

VSBPE

Date: May 8, 2019

ITEM: Discussion of Alternate Route Approval Process

BACKGROUND: The ROPA review of the Peer Review program last summer again raised the ongoing issue of whether ROPA is an appropriate tool for assessing alternate routes to licensure, and if not, how should alternate routes to licensure be assessed. As far back as 2005, the VSBPE had an action step in its strategic plan which was to “Establish a ROPA-like review process for approving alternative preparation programs.” Peer Review is not a preparation program and trying to review it in the same way that preparation programs are reviewed has proven to have many challenges throughout all three of Peer Review’s ROPA reviews.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS: ROPA Review Team reports on Peer Review, Peer Review rejoinder from 2018.

Report of the Full ROPA Review

Peer Review

January 24, 2013

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Introduction

The Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators (VSBPE) authorized a ROPA Review Team to conduct an on-site review of Peer Review, an alternate route to licensure. The site visit was conducted on October 21-23, 2012 at the Department of Education in Berlin, Vermont. Members of the Review Team were: Cheryl Baker, Team Chair, Director of Graduate Studies Recruitment and Outreach Programs, Plymouth State College; Debrah Fishwick, Principal, Shrewsbury Mountain School; Penny Chamberlin, VSBPE Member, Director, Barre Technical Center Technical Center; and Rob Brown, English Teacher, Rice Memorial High School. Education Consultants, Sarah Cloud and Marilyn Richardson, from the Vermont Agency of Education, assisted the team.

The Team appreciated the hospitality shown by Peer Review. The warm reception and thoughtful itinerary created a welcoming environment. The evidence room was well organized and conducive to the Team's work. It provided ample opportunity for the Review Team to develop their understanding of Peer Review's structure, procedures, and practices that lead candidates to licensure. The Team examined Peer Review's Institutional Portfolio (IP) as well as 60 candidate portfolios addressing many endorsement areas. Phone and in-person interviews were held with Panelists, mentor teachers, K-12 principals, and Advisory Council Members.

Additional information was gathered by attending a Peer Review Clinic as well as interviewing current and former program candidates. Peer Review Consultant, Pam Miller, was a valuable asset, helping the Team to thoroughly understand Peer Review's post-baccalaureate teacher readiness assessment program. The Team's preliminary evaluation was presented in an Exit Report on October 23, 2012. The ROPA Review Team based their assessment on the approval criteria set forth by the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators. The Team's evaluation reflects Peer Review's ability to assure its candidates meet all general requirements for professional licensure as well as the knowledge and performance requirements established for the endorsements.

The following Report of the Full ROPA Review details the findings of the Review Team and describes Peer Review's rating on each of the seven ROPA standards. The subsequent recommendations and/or stipulations are intended to be used by Peer Review, the Vermont Agency of Education, and the Vermont Standards Board for Professional Educators for the purpose of ensuring that Peer Review provides a quality alternate route to licensure.

Program and Standard Specific Rating Summary Peer Review		
PROGRAM SPECIFIC RATING SUMMARY		
Delivery Model: Alternate Route		
Recommendations for licensure are made based on the input from Peer Review Panels which are comprised of individuals who are qualified in the field of practice for the endorsement area candidates seek. Peer Review recommends licensure for all 32 endorsement areas except Speech-Language Pathology.		
ROPA Recommendation: Full Approval		
Stipulation: In a two year report document that Peer Review has implemented a comprehensive system for recruiting and training Panelists as well as assuring that there is inter-rater reliability in the assessment of candidates' knowledge, and performance competencies.		
STANDARD SPECIFIC RATING SUMMARY		
Standard	Title	Rating
I	Opportunities for Standards-based Preparation	AS
II	Collaboration with Pre-K-12 Schools	AS
III	System of Assessment	AS
IV	Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions	M
V	Commitment to Diversity	AS
VI	Resources	AS
VIII	Institutional and Program Renewal	AS

PREFACE

Peer Review is an alternate route to licensure designed to assess candidates' knowledge and performance competencies and determine whether candidates have met all licensure requirements. Unlike traditional educator preparation programs, Peer Review is not responsible for preparing future educators, but rather to assess their preparedness. The ROPA evaluation was adapted to reflect this distinction. Accordingly, Peer Review was measured in terms of the seven ROPA standards though specific indicators were revised or found not applicable. These changes have been noted in the report and subsequently the report begins with ROPA Standard 3.

STANDARD III: System of Assessment

The educator programs use a system of rigorous and varied measures to evaluate candidates' growth from admission through recommendation for licensure. The assessment system ensures that candidates recommended for licensure meet the standards of performance for beginning educators as reflected in *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements. **RATING: Approaching Standard**

3.01 – Peer Review has established and maintains performance criteria for entrance to the program and exit from the program. RATING: M

The Team Noted the Following Findings:

Eligibility:

- The Peer Review handbook clearly outlines licensure requirements and thoroughly defines program expectations.
- Prospective candidates submit a resume, official transcripts and the completed Peer Review application in order to be considered for enrollment.
- The Peer Review Administrative Assistant uses an eligibility checklist and determines initial suitability based on the completeness of each candidate's application.
- Peer Review requires potential candidates to hold a baccalaureate degree; however, the Team found that although transcripts were frequently available in the portfolios, no formal transcript review process was apparent prior to the Panel conducting their review.
- Little evidence was found in the portfolios or in Panelists' evaluations to indicate that Peer Review verified evidence of a major, or the equivalent, in the endorsement area sought which is required for some endorsements.
- No records confirmed that the panel and the Peer Review Consultant review candidates' transcripts to ensure that candidates complete a liberal arts major that complements their knowledge in the endorsement area they seek.

Peer Review Clinic:

- Once a candidate's application is complete they are required to attend a Peer Review Clinic within 18 months of submitting a portfolio.
- The Clinic and handbook outlined the requirements for licensure and detailed the process for seeking licensure through Peer Review.
- After completing a Peer Review Clinic, prospective candidates are expected to be able to assess their own eligibility. Candidates who determine that they have not satisfied all licensure requirements must resolve their deficiencies before continuing to pursue licensure through Peer Review.

Peer Review Panel:

- For each Peer Review candidate, a Peer Review Panel is formed which is comprised of educators licensed in the endorsement area sought by the candidate. The panel evaluates the candidate's credentials by reviewing the candidate's portfolio, and conducting an interview with the candidate.
- The Team found that all completed portfolios included an Evaluation Summary documenting the Panelist's decision.

Plan of Action:

- If the Peer Review candidate is not recommended for licensure following their interview, he/she must submit additional evidence and/or submit a Plan of Action.
- The Team confirmed that Panelists approve Plans of Action that are also reviewed by the Peer Review Consultant and include evidence of the candidate having completed the Plan.
- Some Plans of Action were comprehensive and resulted in recommendation for licensure; however, others were inconsistent. Some included additional documentation to support the candidate's reflections while others did not.

