



LOUISIANA'S
TEACHER
QUALITY
INITIATIVE

***RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE
EXTERNAL EVALUATORS***

**ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE IN
TEACHING DEGREE**

Submitted to the Board of Regents by:

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SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

The Louisiana Community and Technical College System submitted a new core grades 1-5 curriculum for an Associate of Science in Teaching degree program for individuals interested in pursuing a career in teaching. Candidates pursuing this degree must demonstrate mastery of core content knowledge in English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and the Arts that is aligned with Louisiana's grades 1-5 content standards. In addition, candidates must complete six credit hours of education courses that address the needs of PK-12 students in classrooms. Candidates who complete the curriculum and meet all exit requirements may transfer the credit hours within the approved curriculum to four year institutions and apply all approved courses to a baccalaureate degree in teacher education.

The Board of Regents selected two external consultants to review and evaluate the proposed new Associate of Science in Teaching degree program. The evaluators were charged with reviewing the proposal submitted by Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and providing feedback and recommendations to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and the Board of Regents relative to the merits of the proposed degree program.

Provided to the consultants as background materials were the following:

- Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Basic Requirements for Associate of Science Degree Program Proposal, February 24, 2005
- Guidelines for the Louisiana Community College Campus Design of Associate of Science in Teaching Degree, Feb. 20, 2005
- Guidelines for the Louisiana Community and Technical College System Design of Associate of Science in Teaching and Associate of Applied Science in Paraprofessional Degree programs, Feb. 20, 2005
- Final Revision of Guidelines for Submission and Review of Redesigned Teacher Preparation Program, October 18, 2001
- Recommendations of the External Evaluators, Redesigned Teacher Preparation Programs: Undergraduate Certification, Masters Alternative Certification, & Practitioner Teacher Programs, June 12, 2002

Following a review of the written materials, the consultants participated in a 45 minute interview conducted via telephone on May 25, 2005 with representatives from the Board of Regents, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and community college campuses. The consultants then met together in Austin, Texas on Friday, May 27, 2005 to compare observations and make recommendations. The three possible recommendations were the following:

Recommended for Approval: Programs that exhibited many strengths and had no stipulations.

Recommended for Approval with Stipulations: Programs that had areas in need of further development.

Not Recommended for Approval: Programs that were in need of major program redesign.

Based upon information generated by the consultants, this report was prepared to provide specific feedback about the program. SECTION II: PROGRAM EVALUATION provides feedback from the evaluators in the following four areas:

A. Program Recommendation

Statements identifying the types of programs submitted and the recommendations of the evaluators.

B. Strengths

A list of strengths observed in each program by the evaluators.

C. Stipulations That Must Be Addressed for Program Approval

A list of stipulations that universities were required to address for the program(s) to be approved.

D. Specific Recommendations for Future Improvement

A list of recommendations for universities to consider when further developing the program. Universities were not required to address the recommendations in order for their programs to be approved.

If the programs is recommended for approval with stipulations, the Louisiana Community and Technical College System must prepare a rejoinder to address the areas cited by the consultants and submit it to the Board of Regents for review by the BoR/SBESE/LAICU Program Review Committee composed of staff from the Board of Regents, State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (i.e., Louisiana Department of Education), and LAICU. Once all stipulations have been addressed, the Associate of Science in Teaching degree programs must be submitted to the Louisiana Community and Technical College System for approval to implement within all community colleges in Louisiana.

SECTION II: PROGRAM EVALUATION

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

SECTION I: PROGRAM EVALUATION

External consultants examined the overall quality of the proposed programs and developed the following section.

A. PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

TYPE OF PROPOSED PROGRAMS	RECOMMENDATIONS
Associate of Science in Teaching Degree - Grades 1-5	<i>Recommended for Approval with Stipulations</i>

B. STRENGTHS

OVERALL STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM	
1.	The evaluators commend the BoR and the LCTCS for recognizing the important contribution community colleges can make to the preparation of a cadre of diverse and well-qualified future teachers for Louisiana’s classrooms. Creating an Associate of Science in Teaching degree that is standards-based, and fully aligned and transferable to four-year baccalaureate teacher preparation programs, puts Louisiana among an elite group of states at the forefront of teacher education reform across the country.
2.	The stated outcomes for implementing the Associate of Science in Teaching degree are worthy and are commendable. The reviewers summarize these as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the diversity of the teaching force. • Develop solid content knowledge in the teaching force for elementary grades. • Offer early orientation and access to the profession through the two pedagogy courses. • Generally increase access to students who might not have considered education as a career choice. • Provide early field-based experiences to allow students to observe the classroom as future professionals. • Retain candidates for teaching who might otherwise leave higher education or make other career decisions. • Increase long-term retention in the profession.

