

VSPBE

Date: March 28, 2018

Item: Spark Two-Year Report (1 PAC)

ITEM: Shall the VSBPE accept Spark's Two-Year Report and grant continued full approval to their teacher preparation program until their next ROPA review, currently scheduled for fall of 2021?

AGENCY RECOMMENDED ACTION:

That the VSBPE accepts the Spark Two-Year Report with the condition that the questions and gaps noted in red in the Report below are addressed in an annual report due by January 31, 2019.

BACKGROUND: Spark had a full ROPA review in January, 2016. The Two-Year Report was submitted in January 2018 incomplete. An extension was requested and given. The revised report was submitted to the Office on March 2, 2018 and is attached below with questions and comments for the Board's consideration.

RATIONALE: There are some gaps in and questions about the responses to question 3 in Section I, as well as to how Spark has responded to the concerns from their review. See notes in red below.

ROPA Rule 5942.2 notes that "After a follow-up review, the Standards Board may find that:

- a) A program that meets requirements shall remain fully approved or a conditionally approved program that has satisfied conditions shall be granted full approval until the next scheduled approval review.
- b) A program that does not meet the requirements of its approval may have its approval suspended, revoked, or continued for a specified time period with conditions attached.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

SPARK Two-Year Report



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Spark Two-Year Report 2018

Directions: Complete this template to submit your Two-Year Report. A completed submission of a Two-Year Report includes the following:

- A completed template and any accompanying documents referred to (or links to online versions of them)
- A letter from the License Officer
- A fee of \$500 (checks payable to State of Vermont) (Put in the mail on January 31, 2018)

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| Program Name | Spark Teacher Education Institute |
| Address | Educational Praxis, PO Box 409 Putney, VT 05346 |
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Introductory Narrative Description (EC: This narrative is the same as the letter from the License Officer, which was also submitted separately.)

The following information comprises the two-year report of the Spark Teacher Education Institute. The Agency of Education Team after its review and evaluation approved the program and particularly noted the focus on social justice. Since then the Spark Team has continually examined, critiqued and strengthened the components relating to: Student learning with Mentors; Spark relationships to Administration in schools; deeper links between subject content, social justice and assessment; mastery of core teaching standards and updating endorsement standards in all areas.

Our field trips to New York City and Washington, DC have included intern participation and presentations in workshops and conferences. Our Spark seminars have included regular participation by local teachers and alumni who are teachers in the surrounding areas.

We appreciate the cooperation and quick responses from the Agency personnel as we improve our teacher preparation work.

Ellen’s comments in red

I. Program Overview

Initial Licensure

| Program | Delivery Model | Number of Graduates in The Last 3 Years | Number of Enrollees | Notes |
|--|-----------------------|--|--------------------------------|--------------|
| Elementary Secondary Math Middle School Math | Grad | 2015 3 2016 1 2017 1 | 10 total 9 total 7 total | |
| Secondary Social Studies Middle School Social Studies | Grad | 2015 2 2016 4 2017 1 | 10 total 9 total 7 total | |
| Secondary English Middle School English | Grad | 2015 1 2016 2 2017 1 | 10 total 9 total 7 total | |
| Secondary Science Middle School Science | Grad | 2015 1 2016 2017 | 10 total 9 total 7 total | |

II. Introduction: Program Update

1. Are there any major changes at the institution that have impacted or may impact the educator preparation program(s)? The physical transition of Marlboro’s graduate center moving to the undergraduate campus, the loss of Marlboro admissions staffing for the graduate school, and the turn over of graduate office personnel impacted our functioning. Spark has just added our own Spark recruiter with noticeable positive responses.
2. Are you anticipating any substantive changes to your preparation programs? We are hoping to expand and offer Early Childhood, Special Education and ELL certifications. We have begun to review the work required to do this expansion
3. How is your program staying compliant with any new educational laws, initiatives, and other changes in the field since your last review? We have strengthened our relationships with school administration and mentors. This has resulted in positive and continued acceptance of our interns. Several of our interns are Teachers in the surrounding area

schools. 96% of our graduates are employed in teaching positions. We have also newly structured our Thematic Modules and added sessions on Pedagogy and Methods in the fall trimester. We are also reorganizing our Tutorials for each of our students to link the richness of their teaching experience, deepen their subject matter in relation to standards and see how these can be reflected in their portfolios. **No information about Licensure Portfolio, Educator Quality Standards, Act 77 (Flexible Pathways, Proficiency-Based Learning). The information presented is interesting but does not answer the question about response to new initiatives in education.**