3.02 – Peer Review provides a system of continual assessment of candidates' knowledge, skills, dispositions, and performance as reflected in the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements, and provide interim checks to ensure candidates receive timely and accurate feedback and appropriate advising.

RATING: AS

- Panelists review candidate's lesson and unit plans as well as corresponding assessments to ensure that candidates have the knowledge and performance competencies required for licensure.
- Peer Review Panelists review candidate's evidence in reference to the 16 Principles.
- There was no evidence that Peer Review is transitioning to using the Core Teaching and Leadership Standards.
- The panel requires evidence of mentorship of the candidate by a licensed educator in the same endorsement area, to ensure that the candidate has met the endorsement requirements.
- The Team confirmed that the required letters of recommendation were present in each portfolio. These letters were written by a candidate's supervisor, mentor teacher, administrator, colleague, etc. and assist Peer Review Panelists in assuring that its candidates demonstrate the skills and dispositions required for the endorsement they seek.
- Nearly all letters of recommendation were positive endorsements of the subjects' candidacy, and as such provided limited constructive or discriminant information.
- The Team reviewed examples of the Peer Review Consultant's mentoring and deemed them timely and accurate.
- Peer Review requires acceptable scores on the Attributes and Dispositions Form for each candidate seeking an initial license.

3.03 – Peer Review provides a comprehensive system for the development and evaluation of the Peer Review Portfolio. RATING: AS

- The handbook and Peer Review Clinic explains how to develop the portfolio and how the Panelists use it to evaluate a candidate's credentials.
- The Panelists use scoring forms to assess whether candidates have met the general requirements and principles of initial licensure and to assess the competencies for the endorsement area sought.

- Exemplar portfolios are available for candidates to review and the Peer Review Consultant is available for consultation by request.
- Candidates may reference the portfolio scoring forms and competency requirements readily throughout the application process; however during interviews some candidates expressed interest in being provided with concrete examples of what would meet expectations rather than having to ask for them.
- The Peer Review Consultant is seeking feedback from ROPA team on developing a rubric for scoring reflections and analysis.
- The Team found that some Peer Review candidates sought and receive a great deal of feedback during the portfolio formation process, and others do not.
- Peer Review does not systematically recruit, select, and train Panelists to effectively evaluate candidates' performance.
- The Peer Review Consultant created a Powerpoint, designed to orient Panelists to their responsibilities, which accommodates Panelists with scheduling conflicts, and alleviates travel time and expense.
- The Team concluded that Peer Review Panelists are dedicated to accurately assessing candidate competencies and have high expectations for potential teachers; however, they are limited by the quality of assessment tools available, the training and calibration they receive, and the support they are given over time.
- There is little evidence of a comprehensive record-keeping process which documents candidates' progress through the program and is effective in assuring that all candidates meet all licensure requirements.

3.04 – Peer Review assures that candidates are knowledgeable about the program's assessment system including its policies, instruments and uses, and that the system is administered in a manner that is fair and non-discriminatory. RATING: M

- The Team found that adequate information is given to candidates regarding Peer Review's policies and procedures for evaluating candidate's credentials.
- The Team noted the Peer Review Consultant's effort toward ensuring that Panels are comprised of unbiased experts.
- The Team concurred that Peer Review's system of assessment is administered consistently, but variations exist among Panelists' usage of the assessment tools (i.e., scoring forms are used to evaluate every portfolio, but Panelists demonstrated varying degrees of thoroughness while using the rubrics).
- Candidates may appeal the Peer Review Panel's decision. If the candidate believes that the Panel did not follow "applicable procedures" or that the decision was unreasonable, they may appeal to the VSBPE by following the appeal process in the Peer Review Handbook.
- The Peer Review Consultant is currently revising the appeal process to better serve Peer Review candidates now that Peer Review is an approved route to licensure through ROPA.

3.05 – Peer Review uses a formal system to collect information from educators they have recommended for licensure during the first five years of their practice for the purpose of assessing the quality of the program. RATING: AS

- The IP indicates that in 2012 the Peer Review Advisory Committee developed a survey for Peer Review completers designed to acquire feedback that assess the quality of Peer Review.

- The survey was implemented on January 1, 2012, and as of April 2012 it is automatically sent to each completer. In the letter the completer receives recommending them for licensure, Peer Review elicits the completer's input and provides a link to the survey.
- The Team concluded that Peer Review uses a formal system of collecting data in order to assess the quality of its program (i.e., the completer survey), but its effectiveness has not yet been determined because the survey was recently implemented and has provided inconclusive data.

3.06 –Peer Review uses a formal system to collect information from the employers of candidates who have completed the Peer Review process during their first five years in the profession for the purpose of assessing the quality of the preparation programs. RATING: AS

- According to the IP, the Peer Review Advisory Committee (PRAC) developed a survey for employers of Peer Review program completers. 16 employers were surveyed in July 2012 and 12 surveys were returned. The data will be analyzed by PRAC to drive program improvements.
- The Team concluded that Peer Review uses a formal system of collecting data in order to assess the quality of its program (i.e., employer survey), but its effectiveness has not been determined yet because the survey was recently implemented and the data has not been calculated.

Commendations:

- Peer Review Consultant has successfully implemented systems that support candidates and Panelists as evidenced in her availability and noted progress toward meeting the concerns from the last ROPA Review (i.e. the creation of the Attributes and Dispositions Form, systematic record keeping that tracks candidate's progression through the program)..
- Team found that requiring candidates to pass the Praxis I test before their submitting their portfolio is an appropriate program benchmark.
- The handbook is well designed and clearly outlines the assessment system.
- The commitment of the Peer Review Consultant and Panelists is admirable.
- The Peer Review Consultant's presence at all panel reviews provides consistency and highlights a strong commitment to the candidates.
- The development of the Peer Review Advisory Committee (PRAC) provides additional support for planning, implementation, and troubleshooting issues with regard to the Peer Review Process.

Concerns:

- Peer Review does not formally document that transcripts are reviewed prior to the Panel conducting their review or during the interview.
- There is a limited system for recruiting and training Panelists that assures that there is inter-rater reliability in the assessment of candidates' knowledge, and performance competencies.
- Panelists demonstrated varying degrees of consistency while using the rubrics provided.
- There was no evidence that Peer Review is transitioning to using the Core Teaching and Leadership Standards.

Considerations for Further Program Development:

- Consider having a formalized recommendation letter template that requires supervisors to reflect on a candidate's endorsement competencies.
- Consider documenting the effectiveness of the completer and employer surveys by describing how the results were used to make programmatic improvements.
- Consider requiring candidates to receive consultation prior to the Panelist's Interview in order to ensure that candidates have reasonably self-assessed themselves.

