

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

College of Education and Applied Human Sciences

2025 Impact Study

Initial Programs



INTRODUCTION

EKU's Educator Preparation Program (EPP) evaluates the effectiveness of its initial completers in promoting P-12 student learning and development and in demonstrating the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of beginning teachers. This introduction provides general context by defining key terms, explaining cohort selection, and outlining the common data sources and tools used in the analysis.

Initial completers are those who obtained an initial education license from the EPP. Cohorts are selected to represent completers who are approximately two and four years into their teaching careers, allowing enough experience to recognize what aspects of their preparation were most effective and where gaps remain. The EPP identifies cohorts using the Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB) Completer and Enrollment Report, Graduate Assignment and Certification Inquiry (GACI), and Program Completions Employment Report. For this cycle, the 2019–2020 and 2021–2022 completer cohorts are included.

The Impact Study Team coordinates data collection and analysis in collaboration with faculty, staff, and district partners. These findings provide insight into the effectiveness of the EPP and reinforce its ongoing commitment to data-informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

MEASURE 1: COMPLETER IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

The EPP demonstrates that program completers effectively contribute to P-12 student learning and apply professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions in P-12 classrooms. The EPP uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data to measure completer effectiveness in the form of classroom observations, satisfaction surveys, and interviews.

Completer Observations

The observation rubric consists of observable demonstrators the ten InTASC/CAEP standards which outline core teaching principles. These include creating supportive learning environments to address diverse student needs, demonstrating deep content knowledge to engage students effectively, and employing reflective practices to refine instruction and uphold professional ethics. The rating scale includes 'Emerging' (1), 'Developing' (2), 'Competent' (3), 'Exemplary' (4), and 'Not Observed' (N/O). Participants are volunteers from completer cohorts working in various school districts. Each participant is observed twice by two different members of the Impact Study Team composed of experienced faculty and staff trained in evaluating teaching effectiveness.

The participants include three elementary program completers and one middle grades completer. Collectively, they are employed across three different school districts, providing a range of classroom environments. Across all observations, the participants demonstrated overall proficiency in the InTASC/CAEP standards, with most ratings falling within the Competent to Exemplary range. Averaged across all four standards, the mean scores for each participant ranged from 2.6 to 3.6, with an overall average of 3.2. This indicates that, as a group, completers consistently exhibit the professional competencies expected of beginning teachers. Performance was strongest in the Learning Environments (3.1–3.2) and Content Knowledge (4.1–4.2) standards, where all completers earned ratings of 3 or higher across both observations. Observers noted effective classroom management, strong content integration, and thoughtful use of formative assessment strategies. Areas for continued growth include increased differentiation to meet diverse learner needs and providing extended opportunities for student reflection and processing. Together, these results suggest that ECU completers effectively apply their preparation to foster positive, engaging learning environments that support student understanding and development.

Participant A

Participant A is a middle school science teacher. They were observed by different observers on two occasions using the InTASC/CAEP standards aligned observation tool. The teacher demonstrated consistently strong performance for each standard, earning ratings of Competent or Exemplary for every indicator. In both visits they exceeded expectations in key areas of the Learning Environment (3.1–3.3), Content Knowledge (4.1–4.3), and Instructional Strategies (8.1, 8.3). Observer comments highlighted the teacher's effective use of real-world analogies (e.g., football field, local landmarks) to show the concept of location, incorporation of a Claim-Evidence-Reasoning formative assessment, and smooth classroom management that encouraged student participation.

Participant B

Participant B is an elementary school teacher. They were observed by different observers on two occasions using the InTASC/CAEP standards aligned observation tool. The teacher demonstrated consistently strong performance for each standard, earning ratings of Competent or Exemplary for every indicator. The teacher excelled in the Learning Environments standard (3.1–3.3) and in Content Knowledge (4.1–4.3), consistently scoring "Exemplary" both observations. Observation notes praised the teacher's smooth classroom management, strategic use of "wait time," and Kagan cooperative learning structures that kept students motivated. The teacher made an authentic real-world connection to supply and demand by framing it through the familiar concept of Christmas shopping.

Participant C

Participant C is an elementary school teacher. They were observed by different clinical educators on two occasions using the InTASC/CAEP standards aligned observation tool. The teacher consistently demonstrated Competent ratings across most indicators, with some Developing scores noted in areas such as Learner Development (1.1, 1.2) and Assessment (6.2–6.4). Across both observations, the teacher maintained clear routines and expectations, fostering a respectful classroom culture. Lessons included real-world tasks that encouraged student discussion and explanation, both in pairs and with the whole group. Observation notes praised the teacher's consistent family communication, use of Everyday Math materials aligned with standards, and responsiveness to feedback. Opportunities for growth include incorporating more intentional differentiation and cooperative learning structures to enhance engagement and meet varied student needs.

Participant D

Participant D is an elementary school teacher. They were observed by different observers on two occasions using the InTASC/CAEP standards aligned observation tool. The teacher consistently scored Competent performance across all indicators, with Exemplary ratings in Learner Development (1.2), Learning Environments (3.2), and Application of Content (5.3). The teacher maintained a well-organized classroom with clearly established routines and expectations that students followed independently. Lessons incorporated engaging, real-world applications and a variety of instructional materials, including interactive technology, whiteboards, and songs. Students participated in hands-on learning stations, shape walks, and shared their thinking aloud and in writing. Differentiation was evident through leveled small groups, responsive adjustments to activities, and effective co-teaching. Observers praised the teacher's strong classroom management, effective transitions, and ongoing formative assessment practices. While overall engagement was high, offering more time for student processing could further deepen understanding.

Completer Interview

Several completers indicated a willingness to participate in focus groups/interviews through our Initial Completer Satisfaction Survey. Ultimately, one was available. The Impact Study Team conducted an interview with a P-12 completer working at the secondary level. This feedback offers useful insight into P-12 educator preparation.

The completer reported feeling well prepared to build a positive classroom environment, noting particular strengths in classroom organization and behavior management. "I felt really well prepared to establish classroom procedures, which is a really big part of being an educator." Coursework in differentiation was also valuable, with in-

structors effectively connecting strategies across content areas, though most examples focused on core subjects rather than electives.

A key challenge for the completer was interpreting and applying the standards associated with their P-12 certification. These standards differ structurally from core content standards, and the completer expressed difficulty aligning them with standards-based grading and assessment expectations. "They are not set up in the same way as most core content standards. They are very broad." The completer added, "I did not feel very well prepared in understanding my standards leaving the program." They recommended that future coursework include explicit examples of how non-core standards (e.g., art, music, physical education) can be applied in planning and assessment.

Technology integration also emerged as an area of growth for P-12 programs. The completer shared that while some educational technology tools introduced in the EPP were interesting, many were not directly applicable to their content area or were difficult to implement due to limited school resources.

During their EPP, the completer was an active member of student organizations such as the Kentucky Education Association Student Program and a discipline-specific student association, taking on leadership roles in both. "It also really prepared me for moving into my own department and working with fundraising, coordinating volunteers, and things like that." They are currently active in several professional organizations, including serving on the board of a state-level professional association.

The completer described having a great overall experience in the EPP and felt well prepared for the classroom, particularly in management and organization. Their suggested area of improvement is more support in understanding and applying P-12 standards in planning and assessment.