Maryland
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.
State Superintendent of Schools

TO: Members of the Education Policy Committee

FROM: Carey M. Wright, Ed.D. State Superintendent of Schools

DATE: November 19, 2026

SUBJECT: COMAR 13A.07.06.08 State Program Approval Requirements
Permission to Adopt

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

Pillar 2: High-Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders
Goal: Every school has high-quality and diverse teachers and leaders.
Outcome: 2.A: Increase the percentage of teachers with a professional license.

Purpose

The purpose of this item is to request permission to adopt amendments to the Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR) 13A.07.06.08 *State Program Approval Requirements.* These amendments serve to realign COMAR with Md Code, Education Article §6-126, which was amended during the 2026 legislative session by Senate Bill (SB) 311, as well as with Md. Code, Education Article §25-401-§25-402, a new law established by Senate Bill 238.

Background

Under Maryland law, the Professional Standards and Teacher Education Board (PSTEB) shares joint authority with the State Board of Education (SBOE) to develop regulations governing teacher certification and preparation. When the PSTEB initiates a regulatory change, the SBOE must also review the proposed regulation. If a majority of the SBOE members approve of the regulation, the regulation promulgation process continues.

After the PSTEB and SBOE vote to approve a regulation, the proposed regulation is sent to the Administrative, Executive, and Legislative Review Committee (AELR) for a 15-day review period. If the AELR Committee does not hold up the proposed regulation for further review, it is published in the Maryland Register for a 30-day public comment period. At the end of the comment period, Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) staff reviews and summarizes the public comments, which are presented to both boards. Thereafter, MSDE staff will present a recommendation to both the PSTEB and SBOE to either: (1) adopt the regulation in the form it was proposed; or (2) revise the regulation and adopt it as final because the suggested revision is not a substantive change; or (3) withdraw the regulation and re-propose it because the suggested revision is a substantive change. At any time during this process, the AELR Committee may stop the promulgation process and hold a hearing. Thereafter, it may recommend to the Governor that the regulation not be

adopted as a final regulation, or the AELR Committee may release the regulation for final adoption. The PSTEB and SBOE would then vote to adopt the regulation.

Executive Summary

COMAR 13A.07.06.08 establishes the requirements for Maryland-approved educator preparation programs, including entrance requirements, standards and competencies, clinical experiences, and exit requirements. During the 2026 legislative session, SB 311 modified Md. Code, Education Article §6-126, expanding the options for Maryland program candidates to demonstrate pedagogical knowledge for initial licensure. The amended law allows Maryland program candidates to demonstrate pedagogical knowledge by completing one of the following performance assessment options:

1. The edTPA (i.e., nationally recognized performance-based assessment);
2. A portfolio–based assessment developed by a Maryland teacher preparation program that has national accreditation or has been approved by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE);
3. A local education agency induction program that meets certain statutory requirements approved by the Accountability and Implementation Board and MSDE; or
4. The MSDE-sponsored Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

Additionally, Senate Bill 238, effective October 1, 2026, established Maryland in the Interstate Compact for School Psychologists. The development of the Compact was led by the Council of State Governments National Center for Interstate Compacts, National Association of School Psychologists, and the U.S. Department of Defense. This Compact is designed to make it easier for qualified school psychologists to provide services across participating states while maintaining professional standards. Member states must align preparation and licensure requirements with the requirements outlined in the Compact.

On July 9, 2026, and July 28, 2026, the PSTEB and SBOE, respectively, granted permission to publish the amendments in the Maryland Register for public comment. No comments were received.

Action

MSDE is requesting that the SBOE grant permission to adopt amendments to COMAR 13A.07.06.08 *State Program Approval Requirements.*

Attachment

COMAR 13A.07.06.08 State Program Approval Requirements.pdf

.08 State Program Approval Requirements.

A. Entry Requirements for Teacher Preparation Programs.

(1) A provider of a traditional program shall require candidates to have a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale during the most recent 2 years of the candidate's post-secondary education or demonstrate mastery of general knowledge by providing evidence of a qualifying score, as established by the State Superintendent of Schools and as approved by the State Board of Education (SBOE), on a basic skills assessment.

