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ACADEMIC PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT FORM AY2024-2025

Program(s) in the review: Teaching and Learning MEd

Specialized Accrediting Agency (if applicable): N/A

Campuses where the program is delivered: ☒ Anchorage ☐ KOD ☐ KPC ☐ MSC ☐ PWSC

Year of last review: AY2019-2020

Final decision from last review: Continuation

PROGRAM SECTION (Due on March 1)

Program Review Committee:

Timothy Jester, Professor, Elementary Education, *Chair*

Ginger Blackmon, Professor, Educational Leadership, *Member*

Panigkaq Agatha John-Shields, Assistant Professor, Indigenizing Education, *Member*

Cathy Coulter, Professor, Elementary Education, *Member*

Krista James, Term Assistant Professor, Special Education, *Member*

1. Demonstrate that the program has responded to previous recommendations.

Recommendation 1: The faculty should work with the faculty at UAF and UAS to resolve the UA College of Education structural problem.

How do you know the recommendation has been successfully achieved? (2500 characters or less)

Following the expedited review in 2019-2020, the UA Board of Regents (BOR) rescinded the policy that created the UA College of Education at UAS. This action resolved the structural problems by reestablishing independent Schools of Education (SOE) at UAA, UAF, and UAS and creating the Alaska College of Education Consortium (ACEC) in June 2021. A significant purpose of the ACEC is to "Provide a formal mechanism (the ACEC Committee) to facilitate inter-university coordination and communication to meet the goals." Furthermore, the BOR established three components of ACEC to realize this purpose:

- 1) Three separate Schools of Education, one at each university, led by a *director.
- 2) The three directors, a faculty member from each university, and system office representation forms the ACEC Committee.
- 3) One of the SOE deans chairs the committee on a rotating basis.

*The "director" designation was changed to "dean" in AY 2023.

More information about ACEC is available at <https://www.alaska.edu/acec/>

Actions taken to date (2500 characters or less)

UAA's School of Education dean and a faculty representative meet monthly with the ACEC Committee. The M.Ed. Teaching and Learning faculty (TLRN) provides input to the faculty representative about the ACEC Committee's affairs. The faculty member also participates in ACEC summits in the fall and spring semesters.

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Evidence of success to date (2500 characters or less)

Evidence of success to date include the following:

- 1) A formal structure—ACEC—was established to support inter-university coordination and communication.
- 2) ACEC is operational: It meets monthly to collaboratively address issues relevant to teacher education in the three Schools of Education.
- 3) Example of inter-university coordination in 2024-2025: ACEC is developing an academic plan that ensures inter-university coordination on program plans.

2. Demonstrate the centrality of the program to the mission, needs, and purposes of the university and the college/community campus. Include how the program is integrating (or planning to integrate) intentionally designed opportunities for students to develop the four core competencies (Effective Communication; Creative and Critical Thinking; Intercultural Fluency; and Personal, Professional, & Community Responsibility). (3000 characters or less)

The Master of Education (MEd) in Teaching and Learning is designed for professionals seeking advanced studies in education. Students examine education in Alaska and similar contexts and identify a professional focus area related to professional practice and career aspirations.

The response to item #2 focuses on the M.Ed. TLRN Program Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs) and Teaching and Learning Capstone Portfolio. The PSLOs are the program's defining framework, and the Capstone Portfolio is the forum where students demonstrate their enactment of the PSLOs.

The five PSLOs are listed in the Item #3 prompt below. The program uses the TLRN Capstone Portfolio to evaluate students' attainment of the PSLOs. Students develop their portfolios in ECTL A680, Teaching and Learning Capstone Portfolio. The portfolio includes an inquiry project report, a PSLO report, and a self-reflection.

Alignment to UAA Mission. UAA aims to transform lives through teaching, research, community engagement, and creative expression in a welcoming environment. The M.Ed. TLRN addresses this mission by preparing educators to transform students'/clients' lives through teaching, research, and community engagement—specifically, M.Ed. TLRN students demonstrate teaching skills through their advanced content and pedagogical knowledge (PSLO #1), conduct and use research to inform their teaching practice (PSLO #2), and engage in communities as culturally responsive leaders and educators (PSLO #4 and #5).

UAA Four Core Competencies. The M.Ed. Teaching and Learning program also addresses the UAA Four Core Competencies. The following examples illustrate the connections.

Effective communication: Students present the capstone portfolio to faculty and classmates; effective communication is essential in this presentation. PSLO #4 addresses effective communication in several ways, as captured in the PSLO Rubric, Standard 2, Indicators 4.2a and 4.2c.

Creative and critical thinking: Students design and implement an inquiry project for the Capstone Portfolio addressing a relevant problem of practice. Students collect and analyze data and critically examine the findings to create an action plan for improving the problem of practice.

Intercultural fluency: M.Ed. TLRN students engage in culturally responsive practice in educational contexts when addressing PSLO #5. This PSLO guides students in connecting teaching to their students' backgrounds and engaging in community activities.

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Personal/ professional/community responsibility: The M.Ed. TLRN program is designed to support students' personal and professional development with a sense of community responsibility. These responsibilities are addressed in PSLO #4, Standard 1, Indicators 4.1a and 4.1b.

