PROGRAM SPONSOR ALERT

DATE:
August 14, 2020

NUMBER:
20-11

SUBJECT: Commission-approved Flexibilities and Specificities for Preliminary Education Specialist Candidates in the 2020-21 Academic Year

Summary:

This alert provides the flexibilities and implementation specificities approved by the Commission at its August 2020 meeting relative to each of the Preliminary Education Specialist Program Standards for the 2020-2021 academic year. All Commission-approved programs may apply the flexibilities approved by the Commission and must ensure that each candidate meets the identified specificities. One of the key specificities is that each candidate must have experience with synchronous instruction as part of clinical practice.

Key Provisions:

Standard 1: Program Design, Rationale, and Coordination
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility for virtual learning environments.

Standard 2: Professional, Legal and Ethical Practices
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility for virtual learning environments.

Standard 3: Educating Diverse Learners
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility for virtual learning environments.

Standard 4: Effective Communication and Collaborative Partnerships
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with

the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the TPEs and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 5: Assessment of Students

Candidates must have extensive/significant experience with the full cycle of teaching activities that include assessing and analyzing student learning, and reflecting on the full cycle of instruction to plan future instruction. If the candidate is teaching a group of students that is smaller than the whole class, the program needs to support the candidate in analyzing how the experience would need to be modified for whole class instruction. The target goal is that all candidates have opportunities to lead full class instruction, supplemented with small group instruction and individual instruction as appropriate.

Standard 6: Using Educational and Assistive Technology

This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the TPEs and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 7: Transition and Transitional Planning

This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the TPEs and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 8: Participating in IFSP/IEPs and Post-Secondary Transition and Transitional Planning

This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the TPEs and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 9: Preparation to Teach Reading/Language Arts

This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate that reading is taught and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 10: Preparation to Teach English Language Learners

This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities in this standard and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 11: Typical and Atypical Development
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility for virtual learning environments.

Standard 12: Behavior, Social and Environmental Supports for Learning
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities in this standard and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 13: Curriculum and Instruction of Students with Disabilities
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and abilities in this standard and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 14: Creating Healthy Learning Environments
This standard can be implemented as written without adaptation or additional flexibility, with the understanding that programs may need to modify how candidates complete clinical practice, specifically, how candidates learn, practice and demonstrate the **knowledge, skills and abilities in this standard** and how programs monitor candidate development.

Standard 15: Field Experience in a Broad Range of Service Delivery Options
Clinical practice is where the candidate engages in the work of schools and classroom teaching at one or more school site placements (in-person or virtual), observing, supporting, and teaching PK-12 students under the guidance of an experienced educator. Preparation programs will need to work with candidates to secure virtual field placements, with focused attention to adapting these experiences to the virtual teaching and learning environment. Identifying and documenting aspects of clinical practice that have been required previously but cannot be adapted to the virtual environment will be necessary.

Clinical practice can involve synchronous, asynchronous, in-person and/or online/distance learning environments; each candidate must have some synchronous teaching experience as part of clinical practice. During the pandemic, candidates may have some opportunities for practice that are outside the public schools, such as tutoring or ad hoc work with small groups of students. These experiences should only be included as part of early field experience and the candidate should keep their program informed about these activities. Candidates need opportunities to implement differentiation strategies to meet the needs of all students in the class, and programs need to work with candidates to ensure that online, synchronous and asynchronous work with students provide these opportunities. Programs should prioritize direct practice with PK-12 students. Practice beyond direct PK-12 student engagement within placement(s) could be supplemented with proxies for practice such as teaching simulations,

practice teaching among candidate peers, using video of experienced educators to analyze practice. These proxies for clinical practice also require supervision/facilitation from mentors but do not replace experiences with PK-12 students. Programs are expected to make professional judgments about each candidate's demonstration of knowledge and skills prior to recommending them for a preliminary credential.

Standard 16: Assessment of Candidate Performance
This standard can be met in virtual teaching and learning contexts. Programs may need to modify how candidates "practice" some of the knowledge, skills and abilities, in addition to the TPEs and consequently may modify how the program "assesses" candidates.

Program Specific Standards
For all seven credential areas, (Mild/Moderate Disabilities, Moderate/Severe Disabilities, Early Childhood Special Education, Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Visual Impairments, Language and Academic Development and Physical and Health Impairments), standards can be met in virtual teaching and learning contexts. Programs may need to modify how candidates "practice" some of the knowledge, skills and abilities, in addition to the TPEs and consequently may modify how the program "assesses" candidates.

Important Dates:
These flexibilities and specificities are applicable to Education Specialist teacher preparation candidates in the 2020-21 academic year.

Background:
A variety of flexibilities have been put in place for applicants, candidates, credential holders, and Commission-approved programs for the 2019-20 year. The flexibilities and specificities in this PSA are for candidates completing programs in 2020-21.

References:
[Strengthening and Adapting Educator Preparation for Virtual Teaching and learning: Issues and Options for 2020-21](#) (August 2020)

[Preliminary Education Specialist Program Standards (2014)](#)

Contact Information:
Contact Information for the Professional Services Division is available at the [Professional Services Contact webpage](#).