

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
SYNOPSIS AGENDA/EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

CODE:	<u>EP-02</u>
COMMITTEE:	<u>Education Professions</u>
DATE:	<u>August 4, 2026</u>

SUBJECT/TITLE

Clemson University New Educator Preparation Program in Early Childhood and Special Education

PURPOSE OF REPORT/REGULATION/ITEM

Approval of Clemson University's newly developed Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood and Special Education: Multi-categorical.

CRITICAL FACTS

S.C. Code Ann. § 59-26-20 authorizes the State Board, through the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE), and the Commission on Higher Education (CHE) to develop and implement a plan for the continuous upgrading of the standards for program approval for undergraduate and graduate programs preparing candidates for teacher certification. Before seeking state approval to offer a new teacher preparation program, an educator preparation provider (EPP) must complete the program development and approval process at the college or university level. Public providers must then submit the new program proposal for review by the CHE. If the program is approved by the CHE, the provider must submit the proposal for review by the SCDE to determine if the program meets standards for the preparation and certification of teachers. Private providers must submit new program proposals directly to the SCDE. An external peer review team of subject matter experts and the Professional Review Committee (PRC) review each new program proposal to make a recommendation to the State Board. The State Board must grant final approval so that the EPP may enroll candidates in the preparation program and, ultimately, recommend program completers for educator certification.

Clemson University developed and submitted a proposal to offer a Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood and Special Education: Multi-categorical. The SCDE disseminated the proposals to an external review team of subject-matter experts who evaluated the rigor and content of the programs to prepare teachers and ensure that all requirements established in South Carolina statute, regulation, or guidelines are addressed sufficiently in the proposal. The SCDE created two external peer review teams, one team to review the Early Childhood program, and one team to review the Special Education: Multi-categorical program. The external peer review teams approved the programs with conditions, and the SCDE returned the proposals to the institution for a response to the conditions. Following

revisions to the proposals the external peer review team provided further feedback. The institution revised the proposals and upon a final review by the SCDE, the PRC ensured the proposals addressed all feedback provided by the external peer review team and adequately addressed all state requirements for teacher certification.

The PRC considered Clemson University's proposal on May 1, 2026, and voted to approve the program with conditions. The PRC provided feedback to Clemson University, to which Clemson University responded. The PRC considered the program again on June 5, 2026, and recommended approval by the State Board of Education. If the State Board of Education approves the proposal, the institution will enroll candidates in Fall 2026.

TIMELINE/REVIEW PROCESS

March 11, 2025	Clemson University submits a new program in Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood and Special Education: Multi-categorical.
March 14, 2025	The SCDE emails EPPs seeking volunteers to serve on the Early Childhood external peer review team and the Special Education external peer review team.
March 28, 2025	The SCDE refers the proposals to the external peer review teams.
May 1, 2025	The Special Education external peer review team meets and recommends program approval with conditions for the program.
May 7, 2025	The Early Childhood external peer review team meets and recommends program approval with conditions for the program.
May 20, 2025	The SCDE emails Clemson University feedback from the external peer review teams.
January 24, 2026	Clemson University submits revised proposals for review by the external peer review team.
February 25, 2026	The Special Education external peer review team meets and recommends program approval with conditions.
February 26, 2026	The Early Childhood external peer review team meets and recommends program approval with conditions.
February 27, 2026	The SCDE emails Clemson University feedback from the external peer review teams.
March 4, 2026	Clemson University submits the revised proposal.
April 10, 2026	The revised program proposals are shared with the PRC.
May 1, 2026	The PRC recommends program approval with recommendations and provides feedback to Clemson University.
May 4, 2026	The SCDE emails Clemson University feedback from the PRC.

May 18, 2026	Clemson University provides clarification to issues raised by the PRC.
June 5, 2026	The PRC votes to approve the program proposal for State Board approval and the SCDE accepts the final, ADA-accessible proposals from Clemson University.
August 4, 2026	The SCDE presents the proposals for State Board approval.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

COST: N/A

FUND/SOURCE: N/A _____

ATTACHMENTS

Attachments: ☒ yes ☐ no
(attachments must be submitted with synopsis)

Name of Attachments: Clemson University BS Early Childhood and Special Education
Multi-categorical

RECOMMENDATION

The SCDE recommends the State Board approve Clemson University's Bachelor of Science, Early Childhood and Special Education: Multi-categorical program for the preparation and certification of candidates in the fields of Early Childhood Education (PK-Grade 3) and Special Education: Multi-categorical (PK-Grade12).

ACTION REQUEST

FOR APPROVAL: ☒

FOR INFORMATION ONLY: ☐