AAQEP Annual Report for 2025

Provider/Program Name:	Fitchburg State University
End Date of Current AAQEP Accreditation Term (or "n/a" if not yet accredited):	December 31, 2030

PART I: Publicly Available Program Performance and Candidate Achievement Data

Overview and Context

This overview describes the mission and context of the educator preparation provider and the programs included in its AAQEP review.

For over **175 years**, the **School of Education at Fitchburg State Universit**y has been a pillar of excellence in teacher preparation. As one of the **first State Normal Schools**, founded in **1849**, our legacy is deeply rooted in the belief that education transforms lives—and through it, we shape the future.

Today, we remain steadfast in our mission to cultivate **exceptional educators and leaders**. Our **comprehensive** undergraduate and graduate **programs**, spanning licensure and non-licensure pathways, prepare students and professional educators to excel in diverse fields, including **Early Childhood and Elementary Education**, **Special Education**, **Applied Behavior Analysis**, **Reading**, and **Educational Leadership and Management**. With a curriculum that blends rigorous scholarship, innovative practice, and a commitment to equity, we ensure our graduates are ready to meet the evolving challenges of education.

Beyond the classroom, we embrace our responsibility to **expand access and opportunity**. Initiatives such as the **Future Falcon Academy** and **Future Education Academy** invite regional middle and high school students to experience **immersive, college-level learning**, inspiring the next generation of educators.

At the **School of Education**, we are more than an institution of learning—we are a dynamic community of **scholars, mentors, and change-makers** dedicated to shaping an educational landscape that is inclusive, innovative, and impactful.

Mission Statement: The Education Unit at Fitchburg State University is committed to preparing knowledgeable, skillful, and culturally responsive educators that have a focus on inclusivity. We strive to prepare compassionate candidates that become reflective, ethical, professional, and socially responsible teachers, administrators, and counselors. Our programs focus on anti-racist pedagogy, and employ innovative technology to cultivate higher-level thinking and metacognitive skills, while acknowledging the value and benefit of divergent thinking. We support the community by offering both licensure and non-licensure programming that is inclusive of all students, including those with varying abilities and cultural backgrounds.

Public Posting URL

Part I of this report is posted at the following web address (accredited members filing this report must post at least Part I):

https://www.fitchburgstate.edu/academics/academic-schools/school-education

Enrollment and Completion Data

Table 1 shows current enrollment and recent completion data, disaggregated by program and license/certificate, for each program included in the AAQEP review.

Degree or Program offered by the institution/organization	Certificate, License, Endorsement, or Other Credential granted by the state	Number of Candidates Enrolled in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 08/2025)	Number of Completers in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 08/2025)
B.S.	Biology, 8-12, Initial	0	0
M.Ed.	Biology, 8-12, Initial,	11	2
B.S.	Chemistry, 8-12, Initial	1	0
B.S.	Early Childhood, PreK-2, Initial	29	14
M.Ed.	Early Childhood, PreK-2, Initial,	17	3
B.S.	Elementary, 1-6, Initial	35	10
M.Ed.	Elementary, 1-6, Initial,	33	5
B.S.	English, 5-12, Initial	6	2
M.Ed.	English, 5-12, Initial,	7	1
B.S.	General Science, 5-8, Initial	0	1
M.Ed.	General Science, 5-8, Initial,	19	5
B.S.	History, 5-12, Initial	10	3
M.Ed.	History, 5-12, Initial,	13	4
B.S.	Mathematics, 5-8, Initial	0	0
M.Ed.	Mathematics, 5-8, Initial,	2	1
B.S.	Mathematics, 8-12, Initial	1	0
M.Ed.	Mathematics, 8-12, Initial,	6	1
M.Ed.	Moderate Disabilities, 5-12, Initial,	56	14
B.S.	Moderate Disabilities, PreK-8, Initial	7	4

