AAQEP Annual Report for 2024

Provider/Program Name:	Utica University Educator Preparation Program
End Date of Current AAQEP Accreditation Term (or "n/a" if not yet accredited):	June 30, 2030

PART I: Publicly Available Program Performance and Candidate Achievement Data

1. Overview and Context

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

The mission of the Educator Preparation Programs is to prepare educators with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to serve an increasingly diverse P-12 student population in a geographic area that encompasses urban, suburban, and rural districts of wide socio-economic variation with unique community challenges and opportunities. These provide opportunities for broad student experience in diverse contexts for fieldwork, student teaching, and ultimate employment.

The Educator Preparation Program (EPP) is part of the School of Health Professions and Education. The program is administered by the Dean of Health Professions and Education, Dr. Patrice Hallock. The chair of the Educator Preparation Program is Dr. Laurence Zoeckler.

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):

2. Enrollment and Completion Data

Table 1 shows current enrollment and recent completion data for each program included in the AAQEP review.

Table 1. Program Specification: Enrollment and Completers for Academic Year 2023-2024

Degree or Certificate granted by the institution or organization	**State Certificate, License, Endorsement, or Other Credential** Note: Certification areas that had zero enrollment during the 23-24 year were not included in this table.	**Number of Candidates** enrolled in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 05/24)	**Number of Completers** in most recently completed academic year (12 months ending 05/24)
Programs that lead to initial teaching credentials			
Bachelor of Arts	*Initial Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)*	3	1
	Initial Certification: Early Childhood (Birth – Grades 2)	2	0
	Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Initial Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	2	2
	Initial Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	6	5
	Initial Certification: English as a New Language (ENL) (Grades K-12)	1	0
	Initial Certification: Students with Disabilities Generalist (Grades 7-12)	2	2
Bachelor of Science	*Initial Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)*	78	18

	Initial Certification: Early Childhood (Birth – Grades 2)	69	15
	Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	4	0
	Initial Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	7	0
	Initial Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	3	0
	Initial Certification: Special Education (Grades 1-6)	3	2
	Initial Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	2	0
	Initial Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Initial Certification: Students with Disabilities Generalist (Grades 7-12)	1	0
Master of Science	*Initial Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)*	18	8
	Initial Certification: Special Education (Grades 1-6)	4	2
	Initial Certification: Physical Education (Grades K-12)	18	9
	Initial Certification: Health Education (Grades K-12)	18	9
	Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	4	0
	Initial Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	11	4
	Initial Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	2	2
	Initial Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	3	3
	Initial Certification: Students with Disabilities Generalist (Grades 7-12)	4	3

	Professional Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)	18	8
	Professional Certification: Special Education (Grades 1-6)	4	2
	Professional Certification: Physical Education (Grades K-12)	18	9
	Professional Certification: Health Education (Grades K-12)	18	9
	Professional Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	4	0
	Professional Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	11	4
	Professional Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	2	2
	Professional Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	3	3
	Professional Certification: Students with Disabilities Generalist (Grades 7-12)	4	3
Master of Science (Alternate Transitional-B Certificate Program)	*Initial Certification: Spanish (Grades 7-12)*	2	1
	Initial Certification: French (Grades 7-12)	1	0
	Initial Certification: Technology Education (Grades 7-12)	6	2
	Initial Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	4	0
	Initial Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	6	0
	Initial Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	2

	Initial Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	9	3
	Initial Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	2	0
	Initial Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Transitional-B Certification: Spanish (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Transitional-B Certification: French (Grades 7-12)	1	0
	Transitional-B Certification: Technology Education (Grades 7-12)	6	2
	Transitional-B Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	4	0
	Transitional-B Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	6	0
	Transitional-B Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	2
	Transitional-B Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	9	3
	Transitional-B Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	2	0
	Transitional-B Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Professional Certification: Spanish (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Professional Certification: French (Grades 7-12)	1	0
	Professional Certification: Technology Education (Grades 7-12)	6	2