- Consider utilizing Panelist’s expertise to provide guidance to candidates regarding their Plan of Action.
- Consider surveying Panelists to identify which indicators are the most challenging to assess; document the data and demonstrate how it was used to make programmatic improvements.
- Consider assigning content-specific mentors to candidates in order to assist them with the portfolio development process.
- Consider expanding the Evaluation Summary to include feedback that candidates may use to set goals for professional improvement.
- Consider developing a rubric for evaluating candidates’ reflection and analysis.
- Consider expanding new Panelist training by assigning a mentor Panelist to each new Panelist.
- Consider expanding new Panelist training by inviting new Panelists to observe a Peer Review interview prior to serving on a panel.
- Consider hosting collaborative workgroups designed to calibrate Panelists’ rater effectiveness.
- Consider setting a minimum amount of required lesson plans and examples of student work that is required in portfolios, and limit the number of times evidence may be cited.

STANDARD I: Standards-Based Preparation

Programs provide candidates with coherent and purposeful instructional experiences. Programs assure that candidates acquire content-rich general knowledge and the knowledge, skills, dispositions, and pedagogy of their content area(s) as reflected in *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements. **RATING: Approaching Standard**

1.01 - Peer Review assures that candidates have acquired content-rich general knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences, have rich content across the disciplines, and have completed a liberal arts major that will complement knowledge in their endorsement area(s). RATING: AS

- Peer Review’s assessment system is designed to determine whether candidates have acquired content-rich general knowledge in the liberal arts and sciences, have rich content across the disciplines, and have completed a liberal arts major that will complement knowledge in their endorsement area(s).
- Peer Review attracts candidates with diverse real-world experiences.
- Candidates must hold at least a baccalaureate degree as a condition for admission to PR.
- An evaluation panel determines whether candidates meet the endorsement requirements through the portfolio and interview process.
- Although the IP reports that the panel and the Peer Review Consultant review candidates’ transcripts to ensure that candidates complete a liberal arts major complements their knowledge in the endorsement area they seek, the Team found sparse record of this process occurring.
- Praxis I is required before a candidate’s portfolio will be accepted.

1.02 –Peer Review assures that candidates have developed in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge in the endorsement area(s) sought, including the central concepts, the tools of inquiry, and the structures of the relevant discipline(s). RATING: AS

- Peer Review’s assessment system is designed to determine whether candidates have developed in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge in the endorsement area(s) sought, including the central concepts, the tools of inquiry, and the structures of the relevant discipline(s). Consequently please also reference Standard III and IV for a comprehensive overview of the Team’s findings.
- The Team observed that in many cases Panelists did not thoroughly complete the portfolio scoring forms and inconsistencies existed among completed forms.
- The Team found that when Panelists thoroughly complete the portfolio evaluation rubric it documented that Peer Review’s assessment system is capable of determining if a candidate has acquired in-depth content and pedagogical knowledge required for the endorsement area sought.
- The Team found little evidence confirming that Peer Review evaluated transcripts for evidence of a major, or the equivalent in the endorsement area, which is required for some endorsements.
- Peer Review uses forms that “cluster” the endorsement competencies, but the clusters do not include all requirements. Endorsement area examples include ECE, SpEd, K-12 cert, and middle level education.
- Although panels are comprised of experienced professionals, interviews with Panelists indicated that they may not be aware of current research-based best practices (e.g., use of the Common Core).
- Assessment of candidates for ELA endorsement present particular challenges. As one panelist observed, “Unless the candidate has a good placement and support from a mentor, they will have a difficult time meeting all the standards. They need to be in a placement that allows for the use of data in driving instruction, and provide for formative assessment. Otherwise they will have to take a balanced literacy class.”

1.03 – Peer Review assures that candidates have learned how preK-12 children develop, how they differ in their approaches to learning, and how to create equitable learning experiences that are responsive to all students’ intellectual, social, physical and emotional development. RATING: AS

- The Peer Review Panelists review the candidate’s evidence for Principle # 2: *The Educator understands how individuals learn and grow and provides learning opportunities that support intellectual, physical, social, and emotional development.*
- The Panel also reviews evidence for Principle #3: *The educator understands how individuals and groups differ and creates equitable instructional opportunities that respond to the needs of all students,* and Principle #8: *The educator integrates students with disabilities into appropriate learning situations.*
- There is evidence that Panelists are considering how applicants address this issue both at the child development level and within efforts to differentiate as shown in portfolios, lesson plans and notes on score sheets for endorsements. However, evidence was inconsistent and there were some conflicting opinions on the competency sheets completed by the Peer Review Panelists.

1.04– Peer Review assures that candidates demonstrate technological literacy and the ability to use technology in instruction within their endorsement area(s). RATING: E

- The Peer Review Panel reviews evidence for Principle # 9: *The educator integrates current technologies in instruction, assessment and professional productivity* by reviewing lesson plans and examples of student work for evidence of technological literacy.
- The Team found significant variations in the amount and quality of evidence provided by candidates to support that they have met this indicator.

- The Team concluded that Panelists demonstrated significant variations in scoring the quality of evidence provided by candidates.
- It was also noted that some Panelists accepted minimal evidence of candidates' ability to use technology to positively impact student learning.

1.05– Peer Review assures that candidates have learned how to plan curriculum, instruction and assessment activities and structure positive learning environments aligned with the Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling, the 16 Principles for Vermont Educators, the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, the Grade Expectations, and the endorsement requirements. RATING: M

- Peer Review requires that candidates demonstrate their ability to plan, instruct and assess lessons by responding to several principles 3-7, 10, 12, 13 and 15 within their portfolios.
- Interview data documents that Panelists lack training in the Common Core and experience in assessing a candidate's ability to plan, instruct and evaluate in reference to the Common Core.
- Peer Review has increased its requirements for the inclusion of lesson plans and students work. However, Panelists inconsistently evaluated students' work in relation to the candidates' ability to positively impact student learning.
- There was limited evidence documenting that candidates plan, instruct and evaluate in reference to the Common Core.

1.06 – Peer Review assures that candidates are reflective practitioners and can plan for professional growth. RATING: M

- The Peer Review Panel reviews the candidate's written reflection and analysis sections for each piece of evidence including Principle # 14: *The educator grows professionally, through a variety of approaches, to improve professional practice and student learning.*
- The Team found that successful candidates evaluate their competencies and devise plans to address requirements that they've not met.
- The Team found that candidates' reflections provide a powerful method of assessing candidates' understandings of planning, designing, and assessment; however Peer Review lacks a system for evaluating candidates' reflections and analysis.
- Peer Review is working to develop a system to better assess candidates' analyses and reflections.
- By participating in Peer Review candidates are showing motivation toward professional development.