3. Demonstrate program quality and improvement through assessment and other indicators.

a. Program Student Learning Outcomes Assessment and Improvement Process and Actions

i. MEd Teaching and Learning

- *1) Demonstrate advanced content and pedagogical knowledge for teaching; 2) Use research to inform professional practice; 3) Explain the relationship between education and social justice; 4) Demonstrate leadership skills for the professional context; 5) Translate educational theories into culturally responsive practice.*

Describe your key findings for these outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

The M.Ed. Teaching and Learning faculty reviews program assessment data for each AY between May and September as part of the continuous improvement process. When areas for change are identified in the assessment review, the faculty takes appropriate action.

Assessment data show students consistently demonstrated knowledge and skills embedded in the PSLOs. The following are examples of artifacts students used in the Capstone Portfolio to demonstrate PSLO enactment:

PSLO #1: Content and Pedagogical Knowledge: Curriculum Design Project, EDTL A651; Mindfulness in Education Program Design project, EDTL A650; Curriculum unit used in teaching practice, Professional Experience.

PSLO #2: Research Informing Practice: Research Design Project, EDRS A660; Literature Review, EDTL A698/680; Inquiry Project, EDTL A698/680

PSLO #3: Education and Social Justice: Curriculum Analysis Project, EDTL A651; Lesson plan focusing on including all students, Professional Experience

PSLO #4: Leadership: Curriculum Design Project, EDTL A651; Curriculum review committee chair, Professional Experience

PSLO #5: Place-based/Culturally Responsive Practice: Culturally Responsive Inquiry Project, EDTL A692; Curriculum Design Project, EDTL A651.

The M.Ed. Teaching and Learning faculty reviews program assessment data for each AY between May and September as part of the continuous improvement process. When faculty identify areas needing changes, they take appropriate actions during that AY.

Although students effectively addressed the PSLOs, the faculty has noticed variability in students' focus, specificity, and depth of understanding. For example, in addressing PSLO #1, some students present detailed descriptions of pedagogical strategies supported by theoretical or research connections. In contrast, others list instructional actions in general terms with no reference to them. Although students effectively addressed the PSLOs, the faculty noticed variability in students' focus, specificity, and depth of understanding. For example, in addressing PSLO #1, some students presented detailed descriptions of pedagogical strategies supported by theoretical or research connections, while others simply listed instructional actions in general terms with no reference to theories or research. Both responses addressed

advanced content or pedagogical knowledge; however, the entries were qualitatively different. Therefore, the faculty engaged in a project to clearly define the expectations for each PSLO. These actions are explained below.

Describe actions taken to improve student learning for these outcomes. (3500 characters or less)

To clarify expectations, the faculty examined professional standards and research literature related to each PSLO, combined with their expert knowledge of teaching and learning. The faculty developed a standards-based rubric and revised the Academic Assessment Plan, incorporating the rubrics into the Capstone Portfolio. The rubric defines each PSLO through standards, indicators, and performance levels. Students must demonstrate that they meet at least one standard and two indicators for each PSLO to “pass” the portfolio.

The following is an example from PSLO #1, which identifies the significant elements of the rubric:

PSLO #1: Demonstrate advanced content and pedagogical knowledge for teaching

Professional standard(s) connections: InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards and Learning Progressions for Teachers 1.0 (2013)

PSLO standard themes and number of indicators:

- 1) Content knowledge: Three indicators
- 2) Content application: Three indicators
- 3) Planning for instruction: Three indicators
- 4) Pedagogical strategies: Three indicators

Example: PSLO #1, Standard 1: Content knowledge

Indicator 1.1a: Understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and knowledge of the discipline or professional field.

Performance Indicator, Level 1: Unsatisfactory: No evidence or insufficient evidence of accurately or effectively communicating concepts, processes of inquiry, and/or knowledge of the discipline or professional field.

Performance Indicator, Level 2: Proficient: Evidence of accurately and effectively communicating two of the following: concepts, processes of inquiry, or knowledge in the discipline or professional field.

Performance Indicator, Level 3: Exemplary: Evidence of accurately and effectively communicating concepts, processes, and knowledge in the discipline or professional field.

Describe evidence that these actions are working. (3500 characters or less)

AY 2025 is the first year the program has implemented the rubrics and the revised assessment plan. Therefore, data collection is underway, and faculty will analyze it after the Spring 2025 semester, per the program’s assessment review timeline. However, preliminary findings from students’ PSLO Reports in Fall 2024 are promising, providing evidence of a robust understanding of PSLOs.

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- b. Demonstrate program quality and improvement through other means, for example, maintaining specialized accreditation, using guidance from advisory boards/councils, responding to community partners and local needs, maintaining currency of the curriculum, implementing innovative program design, intentionally integrating high-impact teaching and learning practices into the program, and meeting indications of quality in distance education, such as the C-RAC Standards. (3500 characters or less)**

Community partners/Local needs. The program responds to community partners' specific needs. For instance, program faculty work with rural school district administrators on a project to improve K-12 teacher retention. A collaborative design process began in the summer of 2020 when the School of Education, the Bristol Bay Foundation, and four school districts in the Bristol Bay Region partnered to address the chronic and costly issue of teacher turnover. The goal was to improve teacher retention rates by enrolling teachers in a master's degree, including online courses and experiential learning.