	Professional Certification: English (Grades 7-12)	4	0
	Professional Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)	6	0
	Professional Certification: Earth Science (Grades 7-12)	2	2
	Professional Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	9	3
	Professional Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	2	0
	Professional Certification: Chemistry (Grades 7-12)	2	1
Total for programs that lead to initial credentials		453	154
Programs that lead to additional or advanced credentials for already-licensed educators			
Master of Science in Education	*Professional Certification: Social Studies (Grades 7-12)*	2	2
	Professional Certification: Biology (Grades 7-12)	1	1
	Professional Certification: Mathematics (Grades 7-12)	2	1
	Professional Certification: Childhood (Grades 1-6)	5	2
	Initial Certification: Students with Disabilities (Grades 1-6) **Note:** *Requires initial certification in childhood 1-6*	4	2
	Professional Certification: Students with Disabilities (Grades 1-6) **Note:** *Requires initial certification in childhood 1-6*	4	2

	Non-Certification Track Students (Seeking just the MSED and no teaching credentials)	2	1
	Total for programs that lead to additional/advanced credentials	20	11
Programs that lead to credentials for other school professionals or to no specific credential			
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total for additional programs	N/A	N/A
	TOTAL enrollment and productivity for all programs	473	165
	Unduplicated total of all program candidates and completers	226	78

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.)

Discontinued Programs:
The university discontinued the undergraduate BS-Adolescence – Spanish program due to there not being sufficient content course offerings at the institution to support the 30 credits required of NYS content core that all undergraduate teacher candidates seeking Spanish certification must complete. The reason that there are not sufficient content course offerings is the university discontinued the BS-Spanish major, although we still offer a Spanish minor.

In addition, the University officially deleted its Educational Leadership and Administration programs that had been dormant for several years. NYSED rolled out new ed leadership standards and contacted our program about either updating the program or deleting it.

Per our QAR, the program continues to teach out the old "linked major" education programs as the new, 120-credit education majors replace them. 2023-2024 saw the program completion of the majority of these students, with some exceptions due to ongoing Robert NOYCE STEM Scholarship that requires some students to remain in the "linked major" programs for STEM.

Program Additions:
There have been several changes approved by both NYSED and Utica's internal curriculum process in the 23-24 year:

1. Our graduate programs that lead to special education certification have been revised to include the new "all grades" certification band that New York State Education Department has transitioned all new teacher candidates to completing. The programs that were revised and approved are MS-Childhood and Special Education (all grades), MS-Students with Disabilities P-12, and MSED – Special Education P-12. Similar revisions are underway for our undergraduate programs leading to special education certification.

2. A new, alternative online MS-Special Education Apprenticeship Program P-12 was approved by NYSED and Utica University to officially add special education all grades to the list of transitional-B certificate areas.

3. Program Performance Indicators

The program performance information in Table 2 applies to the academic year indicated in Table 1.

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.
Our total unduplicated enrollment during the 2023-2024 year was 226 students, when taking into account our graduate, undergraduate and alternative program enrollments.
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.
Our total number of unique completers across all programs during the 2023-2024 year was 78 students.
C. **Number of recommendations** for certificate, license, or endorsement included in Table 1.
Our program entered 155 recommendations for certification in 2023-2024.
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.
Due to our recent change in our curriculum, our undergraduate program completion rates are unavailable until the new majors begin to graduate students. Our old curriculum was not designed in a manner that would allow for a four year completion, and that

was part of the reason why we shifted to 120-credit undergraduate education majors. We look forward to being able to report out this information in the future.

In terms of graduate students, our program completion rate at the "normal" time to completion of three years (graduate students are typically provided more flexibility in terms of sequencing and time to completion due to varying outside responsibilities), 69.11% of our graduate students complete in three years. 7.58% of graduate students finished in 4.5 years, when programs are aggregated. We conclude that the majority of our graduate students finish within three years.

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%.

Utica University's NYSTCE results pass rate, 2023-2024 (cumulative at the time of reporting) was 91%. One test averaged below 80%, (Chemistry CST) largely attributed to a low n of test takers (n=4). Please note that the university conducted its own analysis based on available data, and the final NYSTCE pass rates for 2023-2024 are posted in April of 2025.