1.07 – Peer Review assures that candidates understand and maintain standards of professional conduct guided by legal and ethical principles. RATING: E

- The Peer Review Panelists review the candidate's evidence for Principle #13: *The educator understands laws related to educator rights and responsibilities, and applies current state and federal laws and regulations as they pertain to all children, including those who are at risk and those with disabilities, and treats students and colleagues fairly and equitably.*
- The Team found that letters of recommendation often provided anecdotal evidence of candidates' competency in this area. However, the Team noted that there is no specific requirement that recommendations address this area specifically.

- Peer Review requires acceptable scores on the Attributes and Dispositions form for each candidate seeking an initial license; however, the Team found that the Disposition and Attribute evaluation form was seldom included within the portfolios and those present were inconclusive.
- During interviews, Panelists noted that it is challenging to assess a candidate's professional conduct and that they rely heavily on candidates' recommendations to make a determination.
- The Peer Review Consultant is exploring ways to make the Attributed and Dispositions Form more effective.

Commendations:

- Peer Review Consultant is deeply committed to supporting the development of Peer Review. Her passion and personal energy is evident, and is a signature aspect of the program.
- Panelists determine eligibility based on a multitude of candidate information.
- Peer Review candidates demonstrate rich knowledge across a broad range of fields and diverse real-world experiences; these factors may make them strong educators.

Concerns:

- Peer Review does not have an operable system to assure that candidates understand and maintain standards of professional conduct guided by legal and ethical principles.
- Peer Review uses forms that relate to "clusters" which are not aligned with current teacher certification requirements in VT. Endorsement area examples include ECE, SpEd, K-12 cert, and middle level education.
- Panelists may not be aware of or skilled in evaluating the use of current research-based best practices (e.g., use of the Common Core).
- Peer Review does not formally document the transcript review process.
- Candidates are not required to have a major in the endorsement area sought but are expected to have the equivalent. Panelists are not using the Equivalency Rubric consistently.

Considerations for Further Program Development:

- Once Peer Review has fully implemented the standardized e-portfolio system, consider seeking feedback from Panelists and candidates in order to evaluate and monitor its effectiveness as well as make data-driven improvements.
- Consider creating a menu of options designed to help candidates understand what is considered acceptable evidence for technology integration and how they may document that it was used to improve student learning.
- Consider requiring candidates make audiovisual recordings of their teaching and reflect upon them in reference to Peer Review's requirements and create rubrics for Panelists that will increase inter-rater reliability.
- Consider providing training to Panelists designed to enable them to accurately assess evidence of technological literacy and the ability to use technology in instruction to improve student learning.
- Consider adding goals and identifying indicators of success to the Five-year Plan that ensure Panelists are able to assess the extent to which candidates have learned to plan curriculum, instruction, and assessment activities aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

STANDARD II: Collaboration with Pre-K-12 Schools

The program and its PreK-12 partners are committed to the improvement of teaching and learning for all candidates, cooperating practitioners, PreK-12 students, and college faculty. The program and its school partners design, implement, and evaluate field experiences to ensure that these are high-quality experiences capable of providing a candidate the opportunity to develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills and dispositions as reflected in the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

RATING: Approaching Standard

2.01 - Peer Review establishes collaborative and respectful relationships with school districts and other educational settings to assist candidates in preparing for the Peer Review process.

RATING: NA

2.02 - Institution and programs promote collaboration among higher education, preK-12 faculty and administration to design, implement, and evaluate field experiences to ensure these experiences are high quality learning opportunities. RATING: NA

2.03 – Peer Review assures that candidates have completed purposeful and developmentally sequenced field experiences where they learn to integrate content, pedagogical knowledge, and a full range of professional and general knowledge, in the context of the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements.

RATING: AS

- Candidates compile evidence of their teaching experience, including evaluations, observations, and letters of recommendations to present in their portfolio and to the Peer Review Panel for their review and evaluation.
- The Team observed that evidence of student teaching was consistently included in candidate portfolios, but was inconsistently rated by Panelists; some Panelists used the student teaching rubric while others did not.
- During interviews, Panelists reported that evaluating the quality of a candidate’s student teaching experience was challenging and that they rely heavily on candidates’ recommendations to make a determination.
- During interviews with candidates and Panelists, mentor teachers were cited as an integral component for documenting field experiences. However there is no format for the letters of recommendation that require mentor teachers and supervisors to reflect on a candidate’s performance standards of the appropriate endorsement.

2.04 – Peer Review assures candidates have had a variety of field experiences in classrooms that serve a diverse population of students. RATING: E

- The IP explains that in Vermont, many schools have very diverse socio-economic student populations while others have increasing numbers of refugee populations and English Language Learners. Peer Review candidates have field experiences in schools across Vermont. The Panelists carefully review this evidence when scoring the candidate’s portfolio.

- During interviews, Panelists reported that it was challenging to evaluate whether a candidate has had a variety of field experiences in classrooms that serve a diverse population of students.
- During interviews with Panelists and candidates, interviewees were not able to clarify how diverse populations were represented in the licensure portfolio or how field experiences served diverse populations were evaluated by Peer Review. For example, some Panelists stated that this indicator is assessed during the interview while others said they looked for specific experience in EST, ELL, alternative programs or formal coursework addressing diverse populations.

2.05 – Peer Review assures that candidates have completed field experiences that represent the range of grade levels, content, and requirements of the endorsements sought. RATING: AS

- The Peer Review Consultant reports that in order for a candidate to be recommended for licensure he/she must demonstrate having successfully completed field experiences which involved working with students in the range of grade levels, content, and requirements of the endorsements sought.
- The Team found that Panelists did not consistently document that various grade levels were addressed.
- The Team found some evidence to support that Peer Review ensures that candidates have multiple exposures to at least two grade levels.
- The Team noted that some recommendations limited the endorsement sought which demonstrates an awareness of this indicator.

2.06 - Programs systematically recruit, select, and support field-based faculty who model effective practice and are committed to supervising and assessing candidates' performance with respect to the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements. NA

Concerns:

- There is no system to assure that candidates have field experiences with diverse populations of students.
- Portfolios do not consistently document that candidates have completed field experiences that represent the range of grade levels and content required.

Considerations for Further Program Development:

- Consider requiring candidates, who hold a provisional license, to reflect on his/her progression through the new teacher induction process at their school.
- Consider establishing a format for letters of recommendation that require mentor teachers and supervisors to reflect on a candidate's endorsement performance standards.
- Consider detailing the requirements for mentoring and supervising student teaching experiences.
- Consider providing multiple examples of methods of documenting field experiences in classrooms that serve diverse populations (e.g., an externship at an urban school).