(2) A provider of an alternative program shall require candidates to submit:

(a) A GPA of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale at the post-secondary level, or demonstrate mastery of general knowledge by providing evidence of a qualifying score, as established by the State Superintendent of Schools and as approved by the SBOE, on a basic skills assessment; and

(b) Evidence of one of the following:

(i) A conferred bachelor's degree or higher with a major related to the program licensure area;

(ii) A conferred bachelor's degree or higher with a minimum of 24 semester hours of credit related to the licensure area; or

(iii) A conferred bachelor's degree or higher and evidence of a qualifying score on an approved content assessment, as established by the State Superintendent of Schools and as approved by the SBOE.

B. Waiver of Entry Requirements.

(1) A provider of a program may waive the entrance requirement for up to 10 percent of the candidates admitted in an annual cohort.

(2) A provider of a program shall implement strategies to ensure that candidates admitted under a waiver receive assistance to successfully demonstrate the required standards and competencies and meet requirements for licensure on exit from the program.

C. Standards and Competencies.

(1) A provider shall ensure that its teacher preparation programs provide the following for all candidates:

(a) Instruction and experiences in the core academic subjects that the teacher will be teaching, aligned with Maryland-recognized national content and pedagogy standards listed under Regulation .03A of this chapter;

(b) Instruction and experiences aligned with Department-approved competencies under Regulations .12—.15 of this chapter;

(c) Instruction in the Department-approved Model Code of Ethics for Educators;

(d) Instruction in teaching in high poverty, culturally diverse, and linguistically diverse schools under Regulation .15 of this chapter;

(e) Instruction in research-based literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading for the grade level the individual will be teaching; and

(f) Training in the skills and techniques for teaching effectively in a virtual learning environment, including the use of online curricula.

(2) A provider of a teacher preparation program leading to licensure in early childhood education, elementary education, English as a Second Language, and special education shall:

(a) Provide coursework demonstrating coverage of research-based literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading including phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension;

(b) Use high-quality curricula and materials that accurately detail the principles of scientifically based reading practices;

(c) Provide opportunities for candidates to demonstrate mastery of reading instruction through in-class assignments, tests, and instructional practice; and

(d) Prepare candidates to interpret reading assessment data to identify students with reading difficulties and inform instruction.

(3) A provider shall ensure that programs preparing candidates for licensure in early childhood and elementary education provide content instruction in each of the following:

(a) English language arts;

(b) Social studies;

(c) Math; and

(d) Science.

(4) Programs for Specialists.

(a) The Department shall approve specialists programs according to the national standards listed in Regulation .03A of this chapter[.];

(b) A program leading to licensure as a school psychologist shall require a candidate to:

(i) Complete a minimum of 1200 hours of supervised practicum of which at least 600 hours is completed in a school; and

(ii) Pass an exam approved by the State Board of Education.

(5) Programs for Administrators.

(a) The Department shall approve administrator programs according to the national standards listed in Regulation .03A of this chapter.

(b) A provider of a program that offers courses in school administration shall:

(i) Develop a method for evaluating the potential of candidates to be effective school leaders;

(ii) Develop a curriculum to enable candidates to organize and manage both schools and highly skilled professionals in a professional work environment, and achieve effective peer observations and effective evaluations of other personnel;

(iii) Include clinical experiences and assessments that measure competencies established in the program curriculum; and

(iv) Include instruction in research-based literacy instruction aligned to the science of reading.

D. Clinical Experiences.

(1) Each participant in an undergraduate, graduate, or alternative teacher preparation program shall complete a teacher training practicum as a requirement for program completion.

(2) A provider shall ensure that a teacher training program incorporates classroom observations in which the candidate is observed in different school settings at the beginning of the program to assist in determining if the candidate has the aptitude and temperament for teaching.

(3) A teacher training practicum may be completed consecutively or over the course of the program.

(4) Before July 1, 2025, a provider shall ensure that a teacher preparation program has a required practicum of a minimum of 100 days.

(5) Minimum Required Practicum.