		Number of Candidates Enrolled	Number of Completers
M.Ed.	Moderate Disabilities, PreK-8, Initial,	63	12
B.S.	Severe Disabilities, All Levels, Initial	6	3
M.Ed.	Severe Disabilities, All Levels, Initial,	59	7
B.S.	Technology/Engineering, 5-12, Initial	0	1
M.Ed.	Technology/Engineering, 5-12, Initial	3	0
Total	Total for programs that lead to initial credentials	384	93
Advanced Programs	***Programs that lead to additional or advanced credentials for already-licensed educators***	NA	NA
Total	Total for programs that lead to additional/advanced credentials	NA	NA
Leadership Programs	***Programs that lead to P-12 leader credentials***	**Number of Candidates Enrolled**	**Number of Completers**
M.Ed. and CAGS	Principal/Assistant Principal, 5-12, Initial	16	8
M.Ed. and CAGS	Principal/Assistant Principal, PreK-8, Initial	15	4
M.Ed. and CAGS	Supervisor/Director, All Levels, Initial	10	3
Toal	Total for programs that lead to P-12 leader credentials	41	15
Specialist Programs	***Programs that lead to credentials for specialized professionals or to no specific credential***	**Number of Candidates Enrolled**	**Number of Completers**
Master's of Science	School Counselor, All Levels	11	6
M.Ed., CAGS, and Certificate	Specialist Teacher, Reading, All Levels, Initial	60	13
Total	Total for programs that lead to specialized professional or no specific credentials	71	19

Total	TOTAL enrollment and productivity for all programs	496	127
Total	Unduplicated total of all program candidates and completers	496	127

Added or Discontinued Programs

Any programs within the AAQEP review that have been added or discontinued within the past year are listed below. (This list is required only from providers with accredited programs.)

NA

Program Performance Indicators

Table 2. Program Performance Indicators

A. **Total enrollment** in the educator preparation programs shown in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals earning more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.
496
B. **Total number of unique completers** (across all programs) included in Table 1. This figure is an unduplicated count, i.e., individuals who earned more than one credential may be counted in more than one line above but only once here.
127
C. **Number of recommendations** for certificate, license, or endorsement included in Table 1.
127
D. **Cohort completion rates** for candidates who completed the various programs within their respective program's expected timeframe **and** in 1.5 times the expected timeframe.

	% Completion in Expected Timeframe	% Completion in 1.5 times Expected Timeframe
Graduate Teacher N=55	75%	25%
Undergraduate Teacher N=38	84%	16%
Principal N=15	87%	13%
Reading Specialist N=13	46%	54%
School Counseling N=6	66%	33%

E. **Summary of state license examination results**, including teacher performance assessments, and specification of any examinations on which the pass rate (cumulative at time of reporting) was below 80%.

| | | Fitchburg State University | | | | State | | | |
| | | | MTEL Taken | | MTEL Pass Rate | | MTEL Taken | | MTEL Pass Rae |
		Completed	By Person ⓘ	By Test ⓘ	By Person ⓘ	Completed	By Person ⓘ	By Test ⓘ	By Person ⓘ
All Programs		**127**	**191**	**270**	**89%**	**3,576**	**5,140**	**6,911**	**88%**
Selected Program(s)		**127**	**191**	**270**	**89%**	**2,605**	**4,278**	**5,820**	**88%**
Initial	Communication and Literacy Skills	127	7	8	100%	2,605	883	1,015	93%
	Early Childhood	127	16	19	100%	2,605	216	322	94%
	Elementary Mathematics	127	--	3	0%	2,605	35	51	20%
	English	127	--	5	80%	2,605	115	181	87%
	Foundations of Reading - New	127	52	79	96%	2,605	936	1,299	89%
	Foundations of Reading - Old	127	--	1	0%	2,605	26	67	42%
	General Curriculum Mathematics	127	11	16	36%	2,605	144	269	49%
	General Curriculum Multi-Subject	127	7	8	71%	2,605	148	246	69%
	General Science	127	--	4	33%	2,605	17	26	65%
	History	127	--	10	100%	2,605	156	234	88%
	Language Arts and History/Social Science	127	30	37	100%	2,605	632	748	95%
	Mathematics	127	--	1	0%	2,605	55	86	80%
	Mathematics, Science, and Technology/Engineering	127	33	61	94%	2,605	690	995	88%
	Middle School Mathematics	127	--	2	100%	2,605	34	64	62%
	Reading	127	15	15	100%	2,605	154	177	98%
	Technology/Engineering	127	--	1	100%	2,605	--	1	100%