STANDARD IV: Demonstration of Candidate Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

Candidates are knowledgeable in the content area(s) of their endorsements and have the pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for beginning educators as reflected in *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements. **RATING: Meets Standard**

4.01 – Peer Review assures that all candidates demonstrate through the Peer Review Portfolio that they have met the standards of performance for beginning educators as reflected in the Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling, the 16 Principles for Vermont Educators, the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, the Grade Expectations, and the endorsement requirements. RATING: M

- The IP describes the Peer Review portfolio as an assessment method which uses multiple measures including: the handbook, clinic, advising, testing requirements, degree requirements, student teaching equivalent requirement, scoring forms, rubrics, interviews, Attributes and Dispositions Form, Letters of Recommendation, standards based lesson plans, assessments and examples of student work.
- The Team concluded that the Peer Review portfolio enables candidates to document having met Vermont’s standards of performance for beginning educators; however, it is the responsibility of the Panelists to determine whether the documentation that a candidate provides is sufficient.
- A number of portfolios were particularly notable for their quality of reflection and supporting evidence.

4.02 – Peer Review uses the data gathered through the assessment system(s) to assure that candidates recommended for licensure are knowledgeable in the content areas of their endorsements and have the pedagogical knowledge, skills, and dispositions required for beginning educators as reflected in the Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling, the 16 Principles for Vermont Educators, the Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities, the Grade Expectations, and the endorsement requirements. RATING: M

- Peer Review uses qualitative and quantitative data to ensure that candidates have met the knowledge and performance competencies of the endorsement sought.
- The Team concluded that Peer Review requires a sufficient quantity of data, which is extracted from multiple measures, in order to recommend a candidate for licensure; however, dispositions are assessed using letters of recommendation, scores on the Professional Attributes and Dispositions Form, and the interview.

Commendations:

- Peer Review uses multiple assessment measures to determine a candidate’s eligibility for licensure which adds validity to the Peer Review process.

Considerations for Further Program Development:

- Consider requiring Panelists to summarize their analysis of the data candidates present.

STANDARD V: Commitment to Diversity

The institution provides candidates with opportunities to learn from faculty and students from diverse backgrounds in order for candidates to develop a greater appreciation for diversity on our world. The program assures that candidates have the knowledge, skills, and disposition to address issues of diversity in the context of teaching and learning. **RATING: Approaching Standard**

5.01 – The institution and programs are committed to providing an environment where issues of diversity are explored and addressed. RATING: NA

5.02 – The Program recruits and supports students from diverse backgrounds. RATING: M

- The Review Team concluded that the adults who join and emerge from this program are from a variety of backgrounds and have very different strengths and weaknesses.
- The Peer Review Consultant provides a high level of support through intensive advising for candidates who request to work with her.
- There was evidence of cultural diversity during the Meet and Greet Dinner in both candidates and Panelists.
- The clinic that the Team observed included people of diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- The IP explained that Peer Review is a partner of the Vermont Teacher Diversity Scholarship program, which is a non-profit program dedicated to enhancing the educational experiences of all students in Vermont public schools by ensuring that they experience the talents of capable teachers and administrators from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds. The VTDSP is a loan cancellation program to support students from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds who wish to become teachers or administrators in the Vermont public school system.
- No candidate data relating to diversity was reported.

5.03 – Peer Review recruits, hires, supports, and retains Panelists from diverse backgrounds. RATING: IE (inconclusive evidence)

- The Team did not observe conclusive evidence to support that Peer Review recruits, hires, supports and retains Panelists from diverse backgrounds.
- The IP indicates that Peer Review does not recruit Panelists. New Panelists have been recommended from the VT Department of Education, experienced educators or Local Standards Board members throughout Vermont.
- The Team observed evidence that Peer Review seeks Panelists who are linguistically capable of conducting interviews with candidates who have acquired English as an additional language.

5.04 – Peer Review assures that candidates have acquired knowledge of other cultures and communities, and have explored issues of diversity, and have developed skills to apply this knowledge in their teaching and learning. RATING: E

- Evidence in the portfolios was not descriptive or substantial enough to indicate that candidates have knowledge of other cultures and communities.
- The Team observed some evidence of how candidates apply their knowledge of diverse cultures and communities to improve student learning. For example, a portfolio for a library media specialist showed thoughtful selection of multicultural literature to support her library resources, another portfolio contained examples of documents translated into Spanish to accommodate Spanish-speaking students.
- The Team reviewed rubrics used as an assessment tool, but noted that they were inconstantly completed.
- During interviews, Panelist expressed difficulty assessing candidates in relation to this indicator.
- According to the Peer Review Consultant, the principles do not directly address the OTHERness inherent in this indicator, a comment with which the panel agrees.
- Candidates were not formally assessed for addressing issues of diversity in the context of teaching and learning.

5.05 - Peer Review assures that candidates understand conditions which may lead to discrimination and how to take proactive steps to address discrimination. RATING: AS

- Peer Review requires candidates to respond to Principle #10: The educator understands conditions and actions which would tend to discriminate against students on the basis of sex, race, color, creed, age, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin, and takes proactive steps to address discrimination.
- Candidate interviews reveal an inconsistent understanding of discrimination in education as required in Principle 10.
- Candidates described having attended workshops, conferences and courses to demonstrate having acquired an understanding of discriminatory conditions and actions. Coursework on bullying and harassment were also cited.
- Candidates infrequently identified steps that they have taken (or observed) that proactively address discrimination.
- Panelists infrequently noted when candidates reflected on situations that they had handled which directly related to this indicator.
- The rubric, designed to assess candidates' understanding of the potential impact of discrimination and their proficiencies relating to proactively addressing discrimination, was inconsistently used.
- Peer Review provided no evidence of triangulating data from portfolio, mentor/letters of recommendation, and interviews to confirm that candidates meet this indicator.

5.06 - Peer Review assures that candidates create educational climates that encourage respect for self and others, positive social action, and personal health and safety. RATING: AS

- Candidates provide a variety of lesson plans and reflections to support Principle #5: The educator creates a classroom climate that encourages respect for self and others, positive social interaction, and personal health and safety.
- Although candidates are required to reflect on their experience implementing strategies and techniques to encourage positive classroom environments, the Team found the Panelists inconsistently assessed candidate reflections.
- The personal attributes and dispositions form and the student teaching evaluation form do not reference this indicator.

- Some letters of recommendation directly reflect on candidates' ability to create positive environments for student learning while others do not.
- The Team concluded that Peer Review does not assess candidates' competencies in relation to this indicator with intentionality.

Commendations:

- Candidates who submitted foreign language portfolios excelled at demonstrating cultural competence and their ability to apply their knowledge to improve teaching and learning.
- Since the last ROPA Review, Peer Review has taken steps to assure that candidates understand diversity and equity in the teaching and learning process.

Concerns:

- Peer Review Panelists do not consistently assess candidate proficiencies at creating healthful and respectful classroom environments.
- Peer Review does not assure that candidates understand conditions which may lead to discrimination and how to take proactive steps to address discrimination.
- Peer Review does not assure that candidates have acquired knowledge of other cultures and communities, and have explored issues of diversity, and have developed skills to apply this knowledge in their teaching and learning.