Currency of curriculum. The experiential learning program described above and the flexible, interdisciplinary design described below are examples of the program's curriculum currency. Additionally, in AY 2024, the faculty developed three adult education courses (9 credits) and four instructional design and technology (IDT) courses (12 credits) in AY 2024. UAA is the only university in the UA System offering these courses, which meet the needs of professionals working in schools, universities, and other industries. Adult education courses provide professionals with theories, research, and practices that support adult learning in educational settings and other sectors, such as professional development and leadership programs in the US Military and businesses. The IDT courses equip professionals with the knowledge and skills to design curricula and learning-related programs in online/distance and in-person settings.

Innovative program design. The M.Ed. TLRN is designed to meet students' personal and professional interests and goals and provide access to expert faculty across the UA System. Unlike programs with a fixed sequence of courses, the M.Ed. TLRN requires three courses (9 credits), with the remaining 21 credits coming from a) Education-specific selectives (6 credits) related to the PSLOs but not prescribed courses and b) interdisciplinary options across UAA, UAF, and UAS for the professional focus area (15 credits). Furthermore, some students earn a graduate certificate in a specific discipline/field and use these credits in the M.Ed. TLRN program (e.g., Language and Literacy in the UAA School of Education and Children's Mental Health in UAA College of Arts and Sciences).

High-impact teaching and learning practices. The faculty and the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning's design incorporates high-impact teaching and learning practices. The following are examples:

Capstone courses and projects. All students complete EDTL A680, Teaching and Learning Capstone Portfolio, and prepare a portfolio demonstrating attainment of the PSLOs. The portfolio includes an inquiry project, academic and professional artifacts, and self-reflections on learning.

Common Intellectual Experience. The program ensures that students share intellectual experiences through three required courses: EDTL A651, EDTL A680, and EDRS A660. These courses are directly linked to the PSLOs and provide numerous learning activities and assignments demonstrating essential knowledge and skills.

Community-based Learning: Students participating in the partnership experiential learning program are immersed in community-based learning. Additionally, the program promotes community-based learning for all M.Ed. TLRN students by encouraging them to use artifacts from their professional experiences in the Capstone Portfolio. Through this process, students learn in/from their work in communities.

4. Demonstrate student success and the closing of achievement gaps.

- a. **Analyze and respond to the disaggregated data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to close any achievement gaps. The Student Success program review metrics are Junior Graduation Rate, Associate Graduation Rate, Semesters to Degree – Graduate Programs, and Course Pass Rates by Course Level. (3500 characters or less)**

Semesters to Degree: The average semesters-to-degree for M.Ed. TLRN students are 4.66, an acceptable timeframe for students enrolled in the program—most M.Ed. TLRN students are part-time students working full-time as teachers or in other education-related roles. Moreover, a growing student population is teachers enrolled in the program through the teacher retention partnership in rural Alaska; by design, these students must enroll in the program for six semesters/three years. (See items 3b and 8 for more information about this pathway.)

Coure Pass Rates: The average course pass rate for education-specific courses is 90.6%, indicating a high level of success for most students. However, the data sheet does not account for the program's interdisciplinary and flexible design, which allows students to complete courses beyond the nine courses listed in the UAA Catalog and used to create the data sheet.

- b. **Numerous US universities, and a number of programs across UAA, have holistically evaluated their programs and courses to look for unintended barriers to student success. For example, the Purdue IMPACT (Instruction Matters: Purdue Academic Course Transformation) effort between 2011 and 2018 resulted in 325 courses being redesigned to incorporate research-based strategies known to increase student outcomes, while maintaining academic quality and rigor. Other efforts have involved course sequencing and scheduling, resulting in improved success even for [graduate students](#). Please consider your program's graduation rate, course pass rates, and similar data sources to reflect on any barriers to students moving through the curriculum, and describe what steps you have taken (or are planning to take) for possible redesign of gateway courses, course sequence changes, course scheduling, or similar efforts. (3500 characters or less)**

Although the number of semesters to degree is expected for the part-time status of most M.Ed. TLRN students, one potential barrier is the structure of the EDTL A680, the Teaching and Learning Capstone Portfolio. EDTL A680 is a one-credit course that students complete three times for three credits. Therefore, by design, it takes students three semesters to complete the required three credits.

The faculty is considering revising EDTL A680 to allow students to complete three credits in two semesters rather than three while incorporating all elements of the Capstone Portfolio, per the Assessment Plan. For example, the faculty may replace EDTL A680 with two courses—EDTL A680A and A680B—that students can complete in two semesters rather than three:

EDTL A680A (2 credits): Design and implement an inquiry project and begin assembling artifacts for the Capstone Portfolio.

EDTL A680B (1 credit): Write the inquiry project report and complete the Capstone Portfolio.

- c. **Provide evidence of the overall success of students in the program. For example, you might talk about the percent of students in post-graduation employment in the field or a related field, the percent of students who go on to graduate school or other post-graduation training, and/or the percent of students who pass licensure examinations. You might also give examples of students who have been selected for**

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major scholarships or other competitive opportunities. [Please do not use personally identifiable information.] (3500 characters or less)

The School of Education no longer collects data on post-graduate employment of graduates of the M.Ed. TLRN program. However, based on the faculty's communication with graduates from AY 2020 to AY 2024, a summary of success evidence includes teachers and principals in K-12 schools, university faculty in various departments/programs, adjuncts for M.Ed. TLRN courses, doctoral students (e.g., UAF, University of Washington, University of Minnesota), and program directors in a university and Alaska Native organizations.

