

Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State Colleges

Proposal to Add a Masters of Arts in Teaching with Initial Certification

1. Descriptive Information

- A. Name of Institution: Chadron State College, Peru State College, Wayne State College
- B. Name of Program: Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)
- C. Degrees/credentials to be awarded graduates of the program: Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT)
- D. Other programs offered in this field by the institution:

Master of Arts in Education
Master of Education
Master of Science: Curriculum & Instruction
- E. CIP code: 13.1206
- F. Administrative units for the program: Teacher Education Units
- G. Proposed delivery site(s) and type(s) of delivery, if applicable: Courses delivered online; mentoring and supervision delivered onsite at each school location
- H. Proposed date (term/year) the program will be initiated: Fall 2024
- I. Description of Program:

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program is a fairly common type of graduate-level program that includes coursework and field experiences that, as a whole, prepare an individual to meet the requirements for initial certification in their respective state. The primary function of this program is to allow an individual who already holds a bachelor's degree to complete the requirements for initial teacher certification in the State without needing to pursue an additional bachelor's degree to complete certification requirements. In many instances, the individual may be teaching under a temporary certificate that the State provides for a specified amount of time, with the expectation that the individual is working toward an initial or standard teaching certificate.

This MAT program is strategically and collaboratively designed by the State Colleges to work in tandem and meet the requirements of the Nebraska Department of Education's (NDE) Alternative Program Teaching Permit, which is outlined in *Rule 21: Regulations for the Issuance of Certificates and Permits to Teach, Provide Special Services, and Administer in Nebraska Schools* (see Appendix I, section 005.12). The Alternative Program Teaching Permit allows an individual with a bachelor's degree to be immediately hired by a school district as a classroom teacher through meeting the requirements of one of seven Alternative Program Teaching Permit

pathways. The requirements of the permit include the individual developing a plan of study with a post-secondary institution to complete the institution's requirements for initial certification.

While this program is specifically being developed around the requirements established in Rule 21 for those who hold an Alternative Program Teaching Permit, the MAT program could provide a graduate level pathway for post-baccalaureate students who are not currently teaching full-time under a temporary teaching certificate and wish to pursue their initial teaching certification through a graduate degree option. Individuals on this pathway to licensure would need to establish a comprehensive plan of study to ensure that all initial certification requirements can be completed.

The Master of Arts in Teaching will require 36 credits of graduate-level coursework based upon the [Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium \(InTASC\) Standards](#), which are the standards that establish the accreditation frameworks for both the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). The ten (10) standards are organized within four primary domains, as listed below:

The Learner and Learning

- Standard #1: Learner Development. The teacher understands how learners grow and develop, recognizing that patterns of learning and development vary individually within and across the cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional, and physical areas, and designs and implements developmentally appropriate and challenging learning experiences.
- Standard #2: Learning Differences. The teacher uses understanding of individual differences and diverse cultures and communities to ensure inclusive learning environments that enable each learner to meet high standards.
- Standard #3: Learning Environments. The teacher works with others to create environments that support individual and collaborative learning, and that encourage positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.

Content Knowledge

- Standard #4: Content Knowledge. The teacher understands the central concepts, tools of inquiry, and structures of the discipline(s) he or she teaches and creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to assure mastery of the content.
- Standard #5: Application of Content. The teacher understands how to connect concepts and use differing perspectives to engage learners in critical thinking, creativity, and collaborative problem solving related to authentic local and global issues.

Instructional Practice

- Standard #6: Assessment. The teacher understands and uses multiple methods of assessment to engage learners in their own growth, to monitor learner progress, and to guide the teacher's and learner's decision making.
- Standard #7: Planning for Instruction. The teacher plans instruction that supports every student in meeting rigorous learning goals by drawing upon knowledge of content areas, curriculum, cross-disciplinary skills, and pedagogy, as well as knowledge of learners and the community context.

- Standard #8: Instructional Strategies. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage learners to develop deep understanding of content areas and their connections, and to build skills to apply knowledge in meaningful ways.

Professional Responsibility

- Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice. The teacher engages in ongoing professional learning and uses evidence to continually evaluate his/her practice, particularly the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (learners, families, other professionals, and the community), and adapts practice to meet the needs of each learner.
- Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration. The teacher seeks appropriate leadership roles and opportunities to take responsibility for student learning, to collaborate with learners, families, colleagues, other school professionals, and community members to ensure learner growth, and to advance the profession.

In addition, NDE’s Rule 20 also mandates specific curriculum related to Human Relations training, science of Reading, and Special Education, which are required for educator preparation, regardless of endorsement. Those curricular requirements are also embedded within the MAT Core set of coursework.