Our overall pass rate for completers was 89% (which was slightly higher than the state average-88%). The "General Curriculum Mathematics" test has a pass rate of 36%, but that test has been discontinued and is no longer being offered. The new test is "Mathematics, Science, and Technology/Engineering" and our pass rate for that was 94%. The same thing goes for "General Curriculum Multi-Subject" which is no longer being offered. It is now called "Language Arts and History/Social Science" which has a pass rate of 100%.

 "General Science" fell below the 80% benchmark with 33% but we only had one completer in this cohort year. This means that the candidate did pass the test after the 4th try. We will continue to monitor pass rates for this exam moving forward.

While the Mathematics exam had a 0% pass rate, we did not have any UG completers in Mathematics. This suggests that a completer in a different licensure area took the mathematics test and failed. It was likely they were looking to add a license on their own and mathematics was not the subject matter focus of their program.

F. Explanation of **evidence available from program completers**, with a characterization of findings.

Our Annual report includes the following performance data:
Candidate Disposition Rubric
Lesson Plan Rubric
CAP (Candidate Assessment of Performance) which is the state practicum performance assessment

Our benchmarks for the Candidate Disposition and Lesson Plan rubrics are 90% ratings of 3 and 4 combined. A rating of 3 is considered proficient and a rating of 4 is considered exemplary.

Our benchmark for CAP is a rating of 3.00 (proficient) in quality, and 2.00 (needs improvement) for Scope and Consistency. These benchmarks are established by the state and are scores that candidates need to achieve to pass the performance assessment.

All assessments met the benchmark for both UG and GR licensure programs.

Graduate Aggregate:

GR Aggregate Candidate Disposition, Lesson Plan Rubric, CAP Summary 2024-2025
N=55

Rating Scale:	4= Exemplary	3=Proficient	2=Needs Improvement	1=Unsatisfactory

SUMMARY:

Items falling below 90% benchmark (Ratings 3+4)

		None

Lowest Mean per Assessment Tool

Candidate Disposition - Supervising Practitioner

3.22	Demonstrates clear understanding of legal and moral obligations of the profession, mandated reporting responsibilities, and organizational rules and procedures.

Candidate Disposition - Program Supervisor

3.00	Demonstrates clear understanding of legal and moral obligations of the profession, mandated reporting responsibilities, and organizational rules and procedures.

Lesson Plan #2

2.92	Objectives/Learning Target

CAP Rubric

Essential Element	Quality	Scope	Consistency
Subject Matter Knowledge	3.07	3.07	3.07
Well Structured Lessons	3.09	3.05	3.02
Adjustment to Practice	3.05	2.98	3.00
Meeting Diverse Needs	3.09	3.05	3.05
Safe Learning Environment	3.13	3.05	3.09
High Expectations	3.11	3.05	3.07
Reflective Practice	3.11	3.07	3.05

UG Aggregate:

UG Aggregate Candidate Disposition, Lesson Plan Rubric, CAP Summary 2024-2025
N=38

Rating Scale:	4= Exemplary	3=Proficient	2=Needs Improvement	1=Unsatisfactory

SUMMARY:

Items falling below 90% benchmark (Ratings 3+4)

	89.2%	*LP- Differentiated strategies and/or Universal Design*
	89.2%	*LP- Smooth Transitions*

Lowest Mean per Assessment Tool

Candidate Disposition - Supervising Practitioner

	3,08	*Demonstrates clear understanding of legal and moral obligations of the profession, mandated reporting responsibilities, and organizational rules and procedures.*

Candidate Disposition - Program Supervisor

	3.05	*Demonstrates clear understanding of legal and moral obligations of the profession, mandated reporting responsibilities, and organizational rules and procedures.*

Lesson Plan #2

	2.95	*Objectives/Learning Target*
	2.95	*Smooth Transitions*

CAP Rubric

Essential Element	Quality	Scope	Consistency
Subject Matter Knowledge	3.11	2.97	3.00
Well Structured Lessons	3.08	2.97	2.95
Adjustment to Practice	3.05	3.00	2.97
Meeting Diverse Needs	3.08	2.95	3.00
Safe Learning Environment	3.08	2.97	2.95
High Expectations	3.08	3.00	2.97
Reflective Practice	3.11	3.03	3.05

All scores exceed the benchmarks.

