

EASTERN KENTUCKY UNIVERSITY

College of Education and Applied Human Sciences

2025 Impact Study

Initial Programs



INTRODUCTION

EKU's Educator Preparation Program (EPP) evaluates employer satisfaction with the preparation of its initial completers to ensure they meet the expectations of P-12 schools and their professional roles. 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 Completers 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 2: SATISFACTION OF EMPLOYERS AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The EPP demonstrates that employers and stakeholders are satisfied with completers' preparation and effectiveness in P-12 settings. The EPP uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data, including satisfaction surveys, interviews, and stakeholder meetings, to evaluate completers' professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions and their impact on P-12 student learning and development.

Employer Satisfaction Surveys

The data in this section was obtained by analyzing the results from the Initial Employer Satisfaction Survey. The survey was designed to gather responses from employers ranking the effectiveness of the EPP in preparing teachers to meet the demands of the job in all areas of the profession using the ten InTASC/CAEP standards. 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 ranking descriptions were (1) Poor – performance is inferior in quality; (2) Fair – performance is not very good or very bad in quality; (3) Good – performance is competent; (4) Excellent – performance is exemplary.

The survey was administered to employers of recent initial completers. Out of 106 employers surveyed, 23 employers of initial completers responded for a response rate of 22%. Figure 1 shows overall ratings of either “excellent” or “good” for the EPP's preparation of initial completers, while Figure 2 provides a more detailed illustration of employer satisfaction specifically by each of the four possible ratings.

Employers overwhelmingly express confidence in the content knowledge and instructional abilities of program completers, with more than 80% of respondents rating 22 out of 29 areas favorably (Figure 1). The highest-rated areas (shown in blue) received 90% or higher approval, highlighting employer satisfaction with completers' ability to understand learner differences, implement developmentally appropriate and rigorous learning experiences, and use strategies that build on learners' background knowledge to apply content in meaningful ways. Other notable strengths include using a variety of assessments and assessment results to guide instruction and collaborating with colleagues to address collective professional needs. Qualitative feedback reinforces these strengths,

noting that completers are reflective practitioners who seek feedback to improve their teaching.

A second tier of nine areas received 80-89% favorable ratings (green), including teaching students with disabilities effectively, using a variety of high-quality resources to engage learners, and applying evidence-based strategies and technological tools to meet diverse learning needs.

Areas identified for further improvement are closing Achievement Gaps as well as developing leadership skills and taking on leadership roles. (yellow and light orange), with scores ranging from 63% to 78% favorable.

Figure 2 provides a more detailed breakdown of employer ratings across four categories: Excellent, Good, Fair, and Poor. Though overall satisfaction with completers has improved, the proportion of excellent ratings has declined from the previous year. Collaborating with others to foster safe and respectful learning environments maintains a high level of excellence at 65.2%. Satisfaction with teaching students who are limited English speakers improved, with Poor ratings decreasing from 10.5% to 5.3%, reflecting continued progress in this area. Program adjustments over the past few years, such as embedding more English language learner-focused instruction into core classes, are yielding positive results.

These survey results set the foundation for further discussion in focus groups and stakeholder meetings, where employers provided qualitative feedback on the strengths and areas for growth within the EPP. Employer feedback from the previous cycle identified communication with families as an area for growth. In response, the EPP implemented additional training focused on engaging and collaborating with parents and guardians.