Master of Arts in Teaching Program Requirements (36 credit hours)

<p><u>MAT Core Coursework (18 Credit Hours):</u></p>	<p><u>InTASC (Rule 20) Coursework (12 Credit Hours)</u> MAT candidates will be required to complete a minimum of twelve (12) credits of coursework aligned to the four (4) InTASC domains listed below that ensure preparation and development of knowledge and skills related to each standard/domain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Learner and Learning • Content Knowledge • Instructional Practice • Professional Responsibility <p>Included within the InTASC coursework will be 100 hours of embedded field experiences as aligned to NDE requirements for licensure, as well as Human Relations and Special Education curriculum.</p> <p><u>Clinical Experience (6 Credit Hours)</u> MAT candidates will complete a minimum of 14 weeks of clinical experience, as required by the Nebraska Department of Education, which will equate to one six (6) credit clinical experience course.</p>
<p><u>Elective Coursework (18 credits)</u></p>	<p>MAT candidates will complete additional graduate coursework as outlined in the Plan of Study established between the candidate and the Educational Preparation Program (EPP), which ensures that the candidate is prepared to meet all requirements for initial certification.</p>

	<p>This portion of the degree is strategically established as elective coursework to allow each candidate the flexibility to complete coursework specific to their goals. Examples of how candidates may use these credits include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secondary education candidates may complete graduate content courses that move them forward in meeting the credentials for teaching dual credit courses. 2. Candidates interested in completing future graduate programs for advancement, such as in the areas of educational administration or school counseling, may select courses that allow them to explore these areas or prepare them for success in these programs. 3. Candidates wishing to expand their eligible teaching assignments may use these credits to complete requirements for an additional endorsement.
--	--

The MAT program will allow a new candidate to begin during the Fall, Spring, or Summer term. MAT candidates who have been approved for an Alternative Program Teaching Permit - Pathway 5 will be required to complete the pre-seminar component prior to beginning any MAT coursework. As part of admission to the MAT Program, each candidate will meet with an MAT program advisor to develop a plan of study for completing all requirements for initial certification and determining how best to utilize the elective coursework portion of the degree. For an MAT candidate who is not teaching full-time at the point of admission, the plan of study will also consider the timeline for ensuring school placements will be made and/or full-time teaching will be pursued.

The InTASC coursework will be offered annually across the Fall, Spring, and Summer terms. The Clinical Experience cannot be completed until all InTASC coursework has been completed. Elective coursework can be selected and completed around these required courses at any point during the completion of the program. While candidates can complete the program at varying paces, the MAT program is expected to be completed within two years.

While the MAT Core Courses required by each College (*Appendix II*) will be required to be fully completed at the specific College through which the candidate has selected to complete the MAT degree, the elective credit portion of the degree may be completed with coursework offered from any of the State Colleges. This will provide greater access to coursework such as graduate content coursework for specific disciplines. Therefore, the MAT program will allow up to 18 credits of transfer coursework across the State Colleges.

While the program coursework will be offered entirely online, each College is expected to ensure that each MAT candidate hired on an Alternative Program Teaching Permit - Pathway 5 and enrolled in the MAT program is assigned a mentor and supervisor who regularly visits the candidate each semester to observe the candidate in the school setting, provide feedback and support to the candidate throughout the MAT program, and evaluate the candidate on their growth and development in relation to the InTASC standards. For those candidates completing the other pathways of the Alternative Program Teaching Permit, the InTASC coursework (which embed practicum experiences) and the Clinical Experience also require the College to engage with the candidate and P-12 school district to provide feedback and supervision during each field experience.

This critical role and ongoing relationship between the Educator Preparation Program (EPP), the MAT candidate, and the P-12 school district makes it very difficult for any single State College to offer this program state-wide, which is why the Nebraska State Colleges are proposing this program as a System initiative. The Colleges are committed to ensuring that each school district across the State, no matter its geographic location, has the opportunity to recruit potential educators and provide a successful path to certification through these alternative educator pathways. As such, each College is committed to serving the P-12 partners in their respective service regions by supporting them in their efforts to attract educators to their school districts. Individuals who can meet the requirements for alternative and transitional certification pathways can be immediately hired as teachers with the assurance that they have an accessible MAT program that moves them toward initial certification while providing quality instructors, mentors and supervisors who will support each MAT candidate in their growth and development as educators.