G. Explanation of **evidence available from employers of program completers**, with a characterization of findings.

Graduate Aggregate 2018-2022 Completers Educator Evaluation Ratings: E=Exemplary, P=Proficient, N=Needs Improvement, U= Unsatisfactory

	Completed	Employment		Evaluation		Overall				Standard 1				Standard 2				Standard 3				Standard 4			
		#	%	#	%	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %
State	12,485	10,161	81%	7,253	71%	7%	87%	6%	0%	9%	87%	4%	0%	9%	86%	5%	0%	9%	89%	2%	0%	12%	85%	2%	0%
FSU	467	419	90%	316	71%	9%	87%	5%	0%	11%	85%	4%	0%	11%	85%	4%	0%	11%	87%	2%	0%	13%	84%	3%	0%

This data shows the evaluation ratings for our completers employed in a public school from 2018-2022. Overall, our combined percentage of completers rated as Exemplary AND Proficient was 96% and higher than the state average (95%).

Undergraduate Aggregate 2018-2022 Completers Educator Evaluation Ratings:

	Completed	Employment		Evaluation		Overall				Standard 1				Standard 2				Standard 3				Standard 4			
		#	%	#	%	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %	E %	P %	N %	U %
State	4,690	3,353	71%	2,043	61%	1%	86%	13%	0%	1%	89%	9%	0%	2%	88%	11%	0%	3%	93%	5%	0%	4%	92%	4%	0%
Organization	232	187	81%	122	65%	1%	84%	15%	0%	2%	89%	9%	0%	1%	88%	11%	0%	4%	93%	2%	0%	2%	96%	2%	0%

This data shows the evaluation ratings for our completers employed in a public school in 2018-2022. Overall, our combined percentage of completers rated as Exemplary AND Proficient was 85% and lower than the state average (87%). When drilling down into each standard, it does not appear that there is a gap or area of concern in any one particular standard suggesting that we are consistent with the state average.

We used the years 2018-2022 in order to give a large enough sample size. The state has not published evaluation data from the most recent cohort years.

H. Explanation of how the program investigates **employment rates for program completers**, with a characterization of findings. This section may also indicate rates of completers' ongoing education, e.g., graduate study.

The state is always a few years behind when releasing employment data. In order to generate a representative sample, we look at larger pockets of time when examining employment rates. The data below shows employment rates from completers between 2018-2022.   At both the GR and UG levels, FSU had higher employment rates than the average of all Educator Prep organizations.

Graduate Aggregate Employment Rates 2018-2022:

Organization	Completed	Employment	Employment

Organization	Completed	#	%
State	12,485	10,161	81%
FSU	467	419	90%

Undergraduate Aggregate Employment Rates 2018-2022:

Organization	Completers	**Employment**	**Employment**
Organization	Completed	#	%
State	4,690	3,353	71%
FSU	232	187	81%

I. Explanation of how the **staffing capacity** for program delivery and administration and quality assurance system monitoring have changed during the reporting year, if at all, and how capacity matches the current size of the program.

New Hires:

This year, we welcomed three full-time faculty members:

- **MaryBeth Donlan**, Assistant Professor (new hire)

- **Nancy Murray**, Professor (returning to faculty from her role as Dean)

- **Kimberly Bennett**, Assistant Professor (new hire)

ELA Content Experts:
Two full-time faculty members serve as ELA content experts:

- **Dustin Halterman**, Assistant Professor

- **MaryBeth Donlan**, Assistant Professor

Staff Support for Programs and Program Approval:

A total of **eleven** staff members support Education programs, including **six full-time staff (FTS)** and **five part-time staff (PTS)**.