Utica University maintains a 100% pass rate for its Teacher Performance Assessment since its implementation in Fall 2023. This perfect pass rate can be attributed to a quality assurance system that supports student teachers facing challenges early on in their placement and works to remediate issues prior to submission of their final TPA. In addition, University-Based Teacher Educators work with student teacher candidates throughout the TPA process as they complete the various tasks of the assessment.

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

Program completer data collection continues to be a challenge. Following the plan for collecting program completer data, we surveyed first and third year program completers in order to obtain feedback from program completers who graduated in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, respectively.

The surveys were mainly qualitative in nature, and some common themes were identified by the surveys. The 2022 and 2023 cohorts both included "more classroom management" as an area that needed improvement. This feedback correlated with employer feedback.

The other common area identified among the 2020-2023 program completer cohorts was the difficulty obtaining graduate electives at the university, which were required of all graduate education programs until 2022 when they were removed from graduate programs where they were not specifically required as part of the NYS or Utica University credit requirements. These consisted of all graduate programs except the MS-Apprenticeship and the MSED-Leadership and Instruction for Inclusive Classrooms

programs.. Students were often advised to seek permission to study at another institution to obtain graduate elective credits appropriate for their content areas. The department identified this as a major concern since the courses were not regularly offered at Utica University due to low demand for subject-specific graduate content electives outside of education. Taking a course at another institution could also potentially change their full-time or part-time status, impacting students in their ability to apply for and receive aid. Furthermore, several students reported problems with obtaining transcripts from other institutions, which led to unnecessary stress about meeting graduation requirements.

It's for these reasons that the department shifted its advising policies and began allowing students to take graduate education electives as opposed to content electives. The assumption is that graduate students are well-prepared in content by meeting the NYS Content Core Requirements (requiring 30 credits in a single subject area of content as part of the admissions screening process). This solved the problem of students having to seek permission to study at another institution and also created opportunities for teacher candidates to explore other areas such as inclusive classroom strategies and special education coursework that they might have some interest in. Students are now advised to take electives in-house, making for a smoother process and experience all around. Coursework designed specifically to address the feedback received by program completers has been rolled out and will be described in greater detail in the next section of this report.

Lastly, some feedback from 2020 completers pointed to the need for additional certification support. While it had been a longstanding practice for the chair of educator preparation to serve as certification officer, in 2023 the university appointed Kyle Riecker as the certification officer for the program. He now offers dedicated support to program completers and current students with certification questions, as well as tracking and organizing Transitional-B certificate recommendations and offering support to trans-B certified students. He also attends regional meetings with the Consortium of Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU) and quarterly meetings with NYSED to stay up to date regarding the latest changes to the certification process.

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

During a 2023 survey, 100% of employers who were surveyed said they definitely would hire another Utica University candidate. When the same survey was conducted in 2024, nine out of ten employers indicated that they definitely would hire another Utica University candidate. It should be noted that the one employer that did not indicate that they would hire another Utica candidate may have accidentally checked the wrong box. All other corresponding survey data indicate that they are satisfied with our candidates, including the comment "we look to partner with Utica University annually and are very pleased with student teachers or new teacher candidates that we've hired."

As the result of the analysis of our program completer and employer surveys (2018-2022), the department identified classroom management as a common area that both program completers and employers noted as needing improvement. The department, specifically Dr. Xinyue Liu, designed two classroom management courses that have been approved by the Utica University

curriculum committee and faculty senate. Both of these courses are going to run as elective courses this spring, and the plan is to incorporate them as required courses in programs within the next three years. The courses will be strongly recommended by faculty advisers, particularly within the MS-Apprenticeship Alternative Certification Program. This demographic of students are faced with a quicker time frame for being prepared for the classroom since it's an accelerated program. Having them take a classroom management course while they are navigating the complexities of classroom management in a P-12 setting will create a cohesive and useful experience where content can be applied in real time to practice.

During the 2024 employer survey, results from the 2024 employer survey indicated that we need to help our students build communication skills and relationships with parents. The classroom management course covers the topic of parent and guardian communication and relationship-building.