In addition, each Educator Preparation Program at the Colleges is currently accredited by CAEP, which has as one of its standards *Standard 2: Clinical Partnership and Practice*. The components of this standard establish the importance of the roles and functions between the institution and the school district in relation to the co-construction, co-implementation, and co-evaluation of the clinical experiences required for teacher candidates. As such, the State Colleges primarily utilize placements within their service regions to ensure positive and productive relationships with their P-12 partners. As a program which leads to initial certification, the same must hold true for this MAT program; therefore, the State Colleges propose to work within their already established service regions when it comes to where the MAT candidates are placed or serving as full-time teachers in school districts across the State.

2. Centrality to Role and Mission

This proposed MAT program is consistent with the State Colleges' role and mission. The State College have a long and rich history of preparing educators, first as Normal Schools and Teachers Colleges. As such, the Colleges are committed to the vital role each play within their respective service regions across Nebraska, and in partnership with the Educational Service Units (ESUs) and P-12 school districts with which they have existing partnership agreements for their traditional teacher certification pathways. In addition, Nebraska state statutes clearly reference the State Colleges' roots in educator preparation and their continued primary role in serving to address the state's workforce needs in teacher education.

As the Colleges' mission and role have continued to evolve, the commitment to the preparation of quality educators has continued to be of paramount importance. The State Colleges have expanded their endorsement programming based upon the needs of the State and their service region P-12 partners, both for certification of educators as well as principals, counselors, and other school administrators and personnel.

As the State of Nebraska faces critical teacher workforce shortage challenges, the State Colleges wish to offer this new MAT program to support individuals who hold a baccalaureate degree and wish to become educators through the Alternative Program Teaching Permit pathways. The Colleges clearly see this new MAT program to be central to the role and mission they serve for their service regions and the State as a whole.

3. Evidence of Need and Demand

A. Need for the program:

The State of Nebraska is facing a critical teacher workforce shortage. The Nebraska Department of Education's teacher [shortage website](#) lists almost every endorsement area as a shortage area for the State. The latest [2022-2023 Teacher Vacancy Survey Report](#) indicated that there were 768 unfilled teaching positions reported for 2022, which means an individual certified to teach in that position was not filling that position. Out of those, 208 were entirely vacant, with no one serving in any capacity. And out of the 768 unfilled positions, 227 of them were in districts or systems with fewer than 500 students.

Compare these data with the [2019-2020 survey](#) findings, which reported 321 unfilled teaching positions, of which 62 were vacant. The changes that have occurred over the past three years are significant when it comes to our schools' ability to fully staff their classroom with quality (and qualified) educators.

A number of news articles reporting upon the concerning statistics of educators leaving Nebraska K-12 schools, and the increasing challenges to replace them with new educators, have been released this past year. The Nebraska Unicameral have begun to consider legislation that will help to address the teacher workforce shortage, such as funding for specific recruitment or retention programs and alternative certification pathways.

The Nebraska Department of Education, recognizing the need to attract educators from all walks of life, has developed alternative pathways to certification that had not previously existed. However, some of these pathways require post-secondary institutions to begin to think innovatively about how to partner with NDE to ensure that the path from A to B can be achieved. This MAT program is such a path.

B. Demand for the Program:

Ongoing engagement with regional P-12 partners continues to focus upon the increasing need for educators across the State College's service regions, especially in rural districts where the loss of one teacher may result in an entire discipline being in jeopardy of being offered. Recent discussions have focused upon a desire for a graduate level program with this scope that addresses initial teaching certification requirements and affords the opportunity for a candidate to pursue a Master's degree congruently if they choose.

As State legislators continue to focus on potential solutions to educator shortages, and the Nebraska Department of Education develops and moves new alternative certification options forward, the need to establish innovative and alternative pathways for initial certification is at a critical level. The changes that have been proposed by NDE and supported and approved by the State Board of Education reflect the desire to think differently about how we prepare and certify individuals to serve as educators for our P-12 students.

This MAT option is a direct response to NDE's innovative move on the alternative certification side of expanding access to educator certification, so that those individuals have a clear path to initial certification, regardless of where they are teaching across Nebraska, so that they can

meet the expectations of their temporary permits and continue their roles as educators for the students they serve.

Based upon data collected from NDE in Fall 2023, two-hundred-eighteen (218) individuals were teaching under a Transitional Teaching Permit and three-hundred-fifteen (315) individuals were teaching under an Alternative Program Teaching Permit, which were the existing temporary permits for post-baccalaureate individuals who were approved to serve as an educator in Nebraska. As part of their efforts to move toward initial certification, each individual would also be working with a Nebraska Educator Preparation Program (EPP) to complete the requirements. The State Colleges report that for candidates who hold these types of temporary teaching permits and have come to them to complete the remaining requirements for initial certification, their only route at this time is to complete undergraduate coursework. However, in doing so, these individuals are not eligible for financial aid or other assistance, as they are not degree-seeking students.