5. Demonstrate demand for the program.

- a. Analyze and respond to the data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to improve. The Demand program review metrics are Ratio of Out-of-Discipline Credit Hours to Total Credit Hours, Number of Program Graduates Who Continue Education, and Number of Program Graduates Who Return to UAA to Pursue an Additional Program. (3500 characters or less)**

1. Ratio of out-of-discipline credit hours to total credit hours: Students from graduate programs outside education enroll in EDTL courses. The data sheet indicates a 43.8% average ratio of out-of-discipline credit hours to total credit hours. For example, students in UAF's interdisciplinary Ph.D. program and UAA's MSW and MS Nursing enroll in EDTL A651, Curriculum Theory and Design, and EDTL A650, Mindfulness in Education. Furthermore, K-12 teachers who are non-degree-seeking students enroll in EDTL A651 and EDTL A692 to meet the Alaska Department of Education's requirement for credits in multicultural education.

The following clarifying points should be considered when interpreting the SCH/FTEC data: 1) The data sheet lists nine courses; however, only three courses are required for all M.Ed. TLRN students—the other courses are selectives that students may complete to meet TLRN Core credit requirements. 2) EDTL A680, TLRN Capstone Portfolio is one of the three courses required by all M.Ed. TLRN students—students outside the M.Ed. TLRN program are not allowed to enroll in this course. 3) Three of the nine courses listed on the data sheet are required in the M.Ed. Educational Leadership; although these courses can be used to meet M.Ed. TLRN requirements, they are not M.Ed. TLRN-specific courses.

2. Number of graduates who continue education: Twenty-three (23) program graduates continued their education after completing the M.Ed. TLRN. The M.Ed. TLRN is a "terminal" degree for most professional educators completing the program. However, as the data indicate, almost half of the program graduates continued their education. Although the program does not have access to data on the programs/degrees these graduates pursued, based on the faculty's communication with graduates, some enrolled in UAA's graduate certificate in principal preparation and doctoral programs at UAF or graduate schools outside Alaska. These data indicate that the program prepares students for continued education beyond a master's degree.

3. Number of graduates who return to UAA to pursue an additional program: Thirteen (13) graduates returned to UAA to pursue an additional program. Although the program does not have access to data on the programs/degrees these graduates pursued, based on the faculty's communication with graduates, some enrolled in the UAA School of Education's graduate certificate in principal preparation.

6. Demonstrate program productivity and efficiency.

Analyze and respond to the data in the data sheet for your program. Provide clarifications or explanations for any positive or negative trends indicated by the data, and discuss what you are doing to improve. The

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Productivity and Efficiency program review metrics are Five Year Degree and/or Certificate Awards Trend, Student Credit Hours per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty, and Full-Time Equivalent Student per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty. (3500 characters or less)

1) Five-year Degree Trend: Between AY 2020 and 2024, 54 students earned the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning. On average, 10.8 students graduated each academic year. Only one faculty member is assigned to the M.Ed. TLRN program. Therefore, the number of graduates indicates the program efficiently produces graduates each AY.

2) SCH/FTEF: According to the data sheet, the average SCH/FTEC is 216.8, ranging from 170.7 to 273.0. The trend was consistently in the 200s between AY 2021 and 2024; in AY 2020, the SCH/FTEF was 170.1.

The following points are essential for interpreting the SCH/FTEF data:

1) Only one faculty member is assigned to the M.Ed. TLRN program; 2) the data sheet lists nine courses; however, only three courses are required for all students—the other courses are selectives that students may select to meet TLRN Core credits; 3) the one faculty, unless “bought out” by a grant, often teaches the three required courses; 4) three of the nine courses listed on the data sheet are required in the M.Ed. Educational Leadership program, and are taught by EDL faculty or adjuncts; although the courses can be used to meet M.Ed. TLRN requirements, they are not M.Ed. TLRN-specific courses. Therefore, the SCH/FTEF calculation presents an incomplete view of the M.Ed TLRN program’s productivity and efficiency.

3) FTES/FTEF: According to the data sheet, the average FTES/FTEF is 9.04.

The following points are essential for interpreting the SCH/FTEF data:

1) Only faculty is assigned to the M.Ed. TLRN program; 2) the data sheet lists nine courses; however, only three courses are required for all students—the other courses are selectives that students may select to meet TLRN Core credits; 3) the one faculty, unless “bought out” by a grant, often teaches the three required courses; 4) three of the nine courses listed on the data sheet are required in the M.Ed. Educational Leadership program, and are taught by EDL faculty or adjuncts; although the courses can be used to meet M.Ed. TLRN requirements, they are not M.Ed. TLRN-specific courses. Therefore, the FTES/FTEF calculation presents an incomplete view of the M.Ed TLRN program’s productivity and efficiency.

Optional: Discuss the extent to which, if any, extramural funding supports students, equipment, and faculty in the program. (3000 characters or less)

The faculty assigned to the M.Ed. TLRN program secured \$539,000 in external grants between 2020-2022. These grants have supported faculty in research, service, and teaching.