III. Program Stipulations

| Program | Stipulation | Update | Evidence |
|---------|--|--|---|
| Spark | Stipulation 1: Review program to confirm that Core Teaching Standards have replaced 16 Principles in every area before May 1, 2016. Additionally update endorsement standards to current standards in all areas. All these revisions are reflected in handbook, portfolio and/or any other documentation used by candidates and faculty. | <p>Since the Review Team’s visit in October, our program has worked to address this stipulation in the following ways:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We have reviewed and updated our Handbook so that the Core Teaching Standards have replaced the 16 Principles. 2. We have reviewed and updated the Individualized Learning Plan template and Spark Teacher Competency Framework to reflect these changes. 3. We are continuing to move forward with our plans to adopt the new Level I Licensure Portfolio which is aligned with the Core Teaching Standards. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Updated our Handbook so that the Core Teaching Standards have replaced the 16 Principles. 5. Individualized Learning Plan template <p>EC: I did not see a reference to the 16 Principles, the Core Standards, or the endorsement requirements in the Handbook or the ILP.</p> <p>No link to Spark Teacher Competency Framework.</p> <p>VLP is required for all pre-service educators entering programs as of fall 2016. Is Spark currently using the VLP or still “continuing to move forward” with plans to use it?</p> |
| Spark | Stipulation 2: Create a crosswalk between MAT course learning outcomes, weekly elementary workshops, and the seminar schedule so that it is | 1) We created a Master Overview spreadsheet that crosswalks where specific InTASC standards are met by individual modules | 4) Master Overview spreadsheet that crosswalks where specific InTASC standards are met by individual modules and their associated courses. |

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| | <p>clear that each course-learning outcome is met over the course of the program before May 1, 2016.</p> | <p>and their associated courses.</p> <p>Across the top are the module names with an X marking the specific standards broken down by Performances, Essential Knowledge and Critical Disposition that are met. Individual course syllabi further identify the specific InTASC indicators each course is designed to meet.</p> <p>2) We have created a Spark Seminar Overview chart to identify when each standard will be met in the specific seminar schedule for the coming year along with the learning theory, etc, each seminar will address.</p> <p>3) Finally, to further strengthen and document our course alignments with the InTASC standards, we are adopting a Seminar Lesson Plan Template that each seminar instructor will be required to use. These Seminar Lesson Plans will take the place of the current seminar agendas and the weekly elementary workshop notes.</p> <p>The template will require instructors to</p> | <p>Individual course syllabi</p> <p>Spark Seminar Overview</p> <p>Seminar Lesson Plan Template</p> |
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| | | <p>specify which learning outcome (i.e. InTASC standard) they are addressing in the seminar for the day, along with the social justice skill they are emphasizing. Such templates will function as both clear documentation of where the course learning outcomes are being met AND as tools enabling instructors to reflect more formally with candidates on these standards. Time will be made at the end of each seminar to review the Seminar Lesson Plans and related InTASC/Core Teaching Standard with candidates.</p> | |
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Additional question from Handbook: It states “Spark is an intensive, field-based, teacher preparation program leading to licensure in the candidate’s chosen endorsement area” and “Spark Teacher Education Institute is approved by the Vermont Department of Education to offer a program of study providing graduate level coursework for academic credit, leading to teacher licensure.

Teacher Licensure. Upon successful completion of the program as set forth in this Handbook, the candidate will be recommended to the Vermont Department of Education for teacher licensure in the endorsement area successfully undertaken.” It does not clarify in which endorsement areas Spark is approved to recommend licensure, which could be confusing to a prospective candidate.

There is a letter in the Spark ROPA file from Jan. 19, 2016 to Spark from the AOE that the stipulations have been addressed, so they actually did not need to be addressed in this report.

Spark Teacher Education Institute Revised/Amended ROPA 2 year report - Section IV March 2, 2018 Progress Addressing Concerns

Standard 1

Concern: For Middle Grades endorsements, the Professional Knowledge Middle Grades performance standards are addressed in the portfolio, however the Professional Knowledge Middle Grades knowledge standards are not being addressed. There needs to be a process to assess or document that candidates have met these standards (Indicator 1.3) Note: This was noted as a concern in the regulation check.

Spark response to concern: The professional Knowledge Middle Grades Knowledge Standards are now explicitly addressed in the endorsement portfolio; therefore, the process of assessing them and entering them is in an endorsement portfolio document. **As long as the portfolios are being used, this would address this concern. No portfolios shown as evidence.**

Concern: The content knowledge portfolio addresses most of the knowledge standards of Middle Grades Mathematics, however it excludes both the NCTM Process Skills and typical misconceptions. Our recommendation is to add knowledge of the NCTM Process Skills into the portfolio. When these endorsements are updated, this may no longer be an issue. (Indicator 1.3).