Across the System, the number of candidates is significant, for over the past several years, the Colleges have assisted over one-hundred-fifty (150) post-baccalaureate candidates in working toward initial certification. Providing a graduate program option for future candidates which would be available to them as they teach full-time in our regional schools, and which would allow them to be eligible for financial aid, would be a tremendous benefit to them and to our P-12 school district partners.

4. Adequacy of Resources

A. Faculty and Staff Resources:

Initially, the MAT Core courses, which are new, will be offered using a combination of existing full-time faculty and adjunct faculty at each College who meet Higher Learning Commission (HLC), Nebraska Department of Education (NDE), and Council for the Accreditation for Educator Preparation (CAEP) instructor credentials. However, should the program grow and additional sections of courses be needed, additional full-time faculty line(s) and/or adjunct instructors may be needed. Individuals serving as supervisors and mentors for candidates will be hired following the same procedures used for current candidates and will require the same credentials established by NDE and CAEP.

In addition to the new Core courses, the additional workload related to oversight of the program and candidate recruitment and advisement will need to be addressed through additional staffing, which will initially be estimated as one full-time staff position per State College.

B. Physical Facilities:

The courses themselves will be offered online, so there are no facility-related challenges or requirements to offering this program. The clinical experience and practicum components of the program will be completed in site-based classrooms provided by the Colleges' P-12 school district partners.

C. Instructional Equipment and Informational Resources:

The technology infrastructure at each College will be the platform through which the program coursework will be offered, including Canvas courses, Zoom platform, etc. There should be no considerable needs beyond what the College currently provides for existing online programs.

D. Budget Projections for the first five years of program (per each College):

EXPENSES

With each College developing and offering four (4) new 3-credit graduate courses for the MAT Core, and with the expectation that these courses will be offered in sequence during **Year One** for each new cohort, there will be the added expense of offering twelve (12) additional credits of graduate coursework each academic year. The instruction for these new courses will initially be covered through adjunct instruction, either to teach these courses or to teach existing courses that will need coverage if full-time faculty loads are shifted to these courses. Currently, at a cost of \$1000 per credit, the cost to offer these twelve (12) credits of coursework through adjunct instruction annually would be **\$12,000** per year.

In addition to the four (4) new courses being offered for the MAT Core, the six (6) credits of Clinical Experience will require that each candidate be assigned a clinical supervisor to serve as a mentor and evaluate the candidate during this experience. The instructional cost associated with this role is 1 credit hour per candidate, at a rate of \$1000 per credit. With the expectation of ten (10) MAT candidates completing the Clinical Experience each year, beginning in Year Two of the program implementation, the cost for this program component will be **\$10,000** per year.

MAT program candidates holding Alternative Teaching Permits through Pathway 5 under Rule 21 require supervisory visits each semester, and the additional cost for the college supervisor to travel to observe the candidate at least once each semester of the first year of the program, prior to completion of all MAT Core Coursework, equates to \$500 per candidate per year. The Colleges believe this level of mentorship should be provided to all candidates; therefore, this cost would be **\$5,000** per year.

Beyond the required MAT Core and Clinical Experience coursework, much of the remainder of the program coursework will be elective graduate coursework that is already being offered by the College and has available seating, so no additional expenses for these courses are expected.

In addition to the instructional costs, the offering of this MAT Program will include a new personnel cost of an **MAT Program Coordinator** who will serve as the primary point of contact for the program, provide initial advisement to prospective MAT candidates, and collaborate with faculty and staff regarding recruitment, admissions, records, marketing and orientation initiatives for the MAT Program. This position will be a 12-month professional staff position with an expected annual salary of \$50,000, plus \$16,840 (33.68% benefits), for a total of **\$66,840**. For Years Two through Five, a modest salary increase of 3% has been included in the estimated expenses.

As the *MAT Expenses Table* reflects, overall expenses for this MAT Program for the first five (5) years are estimated to be **\$479,861**.

REVENUE

Based upon the existing number of post-baccalaureate candidates at each State College, each College estimates a conservative recruitment of ten (10) new MAT candidates each year, for the first five years of the program. While candidates can begin the program at any point in the academic year and can complete the coursework at whatever pace best suits them, for the ease of computation, the revenue table is built upon the belief that each candidate will begin in the Fall, complete eighteen (18) credits of coursework each year, and complete the MAT program within two (2) years. The Alternative Program Teaching Permit is valid for two (2) years, which would require the candidate to complete the MAT Core within that two-year period in order to be eligible for initial certification prior to the expiration of the permit, so this pace is plausible.

