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# LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

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TEACHER PREPARATION INSTITUTION  
PERFORMANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

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# LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY

## TEACHER PREPARATION INSTITUTION PERFORMANCE RECOMMENDATIONS

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### BACKGROUND

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The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) has, since 2000, initiated several changes in the procedures for reviewing and approving teacher preparation programs in order to assure that the state's programs continue to advance in quality.

During the same period, Title II, Section 208(a) of the Higher Education Act (HEA) has required that each state establish criteria and identify and assist teacher preparation institutions that are not performing at a satisfactory level. In order to receive funds under the HEA, states are required to have a procedure to identify and assist low-performing programs of teacher preparation within institutions of higher education. States must also provide the United States Department of Education (USED) a statement of its procedure along with annual lists of low-performing and at-risk teacher preparation institutions.

The Office of Professional Preparation Services (OPPS) developed, and the State Board of Education (SBE) approved with amendments, a set of procedures that reflect the overall effectiveness of the preparation program, using multiple factors. Criteria within the procedures include weighted components from earlier reviews of institutional programs, the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) test scores, new teacher efficacy surveys, supervisor validation of new teachers' efficacy, program completion rates, and additional consideration for the program's mission that is responsive to the state's teacher preparation needs.

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### TEACHER PREPARATION INSTITUTION PERFORMANCE SCORING

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The Office of Professional Preparation Services (OPPS) developed, and the State Board of Education (SBE) approved with amendments, a set of procedures that reflect the overall effectiveness of the preparation program, using multiple factors. Criteria within the procedures include weighted components from earlier reviews of institutional programs, the Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (MTTC) test scores, new teacher efficacy surveys, supervisor validation of new teachers' efficacy, program completion rates, and additional consideration for the program's mission that is responsive to the state's teacher preparation needs.

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) complies with the Higher Education Act (HEA) Title II state requirements and the State Board of Education (SBE) expectations by identifying four categories of teacher preparation institutions:

- Exemplary Performance Teacher Preparation
- Satisfactory Performance Teacher Preparation
- At-Risk Teacher Preparation
- Low-Performing Teacher Preparation

A range of 0 to 70 points is currently awarded. The total points will increase as other factors are implemented (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number). Currently, the points and categories are as follows:

- 63 (90%) or higher = exemplary
- 56 to 62 (80% to 89%) = satisfactory
- 52 to 55 (75% to 79%) = at-risk status
- Below 52 = low-performing

The following six criteria are used for placement of a teacher preparation institution into a performance category as identified above.

#### PERFORMANCE SCORE RUBRIC (Total points possible: 70)

##### 1. **Test pass rate (30 points):**

Test pass rate shall be the three-year aggregate of all specialty content areas for individuals validated by the institution as ready for the content test (note: not necessarily program completers). The MDE creates a summary score for the institution based upon its aggregate pass rate information on validated (subject to state audit) candidates.

The MDE identifies four test pass rate categories to be used to allocate points (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number):

- a. 90% or higher = 30 points
- b. 85 - 89% = 25 points
- c. 80 - 84% = 20 points
- d. Below 80% = 0 points

##### 2. **Program Review (10 points):**

As part of periodic review or an equivalent accreditation process, a determination is made as to the status of each endorsement program. Full approval = 1, approval suspended by the state (or equivalent accrediting body) = 0\*\*. These scores are totaled and divided by the total number of programs so classified, to determine the percent of programs approved (this is done to avoid penalizing institutions of any particular size or number of programs). The possible range of scores is thus 0 through 100%. The points are awarded as follows (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number):

- a. 95% or more programs approved = 10 points
- b. 90 - 94% programs approved = 8
- c. 85 - 89% programs approved = 6
- d. 80 - 84% programs approved = 4
- e. 75 - 79% programs approved = 3

##### 3. **Program Completion (10 points):**

The number of candidates who are recommended (or who are eligible for recommendation) by the institution for a teaching certificate within six years of entering a cohort, divided by the total number of candidates admitted into the teacher preparation cohort at or beyond the junior year of a baccalaureate program or at entrance into a post baccalaureate program

during a specified academic year. In each case, a cohort will be defined by the number who entered the program (e.g., using 2003-2004 academic year data as the denominator, the six-year completion rate would be calculated based on recommendations during 2008-2009 academic year).