Grant/External Funding #1: (2020-2021). Bristol Bay Native Corporation (2020-2021). \$17,000 was awarded to the School of Education in AY 2021. These funds supported the early development phase of the M.Ed. Teaching and Learning’s teacher retention partnership project in the Bristol Bay Region. Funds supported faculty to work on partnership and program development and paid an adjunct to coordinate the experiential learning project and mentor teachers in the 2021-2022 school year.

Grant/External Funding #2: Bristol Bay Foundation (\$25,000) and Rasmuson Foundation (\$25,000) (Fall 2021). The School of Education received \$50,000 for evaluation research of the Bristol Bay M.Ed. TLRN Partnership program. The evaluation project focused on teacher retention and M.Ed. TLRN students’ teaching practices and experiences in the program. The project began in 2022 and ended in June 2024. Products from the project included analyses of school climate, teacher retention, and M.Ed. TLRN students’ perceptions of the program.

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M.Ed. TLRN faculty used findings from the evaluation research in presentations at research conferences and manuscripts, which are in the publication process.

Grant/External Funding #3: (Fall 2022). \$472,000 was awarded to the School of Education from the Department of Education's Alaska Native Education Program. The Bristol Bay Foundation is the sponsoring Alaska Native agency; the total grant amount is \$4.39 million. Key goals of the grant-funded project are to increase the number of teachers from the Bristol Bay region, infuse culture in the schools, and enhance the cultural competencies of teachers from outside the region. Partners include the Bristol Bay Foundation, UAA, Alaska Humanities Forum, Bristol Bay Region Career and Technical Education, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, and Bristol Bay's four school districts.

The M.Ed. TLRN faculty serves as the PI and conducts research related to the project. The faculty presented research findings at the Association for Education Communications and Technology conference in October 2024 and in a webinar for members of an education-related network with the UArctic. Additionally, two manuscripts about the project are in the final stages of publication, and a third is in preparation by invitation from editors of the *Education in the North* journal.

In addition to the research-related productivity noted above, between Spring 2023 and Spring 2025, the grant has paid portions of two full-time faculty and one adjunct for 36 credits during the regular 9-month contract period (August to May).

7. Assess program distinctiveness, as well as any duplication resulting from the existence of a similar program or programs elsewhere in the University of Alaska System. Is duplication justified, and, if so, why? How are you coordinating with UAA's community campuses and the other universities in the system? (2500 characters or less)

The M.Ed. TLRN program is distinct in several ways. The following are highlights of the program's distinctiveness:

1) Only non-licensure M.Ed. in UA System. The M.Ed TLRN program is the only non-licensure master's degree program in education in the UA System. The Schools of Education at UAA, UAF, and UAS offer master's degrees for students seeking teaching licenses or endorsements in specific areas (e.g., early childhood (P-3), elementary (K-6), secondary (7-12), special education (K-12), and principalship (K-12). Therefore, the M.Ed. TLRN program meets a unique need for professional educators across multiple sectors seeking an advanced degree in education, including, for example, K-12 teachers, university faculty, members of the US Military, and program staff and managers in Alaska Native organizations and other community-based organizations.

2) Online. The M.Ed. TLRN is delivered online through distance technology using UAA's course management system and Zoom. The distance delivery format ensures educators across Alaska and beyond can access it while working and living outside Anchorage.

3) Program design: cohesive and flexible. The program's design is intentionally cohesive and adaptable, as discussed in Item 3b above. The nine credits of required courses and the Capstone Portfolio ensure that students share learning experiences directly aligned to the program's PSLOs. Furthermore, the program allows students flexibility in selecting courses, offering an interdisciplinary approach for students to focus on their professional and personal learning interests and goals.

4) Experiential learning: Experiential learning is integrated into the program. The faculty assigned to the TLRN program uses an experiential learning framework to design learning activities/assignments in TLRN courses. The faculty has also experimented with a 600-level independent studies course for students to deepen their professional learning by engaging in research, analysis, and evaluation. Furthermore, the teacher retention

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partnership program in rural Alaska, as noted in items 3 and 8, is infused with an experiential learning framework that leads to credits for the M.Ed. TLRN professional focus area.

8. Assess the strengths of your program and propose one or two action steps to address areas that need improvement. (4000 characters or less)

Many of the points made in the items above are strengths of the program, e.g., innovative design, experiential learning, partnerships, responses to community needs, currency of curriculum, high-impact practices, and online delivery. In this section, entries focus on the program's flexible design, partnership for teacher retention, and opportunities to expand the program's successes in meeting the needs and goals of students and communities.

1) Flexible program design. The program's flexibility encourages students to tailor their coursework around their professional interests and goals. The following are examples of focus areas available to students: children's mental health, leadership, Indigenizing education, place-based/culturally responsive education, teaching English Language Learners, and rural development.

The flexible design supports faculty collaboration outside the M.Ed. TLRN program, including other programs in the School of Education and departments across UAA, UAF, and UAS where students enroll in individual courses and graduate certificate programs. This approach also benefits students because they access expert faculty across the UA System, and it positively impacts UA by boosting student enrollment in multiple departments and colleges.