It is expected that the retention rates will be high for this MAT Program, due to the commitment of the post-baccalaureate candidates to the requirements of the temporary permit/certification pathway and the overall chosen career path. Therefore, for each group of ten (10) candidates who begin at each College each year, an attrition rate of 20% (two candidates) has been set for the second year.

All graduate courses will charge the graduate online tuition rate of \$370 per credit hour, which includes all embedded fees. As the *MAT Revenue Table* reflects, the tuition revenue will be \$66,600 for Year 1 and \$119,880 for Years 2-5, for a total tuition revenue of **\$546,120**. Beyond the course tuition, no other revenue is collected as part of this program.

Based upon the Expenses and Revenues descriptions above and the attached tables, the estimated net revenue for the first five years of the MAT Program is **\$66,259**.

5. Avoidance of Unnecessary Duplication

While there are two private universities in Nebraska that offer a similar Master of Arts in Teaching program as the one being proposed by the State Colleges, no other public four-year post-secondary institution in Nebraska offers such a program. However, no other program beyond the UNK certification program is specifically developed to support an alternative certification pathway currently being offered by NDE. This MAT program specifically builds upon the requirements of the Alternative Program Teaching Permit pathways to assist school districts in identifying individuals who have the initial credentials to serve as educators while they work with one of the State Colleges to complete an alternative pathway to certification.

Below are the graduate programs currently being offered in Nebraska that align in some way with post-baccalaureate routes to initial certification:

- UNL offers a [Masters of Arts](#) leading to Initial Certification program, which combines graduate coursework with coursework required for initial certification in a specific endorsement area. However, this appears to be more of an accelerated program for certification and focuses upon clinical placements solely within Lincoln and Omaha Public School districts.
- UNK offers the [Transitional Certification Program](#), which includes a series of graduate courses in support of individuals with Transitional Permits, but those courses may only be considered toward completion of the institution's Masters of Science in Curriculum &

Instruction. They do not offer a degree program primarily focused toward post-baccalaureate individuals desiring certification and a graduate degree.

- UNO offers the [Teacher Academy Project \(TAP\)](#) program for individuals interested in certification at the secondary level. Candidates can either complete the program through the TAP Residency, which allows them to teach full time while completing their courses in the evening and on weekends, or as a TAP Para, which allows them to work 20 hours per week in a school district while completing their coursework. Graduate credits may be used toward a Masters degree in Secondary Education. Course offerings restrict the program to individuals who can commute to UNO for courses.
- UNO also offers the [Elementary-Accelerated Certification for Teachers \(E-ACT\)](#) program for individuals interested in certificate at the elementary level. Candidates serve as paraprofessionals during the first year of the program, and then can be eligible to teach under a transitional teaching permit during the second year of the program. Graduate credits may be used toward a Masters degree in Elementary Education. Coursework is offered during the summer and in the evenings during the school year, which again, limits the program to individuals who can commute to UNO for courses.
- College of St. Mary: [Master of Arts in Teaching](#)
- Hastings College: [Master of Arts in Teaching](#)

Regional institutions offering an MAT, but aligned to the certification requirements of their respective states:

- Iowa - Buena Vista University: [Master of Arts in Teaching](#)
- Kansas - Kansas State University: [Master of Arts in Teaching](#)

6. Consistency with the Comprehensive Statewide Plan for Postsecondary Education

The Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) program at Chadron State, Peru State, and Wayne State Colleges aligns to the CCPE's Comprehensive Statewide Plan by offering a high-quality academic program that addresses the workforce challenges currently facing the State of Nebraska. The CCPE Plan notes that "Postsecondary education in Nebraska will be responsive to the workforce development and ongoing training needs of employers and industries to build and sustain a knowledgeable, trained, and skilled workforce in both rural and urban areas of the state." The MAT will provide school districts across the State with an alternative pathway to teacher certification for those who meet the Alternative Program Teaching Permit criteria or those who hold a bachelor's degree outside of teaching who desire to become a fully certified teacher without completing a second bachelors degree. Offering this program will address the critical workforce shortage that Nebraska is currently facing.

The CPPE Plan also notes the importance of post-secondary's ability to be innovative in addressing the needs of the State: "Postsecondary education institutions will assess evolving needs and priorities of the students and people of Nebraska in a timely manner and will adopt new methods and technologies to address them." The State Colleges' development of the MAT Program was focused upon a new alternative pathway to educator certification that addresses the challenges currently facing individuals who hold Alternative Program Teaching Permits and are teaching full time in Nebraska schools, which restricts their access to complete certification through traditional pathways.