This information is calculated by the institution and subject to state audit. The points are awarded as follows (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number):

- a. 90% = 10 points\*
- b. 80 - 89% = 8 points
- c. 70 - 79% = 6 points
- d. 60 - 69% = 4 points
- e. 50 - 59% = 2 points

\*Note: The maximum point category is set only at 90% to acknowledge that institutions have a responsibility to identify candidates whose commitment or classroom performance is not suitable for the profession, even if academic qualifications that led to program admission are strong. However, over time, it is expected that institutional admission criteria would increasingly reflect institutional experiences of the qualifications, both academic and interpersonal, needed for success in the specific program.

**4. Survey of candidates and supervisors (10 points):**

A. Survey of candidates: (5 points)

The score will depend on the aggregate results of the survey of candidates completing student teaching regarding their perceived readiness (efficacy) in each of the seven Entry-Level Standards for Michigan Teachers (ELSMT) areas. Since response rate is important to validity of results, the MDE expects institutions to assure that a large proportion of their student teachers complete the survey. The response rate is built into the points awarded in this area as indicated in the following table (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number):

Student Teacher Response Rate	80-100% Efficacy	70-79% Efficacy	60-69% Efficacy	Below 60% Efficacy
80-100%	5	4	3	0
60-79%	3	2	1	0
Below 60%	0	0	0	0

B. Survey of supervisors: (5 points)

Beginning in 2006-07, institutions are also required to have supervisors of student teachers complete a short survey on the same readiness areas for each student teacher supervised. Validation of the student teachers' perceived efficacy with the perceptions of supervisors makes a stronger case for the institution's impact on teacher readiness. The following table indicates the points awarded for different response rates and efficacy levels (decimals will be rounded to the nearest whole number).

Student Teacher Response Rate	80-100% Efficacy	70-79% Efficacy	60-69% Efficacy	Below 60% Efficacy
80-100%	5	4	3	0
60-79%	3	2	1	0
Below 60%	0	0	0	0

**5. Institutional responsiveness to state need (10 points):**

Some institutions have a mission responsive to state need as shown in their emphasis on providing access to diverse students and/or their emphasis on preparation of teachers in high need areas such as mathematics, science, special education, or other areas that the MDE may identify in its Title II HEA formula.

**A. Diversity score (5 points):**

The 2004-2005 Registry of Educational Personnel (REP) indicates that less than 10% of Michigan's teaching force is represented by ethnic minorities. Ethnic minority categories are Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American and Pacific Islander, and multi-racial, as used in other higher education national data.

1. Any teacher preparation institution recommending 10% or more minority candidates in the most recent academic year (irrespective of cohort of individuals) will receive 5 points.
2. Any teacher preparation institution recommending 5 to 9% minority candidates in the most recent academic year (irrespective of cohort of individuals) will receive 3 points.

**B. Preparation of teachers in high need subject areas (5 points):**

Any institution recommending 35% or more candidates with content specialty (major or minor-based endorsement) in special education, mathematics, science (i.e., endorsement codes DX, DI, at either elementary or secondary levels), or specific science endorsements (chemistry, physics, biology, earth/space science) at the secondary level, or world languages in the most recent academic year (irrespective of cohort) will receive 5 points. Other academic subject areas may be added to this list in the future by the MDE based on statewide teacher shortages.