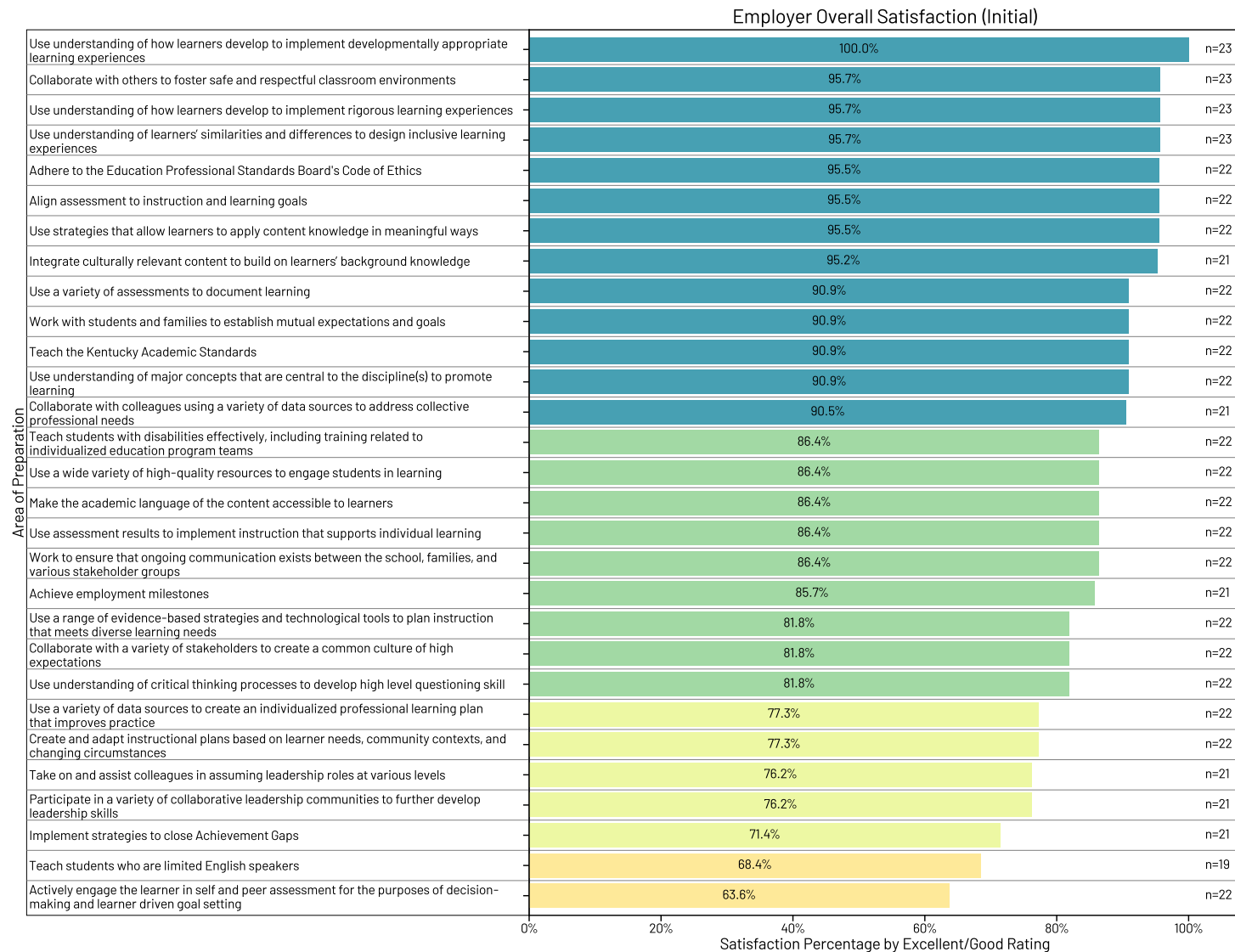


Figure 1: This figure illustrates overall employer satisfaction with initial completers' level of preparation. Ratings of 'Excellent' or 'Good' were collected across 29 areas, with more than 80% of employers rating 22 areas favorably. The highest-rated areas reflect The Learner and Learning and Content Knowledge InTASC standards.