2) Partnership for teacher retention project. The partnership with rural districts to improve teacher retention, noted in Item 3b, is a concrete example of faculty's responses to community-based needs through program-related strategies. Faculty and community partners created the experiential learning teacher retention model for rural school districts between 2020 and 2023; the first cohort of teachers graduating in the Spring of 2023. The model includes 15 credits from M.Ed. TLRN courses and 15 credits earned through an experiential learning portfolio project spanning three school years. The online classes include the TLRN core courses (nine credits) and six research credits. For the experiential learning component, students focus on a school district-identified theme related to one of the PSLOs and develop a portfolio.

The partnership goal was to improve teacher retention by ensuring teachers enrolled in the M.Ed. TLRN program stay in the partner district for at least three consecutive years. Research findings are encouraging: Between 2020-2021 and 2022-2023, 95% of the teachers enrolled in the program returned to their schools compared to 66% of non-participating teachers.

Teachers in the Bristol Bay Region have continued to enroll in the program each school year. Additionally, three other Alaska rural districts, including the state's largest, have partnered with the School of Education to deliver the program. Thus, in 2024-2025, teachers from seven rural districts are enrolled in a partner-designed program addressing teacher retention, a significant local need.

3) Expanding success in meeting the needs of students and communities. The faculty is exploring opportunities to expand the program's successes in meeting the needs and goals of students and communities. Examples of directions the program could take include:

a) Transfer the teacher retention model to other rural districts. The faculty is in conversation with a large rural district in Northwest Alaska about adopting the model in the 2025-2026 school year. Additionally, the faculty is discussing opportunities to transfer the model to other Arctic settings with colleagues in the UArctic.

b) Launch a recruiting campaign targeting students in sectors outside K-12 schools. The program's flexibility has attracted professionals from a variety of backgrounds. The faculty can capitalize on this interest by strategically

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recruiting professionals in training and development in businesses, the US Military, and other community-based organizations.

Action Step: Collaborate with programs in the SOE to data collection and management system to track program graduates' employment and continued education endeavors.

Committee chair first name last name: Timothy Jester

Date: 3/14/2025

END OF PROGRAM SECTION

DEAN SECTION (Due on April 1)

1. Evaluation of Progress on Previous Recommendations

For each recommendation from the last program review, indicate if the recommendation has been met or has not been met and provide commendations and guidance as appropriate. *(2500 characters or less for each recommendation)*

Recommendation 1: The faculty should work with the faculty at UAF and UAS to resolve the UA College of Education structural problem. Recommendation has been met.

The Alaska College of Education Consortium is an active part of all SOE processes and decisions.

Provide your analysis of #2-8 below, based on the data provided and the program's responses above.

2. Centrality of the Program (2000 characters or less)

The M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program aligns directly with UAA's mission to serve Alaska's communities by developing highly skilled educators who contribute to workforce stability and student success. The program plays a critical role in addressing teacher retention challenges, particularly in rural and Indigenous communities, where turnover rates remain high.

A three-year study by Education Northwest (Feb. 2024) found that M.Ed. participants had significantly higher retention rates than non-participants, with 94% of 2022-23 program completers remaining in their schools compared to 66% of non-participants. This demonstrates the program's direct impact on reducing workforce attrition and strengthening educational continuity in high-need districts.

Additionally, the program supports UAA's commitment to lifelong learning and leadership development by preparing educators for instructional leadership roles, curriculum development, and administrative positions. Graduates advance into school leadership, higher education faculty roles, and district-level curriculum positions, ensuring that Alaska's education system benefits from homegrown expertise and culturally responsive practitioners.

The program's online, flexible format further reinforces its alignment with UAA's mission by making graduate education accessible statewide, allowing working professionals to remain in their communities while pursuing advanced credentials. Expanding collaborations with school districts, education agencies, and Alaska Native-serving organizations will enhance the program's ability to meet the state's evolving workforce needs..

3. Program Quality and Improvement (2000 characters or less)

The M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program provides educators across diverse professional contexts with advanced instructional strategies, applied research skills, and a deeper understanding of learning processes.

While course pass rates have remained high, the decline from 94% in 2022 to 83% in 2024 indicates a need for targeted interventions, particularly for part-time students, Alaska Native/American Indian students, and Pell Grant recipients. Expanding structured academic support mechanisms, such as peer mentoring, faculty check-ins, or flexible course pacing, could help address these disparities.

Time to degree completion varies, ranging from 3.5 to 5.6 semesters over the past five years. To improve consistency, the program should assess course sequencing and scheduling predictability to ensure students—whether in K-12, higher education, corporate training, or other learning environments—can progress efficiently. Additionally, faculty buyouts for grant-funded projects may have affected instructional continuity, and a review of faculty workload distribution could help maintain stability in course offerings.

To support ongoing improvement, the program should integrate with existing SOE Student Success processes to collect systematic graduate and employer feedback. Given the program's broad applicability, grouping insights from graduates from across related fields will help refine curriculum and instructional delivery. Strengthening these data collection efforts will ensure the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of professionals in diverse learning environments.

4. Student Success and the Closing of Achievement Gaps (2000 characters or less)

To improve student success and address achievement gaps, the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program should implement targeted strategies that enhance academic support, course accessibility, and data-driven decision-making. Establishing a proactive advising model with scheduled check-ins at key points in the program could help part-time students navigate degree requirements more efficiently. Additionally, expanding peer mentoring and cohort-based engagement opportunities would create stronger academic and professional support networks, particularly for students in rural or isolated settings.