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**LAKE SUPERIOR STATE UNIVERSITY  
TEACHER PREPARATION INSTITUTION SCORING**

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The following chart represents LSSU's cumulative TPI score over the past five years:

<b>Year:</b>	<b>Status:</b>	<b>Score (/70)</b>
2005/2006	Satisfactory	56
2006/2007	Satisfactory	57
2007/2008	At-Risk	53
2008/2009	At-Risk	53
2009/2010	Low-Performing	33

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**REQUIRED CORRECTIVE ACTION STEPS FOR  
LOW-PERFORMING TEACHER PREPARATION INSTITUTIONS**

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Section 208(a) of the Higher Education Act requires that states "shall have in place a procedure to identify, and assist, through the provision of technical assistance, low-performing programs of teacher preparation within institutions of higher education."

Accordingly, the Office of Professional Preparation Services proposed a policy for corrective action for institutions, along with reporting formats for institutions to use in examining possible systemic reasons for their continued performance issues. Institutions in these categories are expected to file a Plan of Improvement with the Michigan Department of Education each year

The policy also identifies consequences for institutions whose performance continues to show "At-Risk" or "Low-Performing" status. These consequences are designed to encourage institutions to focus on candidate achievement, to limit eligibility for some opportunities normally available to teacher preparation institutions, and to offer enrolled candidates some protections from consequences to the institution.

**The Michigan Department of Education has assigned Low-Performing status to LSSU, and is requiring LSSU to do all of the following activities:**

- Notify students admitted to the teacher preparation program in writing of the status of the institution and possible impact on their educational endeavor. The institution must submit a copy of the written notification to the Michigan Department of Education (MDE).

- Completes a needs assessment and teacher preparation plan of improvement using the MDE's templates, within six months of announcement of at-risk status designation.
- Implement improvement plan after review by the MDE.
- Report actions and progress in writing to the MDE at the conclusion of every six months of at-risk status.
- Use available technical assistance by MDE staff and Michigan Association of Colleges of Teacher Education (MACTE), Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Michigan (AICUM), and/or other external consultants.
- Withdraw, after one academic year of less than satisfactory status, from serving as a mentor to any higher education institution seeking State Board of Education (SBE) approval to offer teacher preparation; this includes informing the MDE and mentee institution in writing.
- Acknowledge ineligibility to apply for Higher Education Act Title II subpart A (3) grants; however, existing grants may be continued.
- Move to satisfactory within two years or move to low-performing status and Level 2 Corrective Action.
- Notify the institution's national accrediting agency in writing of its status as part of a regular annual update to the agency and provide a copy of the notification to the MDE.
- Work with a qualified external consultant to execute the improvement plan and provide the MDE with information about the consultant's qualifications.
- Develop an agreement to work with a Michigan mentor institution, in satisfactory or better standing, to function as model for structural and process improvement and to recommend teacher candidates and others for certification if the need to do so occurs.
- Withdraw new programs being reviewed for initial teacher preparation approval. Approved programs being reviewed for alignment to new SBE standards may continue in the review process.
- Attain satisfactory status within two years (if low-performing and Level 2 Corrective Action was the initial performance designation), otherwise move to Level 3 Corrective Action; or
- Attain satisfactory status within one year at Level 2 Corrective Action (if at-risk and Level 1 Corrective Action was the initial performance designation), otherwise move to Level 3 Corrective Action.

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## CONSULTANT'S REPORT: BACKGROUND

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In compliance with MDE's required corrective action steps for low-performing teacher preparation institutions, I was hired by LSSU to conduct fact-finding and to make recommendations for an improvement plan.