H. Narrative 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.

Investigating employment rates for program completers has been a challenge for all educator preparation programs (EPPs) within New York. Surveys and outreach yield less than ideal results, and the state does not release employment information to EPPs. Some information can be found by visiting the completer's TEACH account, since it will include self-reported and verified employment. This has its limitations, as the employment information isn't necessarily current and there is no way to verify current employment through the NYS TEACH system.

Our program investigates and tracks employment using program completer surveys that are sent following the plan included in our QAR. In addition, when information is volunteered by program completers, it is added to a tracking sheet that contains all alumni and program completers over the past 11 years. This sheet includes the most recent email and employment information available. A "date of contact" column has been added in an attempt to keep a more accurate tally of when contact was made and by whom.

Upon review of the available program completer data mentioned above, of the 697 program completers that we have tracked between 2013-present, 216 of them have been identified as employed in a classroom teaching or other P-12 related position (such as a TA), or approximately 31%.

The actual employment figures are likely higher than those resulting from self-reports and employers surveys, which have low response rates. NYSED does not provide data on employment of completers nor is there a state-wide database of this information available to EPP's in NYS.

Only three of our program completers reported working in a non-education field, which represents only .0043% of our alumni. We feel this characterizes our program completers as prepared, hirable, and retained within the profession of teaching. According to a national 2023 NCES survey, 8% of teachers left the profession.

https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/12_13_2023.asp

When we reviewed program completer surveys from first and third year out students from 2020-2023, we found that the response rates to the surveys remains stubbornly low. Out of 316 who were surveyed, 31 responded, which is about a one-tenth response rate.

4. Candidate Academic Performance Indicators

Tables 3 and 4 report on select measures of candidate/completer performance related to AAQEP Standards 1 and 2, including the program's expectations for successful performance 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	Explanation of Performance Expectation	Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation
GPA in Education Courses	We looked at candidates' grade point averages (GPA) in courses specific to their education program to determine the degree to which candidates had knowledge of the pedagogy. This was any course that was required solely for the education program in which the candidate was enrolled.	It is a program requirement that students at the undergraduate level maintain a GPA of 2.75 and graduate students maintain a GPA of 3.0 or higher in order to stay in the EDU program, so any student with the GPA below that was dismissed.

Pass rates on NYS Content Specialty Test (CST)	We looked at a candidate's ability to pass the NYS content specialty test(s) (CST) as an indication of their subject content knowledge. Teacher candidates in the adolescent education program are required to pass one CST in the content area for which they are seeking certification. Teacher candidates in the early childhood, childhood, or special education programs must take and pass three multiple subject (MS) exams. These include ELA (part 1), Math (part 2), and Arts & Science (part 3). Parts 1 and 2 of the MS exams are specific to certification area (birth to grade 2, grades 1-6 or grades 7-12), while Arts & Sciences (part 3) encompasses all grade levels (birth to grade 12). Additionally, teacher candidates who are pursuing special education certification must take the three multiple subject area exams and also the students with disabilities content specialty test. Because we offer dual certifications (in childhood and early childhood, childhood and special education, and adolescence and special education), students often have to take many exams to satisfy New York State's CST requirement. Utica University student scores are compared to NYS averages as a comparison.	See attached table with pass rates for Utica University students compared to NYS pass rates.

| Pass Rate on EAS? | The Educating All Students Exam (EAS) is an exam that all teacher candidates, regardless of program, must pass in order to obtain certification in New York State. This exam assesses five areas of competence: 1. Diverse Student Populations; 2. English Language Learners; 3. Students with Disabilities and Other Special Learning Needs; 4. Teacher Responsibilities; and 5. School Home Relationships.
Utica University students perform slightly better on the EAS exam in comparison to the NYS average. | Utica University Pass Rate - EAS / NYS Pass Rate - EAS table below |