Considerations for Further Program Development:

- Consider using foreign language portfolios as examples of how to document cultural competence and ability to apply knowledge to improve teaching and learning.
- Consider establishing a format for recommendations that require reflection on candidates' understanding of the potential impact of discrimination and examples of candidates proactively addressing discrimination.
- Consider adding interview questions that require candidates to reflect on their understanding of the potential impact of discrimination and identify examples they have taken or observed that proactively address discrimination.
- Consider requiring candidates to make audiovisual recordings of their teaching and reflect upon them in reference to this standard; create rubrics to increase inter-rater reliability.
- Consider requiring candidates to use technologies to apply their knowledge of diverse cultures and communities to improve student learning.
- Consider recruiting candidates particularly from areas in Vermont that are experiencing teacher shortages and/or teacher shortages in specific content areas (e.g., STEM).

STANDARD VI: Resources

The institution provides its educator preparation programs with the funding, personnel, resources, and authority necessary to prepare quality educators as described in Vermont's ROPA Standards. **RATING:AS**

6.01 – The program is part of a higher education institution that is accredited by NEASC.

Rating: NA

6.02 – The governance structure for the Program assures a clear route for programs to plan, deliver, maintain, and improve quality educator programs. RATING: M

- Peer Review has a streamlined structure of governance as well as clear supervision and communication paths.
- Peer Review operates out of the Vermont Agency of Education (AOE) under the supervision of the Director of Educator Quality. The AOE provides Peer Review with the personnel, resources and funding, supplemented by Peer Review's revenue, necessary to recommend quality educators for licensure.
- The Peer Review Consultant attends regular meetings with the Director of Education Quality, as evidenced by agendas, which provide opportunities for communication regarding department initiatives and guidance for problem-solving.
- The Peer Review Advisory Committee (PRAC), a result of the 2006 ROPA review, was designed to support planning, implementation, self-assessment and programmatic improvements.
- The PRAC is comprised of current Peer Review Panelists, the Coordinator of the Teacher Apprentice Program, and Peer Review program completers.
- The Peer Review Consultant noted that opportunities for professional development are available in a variety of areas and opportunities are approved by the Director of Education Quality.
- Funding for professional development is available from the VTAOE departmental general funds as well as from the Peer Review budget and are managed by the Director of Education Quality.

6.03 – The AOE provides adequate resources to support a quality assessment program which assures that candidates meet the *Five Standards for Vermont Educators: A Vision for Schooling*, the *16 Principles for Vermont Educators*, the *Vermont Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities*, the *Grade Expectations*, and the endorsement requirements. RATING: AS

- Peer Review generates revenue that supports its administrative team, operating expenses as well as the Panelists' stipends and mileage reimbursement.
- Fiscal resources are in place to support the Consultant and administrative assistant.
- Funding for professional development can be supported within the budget, but there is also backup funding through other departmental resources.
- Consideration should be given toward ensuring that the Peer Review Consultant is given adequate administrative support.
- Panelists are paid \$100 plus mileage for each panel they serve on.

6.04 - Peer Review receives AOE support and resources that allow for and promote collaboration among constituencies (e.g. TAP). RATING: NA

6.05 - The Peer Review's resources and practices allow personnel to be effectively engaged collaboration and professional development. RATING: NA

6.06 – The AOE provides resources to assure that technologies for Peer Review management are current. RATING: A

- The Peer Review Consultant is actively working on implementing a standardized e-portfolio process which will replace all paper portfolios once completed. This is a collaborative effort with an external consultant and two other members of the VT AOE. This will help streamline the process as Panelists will receive the web addresses for portfolios and is responsive to comments from Panelists regarding having a more standard format. Currently paper portfolios are often creatively organized

which results in time consuming efforts on the part of the panel to find the pieces of evidence required for them to review the portfolios.

- The technical assistance provided by the VT Department of Education's Technology Team is timely and able to provide technical solutions to the Peer Review Consultant and Administrative Assistant.
- The VT Department of Education's website includes the Peer Review information and is maintained by AOE personnel.
- The Team understands that Peer Review has access to the AOE's technological resources, but determined that Peer Review has not fully utilized the available technologies to manage its programming.

6.07 - The AOE provides Peer Review with the resources needed to meet the ROPA standards and to implement the Five-year Plan. RATING: AS

- The Director of Educator Quality reported that there are adequate resources available to assist the Peer Review Consultant to implement the Five-year Plan.
- The current Five-year Plan addresses some of the program goals listed in the institutional portfolio, but not all.
- There is evidence of improvement plans within Five-year Planning and the Institutional Portfolio. It should be noted that the Five-year Plan would be improved by including each of the noted program goals from the Institutional Portfolio along with the resources needed (including personnel) and appropriate times lines for implementation.

Commendations:

- Plans are in place to migrate to an electronic portfolio system which will enable candidates to showcase their work in a more standardized manner. This change is expected to make candidate portfolios more accessible to Panelists.
- The Peer Review administration and staff are deeply committed to running an efficient program and to providing an alternate route to licensure for prospective Vermont educators.
- Peer Review has made significant progress toward addressing the concerns of the Review Team since its last ROPA evaluation in 2007.
- Since its last ROPA evaluation, Peer Review has increased its use of technology to support its programming.
- The PRAC provides support for the planning, implementation, self-assessment and programmatic improvements.
- It is of special note that plans are in place to migrate to an electronic portfolio system which will enable candidates to showcase their work in a more standardized manner.

Concerns:

- Peer Review Panelists may not be compensated adequately for the time they spend reviewing portfolios, interviewing, and following the action plan process to fruition.
- Based on the current stipend, Peer Review Panelists may not be compensated adequately for the training required to ensure inter-rater reliability.
- Peer Review does not adequately utilize technology to standardize its record keeping systems and organize the work of the Panelists.
- There is limited evidence of ongoing support and professional development for the Peer Review Consultant.

Considerations for Further Program Development:

- Consider expanding training efforts for Panelists to remain current with regulation, endorsement changes and program assessment methods
- Consider utilizing web-based technologies to connect candidates with Peer Review Panelists during interviews to help address geographic challenges.
- Consider having the Peer Review Consultant train to become a licensing officer, and have access to the appropriate communication avenues (such as listserves, on-line professional learning communities, etc.) to keep them apprised of changes in educator preparation.
- Consider setting criteria for becoming a Panelist and document their credentials.
- Consider including the goals listed in the IP in the Five-year Plan and include appropriate time lines, specific personnel assignments, and indicators of success.