I spent four days on LSSU's campus during May 2011 reviewing student performance data and school of education reports, as well as interviewing faculty and staff. Specifically, I conducted interviews with the following:

Dr. Barabara Searight, Associate Dean, School of Education  
Dr. Gary Balfantz, Dean, College of Arts and Letters  
Prof. Shirley Schoenemann, Director of Early Childhood Program, Education Faculty  
Vicki Miller, former Secretary in School of Education  
Sandi Rink, Placement and Certification Officer; Education Faculty  
Dr. Guide Yang, Education Faculty  
Dr. Lorraine Gregory, Education and Mathematics Faculty  
Nancy Neve, Registrar  
Stella Deplonty, former Certification Officer  
Dr. Chad Barbour, Department Head, English  
Dr. Dan Dorrity, History Faculty  
Dr. Leslie Dobbertin, Department Head, Social Sciences  
Prof. James Moody, History Faculty  
Dr. David Myton, Former Director of SoE; Chemistry Faculty  
Dr. Louann Disney, Faculty - Spanish  
Dr. Barb Keller – Dean of College of Natural, Mathematical, and Health Sciences  
Dr. Morrie Walworth - Provost  
Dr. Tony McClain - President

A primary data source for my investigation consisted of MTTC testing data on 1,987 test takers over the past nine years. This data set includes the following variables: test date, test type, overall performance, subscale score, student residence, and student area of study (major/minor).

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**CONSULTANT’S REPORT: KEY FINDINGS**

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**A. MTTC Test Data**

Overall, LSSU’s pass rates have been low in most areas. Recall that in order to receive full points (30) for the MTTC category on the TPI, schools must achieve 90% pass rates. Historically, LSSU has only three areas with 90%+ pass rates: Mathematics, Early Childhood, and Group Science. (NOTE: The Group Science major/minor was replaced several years ago with the Integrate Science major/minor, which has had pass rate below 50% over the past three years.) It is difficult to determine why the pass rates in Math and Early Childhood are so high; however, those two areas share one characteristic: The majority of the courses in each of those majors are taught by one fulltime faculty member. In other words, students in those programs have fewer instructors.

Table 1.

**LSSU’s Subject-Area Scores  
on Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (2003-2011)**

<b>Cumulative Test Data</b>	<b>Number of Test Takers</b>	<b>% of Test Takers Who Fail</b>
Biology	31	39%
Business	30	23%
Chemistry	25	24%
Computer Science	12	17%
Early Childhood	27	7%
Earth/Space Science	13	54%
Economics	16	63%
Elementary Education	356	19%
English	107	25%
French	14	79%
Geography	20	25%
Group Science	44	7%
History	132	52%
Integrated Science	25	60%
Math	97	9%
Political Science	19	42%
Social Studies	124	39%
Sociology	28	61%
Spanish	13	69%

Substandard pass rates have been prevalent at LSSU over the past nine years, and the problem is not subsiding. In fact, LSSU's pass rates are declining. Since 2008, LSSU's rate has fallen below 50%. Programs with cumulative pass rates below 80% earn zero (0) points for the MTTC category on the TPI. On the most recent TPI Performance Score Report (2009/2010), LSSU earned 0/30 point for MTTC pass rates, thus contributing to an overall score of 34/70. Clearly, LSSU's performance on the MTTC is the primary concern.

## B. Canadian Students

Since more than 40% of LSSU's Education students are Canadian, it is important to compare their test performance with Americans'. As the table below reveals, Canadian students score as expected in the majority of test areas.

Table 2.

### **LSSU Canadian Students' Subject-Area Performance on Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (2003-2011)**

<b>Subject-Area Test</b>	<b>% of Test Takers who are Canadian</b>	<b>% of Failers who are Canadian</b>
Biology	32%	33%
Business	7%	14%
Chemistry	40%	50%
Computer Science	25%	0%
Early Childhood	0%	0%
Earth/Space Science	15%	14%
Economics	19%	15%
Elementary Education	46%	86%
English	17%	19%
French	71%	64%
Geography	30%	20%
Group Science	5%	0%
History	23%	38%
Integrated Science	4%	7%
Math	20%	33%
Political Science	5%	0%
Social Studies	2%	6%
Sociology	14%	12%
Spanish	0%	0%

A closer look at the data reveals that more recently, Canadian students have not been performing as expected. Specifically, Canadian students have been underperforming on the Elementary Education test, which is LSSU's largest education program. The disproportionate number of Canadian students who fail the MTTC might be attributable to the insufficient rigor of transfer course from Sault College. (See recommendation # 3)

Table 3.