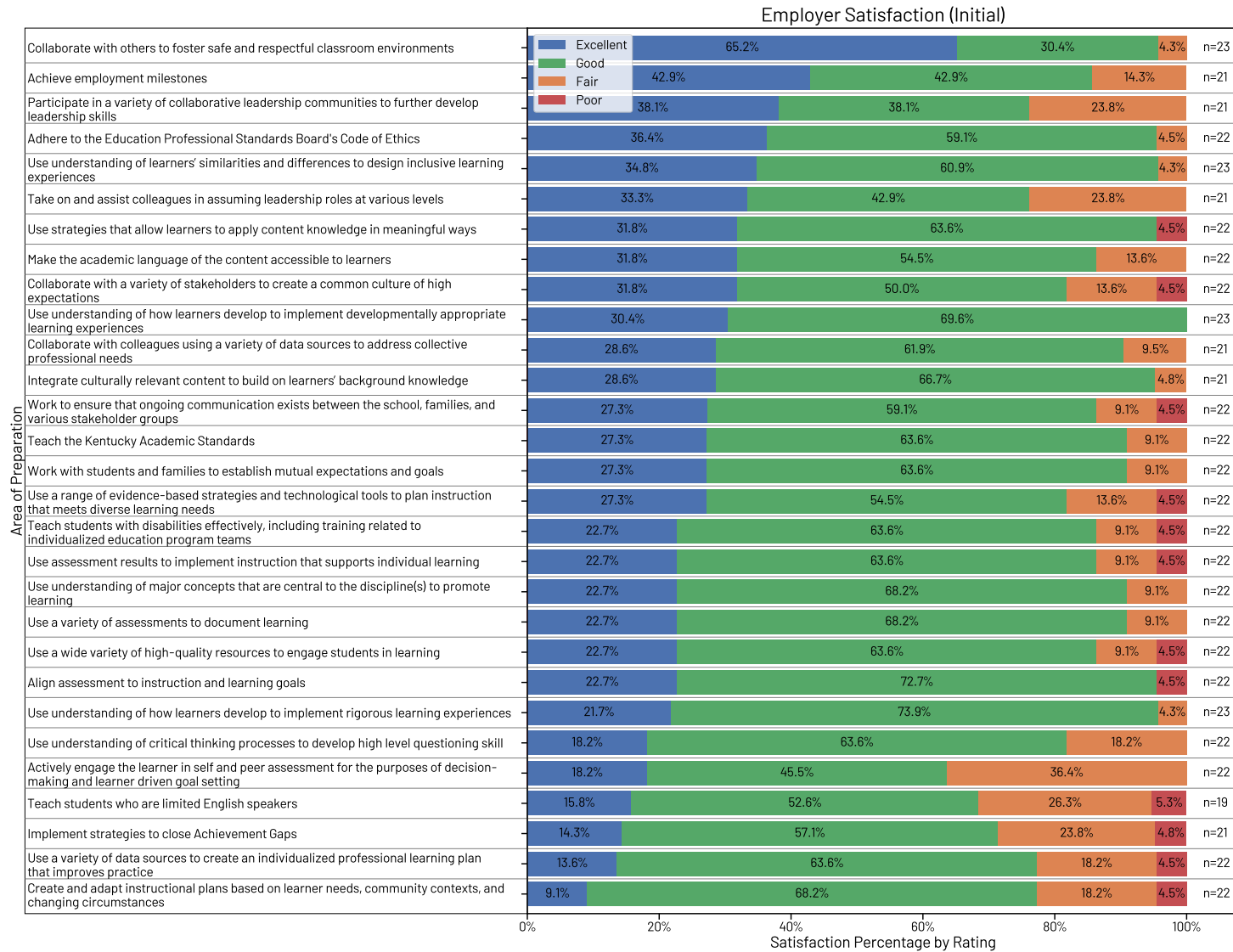


Figure 2: Most employers rated completers' ability to collaborate with others to foster safe and respectful classroom environments as excellent.

Employer Interviews

Several employers indicated a willingness to participate in focus groups/interviews through our Initial Employer Satisfaction Survey. Our focus group team interviewed one elementary and one secondary employer, while another secondary employer provided written responses via email. Employers agree that the EPP's completers possess strong content knowledge and demonstrate proficiency in curriculum planning and instructional methods.