To improve time to degree completion, the program should ensure predictable course sequencing and enrollment pathways so students can plan their schedules effectively. Clarifying degree progression through structured academic planning tools and improved communication of course availability would help students avoid unnecessary delays.

The program should also refine data collection efforts by integrating with SOE Student Success processes to track graduate outcomes and employer feedback. Additionally, surveying students as they graduate may help reveal hidden barriers or issues contributing to achievement gaps, providing valuable insights for future program improvements. Strengthening these data collection efforts will ensure the program remains responsive to student needs and supports equitable outcomes for all learners.

5. Demand (2000 characters or less)

The M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program prepares educators for a wide range of roles beyond traditional classroom teaching, including instructional coordination, educational consulting, and training and development. This aligns with national labor market trends, which indicate continued demand for professionals in education-related occupations.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the employment of instructional coordinators who oversee curriculum development and teaching standards remains steady, with 190,400 jobs nationally in 2023 and a median annual wage of \$66,970. Similarly, training and development specialists responsible for corporate and organizational education are projected to grow 12% from 2023 to 2033, much faster than the average for all occupations. This growth reflects the increasing need for professionals skilled in adult learning, instructional design, and workforce development (BLS, 2024).

In Alaska, the demand for highly trained educators and instructional specialists remains strong. The state employed approximately 350 instructional coordinators in 2023, with a median annual wage of \$75,010, highlighting the regional need for professionals in curriculum development and education oversight. Although specific state projections for training and development specialists are limited, national trends suggest growing opportunities in Alaska's corporate and public-sector training fields (BLS, 2024).

Despite fluctuations in K-12 hiring trends, enrollment in the M.Ed. program has remained stable over the past five years, reflecting sustained interest from educators and professionals seeking advanced credentials. This suggests that while new teacher hiring may be slowing, demand for professional development and career advancement remains strong.

The M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program continues to be a critical driver of workforce development, equipping professionals with advanced instructional strategies, applied research skills, a

6. Productivity and Efficiency (2000 characters or less)

The M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program maintains a consistent level of productivity and efficiency, balancing graduate output, faculty workload, and instructional resource allocation. Over the past five years, the program has awarded an average of 10.8 degrees per year, with annual totals ranging from 8 to 16 graduates. While this variability reflects shifts in enrollment patterns, it demonstrates sustained interest and demand for advanced professional development.

The Student Credit Hours per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (SCH/FTEF) ratio has remained relatively stable, averaging 216.8 over the past five years, with fluctuations between 170.7 and 273.0. The Full-Time Equivalent Student per Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTES/FTEF) ratio has also been consistent, averaging 9.04. These metrics indicate effective faculty utilization and course enrollment patterns.

Faculty buyouts for grant-funded projects have had a measurable impact on instructional capacity, temporarily reducing available teaching assignments. However, the program has mitigated this by using only one or two adjuncts per semester, ensuring that core course offerings remain available without excessive reliance on contingent faculty. Moving forward, the program should continue monitoring faculty workload balance to ensure efficient course delivery and resource allocation.

To further strengthen productivity and efficiency, examining course sequencing and enrollment predictability could help students navigate the program more efficiently, reducing time to degree completion. Additionally, refining data collection on faculty workload and course demand will ensure that instructional resources are allocated effectively and sustainably. These efforts will support the program's long-term viability while maintaining its high-quality, student-centered approach.

7. Duplication and Distinctiveness (2000 characters or less)

The M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program is the only graduate program of its kind in Alaska, making it a critical resource for educators and professionals seeking advanced expertise in instructional practice, applied research, and learning sciences. Unlike other education-focused graduate programs in the state, which emphasize educational leadership or initial teacher licensure, this program serves a diverse range of educators working in K-12, higher education, corporate training, instructional design, and nonprofit sectors.

The program's distinctiveness lies in its flexibility and interdisciplinary approach, allowing professionals across multiple education-related fields to tailor their coursework to their specific instructional contexts. Its fully online delivery format ensures accessibility for working educators in both urban and rural communities, particularly those in Alaska's remote regions who would otherwise have limited options for advanced study.

5/8/2025

With no direct competition within the state, the M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning fills an essential niche need, supporting ongoing professional development, teacher retention, and workforce readiness in education-related roles. Its unique position within the state's education system ensures that it remains a vital program for advancing Alaska's instructional workforce.

8. Strengths and Ideas for Moving Forward (2000 characters or less)

The M.Ed. in Teaching and Learning program has significant potential for growth and expansion due to its flexibility, interdisciplinary reach, and adaptability across multiple professional sectors. Unlike traditional graduate programs focused solely on K-12 education, this program serves a broader audience, including professionals in higher education, corporate training, instructional design, and nonprofit leadership. Its fully online delivery format provides accessibility for working professionals across Alaska and beyond, making it an attractive option for those seeking career advancement while remaining in their communities.

Despite this potential, the program currently lacks dedicated marketing and outreach support at the college level. Without a staff member or budget allocated for targeted recruitment efforts, the program relies on word-of-mouth and institutional visibility rather than proactive engagement with potential students. To increase enrollment and strengthen awareness, resources are needed to develop a strategic marketing plan, digital outreach, and employer partnerships that showcase the program's flexibility and career relevance.

