information the WCOE legal authority or designee believes will help resolve the complaint. Recordings of the Level One and Level Two conferences, if any, shall be maintained with the Level One and Level Two records.

If the complaint WCOE employee who has authority to remedy the alleged problem is the WCOE legal authority or designee, the complaint may begin at Level Two following the procedure, including deadlines, for filing the complaint form at Level One.

Complaints to the Texas Education Agency:

If the stakeholder is not satisfied with the complaint process or outcome, the stakeholder may file a complaint against the Program with the Texas Education Agency. The official Texas Education Agency complaint process can be found at:
http://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Contact_Us/Complaints/Complaints/.

Educational Leadership Programs Statement of Expectations

Programs in Educational Leadership are charged with providing a high level of training and supervising the development of pre-service principals, assistant principals, superintendents, and other school leaders. Faculty must evaluate candidates based on their academic, professional, and personal qualities. A candidate's progress in the program may be interrupted for failure to comply with academic standards or if a candidate's interpersonal or emotional status interferes with being able to meet the demands of a school leader. To ensure proper training, the leader-in-training must abide by relevant ethical codes and demonstrate professional knowledge, technical and interpersonal skills, a professional attitude, and moral character.

For further information about Midwestern State University's policies regarding student ethics and conduct, please consult MSU TEXAS Student Ethics

The Educational Leadership program is accredited by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Southern Association of Colleges (SACS). In addition, MSU's West College of Education is nationally accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP).

Affirmative Action Policy Statement

It is the policy of Midwestern State University that there shall be no discrimination against any individual because of personal characteristics such as, but not limited to, age, sex, gender identity, race, creed, disability, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation. This nondiscrimination policy applies to all students (and applicants), faculty, staff, and employees.

Any student who feels that he/she may need accommodations due to the impact of a disability should consult Disability Services at (940) 397-4140 or Disability Support Services.

References

Shulman, L. (2005). Signature pedagogies in the professions. *Daedalus*, (134), 3.