B. STRENGTHS (CONT’D.)

OVERALL STRENGTHS OF THE PROGRAM

3. The state has taken a significant step in developing a common, statewide format for teacher education in conjunction with receiving institutions. This step will promote completion of a baccalaureate degree, but is one that must be fostered with considerable information to universities, including deans (education and other), other administrators, and faculty in both community colleges and universities. Evidence elsewhere in the country indicates that this step is crucial for buy-in and for alignment of coursework and experiences offered in the field-based courses.
4. Based upon information provided during the telephone interview, the state is making progress toward enrolling a better-prepared student body as evidenced by the passing rates on the PRAXIS I and II, 0014 exams.
5. The PASSPORT electronic portfolio is an important and highly desirable feature of new-teacher preparation efforts in Louisiana.
6. The inclusion of the technology module in the lower division teacher education course is very commendable. Students must have a strong command of technology and applications that will be useful to them as teachers.
7. The rubrics for the structured observations identified as part of the assessment practices are excellent. In particular, the Peer Lesson Evaluation will give students feedback that will be constructive and help them address specific behaviors. This approach should be used to develop all rubrics.

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL

Recruitment

1. A minimum GPA of 2.0 (including developmental education courses) for acceptance into the AST program is very low and should be revisited. The BoR should consider taking this step in relation to the approval and implementation of the AST. The state should closely study the requirements of other states and use these to benchmark the expectations for future Louisiana teachers.

Developmental education courses cover pre-college level work. A 2.0 average in a developmental course does not represent college level academic skills. While we understand and applaud the desire to open up the teaching pipeline to a more diverse

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CON'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL	
Recruitment (Cont'd)	
1.	<p>(Cont'd.)</p> <p>teaching pool, if the teacher workforce is to be considered “highly qualified” beyond technical terms, then the academic expectations for Louisiana teachers must be higher.</p> <p><i>The LCTCS task force should reconsider the minimum entrance standards for the AST degree. A more diverse teaching pool does not have to mean lower entrance standards. The task force should carefully consider and justify any decision that sets standards that are lower than those of the four-year sector. If the decision is made to maintain the 2.0 entrance standard, colleges applying for institutional approval should address what academic support systems they will provide to ensure that lower-scoring teacher candidates can be successful in their coursework.</i></p>
Screening and Selection	
2.	<p>The degree proposal does not specify the point at which a person is screened and selected for the AST program. (It is unclear from the proposal whether a person must be admitted when they first seek to enroll in credit coursework at the college or whether they can enter at any later stage in their lower division coursework). As much as possible, programs should provide multiple entry points.</p> <p>Screening for admission should be undertaken with care and be conducted in very similar ways across institutions. Colleges submitting AST applications should clearly identify who will be responsible for conducting entrance interviews for entering students and identify how these individuals (college advisors, faculty, etc.) will be trained to recognize “student disposition as it relates to the teaching profession.” Objective screening tools for identifying potential successful teachers have been developed and are available commercially.</p> <p><i>Please provide additional information pertaining to the screening and selection process that addresses the above concerns.</i></p>
Associate Degree Curriculum	
3.	<p>The proposal did not provide sufficient evidence that the content knowledge that elementary students must cover in grades 1-5 will be mastered by teacher candidates in the required courses identified for the core curriculum of the AST program. This is a significant concern since there are few if any subject-specific courses taken by students at the upper-division level. It must be shown how required courses will be aligned with the state standards designated for Grades 1 – 5 and in all cases these courses</p>