STANDARD VII: Institutional and Program Renewal

To evaluate its quality effectiveness in preparing knowledgeable and skilled beginning educators, the institutions and programs engage in ongoing self-assessment in relation to each of the ROPA standards. Programs use the data collected from the institutional and program assessment system to design and implement a Five-year Plan for improvement that is consistent with the program's theme and has support across the institution. **RATING: Approaching Standard**

7.01 – Peer Review has a comprehensive system for engaging in ongoing self-assessment in relation to each of the ROPA standards. RATING: E

- The Team found this indicator challenging to rate because Peer Review is not required to self-assess in relation to all of the ROPA indicators (e.g., 2.01, 2.02, and 5.01 are not applicable).
- Peer Review Consultant has successfully implemented systems that support candidates and Panelists; however, the Team found limited evidence of a comprehensive record keeping system that documents candidates' progression through the program as well as its effectiveness at assuring that all candidates meet the knowledge and performance competencies.
- The creation of PRAC has enhanced Peer Review's self-assessment system; however due to its recent induction, the PRAC has yet to demonstrate that it regularly and effectively uses data to make programmatic changes that improve Peer Review's ability to achieve its mission.

7.02 –Peer Review demonstrates progress on the Five-year Plan and concerns from the previous ROPA evaluation(s). RATING: M

- In reference to the concerns noted in the last ROPA Review and the progress made toward meeting the goals of the Five-year Plan, the Team noted the following:

Goal #1: Establish a Peer Review Advisory Committee:

- A Peer Review Advisory Committee was formed in 2007.

Goal #2: Develop a Mission Statement:

- A Peer Review mission statement was developed by PRAC in 2007.

Goal #3: Develop guidelines/rubrics (for candidates, Panelists and supervisor) to determine adequate student teaching documentation:

- PRAC developed a rubric to assist Panelists when reviewing evidence for the student teaching requirement, but Panelists use it inconsistently.

- PRAC developed a list of possible questions for Panelists to use to further assess a candidate's professional attributes and dispositions.

Goal #4: Establish/improve guidelines in order to provide consistency when reviewing portfolio documentation but continue to allow for individuality:

- Peer Review now requires that examples of student work be included in portfolios, but inter-rater reliability continues to be a concern.

Goal #5: Develop guidelines/rubrics for candidates and Panelists to determine what does or does not meet the additional requirements (major; minor)

- PRAC developed a worksheet for Panelists to use when assessing the Additional Requirements of a major/minor, but could be used more consistently.
- The Team also noted that additional candidate advising has been implemented by the Peer Review Consultant and the Peer Review clinic has been designed to inform potential candidates of the process.

7.03 – Peer Review reports and reflects on the findings from ROPA standards I-VI and other relevant data. They use data collected to design a Five-year Plan for improvement. RATING: M

- As a result of addressing the concerns of the previous ROPA review, Peer Review has acquired data from employers and candidates that may be used to make program improvements; however, it is suggested that improvements be made to the data collection system
- Evidence of reporting and reflecting upon the finding of the last ROPA Review are noted in the institutional portfolio. For example, the IP describes program strengths, challenges, and goals.
- The Team noted that the five year plan would be clearer if it specifically referenced each of the concerns of the previous Review Team, recognized the resources needed and identified indicators of success.

Commendations:

- The Peer Review Consultant has successfully implemented systems to support candidates and Panelists as demonstrated by the creation of the Peer Review Advisory Committee (PRAC) and the progress shown toward addressing the concerns of the previous Full ROPA Review.

Concern:

- There is limited evidence of a comprehensive record keeping system that documents candidates' progression through the program as well as its effectiveness at assuring that all candidates meet the knowledge and performance competencies.
- There is limited evidence that the Peer Review Advisory Committee (PRAC) regularly and effectively uses self-assessment data to make programmatic changes that improve Peer Review's ability to achieve its mission.

Considerations for Further Program Development:

- Consider adding a timeline for the revision of the appeal process to the Five-year Plan.



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Vermont Agency of Education Peer Review Program

Institutional Rejoinder to the Full Review Team Results Oriented Program Approval (ROPA) Site Visit August 7& 8, 2018.

We wish to thank the ROPA review team's time and effort in reviewing the Peer Review (PR) program. In particular we thank Ellen Cairns and Dr. Fuller for writing the report. The ROPA process is a substantial undertaking for all involved. We recognize the additional challenges faced by the team while reviewing the only alternative, non-higher education-based program in the state of Vermont. What makes Peer Review an alternative program as opposed to a traditional program, is that Peer Review is not an educator preparation program, it is a program that evaluates a candidate's documented evidence of experiences to meet required competencies and standards. We think this critical difference placed some unique challenges on the review team because the ROPA lens is designed to focus on traditional, educator preparation programs. We note that these challenges date back to at least 2002 in VSBPE documents. Upon review of the team's finding, we respectfully submit a rejoinder to the Peer Review ROPA report.

In the ROPA review team's report, the length of the conditional approval is unclear, nor does the report state explicitly what PR must do to move from conditional approval to full approval. The conditions are not outlined, and the stipulations are vague. Of course, Peer Review will be submitting a Seven Year Plan with much appreciation for the valuable insight and assistance the review team has provided. Many of the consideration and comments will be beneficial to the program. The Seven Year Plan will be based on the review team's report nearly point by point indicating what Peer Review will do to meet Full Approval.

From the Report

Peer Review is an alternate route to licensure which contracts with licensed educators who form a panel to determine candidate's qualification for licensure based on their prior experience and submission of a Vermont Licensure Portfolio. Peer Review does not prepare candidates, but rather assesses their previous preparation, which is usually not through a traditional educator-preparation program but through life experience. (ROPA Report, 2018, 1).

Peer Review Response: *The Peer Review program does not assess a candidate's preparation. A fundamental premise of the non-higher education based, alternate route to licensure, is that candidates demonstrate competence in required standards, through a myriad of rich and diverse experiences. This is a key attribute of the program. How one candidate demonstrates competency compared to another candidate differs. Panelists do not assess the candidate's preparation, they assess the candidate's evidence of mastery of the required standards and competencies both through their document evidence and through an interview process with the candidate.*

From the Report

This is the third ROPA review of the Peer Review program since it has been housed at the Agency of Education. The team reviewed the Institutional Portfolio and interviewed current candidates, program completers, panelists, hiring administrators, and AOE personnel. The findings of this team are consistent with past ROPA reviews (ROPA Report, 2018, 1).

Peer Review Response: *While findings are the same, ROPA is also the same. In previous ROPA reviews of Peer Review, teams have been assessing how panelists assess a candidate's preparation, and not if the candidate is competent based on evidence. We respectfully submit that perhaps this is a large indication that the ROPA assessment process needs to be changed to better assess a non-preparatory, non-higher education based, alternate route to licensure.*

From the Report

In addition, there has been some uncertainty about which requirements Peer Review needs to adhere to when recommending candidates for licensure (examples are the SLLA and the requirement for a Liberal Arts and Science undergraduate degree). The team commends the current Peer Review program for working to clear up these uncertainties and ensure that candidates are meeting all of the necessary licensing requirements (ROPA Report, 2018, 2).