(a) Beginning on July 1, 2025, a provider shall ensure that:

(i) An undergraduate teacher preparation program has a required practicum equivalent to a full school year;

(ii) A graduate teacher preparation program has a required practicum of a minimum of 100 days; and

(iii) An alternative teacher preparation program has a required practicum equivalent to a full school year.

(b) Exceptions.

(i) If an alternative teacher preparation program operating in Maryland on or before July 1, 2021, provides effective and diverse teachers in schools and local school systems, as approved by the State Superintendent, and has high rates of teacher vacancies, teacher turnover, and new teachers relative to other public schools in Maryland, a provider shall ensure that this program has a required practicum of a minimum of 100 days.

(ii) Candidates in an alternative teacher preparation program for early childhood education may satisfy criteria established by the Department that evaluate the knowledge and skills from prior learning relating to early childhood education in place of a practicum.

(6) A provider shall ensure collaboration with mentor teachers of a partner school to evaluate participants in a teacher training practicum and ensure each participant demonstrates the competencies required of licensed teachers.

(7) Special Requirements for Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs. A provider shall ensure that a teacher training practicum in an alternative teacher preparation program includes, at a minimum, the following content:

(a) Preparing lesson plans;

(b) Teaching;

(c) Debriefing;

(d) Observation of a class of students to which the participant is assigned as a student teacher; and

(e) 40 hours of teaching during class periods.

(8) A provider shall ensure that a program leading to licensure in an area of teaching includes a practicum experience in a partner school and:

(a) Is located in a Maryland public school, a nonpublic school, or an out-of-State school with the permission of the State Superintendent;

(b) Is aligned with program curricula that encompass the area, subject, or category of licensure being sought by candidates, including opportunities to provide reading instruction for those candidates enrolled in early childhood, elementary, special education, and ESOL programs;

(c) Provides candidates on-site supervision by a mentor teacher and ongoing support by a clinical supervisor from the provider, including:

(i) Documented observations;

(ii) Collaboration between clinical supervisors and mentor teachers to evaluate candidates for demonstration of required competencies;

(iii) Observations and evaluations of candidates, aligned to a Department-approved educator evaluation system; and

(iv) Feedback, placement, remediation, or supports, informed by candidate evaluation; and

(d) Ensures candidates are responsible for the instruction and classroom management of a roster of students for a minimum of 150 hours during the practicum.

(9) A provider shall ensure that a program for administrators includes supervised clinical experience totaling a minimum of 240 hours distributed within the program to include observations and evaluations of candidates aligned to a Department-approved administrator evaluation system.

(10) A provider shall ensure that a program for specialists includes a supervised clinical experience in the specialty area being pursued.

E. Exit Requirements.

(1) A provider shall establish exit requirements for programs that:

(a) Demonstrate successful completion of required coursework that is based on Department-recognized national content standards and Department-approved competencies;

(b) Demonstrate successful completion of the clinical experience outlined in §D of this regulation; and

(c) Enable teacher candidates to[, beginning July 1, 2025,] complete:

(i) A nationally recognized and nationally scored portfolio-based assessment of teaching ability approved by the State Board of Education; [or]

(ii) *A portfolio–based assessment of a teacher preparation program that has national accreditation or has been approved by the Department;*

(iii) A rigorous local school system teacher induction program that meets the requirements listed in §E(3) of this regulation[.];

(iv) The MSDE-Sponsored Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program.

(2) Candidates who complete an approved program in the State who passed an approved portfolio-based assessment will not be required to take the assessment more than one time.

(3) A local school system induction program under §E(1)(c)(ii) of this regulation shall:

(a) Be developed by the local school system, either independently or collaboratively with other local school systems;

(b) Be approved by the Department;

(c) Last the lesser of 3years or the amount of time a teacher holds a conditional license; and

(d) Include a locally developed portfolio component that is aligned with the Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium Standards.

F. Credit Requirements.

(1) A provider shall ensure that a program leading to a bachelor's degree is a 4-year program and award 120 credits, unless otherwise permitted by law.

(2) A provider may expand the program by no more than 12 semester hours of credit or an additional semester only with the permission of the Department and the Commission.

(3) A locally developed portfolio established under §E(3) of this regulation may be used to meet a portion of the coursework requirements of the program.