

Overview

Changes in demands of students and teachers have prompted school system leaders and preparation providers in recent years to reconsider the system of teacher preparation and certification. As expectations for teacher licensure shift, expectations for preparation program design and BESE's criteria for approving preparation providers must shift, too.

To support new teacher development and the continued improvement of teacher preparation programs, preparation providers should receive meaningful information and feedback on the quality of teacher preparation experiences. Much of the data that teacher preparation providers receive about their programs focus on outcomes, such as their impact on the teacher workforce or the teaching effectiveness of program completers. Because these measures lag, they may not provide insight into the conditions that yielded these outcomes.

The teacher preparation inspectorate model, which has been in place in the United Kingdom since 1984, is one such way to provide Louisiana teacher preparation programs with meaningful information for improvement. By focusing on the preparation experience—the content of program coursework, the connections the program makes to practice, the quality of feedback candidates receive—a program inspection offers actionable feedback that providers can use to ensure all new Louisiana teachers are prepared to teach all students effectively from day one of their teaching careers.

Teacher Preparation Inspection: History and Background

Since 1984, across the United Kingdom, each country's national education agency has had a statutory responsibility to conduct inspections of all institutions providing initial teacher education programs. The system works in concert with national K-12 school inspections: observations and evaluations of practicing teachers are linked back to their preparation providers.

Independent reviews of the inspectorate model in use in England have yielded “strong evidence that initial teacher education in England has improved in many ways over the past 20 years—certainly in terms of its consistency and coherence.” Further, new teachers' ratings of their preparation programs have increased in recent years: over 90 percent of new teachers' rated their preparation programs favorably in 2013.¹

Teacher Preparation Inspection in the United States

In the United States, an independent organization, Teacher Prep Inspection - US (TPI-US), was formed in 2013 to develop and manage a teacher preparation inspectorate program modeled after the United Kingdom's inspectorate. Dr. Ed Crowe is the founding CEO for TPI-US. Dr. Crowe also serves as a Senior Adviser for the Teaching Fellows Programs at the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation and previously served as the first director of the Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement Program for the United States Department of

¹ Feuer, M. J., Floden, R.E., Chudowsky, N., & Ahn, J. (2013). Evaluation of teacher preparation programs: Purposes, methods, and policy options. Washington, DC: National Academy of Education. Retrieved from <https://naeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/028489-Evaluation-of-Teacher-prep.pdf>

Education. This program supports improvements to recruitment, preparation, licensing, and on-going support of teachers.

The inspectorate model gauges how well teacher preparation programs ready candidates to teach in all classrooms. The inspection findings then guide programs' own efforts to improve by providing actionable feedback. Based on the United Kingdom model and other research, program inspection focuses on preK-12 student learning and centers on how the teacher preparation program is designed to positively impact student learning through teacher preparation, specifically in the following four areas:

- Selection of candidates
- Preparation in content knowledge and teaching skills
- Quality of clinical placement (e.g., student teaching), feedback, and candidate performance
- Strength of program performance management

During a [program inspection](#), a team of four to five trained, experienced preK-12 educators and teacher educators work for three to four days to gather evidence and provide feedback on the four key aspects of the teacher preparation experience.

Inspection team members consider the following guiding questions as they observe courses, candidates' and program completers' teaching, interview faculty and partner school leaders, and review existing program documentation:

- How well are preK-12 students learning in classes led by a program's student teachers and recent graduates?
- How well do programs ensure that candidates learn the content and teaching skills needed for successful practice?
- How much is the program learning about its own performance—and what steps are being taken to improve it?

At the end of each day while on site, the team holds a team meeting to discuss the day's evidence. A program representative attends each meeting in order to offer clarifications when needed and stay fully apprised on the inspection process and findings. Following her 2016 TPI-US pilot inspection experience, Dorothy Schween, Associate Dean of Assessment, Accreditation, and Outreach for the College of Arts, Education, and Sciences at University of Louisiana at Monroe (ULM), said, "The ULM Planning Team found the end-of-day open discussions by Inspection Team Members to be most beneficial in terms of strengthening our program. By the conclusion of the inspection, we had some definitive action steps that could be immediately implemented."

At the conclusion of the inspection, the collected evidence is combined and compared to identify program performance patterns—to ensure judgments capture typical aspects of the program across multiple pieces of relevant evidence. For example, evidence gathered through an interview with the principal of a recent elementary program completer, observation of a *Teaching Reading* course for elementary candidates, and state reading assessment results for student of recent completers are used to reach a judgment about the program's elementary teaching methods instruction.

Don Schillinger, Dean of the College of Education at Louisiana Tech University, participated in a 2016 TPI-US pilot program inspection and stated, “A powerful function of the... TPI process is that it provides teacher preparation programs with a source of triangulation; a method to ascertain the validity of data gathered from internal assessment and evaluative processes and to use those multiple data sources to verify results, identify inconsistencies, uncover richer meaning and determine possible interventions for program improvement.”

Upon completion of the inspection and while on site, the inspection team leader provides an oral summary of findings and follows up within a month of the on-site inspection with a brief [written report](#).