Utica University Pass Rate - EAS	NYS Pass Rate - EAS
95%	92%

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

Provider-Selected Measures	Explanation of Performance Expectation	Level or Extent of Success in Meeting the Expectation
Program Completer Survey	Utica University Program Completers offer candid feedback intended to guide the continuous improvement process. It's our expectation that the results show that program completers are generally satisfied with their preparation and support during their program and after graduation.	The program completer surveys administered during the 2023-2024 year of first and third year completers yielded mainly positive results, with common areas that completers felt that needed improvement. Classroom management and graduate content electives were the most common topics of feedback. Completers were asked to select activities related to professional practice that they engaged in during their first or third year. The options were: Collaborate with colleagues to improve your teaching; Foster relationships with

		families/guardians/caregivers; Participate in after school or extra-curricular activities at your school; Attend a professional conference; Participate in volunteer activities in your community; Engage with local cultural communities, and Join a Professional Organization. Of the 27 respondents, 26 indicated they engaged in collaboration with colleagues, 23 indicated that they fostered relationships with parents and/or guardians, 18 participated in after school or extracurricular activities, 14 attended a professional conference, 8 participated in volunteer work within the community, 7 engaged with local cultural communities, and 3 joined a professional organization. These are listed from greatest to fewest because we feel that self-reporting that 96% of completers engaged in collaboration with colleagues, and 88% engaged with relationship building with parents and guardians are both successful outcomes, as are the results for conference attendance and participation in after school activities. The department sees the areas that received the least reports are likely those that our program should focus on strengthening, including volunteering in the community, engaging with a local cultural community, and joining a professional organization.
		The completers were also asked to score themselves on a HEDI scale (1-4, with 4 being highly effective, 3 effective, 2

developing, and 1 ineffective) on areas related to teaching, including: Knowledge of the content I was assigned to teach; Knowledge of effective pedagogical approaches; Understanding the social, emotional, and academic dimensions of learners; Knowledge of culturally responsive teaching practices; Ability to effectively assess student learning; Ability to use assessment data to inform practice; Create and develop a positive learning environment; and Work collaboratively with colleagues to meet the needs of all learners.

Program completers scored themselves highest on "knowledge of content" with the average score being 3.5. Completers scored themselves lowest on knowledge of effective pedagogical approaches with an average score of 3.1. It is important to note that while this category had the lowest score, 3.1, on the HEDI scale is considered effective as an educator. Interestingly, the area scored most prevalent above (Work collaboratively with colleagues) is an area where program completers scored themselves lower on, with the average score being 3.2.

The overall average of scores was 3.31, meaning that program completers generally self- assess themselves as between effective and highly-effective.

Employer Satisfaction Survey	Employers of Utica University program completers are satisfied with the candidates that they hire from Utica.	In 2023-2024, we met our expectations. The basis for this is that we received a 100% employer satisfaction rating and demonstrated the alignment of our program with content, pedagogy and best practices that employers expect. Please note that one BOCES indicated that they were not at all satisfied with our program completers, but we believe that this was an error while completing the survey, as all other responses by the BOCES indicated positive feedback regarding program completers that they had hired. Employers who took part in the 2024 employer survey rated program completers on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being "very low", 2 "below average", 3 "average", 4 "above average" and 5 being "very high." Out of the ten responses gathered, the lowest score was 3 - "", with most submitting scores of 4's or 5's. The average score was 4.3, indicating the program completers they hired from Utica University are considered between "above average" and "very high" in terms of their preparation and performance. Candidates scored exceptionally well on "Practicing a commitment to professional growth and development" (4.5) while the

		area that was scored the lowest "Developing students' global perspectives by teaching about multiple experiences and perspectives" scored an average of 4.1, which is still above average. The relatively low score in this area may be correlated with program completers self-reporting fewer experiences engaging in their local cultural communities, an area that only 26% of program completers indicated they engaged in during the survey. To add another layer, program completers scored themselves the highest on "Knowledge of culturally responsive teaching practices", indicating a disconnect between student and employer perception of performance in this area.
Environmental Scanning - Qualitative Data from social media and emails	Program completers express satisfaction with their educator preparation program, the clinical experiences and the skills and knowledge obtained while attending the program, and feel as if they have grown during their program and after graduation.	After conducting environmental scanning during the 2023-2024 year, it is our program's belief that program completers are well-prepared and are reaping the benefits of their program and preparation. In an email received in 2024, one of our program completers described her elation that two school districts were out-bidding each other to hire her. She is an elementary 1-6 completer, so this is not a high-demand subject area. The student credited her success, stating "Thank you and Utica for everything. I am so thankful and appreciative for my education and now I get to put it to work."

