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Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs)

are the institutions of higher education or other organizations that recruit, train, and produce licensed teachers. There are three types of EPPs in Tennessee: public EPPs like the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, private EPPs like Vanderbilt University, and education-related organizations (EROs) like Teach for America. From 2013 through 2017, 53 percent of new teachers – called *completers* – were trained by public EPPs, 39 percent were trained by private EPPs, and 8 percent were trained by EROs (Exhibit 1). As of 2018, there are at least 40 EPPs in Tennessee.

OREA was asked by House Speaker Pro Tempore Bill Dunn and Senator Dolores Gresham to examine factors that may lead to differences in performance among the three types of EPPs. Additionally, OREA was asked to examine how EPPs are accounted for in the outcomes-based funding formula used to fund Tennessee's public higher education institutions, and how part of the funding formula – the Quality Assurance Funding program – might be revised for the 2020-25 cycle to better reward positive EPP performance.

How do EPPs perform on multiple measures of effectiveness?

OREA analyzed EPP performance using teacher effectiveness data and found that EROs outperformed public and private EPPs based on the TVAAS (the state's method of measuring student academic growth) scores of completers (Exhibit 2). All three types of EPPs exhibited the same average level of effectiveness (LOE) scores and observation scores for completers. Public and private EPPs produced a higher percentage of teachers who received an LOE score of 3 or 4 (on a scale from 1 to 5, with 5 representing most effective) than EROs.

What makes some EPPs more effective?

Several recent studies suggest that the location of teacher training and the quality of mentor teachers can influence the effectiveness of new teachers. OREA found several ways that EROs train teacher candidates in line with the research on what makes new teachers more effective. EROs also provide teacher candidates with specialized coursework designed to help them be successful in the high-poverty schools where they are required to teach. This alignment to research and specialized coursework may partially explain why, on average, EROs produce more effective teachers based on the TVAAS scores of EPP completers.

Exhibit 1: Percentage of completers prepared by each type of EPP, 2013-2017

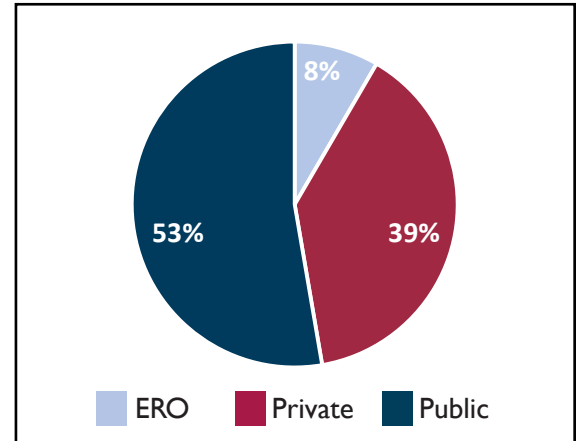
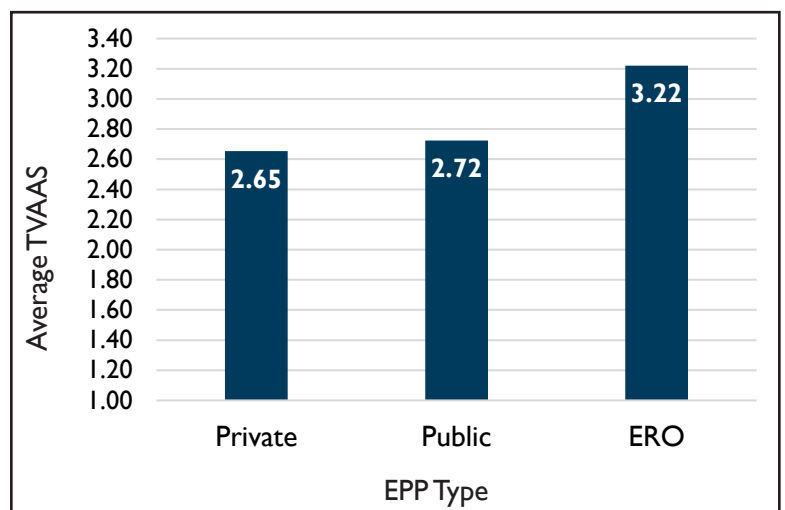


Exhibit 2: Average TVAAS score by EPP type, 2015-2017



SNAPSHOT: Tennessee's Educator Preparation Providers

How are EPPs included in the outcomes-based funding formula?

Tennessee's outcomes-based funding formula allocates state funds to Tennessee's public colleges and universities based on performance. Candidates enrolled in public EPPs are included in the formula through the **Weighted Outcomes** component, which allocates funding to colleges and universities based on measures such as the number of degrees awarded, student credit-hour accumulation benchmarks, and graduation rates.

Under the Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) program, public higher education institutions may earn additional funding on top of their outcomes-based funding appropriation for meeting certain quality standards related to student access, student learning, and student success. Each institution can earn up to an additional 5.45 percent of the total recommendation created by the outcomes-based funding formula. EPPs are included in two different components in the Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) program – Major Field Assessments and Academic Programs.

EPPs contribute to the **Major Field Assessment** component based on the passage rates of teacher candidates on licensure exams, and to the **Academic Programs** component by achieving accreditation from the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). To date, EPP performance on these components has contributed to, but not significantly affected, the level of funding institutions received through the Quality Assurance Funding program.

How could the Quality Assurance Funding program be revised for the 2020-25 cycle to better reward positive performance for EPPs?

As of 2019, EPP performance in the form of completers' TVAAS, observation, and LOE scores is not directly captured by the Quality Assurance Funding (QAF) program.^A The full report includes a discussion framework for how the QAF program might be revised for the 2020-25 cycle to more directly capture EPP performance based on completer outcomes. Options include incorporating completer outcomes within the QAF's existing components or creating a new component within the QAF that rewards institutions for completer outcomes.

Policy Considerations

OREA offers three policy considerations to improve teacher preparation:

1. Public EPPs should consider surveying program completers to inform programmatic improvement.
2. Tennessee's public EPPs could calculate the cost per completer for each of the licensure pathways offered.
3. Public EPPs should consider studying the feasibility of creating job-embedded programs and teacher residencies that function similarly to those operated by EROs. EPPs may be able to leverage public-private partnerships to create and fund such programs.

For more information, please see OREA's full report at: <https://www.comptroller.tn.gov/OREA/>.

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^A The Academic Programs component rewards institutions for having EPPs accredited by the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation. Accreditation by CAEP is based in part on measures of teacher effectiveness.