Peer Review Response: *We are unclear about which evidence collected by the team leads to this statement regarding uncertainty.*

From the Report

Stipulations

Compliance with the requirement of candidates having completed an undergraduate degree in the liberal arts and sciences should be in effect immediately for any new candidates entering the program. (see Rule 5231 and Policy N8) (p.3)

Peer Review Response: *Respectfully, we think this is a misinterpretation of Rule and a misrepresentation of the current practice of Peer Review. Peer Review follows the VSBPE rule #5332 Alternate Route to Licensure, page 22. "An individual who holds at least a baccalaureate degree...who has successfully completed a major, or its equivalent, in the liberal arts and sciences, or in the content area of the endorsement sought,..." All Peer Review completers have either a major in the liberal arts and sciences or in the content areas sought or the equivalent as is demonstrated in the Peer Review, Institutional Portfolio. For example: the candidates who hold a Bachelor's of Fine Arts are accepted based on VSBPE rule "in the content area of the endorsement sought".*

From the Report

Standard 1--Content Knowledge, Pedagogy, and Professional Dispositions Indicator 1.1

ROPA Team Concern: The "Peer Review Attributes and Dispositions Verification" is used inconsistently....Training is need to endure that the form is being used rigorously and consistently. Mentor Teachers should be provided with examples of evidence that they might look for in determining whether a candidate has adequately met each item on the form (ROPA Report, 2018, 3).

Peer Review Response: *The Professional Disposition and Attributes form changed in 2017 to a VLP based format with a proficiency- based rubric. Peer Review does not have contact with mentor teachers so providing them with training to use the form does not align with our program's premise.*

From the Report

ROPA Team Concern: Candidate are not required to write authentic lessons; some candidate pull together plans that are available through programs used in their placement school, or lessons accessed online. There is no clear process for assessing candidate's lesson plans specifically (ROPA

Report, 2018, 3). Candidates could be required to provide a full, sequential unit of study that they have implemented in a classroom (ROPA Report, 2018, 10).

Peer Review Response: *This is factually incorrect. Peer Review provides candidates with a lesson plan template based upon the VT Core Teaching Standards (IP evidence). Additionally, the new VLP requires evidence of a unit plan and five lesson plans (IP evidence). Peer Review Panelists assess on a case by basis through Panelists assessment of the portfolio evidence and during the interview process. It is not haphazard. Additionally, authentic lessons are supplied in candidate portfolios.*

From the Report

Per mentor teachers we interviewed..... (ROPA Report, 2018, 3)

Peer Review Response: *We raise issue with this because there is no indication of how many mentor teachers were interviewed in this case. The concern is that this is vague, while significant, because no indication of how many of the total mentor teachers interviewed/asked this question gave a particular response.*

From the Report

ROPA Team Concern: There was varying evidence in the IP and through interviews that candidates are meeting this standard based on their portfolio work. The team observed examples of candidate portfolio evidence for particular standards that would not have been rated as satisfactory by ROPA team members who rate VLPs as part of their professional responsibilities, yet were rated as “Adequate” by panelists. This speaks to the lack of training and inter-rater reliability for panelists. (ROPA Report, 2018, 3-4).

Peer Review Response: *It is our opinion that this concern should be redacted because it makes an assumption about inter-rater reliability based on another assumption that one who rates VLPs as part of their professional responsibilities is more equipped to rate VLPs than practitioners in the field rating other professionals. That is, while we fully accept that professional raters of VLP’s (college faculty) and practitioners (teachers/PR panelists) may, and probably often do, rate VLP’s differently, we do not accept the assumption that one does it better than the other. The larger issue that begs to be addressed with this concern, is that it is an unfounded assumption to suggest the quality of the eventual teacher will be better because his or her VLP was rated by college faculty or by teacher panelists or vice versa.*

From the Report

ROPA Team Concern: One candidate interviewed showed limited understanding of central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) they are planning to teach and has decided to try to complete the Peer Review process a second time. (ROPA Report, 2018, 6)

Peer Review Response: *Peer Review candidates who do not submit their portfolios within the two- year limit can reapply to Peer Review, however, there is no “repeating” the process once a portfolio has been submitted. Plan of Action is required for those candidate’s whom panelists assess as not meeting the standards/competencies. This process speaks to the rigor of the program.*

From the Report

ROPA Team Concern: Panelists have not been trained on the use of the VLP to score candidate work; the inconsistent scoring is a concern and was also noted as a concern in the 2013 ROPA report. In addition, panelists should be required to write comments when scoring a candidate portfolio. Some panelists consistently wrote in justifications, some wrote little to nothing. This would then be information that could be gathered for programmatic assessment and improvement (ROPA Report, 2018, 9).

Peer Review Response: *This is factually incorrect. The panelists have received training materials, exemplars and videos of interviews with the new VLP format as demonstrated in the IP evidence submitted. In 2017 Peer Review began the implementation of the VSBPE required VLP. The new VLP has rubrics, which for inter-rater reliability amongst panelists. The challenges associated with implementing a format geared towards traditional educator preparation programs were formidable. Still, we agree that further training of panelists is needed, but programmatic assessment is an EPP term and not relevant to Peer Review where candidates are not “taught” but demonstrate through experience if they meet the standards.*

From the Report

However, the *result* is that the candidate was able to use items that were, at best, superficially related to the Standard or, for the letters, not at all. The panelists did not scrutinize the items thoroughly or provide detailed rationales for their scores (ROPA Report, 2018, 7).

Peer Review Response: *We believe this is conjecture with little consideration given to the interview process, which rounds out the portfolio process, and weighs heavily in panelist's determination for licensure.*

From the Report

Indicator 1.6

In an interview with panelists, there was no consensus as to whether or not candidates provided adequate evidence for this standard.
(ROPA Report, 2018, 8).

Peer Review Response: *As noted previously in the Peer Review Responses above there is no indication of how many of the total number of panelists asked this question during the interview(s) gave that particular response.*

From the Report

Standard II Systems of Assessment

Concerns: There is no evidence to show that candidates are informed that they have to have an undergraduate degree in the liberal arts or sciences, or in the content area of the endorsement sought (Rule 5231) (ROPA Report, 2018, 12).

Peer Review Response: *This is incorrect. Peer Review follows the VSBPE rule #5332 Alternate Route to Licensure; An individual who holds at least a baccalaureate degree...who has successfully completed a major, or its equivalent, in the liberal arts and sciences, or in the content area of the endorsement sought, may be licensed by completing an alternate preparation process approved by the Standards Board. This information is provided to candidates in the mandatory clinic and website.*