Employers also offer thoughtful feedback centered on emerging needs in today's classrooms and ways to better prepare candidates to meet them. Secondary employers emphasize the importance of supporting students' mental health, distinguishing between major and minor behavior issues through clear frameworks, and collaborating effectively across departments. They also note the value of preparing candidates to receive and apply constructive feedback through authentic, practice-based learning experiences. Their responses reflect an eagerness to collaborate and contribute to the EPP's ongoing improvement. Elementary employers highlight the growing need for strong classroom-management skills and preparation for working with students with high needs, including an increasing number of students with autism. Across interviews, employers note the continued importance of balancing instructional planning, parent communication, and special education responsibilities. As one employer says, "Communication with families is also an area of growth for many new teachers." The EPP has already taken steps to address communication with families and special education specifically.

Overall, employers express strong confidence in the EPP's ability to produce well-prepared candidates, noting that completers are valuable additions to the workforce.

Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder involvement is evidenced in the intentionality of the EPP to gather perspectives of candidates and employers. These perspectives support informed dialogue among EPP and stakeholders. The EPP engages in reflective practice on an on-going basis to form actionable improvement. To facilitate continuous improvement efforts, essential and timely information about our initial programs is shared with all stakeholders. As portrayed through the Continuous Improvement System, stakeholders outside the EPP offer key feedback on candidate performance, completer impact, and how the EPP is meeting partner needs. The EPP recently added a Moderate to Severe Disabilities MAT program in direct response to stakeholder feedback highlighting the need for more special education teachers. This initiative reflects the EPP's commitment to addressing workforce demands and ensuring all P-12 students receive high-quality education.

School Partners Summit

The EPP hosted an inaugural summit for Spring 2025 to bring together EPP faculty and staff, school partners, co-op leaders, and statewide representatives. Participants reviewed program performance data, discussed the alignment of educator preparation with school needs, and provided input on strategies to support educator recruitment, retention, and innovation in teacher preparation. Topics included collaboration with schools, expanding access to preparation pathways, effective communication with families and communities, and the responsible use of emerging technologies. During the summit, both the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC) and Clinical Education Advisory Committee (CEAC) met.

Educator Preparation Advisory Committee

During the School Partners Summit, the EPP hosts a meeting for the Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC), bringing together internal and external stakeholders to discuss program effectiveness and continuous improvement. EPAC serves as a forum for sharing data related to assessment results, enrollment trends, and program impact, and for gathering stakeholder perspectives on educator preparation.

At this meeting, committee members reviewed statewide educator workforce data and engaged in discussion about current hiring conditions. District leaders shared approaches being used to recruit and retain educators, with several noting the use of financial incentives such as signing bonuses, experience-based pay adjustments,

and targeted incentives to attract returning or retired educators. Feedback informed ongoing considerations related to recruitment pathways and program flexibility.

To support program flexibility, the EPP is implementing the use of Credit for Prior Learning (CPL), which provides a process for evaluating college-level learning gained through relevant training and experience and can help candidates progress more efficiently when prior learning aligns with program competencies.

Clinical Education Advisory Committee

During the School Partners Summit, the EPP hosts the Clinical Education Advisory Committee (CEAC) meeting involving internal and external stakeholders. CEAC is a space for P-12 and university partners to provide feedback and recommendations related to our clinical placements and student experience. It is distinct from EPAC in that, while district administrators are included, the committee also intentionally engages cooperating teachers and clinical educators to focus on clinical experiences and the continuous improvement of practice. Over the past three years, conversations at CEAC have led to a recruitment fair (mid-semester during the student teaching seminar), interview practice sessions, and expanding clinical placements. CEAC participants provided the suggestion of recruitment videos for some of our smaller districts, which resulted in two students choosing to student teach in a rural county. This group also provided integral feedback on the revised Clinical Experiences Clinical Teacher, Clinical Educator, and student handbooks, and the long-term substitute policy while it was being developed.

Teacher Education Committee

Stakeholders are involved in curriculum process committees, including the Teacher Education Committee (TEC), which includes representative members from academic departments across all colleges with professional education programs, P-12 partners, and professional education candidates. All curriculum related to educator preparation must pass through TEC before university approval. Additionally, the Assessment Committee recommends key assessment policies and facilitates key assessment development and validity (Lawshe) sessions. The Assessment Committee is composed of program coordinators across all educator preparation programs.