		In a social media post on Facebook from April 2024, another program completer shared a memory that they posted from when they were student teaching, and how excited they were to be in the classroom. The shared post's caption stated "and here I am, almost done with my first year of teaching. I am forever thankful for my student teaching experience with the best support system that continued to support me during my first year. I love what I do."

5. 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.

Our department has a lot to be proud of this year. The pandemic set in motion a series of events that has created a vast and unprecedented shortage of qualified classroom teachers in NYS, and our program has responded to the need of our P-12 partners in the following ways:

1. Dr. Megan Foster and Dr. Xinyue Liu wrote a grant proposal for the SUNY Workforce Development Grant and the result was our program was awarded $1.2 million in grant funding to provide full scholarships and a cost of living stipend to twenty new graduate students enrolling in the alternative certification graduate program (transitional-B certification). Ten of the full scholarships will be awarded this spring, and another ten will be awarded the following spring in 2026. Utica University partnered with Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES and will prioritize their employment hiring needs.
2. The Utica University and Utica City School District Teacher Residency Program (TRP) placed its first pilot residents, who are currently in their teacher residency placements. Another eight candidates will be placed in 2025-2026. The TRP is partially funded by the NYS Department of Labor's Teacher Residency Program grant that was awarded to the Utica City School District. The total award is $300,000, and designed to provide $30,000 of funding to ten teacher residents. Approximately $15,000 of the award will be used to fund the position while approximately $15,000 will be awarded to offset

tuition costs. This covers the coursework for the academic year and represents approximately one-third of the cost of tuition.

3. In response to the severe shortage of certified classroom teachers in rural and outlying school districts, our department decided to move four graduate programs to a distance format. The programs were approved by NYSED to be offered in a distance format. The programs are: MS-Students with Disabilities P-12; MS-Apprenticeship (Trans-B) Alternative Certification; MSED - Leadership and Instruction for Inclusive Classrooms; and MSED-Special Education P-12. The idea was to remove the obstacles of geographic distance and travel to better serve every region of the state.

4. Per the request and advisement of the site-visit team, Kyle Riecker worked on expanding site-based coursework beyond the children's literacy course that was running as a site-based model at the time of our 2022 accreditation. Meetings were held with Utica City School District, Westmoreland, Notre Dame Jr. Sr. High School and New Hartford CSD to discuss potential site-based courses. Plans were formed to offer two courses as site-based for the fall 2024 semester. One would take place at Notre Dame Jr. Sr. High School (a short distance from campus) and the other would take place at Westmoreland Central School District, approximately ten miles from campus. The enrollment for the Notre Dame Jr. Sr. site-based course was too low to justify running it as a site-based course, so that was temporarily put on hold. The Westmoreland CSD site-based course moved forward. Starting in the fall 2024 semester, student teachers would gather on Wednesdays for EDU 471 and 671, Student Teaching Seminar. By all accounts, the seminar and site-based course is running smoothly, and we plan to continue to offer this site-based course for the next five years, although the need for the site-base component will be assessed each semester.

5. The Education Department created and launched two education minors, one serving to feed the MS-Childhood Education Program and the other serving to feed the MS-Adolescence Education Program. The minors are 15 credits at the graduate level that can then be counted as dual credit upon admission to the graduate program. The intent was to shorten the overall time to completion of a graduate program, while allowing the liberal arts majors to maintain their enrollments in their own majors. As of today, we have seven education minor students enrolled -- a great start!

6. The 2023-2024 year saw another Education Program student receive the distinction of class valedictorian. This was the third year in a row that an education program student was the class valedictorian or salutatorian. We hope our streak continues and are very proud of our students.