Spark response to concern: We have added the NCTM Process Skills as a required part of the content knowledge portfolio. We are making sure that the only current Math endorsement student completes this requirement. **Again, no portfolio provided as evidence but it sounds like they have addressed the concern in the portfolio.**

Concern: The use of appropriate standards (CCSS for Math & LA, NGSS & Vermont State for Social Studies) as reflected in lesson plans in portfolios is inconsistent. Be sure to reference the most recent content area state and national standards when designing lessons (Indicator 1.3).

Spark response to concern: Being cognizant of this concern, we are ensuring that the designs of lesson plans include the most recent state and national standards. **Again, no actual evidence provided, but it sounds like they are addressing the concern.**

Standard 2

Concern: Spark needs to articulate a more thorough and transparent process to inform candidates' of assessment and evaluation products (i.e., the portfolios and action research project) at the outset of the program. (Indicator 2.2)

Spark response to concern: During the Summer Institute in August we give students a calendar of due dates for all assessments and evaluations including specific due dates for portfolios and action research projects. All due dates and programmatic resources can be found on our program Moodle site. Each student has access to Moodle throughout their time in the

program. **Is this different than what was done when you were reviewed and this concern was raised? Did you make any changes based on that concern, or did you think that the concern was not valid?**

Concern: It is not clear what systemic ways Spark implements to assess the effectiveness of mentors. Additionally, how does the placement provide the needed support and encouragement for a candidate? How does the program collect and analyze these data to inform future functioning of the program? (Indicator 2.3)

Spark response to concern: Field Directors and the co-directors meet with the mentor teachers at the initial appointment: two criteria are 1) that they (mentors) have taught for 3 years and 2) have a Masters degree. Additionally, the Field Advisor checks in with the mentor teacher for feedback, the candidate also reports back during the seminar, reporting their current experiences in the schools including their relationship with the mentor teacher. We have created a survey for students to solicit feedback about their learning at their placement, including their interactions with their mentor teacher. If there are problems a meeting is set up to address any concerns in a collegial manner. Notes are kept on all of these discussions in order to collect and analyze any revisions needed for the program. We also meet once a semester with the mentor teachers as a seminar for common discussion of candidates, content, and their ideas to strengthen the program. **Is this different than what was done when you were reviewed and this concern was raised? Did you make any changes based on that concern, or did you think that the concern was not valid? Does the data that gets collected in the surveys get used to make changes to mentor selection in the future?**

Concern: We did not see an articulated process to collect and analyze program efficacy to inform future program revisions. (Indicator 2.3)

Spark response to concern: We have a formal student mid term evaluation and a final evaluation. In addition we elicit evaluations from the mentors during our meetings each semester. **Is this different than what was done when you were reviewed and this concern was raised? Did you make any changes based on that concern, or did you think that the concern was not valid? Does the data that gets collected get used to make program revisions in the future?**

Standard 3

Concern: There is not clear documentation as to the procedure for selecting and evaluating mentor teachers to ensure the program continues to select high quality mentors who may reflect the mission of the program (Indicator 3.1).

Spark response to concern: The two criteria are 1) that they (mentors) have taught for 3 years and 2) have a Masters degree. Our handbook has been amended to include the program's mission to recruit mentor teachers of the highest caliber. **I don't believe amending the Handbook has any effect on the quality of teachers selected to be mentors. We are looking for evidence of the process by which you select and evaluate the mentor teachers. Is it only on the basis of**

three years' experience and a Masters? Do you collect and use any data on the success of the candidates based on who their mentor teachers were or anything like that?

Concern: There is not clear documentation as to how Spark program collaborates with field partners to ensure candidates have access to resources (e.g., special educators, related service providers and specialists) to address students' needs. (Indicator 3.2).

Spark response to concern: We have special lectures [including from superintendents of nearby districts] as part of our seminars to address: organization of schools, laws of the educational system, detailed information about special educators and behaviorists, counselors and service providers within each school. These seminars are part of the curriculum as can be seen in the Spark modules. *Is this different than what was done when you were reviewed and this concern was raised? Did you make any changes based on that concern, or did you think that the concern was not valid?*

Concern: Field experience tracking chart provides thorough evidence of grade level and course placement but the "other demographics" could have a descriptor about the type of diversity (i.e., cultural, SES, learning needs, linguistic) (indicator 3.5).

Spark response to concern: The interns are required to research and write a paper in the beginning of the school year that describes the diversity at their school. In this paper interns must describe in detail the cultural, SES, learning needs and linguistic diversity at their particular school which in turn Spark uses as data. *Is this different than what was done when you were reviewed and this concern was raised? Did you make any changes based on that concern, or did you think that the concern was not valid? Sharing some of those papers and that data and how it is used would be more conclusive evidence.*