An investment in marketing and recruitment support would allow the program to expand its reach through strategic employer partnerships, digital marketing campaigns, and virtual outreach efforts. The program would benefit from a dedicated marketing specialist or shared enrollment recruiter who could develop and implement a targeted strategy. A modest budget allocation for digital advertising, social media campaigns, and promotional materials would help the program better position itself in statewide and national markets. Additionally, collaborating with UAA's enrollment management team to refine messaging and recruitment materials could provide an immediate, cost-effective way to improve visibility.

Dean's Final Evaluation

I commend the program for: (number and list the specific commendations in the narrative box, 2000-character limit)

1. Commitment to Accessibility – The program's fully online format ensures that educators and professionals across Alaska and beyond can access high-quality graduate education without needing to relocate or take extended leave from their jobs.
2. Interdisciplinary Reach – Unlike traditional education programs focused solely on K-12 instruction, this program serves a diverse range of professionals, including those in higher education, corporate training, instructional design, and nonprofit leadership, expanding its impact across multiple sectors.
3. Sustained Enrollment and Workforce Alignment – The program has maintained steady enrollment despite shifts in national and state labor markets, demonstrating ongoing demand for advanced instructional expertise in education and training fields.

5/8/2025

I recommend that the program: *(number and list the specific recommendations in the narrative box, 2000-character limit)*

1. Allocate Resources for Marketing and Recruitment – The program needs dedicated support for targeted outreach, employer engagement, and digital marketing to attract a broader audience. Identifying a shared enrollment recruiter or modest marketing budget would help expand visibility and increase applications.
2. Strengthen Employer and Institutional Partnerships for Data-Driven Improvement – Leveraging existing relationships with school districts, higher education institutions, and corporate training partners to systematically collect feedback on graduate performance, workforce needs, and employer expectations will support program enhancements, marketing efforts, and student recruitment.
3. Monitor Faculty Workload and Course Availability – As faculty buyouts for grant-funded projects continue, long-term tracking of faculty workloads and course sequencing will help ensure consistent course offerings and instructional capacity without over-reliance on adjuncts.

Dean's overall recommendation to the provost: Enhancement -- Program will be enhanced with additional resources.

If an Interim Progress Report is proposed, recommended year: N/A

If a Follow-up Program Review is proposed, recommended year: N/A

Proposed next regular Program Review: AY2032

Dean first name last name: Tonia A. Dousay

Date: 3/17/2025

END OF DEAN SECTION

PROGRAM OPTIONAL RESPONSE SECTION (Due within one week of receiving dean's review)

Are you submitting an optional response? If yes, add your response below, enter your name and date, and follow the guidance below for submission. If no, enter your name and date, and follow the guidance below for submission.

Yes

Optional Response: *(10,000 characters or less)*

I appreciate Dean Dousay's acknowledgment of the program's strengths, potential for growth, and the need for resources to support promotion and marketing. I look forward to working with Dean Dousay and the faculty and staff in the School of Education to enhance the program's integration into the School of Education's emerging infrastructure.

Committee chair first name last name: Timothy Jester

Date: 3/24/2025

END OF PROGRAM OPTIONAL RESPONSE SECTION

5/8/2025

PROVOST SECTION (Due on August 1)**Provost's commendations, additional or adjusted recommendations, if any, and other general comments (3500 characters or less):**

I concur with the dean's commendations, with an additional call out particularly for the program's commitment to making the program as accessible as possible across the state. The interdisciplinary nature of the degree and its flexibility in serving student and district needs is also commendable. And, finally, I would call out the excellent work in assessment and improvement.

I also concur with the dean's recommendations, and include that the previous recommendation has been met. These recommendations will be met through the internal reallocation of School of Education resources. As a suggestion for implementing recommendation 1, the program will want to consider joining efforts with the UAA initiative around dual enrollment and teacher preparation.

Finally, I am asking that over the next year or so faculty holistically review the overall design of their program(s) within the framework of UAA's dual mission and make changes accordingly. Degrees must demonstrate breadth, depth, and appropriate sequencing of coursework. Whenever possible, students are able to complete UAA programs within the Board of Regents' minimum credit requirements, ensuring programs are affordable financially and in terms of a student's commitment of time. UAA programs provide clear and streamlined pathways into and through the credential, ensuring no hidden prerequisites, requiring prerequisites only when clearly tied to success in the course, and, whenever possible, standardizing prerequisites across courses at a particular level within the credential. Credentials within the same discipline or related disciplines clearly stack one within the next, providing students flexible, streamlined opportunities to earn one credential and return to UAA at a later time to complete the next level. Finally, programs formally acknowledge appropriate alternative credit paths, allowing students to take advantage of prior learning and avoid unnecessary credit accumulation. I wish to acknowledge that the MED Teaching and Learning already meets many of these criteria.

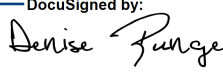
Provost's decision: Enhancement -- Program will be enhanced with additional resources.

Interim Progress Report: N/A

Follow-up Program Review: N/A

Next regular Program Review: AY2032

Provost's signature:

DocuSigned by:

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Date: May 9, 2025