**Comparison of LSSU Canadian/American Students' Performance on Michigan Test for Teacher Certification**

<b>Test</b>	<b>Number of Test Takers</b>	<b>% of Test Takers Who Fail</b>	<b>% of Test Takers Who are Canadian</b>	<b>% of Failers who are Canadian</b>
All Subjects 2003 to 2006	637	25%	17%	19%
All Subjects 2006 to present	497	39%	37%	45%
Elementary Ed Test: 2008-Present	129	34%	70%	100%

**C. Major/Minor Comparison**

A comparison of pass rates between students' major and minor areas reveals a discrepancy for Elementary Education students but not Secondary Education students. One would expect students to perform better in their major area of study than in their minor area of study, as is the case with LSSU's Elementary Education students. The fact that LSSU's Secondary Education students score nearly identically in their major areas of study and minor areas raises several questions. (See recommendation #11 )

Table 4.

**Comparison of LSSU Students' Performance between Majors and Minors on Michigan Test for Teacher Certification (2003-2011)**

All Subjects - Elem Fail rate (Majors)	21%
All Subjects - Elem Fail rate (Minors)	35%
All Subjects - Sec Fail rate (Majors)	38%
All Subjects - Sec Fail rate (Minors)	37%

## **Degree Audit Sheets**

As the LSSU School of Education is undergoing a transition, there is significant inconsistency regarding Degree Audit sheets and student advising. In some programs, more than one Audit sheet exists, and faculty advisors have disparate perspectives regarding which one to use in advising students.

Furthermore, in most programs students have a wide range of course offerings to fulfill their degree requirements. This is particularly problematic as the SoE needs to attach specific teacher preparation standards to specific courses in order make certain students have been taught what is necessary to be successful on the MTTC. (See recommendation #12)

### **D. Faculty**

Because LSSU is a small university with only three full-time education faculty members, many courses are taught by professors in other departments and by adjuncts. Though having a variety of instructors can be beneficial, the lack of awareness and collegiality appears to be problematic. It is important to note that this deficiency is not a result of manifest acrimony or antagonism, but rather a lack of unity around a common purpose and efforts at working toward a shared goal. This is a problem with fulltime and adjunct faculty alike. (See recommendation #10)

### **E. Current Initiatives**

As a result of LSSU's At-Risk status from the past two years, the Associate Dean in the School of Education has begun to implement a number of initiatives. Specifically, Dr. Searight has reported to have addressed each of the Level 1 Action Steps mandated by the MDE. Although progress is being made, the process is slow, and it will likely take several semesters before the impact of initiatives is evident. Furthermore, LSSU must now fulfill the requirements for Level 2 Corrective Action in addition to the initiatives underway. (See recommendation #17)

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### CONSULTANT'S REPORT: RECOMMENDATIONS

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1. Examine the relationship between School of Education admissions criteria and MTTC pass rates. Particularly, determine if the GPA requirement of 2.7 is appropriate.
2. More closely monitor entrance requirements and do not allow exceptions. Do not allow students to enroll in EDUC 301 until they have met all requirements. This will help to decrease the number of non-completers.
3. Evaluate the curriculum and rigor of courses that students transfer into LSSU. Specifically, do not allow Sault College students to transfer in MATH 102, NSCI 101, or NSCI 110.
4. After students are admitted to the School of Education, identify at-risk students and provide additional advising and guidance. Use entrance criteria to identify these students. In addition to GPA (for example all students with a GPA between 2.7 and 3.0), use other entrance measures (essay, interview, etc.) to identify student at-risk of insufficient performance. For these students, require formal test-prep including study sessions and practice testing.
5. Offer test-prep and practice testing sessions to all students.
6. Provide advising to Education students regarding when in their program to take the MTTC and which test to take. For Secondary Education students, who are advised by content-area faculty, the SoE should send notice to the students and their advisors.
7. Pay for and encourage all instructors of Education students to take the MTTC in their respective subject areas. Those who teach elementary education students should also take the elementary test.
8. Provide additional direction to adjunct instructors, with particular attention on the standards they must address.
9. Distribute MTTC test results to all departments with Education majors and all instructors who teach Education students. Transparency and shared purpose is critical.