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CONT'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL	
Associate Degree Curriculum (Cont'd.)	
3.	<p>(Cont'd.)</p> <p>should include both a broad and deep understanding of the subjects in order that future teachers develop the capacity to engage students in learning and thinking related to the specific subject area, including critical, analytical and evaluative thinking. An analysis of the subject-specific coursework identified in materials provided to the review team indicate that persons teaching Grades 1-5 will take only 54 semester credit hours in the core subjects they will teach; the remainder of the coursework required for the bachelor's degree in education are education courses or pedagogy. This is a significantly smaller number of content hours than comparable baccalaureate teaching degrees in other states. We recognize that the curriculum as designed is aligned with that approved for the universities and that this is a broader issue than that of this Associate degree alone.</p> <p>Teachers in Grades 1-5 must possess knowledge to address state content standards as well as NCATE standards. The proposal provided a general education review of courses from Delgado Community College as examples of how courses in all areas could meet those standards. However, in some cases required content standards were identified (e.g., Louisiana history) as part of a course that isn't part of the required curriculum.</p> <p><i>Please reexamine the courses and clearly identify ways in which new courses can be substituted or existing courses adapted to ensure that new teachers will possess knowledge in all areas and the program will address NCATE and state content standards, including social studies, language arts, sciences and math. Address how the developmental and content needs of various grade levels will be addressed within the individual courses. Colleges applying to offer the new AST degree should include complete course descriptions that include proposed resources and materials and how coursework will be differentiated for different levels, if appropriate.</i></p>
Arts/Sciences	
4.	<p>The commitment of the leadership and faculty in the arts and sciences, as well as in education, to participate in the development of future teachers must be evident in the proposals submitted to the BoR by each college. That commitment should be represented by specific actions that will be taken in the college to assure the community college students that they are well prepared to teach subject matter.</p> <p><i>Please identify how the Louisiana Community and Technical College System will be assured that the arts and sciences faculty have been directly involved in the process to design the Associate of Science in Teaching degrees at the individual campuses.</i></p>

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CON'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL

Arts/Sciences (Cont'd.)

5. If content standards are to be mastered in general education core courses it is essential that liberal arts faculty from across the college gain a working understanding of the student standards for all grade levels, focusing on grades 1-5, as these relate to the courses which they teach.

Please explain how colleges applying to offer the new AST degree will provide an explicit description of how all college faculty will be trained to know and adopt the core content standards for Grades 1-5 into their respective general education courses. This description should include a plan for reaching adjunct faculty who are often hired on a term-by-term basis to teach lower division general education courses.

Teacher Education 201 and 203

6. It is very appropriate to give students background in current trends, as well as laws that affect the classroom teacher, including relationships with students, parents, and other teachers. However, some material included in these courses appear to be repeated in upper division courses as well. We would encourage the faculty for these two courses to ensure that the following topics are adequately incorporated into the curriculum of these two courses including:

- Characteristics of public educational systems: elementary, secondary, or post- secondary
- Professional ethics in the educational workplace
- Strategies for effective communication with K-20 students, colleagues, supervisors, and families
- Cultural and individual diversity
- Federal and state law regarding student personnel procedures
- Strategies for group and individualized instruction
- Career development opportunities
- Professional goal setting
- Self-assessment and reflection

(Source: Course syllabus for Education 202 course developed as part of proposed curriculum for Associate of Arts in Teaching degree being developed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges)

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CON'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL

Teacher Education 201 and 203

6. (Cont'd.)

Please re-examine these courses, particularly focusing on well-conceived experiences on school campuses, including observing activities in classrooms as well as parent/teacher conferences, school board meetings, faculty meetings, etc. There is not a clear enough distinction between TEAC 201 and 203. There appears to be significant overlap and an attempt to cover a very broad spectrum of issues and practices related to education. The college proposals must make clear the difference between the two courses as it relates to each module and how these modules will be built upon in the upper-division courses.

7. It is unclear whether these two education courses are the same as the parallel courses offered by universities. If these are the same or very similar, then there should be more evidence presented of collaboration with universities to develop the community college courses.

TEAC 201 is focused heavily on developing knowledge about education within society and theoretical knowledge about child development. This continues into TEAC 202 and may be repeated again at the university. The course outline is very ambitious.