Schillinger further indicated, “While almost all accreditation and evaluation approaches review multiple facets of teacher preparation programs, most focus upon inputs such as admission’s criteria and course syllabi or outcomes such as graduation rates or exit exam pass rates, TPI focuses upon how inputs and outcomes are reflected in processes such as faculty and teacher candidate instruction.”

Developing the Inspection Model in the United States

Since 2013, TPI-US has completed forty-four inspections in eleven states, including seven programs in Texas. After the inspection at his institution, Dr. Robert McPherson Dean of the College of Education at University of Houston said, “The pilot inspection project provided an in-depth and systematic analysis of our undergraduate elementary teacher preparation program, highlighting specific strengths and weaknesses to consider as part of our continuous quality improvement efforts.” Following the inspection of Teaching Excellence, Director of Partnerships Calvin Stocker and Managing Director Carlos Villagrana said, “TPI provided a thorough review of our program, targeted the areas we can leverage most, and gave us actionable insight on how we can take our program to the next level.”

TPI-US is currently working in Florida and Massachusetts to determine how the inspection model can be used to support teacher preparation providers:

- The Florida Department of Education (FDOE) has contracted with TPI-US to conduct baseline and ongoing inspections of four university programs as part of a competitive grants program. As a result of that experience, FDOE is engaging TPI-US to conduct eight site visits focused on two of the inspection judgment areas (Clinical Practice, Candidate Performance, and Feedback; and Program Performance Management) to explore incorporating inspection into Florida's existing provider site review process. As part of this initiative, TPI-US has also trained four Florida-based inspectors.
- The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has contracted with TPI-US to inspect seven providers during the 2016-2017 academic year and train a small cadre of inspectors.

Piloting the Inspection Model in Louisiana

As part of a grant awarded to the Louisiana Department of Education, Louisiana providers were afforded an opportunity to pilot the inspectorate model in conjunction with TPI-US. During the 2015-2016 academic year, ten of Louisiana’s 27 approved providers participated in an inspection pilot with TPI-US. Participating providers in the inspection visits included:

Educator Preparation Provider
Caddo Parish Public Schools

Louisiana College
Louisiana Resource Center for Educators
Louisiana Tech University
Nicholls State University
Northwestern State University
Relay Graduate School of Education
Southeastern Louisiana University
Southern University at New Orleans
University of Louisiana at Monroe

Pilot participants found the feedback provided through the inspection to be helpful and actionable. Following her 2016 TPI-US pilot program inspection experience, Cynthia Elliott, Social-Emotional Learning Grant Coordinator for Southeastern Louisiana University, said, “The depth of review from the TPI-US team was different in [terms of the] level of detail for probing specific, current performance data than previously experienced from re-accreditation review teams provided by NCATE. Providers will be presented with triangulated data from multiple perspectives upon which reflective teacher educators may analyze feedback and identify action plan steps toward continuous program improvement.”

Shaping the Inspectorate Model for Louisiana Needs

Following the 2015-2016 inspection pilot visits, the Department formed a working group comprised of leaders from providers who participated in the 2015-2016 TPI-US program inspection pilots and a representative of the Board of Regents. The working group first convened in April 2016 and provided recommendations to adapt the inspectorate model to develop an on-site review for Louisiana’s preparation programs.

- Some of the participating 2015-2016 pilot providers asked that TPI-US inspect more than one program. While some pilot visits focused on one specific program (e.g., elementary 1-5), other pilot inspections provided review and feedback at the pathway level to include multiple programs. As a result, the 2015-2016 on-site review will be piloted at the **provider and pathway level** so that providers with multiple pathways and programs are visited with equal frequency.
- To ensure **equal expectations for both undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs**, the working group recommended framework modifications that take into account programmatic differences between undergraduate and post-baccalaureate pathways. For example,
 - In the Quality of Content Knowledge and Teaching Methods domain, elements of literacy instruction such as writing, strategies for English Language Learners, and learning differences (e.g., dyslexia) have been added to account for best practices in reading instruction and content-area literacy beyond the five essential components of reading instruction.
 - The Quality of Content Knowledge and Teaching Methods domain now includes criteria specifically geared to post-baccalaureate program structures to focus on candidates’ demonstration of content mastery and corresponding pedagogy to ensure learning and progress of all students.

- The Quality of Clinical Placement, Feedback, and Candidate Performance domain has been revised to address the differences in residency placement in undergraduate and post-baccalaureate programs. For post-baccalaureate programs in which residency placement is determined by the teacher candidate's place of employment, the review focuses on how the program supports candidates as teachers of record and identifies interventions to address areas for improvement if they arise.

Working group feedback and research gathered through the 2015-2016 pilots has been used to refine the [Louisiana-specific on-site review model](#) and, during the 2016-2017 academic year, ten Louisiana providers will [pilot](#) a Louisiana on-site review.

Louisiana's teacher preparation program accountability system is under discussion and development at this time. On-site reviews are part of that discussion, as a potential component of a multi-measure quality rating system. In such a system, the inspection model offers teacher preparation programs feedback specific to the quality of their program coursework and practice experiences to make improvements that produce more effective first-year teachers.