10. Each semester the SoE should facilitate a meeting with all faculty who teach education students.
11. Each department should conduct a thorough comparison of courses Secondary Education students must take for a major and a minor. Particularly, departments should investigate why students with a major do not have a higher pass rate than students with a minor.
12. Reduce course options in all programs. Degree Audit Sheets need to contain a prescribed set of courses that directly address the content-area teaching standards. Eliminate multiple versions of Audit Sheets. Make certain all stakeholders have the same Audit Sheets.
13. Make connections between MI teacher standards and each course clear for students and instructors. Instructors should list standards on their syllabi or accompanying document.
14. Eliminate course waivers/substitutions. Since prescribed courses will be linked directly to the standards, course substitutions are likely to leave students unprepared for MTTC.
15. Create non-negotiable “gates” to the Student Teaching Practicum.
  - a. Do not allow students with a grade lower than a B- in a methods course to student teach. Content-area methods courses are capstone courses in which students synthesize their content knowledge. Standards must remain high in these courses.
  - b. Require students to pass the MTTC in each of their areas before they are allowed to student teach.
16. LSSU should establish a Center for Teaching and Learning. For starters, provide an accomplished faculty member with a reduced teaching load in order to work with faculty on standards-based teaching and matching assessments to standards.
17. Per the mandated Action Steps from the MDE, LSSU must inform prospective students of its At-Risk status. This notification should occur prior to students’ enrollment at LSSU. Currently the website contains a statement that is both false and misleading. LSSU’s At-Risk status is due primarily to its MTTC pass rates (worth 30 out of 70 points), not its Diversity or High Needs Area deficiency (worth 5 points each). The website should be corrected as soon as possible.

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**CONSULTANT’S REPORT: GRAND RECOMMENDATION**

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The recommendations noted above hold the potential to provide short-term solutions to LSSU’s teacher preparation woes. Nonetheless, LSSU faces a number of looming challenges, including, but not limited to: Michigan’s declining population, competition from online and alternative certification programs, and failure to attract Education students from beyond the proximal region.

Thus, LSSU should give serious consideration to a comprehensive overhaul of its teacher preparation program. LSSU should consider starting with a clean slate and designing the type of program that would attract top students from across the Midwest and Canada. (NOTE: Nearly all of LSSU’s students come from the eastern UP, northern lower Michigan, or Ontario. Of the 1,987 LSSU test takers since 2003, only 6 reside in a state other than MI or ON.)

LSSU has a number of assets that could be leveraged to create a premier field-based teacher preparation program consistent with best-practices research. Arne Duncan, Secretary of Education, said recently:

The education of teachers in the United States needs to be turned upside down. What does it mean to turn teacher preparation programs upside down? It means flipping the content of current teacher preparation programs, which typically emphasize theoretical coursework, loosely supplemented by clinical experience of uneven quality. Future teacher preparation programs should instead emulate the model of medical education. They would be fully-grounded in clinical practice, with evidence-based knowledge interwoven with academic content and professional courses (<http://www.ed.gov/news/speeches/secretary-arne-duncans-remarks-national-council-accreditation-teacher-education>).

LSSU has an excellent relationship with local schools and the EUPISD. Furthermore, its small size is advantageous for placing students in local classrooms where other universities face limitations. LSSU should develop a bold vision for the type of teacher preparation program that Arne Duncan will cite in a future speech.