We suggest there should be a stronger consideration of the course content based upon observed experiences in the classroom or analysis of encounters with young children in other settings (e.g. child care, the home). The modules are very broad and appear to be focused on understanding theoretical foundations rather than learning through observation and experience. These are two different approaches to learning and a combination of them is appropriate. Student outcomes should be developed for the courses offered based upon these core abilities – critical thinking, effective communication, information competency, multiculturalism, responsibility.

Some of the activities identified in the proposed course description may be too ambitious, requiring higher-level thinking skills that many students have not yet had the opportunity to develop as they relate to a professional role. These activities may be developmentally appropriate for a teacher-in-training, but only with strong support from both the college faculty and the classroom teacher.

Module Two of TEAC 203 seems to repeat much of the same material as in TEAC 201. The description of communications skills covered shows no evidence that written and other non-verbal communication will also be addressed. These should be a part of both courses.

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CON'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL

Teacher Education 201 and 203

7. (Cont'd.)

The course content in both TEAC 201 and 203 should guide the student to understand how to create a learner-centered rather than a teacher-centered environment. Developmentally appropriate instruction is at the heart of classrooms that embody these traits. Colleges should make clear in their proposals how this will be introduced to their students and reinforced through their own teaching methodologies in TEAC 201 and 203.

Please reexamine these two courses and make necessary changes to strengthen the courses.

Local Public Schools

8. There is little evidence that local public schools have had an impact upon the planning of the community college Associate of Science in Teaching degree. This is particularly important with regard to the field-based activities. In addition, it is important to build this link prior to initiating contacts for field-based learning. Public school personnel from school districts of varying size and location in the state should also be given an opportunity to react to and give comments about this proposed degree and particularly the institutional proposals that will be submitted for approval.

Please identify how the Louisiana Community and Technical College System will be assured that the local public schools are involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of the programs at each of the individual community colleges.

Field Based-Experiences

9. The reviewers have construed from other parts of the proposal that the AST is being added to the state's agenda for improving the teaching profession in order to develop persons who have a strong understanding of the role of the teacher and to develop "best practices" in the classroom. Observing and identifying those behaviors in other teachers can accomplish this best. This field experience is appropriately included in two Teacher Education courses proposed for this lower division AST degree. Research suggests that students need to spend at least half of their time in these courses observing high quality teaching. The remainder of that time should be spent in guided reflection upon that practice. Classroom settings for the future teachers should model the type of instructional practices that future teachers are expected to use in their classrooms.

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CON'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL	
Field Based-Experiences	
9.	<p>(Cont'd.)</p> <p><i>Please determine if additional field-based experiences can be added to the curriculum and identify the types of experiences that will occur during those based- based experiences.</i></p>
10.	<p>Students will be given opportunities to observe and interact in PK-12 classrooms yet the focus of the courses for this AST is for Grades 1-5. What is the rationale? If greater exposure to more developmental levels of students is the purpose, that is good, but it is not expressed in the course descriptions. Generally, the activities described in this section are appropriate. However, it remains unclear how these are correlated to the course descriptions in Section V.</p> <p>The proposals to be submitted by each college should link the field and college classroom time so that the relationship is clear to the readers, and more important, to the students who enroll in the classes.</p> <p><i>Please reexamine the field-based experiences and provide a chart that aligns the field-based experiences with the objectives for the courses.</i></p>
PASS-PORT Training	
11.	<p>The proposed use of the electronic portfolio, PASS-PORT, is an excellent practice that has been developed by LCTCS and the Board of Regents. Without seeing the contents of the portfolio, the reviewers strongly urge those who are developing these two courses to ensure that the requirements for the portfolio be clearly and fully represented in the instruction provided in the two teacher education courses offered at the community colleges; with the caveat that expectations for community college students be based upon developmentally-appropriate actions of a person who is beginning to explore teaching as a vocation.</p> <p>The reviewers believe that each college proposal should indicate how faculty at the college be trained in the purpose, values, content, and standards for the PASSPORT. This step is essential and might even be the foundation for all faculty training.</p> <p><i>Please identify how teacher candidates and college faculty will be trained to use the PASS-PORT System.</i></p>