- The **Office of Student Field Placement and Community Partnerships** is supported by one professional FTS and one PTS as assistant.

- The **Office of Licensure and Accreditation** is supported by one professional FTS (Directory), and one PTS as assistant.

- Two administrative assistants provide daily operational support for the School of Education.

- Three part-time staff members in the **School of Graduate, Online, and Continuing Education** support faculty on all matters related to our Education graduate programs.

In total, **eleven staff members**—six full-time and five part-time—support our programs and program approval processes.

Candidate Academic Performance Indicators

Tables 3 and 4 report on select measures (3 to 5 measures for each standard) of candidate/completer performance related to AAQEP Standards 1 and 2, including the program's expectations for performance (criteria for success) and indicators of the degree to which those expectations are met.

Table 3. Expectations and Performance on Standard 1: Candidate and Completer Performance

Provider-selected measures (name and description)	Criteria for success	Level or extent of success in meeting the expectation
Candidate Assessment of Performance	Score of 3 for Quality and 2 for Scope and Consistency (for all 7 elements)	100% of completers met expectations for all seven elements.
Lesson Plan Rubric	90% score of 3 and 4	There were no LP indicators that fell below the 90% benchmark.
Candidate Disposition Rubric	90% score of 3 and 4	There were no CD indicators that fell below the 90% benchmark.

Measure of Student Learning/Contextual Factors	100% score of 2 or 3	100% of completers met expectations.

Table 4. Expectations and Performance on Standard 2: Completer Professional Competence and Growth

Provider-selected measures (name and description)	Criteria for success	Level or extent of success in meeting the expectation
Candidate Disposition	90% score of 3 and 4	There were no CD indicators that fell below the 90% benchmark.
Candidate Assessment of Performance	Score of 3 for Quality and 2 for Scope and Consistency (for all 7 elements)	100% of completes met expectations for all seven elements.
Measure of Student Learning/Contextual Factors	100% score of 2 or 3	100% of completers met expectations.

Notes on Progress, Accomplishment, and Innovation

This section describes program accomplishments, efforts, and innovations (strengths and outcomes) to address challenges and priorities over the past year.

New Candidate Dispositions: During the 2024–2025 academic year, a committee of faculty members reviewed, revised, and updated the previous Candidate Dispositions, along with the associated rubrics and assessment measures. These revisions were approved by the School of Education faculty before the end of the academic year. The new Candidate Dispositions went into effect at the start of AY 2025–2026.

Alignment to Early Literacy Guidelines: In early 2024, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released a new set of early literacy guidelines to be implemented across key courses in Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and Moderate PK programs statewide. In response, the School of Education program faculty revised a number of relevant course syllabi across programs—updating objectives, learning outcomes, related assignments, assessments, and expectations for applied practice in field experiences—to ensure alignment with the new DESE Early Literacy Guidelines. Revised courses began to be offered in AY 2025-2026.

Wellness Center, and Mental Health Resources: Following the publication of Standard 2g in AAQEP's 2025 Expectations Framework, the School of Education faculty and staff met in spring 2025 to discuss its implications and determine how best to integrate it across programs.

First, in summer 2025, a volunteer group of faculty and staff transformed a two-room storage suite into a quiet, welcoming wellness space designed to support the mental health, stress reduction, and overall well-being of students, faculty, and staff. One room now features arts and crafts materials, mindful guided art activities, and information about mental health resources within and beyond the university. The second room serves as a quiet space for meditation and mindfulness. The Wellness Center opened in fall 2025 and is available daily to the community.

Second, based on the prior year's student exit survey results, faculty revised several courses to incorporate topics related to emotional health, trauma, its effects, prevention, and intervention. These revised courses have been offered since the beginning of the 2025–2026 academic year.

In fall 2025, we also initiated a partnership with the University Counseling Services, beginning with an informative presentation by guest speakers outlining available services and strategies for supporting students. The School of Education continues to collaborate with the Counseling Services directors, who visit monthly during our designated Community Day to provide guided activities and promote mental health awareness among students, faculty and staff.