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CON'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL	
Teacher Education Faculty	
12.	<p>Each college applying to offer the AST should define the requirements for faculty who will teach the two education courses, adding to the educational background of these individuals information about their successes as teachers. Employment and interview strategies should be required to enhance the probability of employing high quality faculty who emulate national and state standards for teaching.</p> <p><i>Please identify how the Louisiana Community and Technical College System will assured that high quality faculty are teaching the courses on individual campuses.</i></p>
Transition to A University	
13.	<p>Activities should also be provided to ease the transition from the community college to a university. These should be developed in collaboration with one or more universities (depending on general enrollment patterns) and begin after the student has accumulated approximately 30 SCH.</p> <p><i>Please explain how the Louisiana Community and Technical College System will be assured that a transition plan exists at each community college campus.</i></p>
Exit Requirements/Support for Program Completers	
14.	<p>This section of the proposal primarily focused on support after completion of the AST. However, the colleges should be required to define all of the support activities that will be available while a person is enrolled at the college. Mentor support, small group activities, etc. help form personal relationships within the college community and give students an impetus to discover the attributes of a “professional” life.</p> <p>Activities should also be provided to ease the transition from the community college to a university. These should be developed in collaboration with one or more universities (depending on general enrollment patterns) and begin after the student has accumulated approximately 30 SCH.</p> <p><i>Please provide additional information to indicate how the Louisiana Community and Technical College System will be assured that support is being provided to candidates while enrolled in the program.</i></p>

C. STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL (CON'D.)

STIPULATIONS THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED FOR PROGRAM APPROVAL	
Evaluation	
15.	<p>A framework for evaluating the field-based portion of each program should be developed for use by the colleges. This should include a list of mentor qualities and set the full range of activities and outcomes that are expected to be achieved as a result of field-based experiences.</p> <p><i>Please identify how the quality of field-based experiences will be evaluated.</i></p>
16.	<p>The evaluation processes described in the proposal are commendable, but should be described in more detail to provide guidance for all of the parties involved.</p> <p><i>Please provide additional information about the evaluation process.</i></p>

D. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE SYSTEM OR WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONS WHEN FURTHER DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION	
1.	<p>The reviewers recognize that reform does not occur quickly, but they strongly recommend that Louisiana educators and policymakers establish a vision of high standards and expectations for the preparation of public school teachers that will be achieved over time in a planned implementation strategy. Significant policy changes are usually undertaken incrementally and are driven by high expectations. We recognize that many of these issues are beyond the scope of the LCTCS and this particular Associate Degree program, but we believe that the community colleges along with their partners in the university sector can play a critical role in raising the bar for public education in the state of Louisiana.</p>
2.	<p>Generally, the state is providing evidence of its desire to increase standards. If not already in state policy, there should be some type of tangible evidence of this as it relates to the teaching profession. This might include increased requirements to pass entrance exams required for teacher education and exams for certification, regular review of courses taught in higher education, etc. These may already be in place, but assessment of both the preparation programs and the specific requirements for persons to become teachers should be accomplished on a cyclical schedule. By doing so, the public will have tangible evidence of a stronger commitment to education.</p>

E. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT (CONT'D.)

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE SYSTEM OR WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONS WHEN FURTHER DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

3. While Louisiana is to be commended for its improved success rates for students who take the Praxis I and II exams, these passing rates are achieved with relatively low cut scores on the tests in comparison to those of many other states. Louisiana should move expeditiously to reexamine the cut scores that are now applied to a student's performance on the above-identified exams to determine exit from the AST program and entry into a university teacher preparation program. This review of "acceptable performance for the teaching profession" should be undertaken with care and advice about psychometric procedures that should be followed. The state should make clear its desire to raise standards for entry into the teaching profession and give advance notice of the requirements that will be applied, perhaps incrementally over time.⁴ Data from these two exams should be widely disseminated and workshops, conferences, etc. across the state should focus on strategies to improve performance on these exams. The state with input from stakeholders and the public should set high expectations for performance on these exams as well as performance in all aspects of the teacher preparation programs.
4. The section of the document "Impact of Candidates on School Improvement" indicates that school improvement is more likely to improve with older personnel in the community college programs who are parents themselves and who are community bound. This assertion should be made with great care and not before all aspects of the program and the schools that the candidates for teaching enter are carefully evaluated. All of the conditions must be a part of an evaluation system to identify those elements which affect both quality and retention of teachers.
5. Screening and selection procedures should be also be reassessed. The expectations for the future teaching workforce should be rigorous, but not unreasonable. Those represented in the proposal should be reconsidered.
6. Based upon the details of the program requirements, credit hours, and course titles shown on Form 3, Grades 1-5 curriculum, the evaluators were struck by the lack of flexibility or options allowed by the degree program, at least as outlined, for students to explore any level of personal areas of interest, even within core areas. While we acknowledge the importance of ensuring alignment with the educational standards as established by the State Board of Education, it is also important to recognize the importance of knowledge and skill in areas that are important to teaching, e.g. speech/communications, or other electives that can advance broader development of the individual. The first two years of education should allow students to gain a broader understanding of the world in which they live. We agree with the strong emphasis on developing a strong command of subject knowledge but wonder whether allowing students a choice of courses within particular areas might not better meet the individual learning needs and interests of students.

E. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT (CONT'D.)

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE SYSTEM OR WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONS WHEN FURTHER DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

7. The reviewers believe that the material presented has adequately established that the relationship between the quality of teacher preparation and the quality of teaching. It is the responsibility of the state to require and confirm that the teacher preparation will produce better-prepared PK-12 students. The state should be bold in this assertion and hold teacher preparation entities, including community colleges, accountable to their work. Steps should be taken immediately to define an accountability process based upon measurable outcomes that will be applied to each community college offering the AST.
8. It wasn't clear from the proposal whether the team(s) that developed the framework for the community college based AST are considering the development of a single AST or three separate levels, i.e., grades 1-5, 4-8, and 7-12? Have the requirements for the other levels been specified and to what extent will they differ from the Grades 1-5 AST? To the extent possible, develop a common core in the lower division courses that provides students a flexible opportunity to explore teaching across the grades, since few students enter college with a fixed notion of what their eventual professional goals may be.
9. The proposal indicates alliances with "various content-area professional organizations." There should be assurances and evidences of this in the proposals. Because the education degree has a predilection toward pedagogy rather than subject knowledge in the courses that are required for the AST and the baccalaureate degree, the content alignment and development of both depth and breadth in the community college curriculum/courses is imperative. NCATE standards and those of the specialty professional organizations should be evident in the ongoing efforts to develop high quality teacher education programs in community colleges. Individual program proposals should require strong evidence of a deep commitment to offer relevant, strong content that is aligned with the student standards and include evidence of alliances with content-area professional organizations.
10. If a community college is approved to offer an AST degree program, the college should include a plan for outreach strategies to identify diverse middle and high school students in their service area who may be good candidates to become future teachers. Early recruitment efforts to orient students to the teaching profession, including establishing high expectations for achievement in high school, should be a part of every approved program. Support activities such as providing scholarships, sponsoring clubs, etc., are important, and the college should partner with the public schools to develop mentoring programs for promising candidates. Colleges should also be encouraged to develop close relationships with K-12 school personnel offices and principals to identify potential opportunities for their students upon graduation. This may/may not require additional personnel at the college to coordinate such activities. Models for these kinds of activities are available in other states.

E. SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE IMPROVEMENT (CONT'D.)

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS THAT SHOULD BE ADDRESSED BY THE SYSTEM OR WITHIN THE INSTITUTIONS WHEN FURTHER DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

11. The background checks that applicants will undergo should include a search of criminal history banks at the local, state, and national level, given the increasing mobility of those with a history of being predators. This is particularly important for regions that are close to bordering states. This is critical and must be done before a person is allowed to engage in activities in a public school setting. Persons are more mobile than in past years and national checks will identify problems that may otherwise be undetected
12. In order to evaluate the effects of the AST on the quality and quantity of new teachers prepared through community colleges, the state should develop an evaluation system that not only tracks students from a college through a university-based teacher preparation program but examines their performance in higher education relative to their performance in the Grade 1-5 classrooms. In addition, the evaluation system should report the number of persons who become paraprofessionals rather than teachers immediately upon completion of the AST and over time. (Research indicates that many persons become paraprofessionals after some collegiate coursework is taken and later complete baccalaureate degrees for teaching.) Summative data of this nature will inform future policy directions