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**Cover Sheet for In-State Institutions  
New Program or Substantial Modification to Existing Program**

Institution Submitting Proposal	Stevenson University
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*Each action below requires a separate proposal and cover sheet.*

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|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="radio"/> New Academic Program | <input type="radio"/> Substantial Change to a Degree Program            |
| <input type="radio"/> New Area of Concentration       | <input type="radio"/> Substantial Change to an Area of Concentration    |
| <input type="radio"/> New Degree Level Approval       | <input type="radio"/> Substantial Change to a Certificate Program       |
| <input type="radio"/> New Stand-Alone Certificate     | <input type="radio"/> Cooperative Degree Program                        |
| <input type="radio"/> Off Campus Program              | <input type="radio"/> Offer Program at Regional Higher Education Center |

Payment <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	Payment <input type="radio"/> R*STARS # 0255728	Payment	Date
Submitted: <input type="radio"/> No	Type: <input checked="" type="radio"/> Check # 0255728	Amount: \$850	Submitted: 03/06/23

Department Proposing Program	Academic Affairs/School of Education		
Degree Level and Degree Type	Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.)		
Title of Proposed Program	MAT: Early Childhood Education		
Total Number of Credits	36		
Suggested Codes	HEGIS: 823.00	CIP: 13.1210	
Program Modality	<input type="radio"/> On-campus <input checked="" type="radio"/> Distance Education (fully online) <input type="radio"/> Both		
Program Resources	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Using Existing Resources <input type="radio"/> Requiring New Resources		
Projected Implementation Date <small>(must be 60 days from proposal submission as per COMAR 13B 02.03 03)</small>	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Fall <input type="radio"/> Spring <input type="radio"/> Summer            Year: 2023		
Provide Link to Most Recent Academic Catalog	URL: <a href="https://www.stevenson.edu/academics/catalog/">https://www.stevenson.edu/academics/catalog/</a>		

Preferred Contact for this Proposal	Name:	Susan T. Gorman
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President/Chief Executive	Type Name:	Elliot L. Hirshman
	Signature:	<i>Elliot L. Hirshman</i> Date: 03/10/2023
	Date of Approval/Endorsement by Governing Board:	03/08/2023

Revised 1/2021

— ACADEMIC AFFAIRS —  
**STEVENSON**  
U N I V E R S I T Y  
Executive Vice President and Provost

15 March 2023

Secretary of Higher Education  
Maryland Higher Education Commission  
6 N. Liberty Street, 10th Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21201

RE: New Academic Program, Master of Arts in Teaching, Early Childhood Education

Dear Assistant Secretary Dow:

Stevenson University is pleased to submit the enclosed proposal for our Master of Arts in Teaching, Early Childhood Education (MAT:EC) degree program. The proposal for this new program has been approved by all of the necessary internal constituencies, including the Faculty Council, President's Cabinet, and our Board of Trustees. As detailed in Section A of this proposal, the proposed MAT: EC program is aligned to Stevenson's mission and planning priorities. Additionally, the program supports all three goals of the 2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education (Goal 1, Priorities 1, 3, and 4; Goal 2, Priorities 5 and 7; Goal 3, Priority 8 – see Section B of this proposal).

The Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education (MAT:EC) prepares teacher candidates to become certified early childhood educators for children in Prekindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in diverse communities across the state. The proposed Stevenson University program aligns with the institution's career-focused mission and draws on its strengths in the initial licensure undergraduate early childhood education program and graduate online MAT:STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education program to provide a curriculum specifically designed to prepare teachers to meet the growing local, state, and national employment needs for early childhood educators.

In addition to being aligned with Stevenson University's institutional mission and strategic priorities and the 2022 State Plan, the proposed MAT:EC program responds to landmark legislation, the Blueprint for Maryland's Future (the "Blueprint"), which was passed in 2021 and reflects the recommendations of the Maryland Commission on Innovation and Excellence in Education also known as the Kirwan Commission. The five pillars of the Blueprint include a pillar focused on early childhood education that seeks to provide equitable access to our youngest learners in economically challenged communities.<sup>1</sup>

The Blueprint authorizes the expansion of free full-day prekindergarten to low-income families. This expansion increases the number of early childhood centers housed in public schools

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<sup>1</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2022). *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*.  
<https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org>/<https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org/>

known as Judy Centers and Patty Centers, thereby creating a substantial need for highly qualified, certified early childhood educators across the state. As a result of the Blueprint legislation and existing teacher shortage, detailed in the attached proposal (Section C), the projected job growth in this area significantly outpaces the projected number of Maryland graduates. Approximately 2,000 current early childhood teachers possess a bachelor's degree in childcare or another related field, demonstrating a significant number of potential candidates without the required Early Childhood Education degree needed for certified teaching positions.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the issuance of Conditional Certificates for those currently teaching has increased by 136% in Maryland over the last 5 years.<sup>3</sup>

In Fall 2022, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) asked Maryland Educator Preparation providers who prepare early childhood teachers for initial licensure to report their mode of program delivery, specifically to determine which of the initial licensure early childhood programs were delivered on evenings, weekends, or online. The data collected revealed that none of the currently existing educator preparation programs leading to initial licensure in early childhood education are delivered fully online. Thus, there is a significant need for programs that are accessible to current conditionally certified early childhood teachers, and interested students who possess a bachelor's degree in another area and would like to pursue initial licensure in early childhood education. Stevenson's program will allow flexibility for current conditionally certified teachers and attract a diverse workforce for individuals who want to obtain an early childhood teaching license but have experienced barriers due to the lack of flexible options in Maryland.

Stevenson University's School of Education has a proven track record of preparing early childhood educators in the traditional undergraduate program and secondary STEM educators in the fully online MAT:STEM program. The proposed program maximizes the current expertise of the undergraduate and graduate faculty in these programs. Additionally, the diversity of Stevenson's student population (44% students of color; 27% Black/African American) positions the proposed program well to contribute to the development of a more diverse pipeline of highly qualified certified early childhood educators. Combined with the university's mission of providing career-focused education and commitment to preparing graduates for a lifetime of inquiry and contribution, the expertise of Stevenson's faculty and the diversity of the student body make this program ideally suited to a variety of potential teachers in high need areas in the state.

The MAT:EC program will be Stevenson's second online MAT program. The proposed program will complement and build on the strength of our undergraduate and graduate education programs as well as our strong partnerships with school systems in the state. The value of adding this program to our graduate offerings is understood and strongly supported not only by Stevenson's academic departments and schools, but also by related units, such as the

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<sup>2</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2022). *Blueprint Deep Dive: Early Childhood Education*. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0426/BlueprintDeepDiveEarlyChildhoodEducation.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (26 July 2022). *Maryland's Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*, briefing presented to the Maryland State Board of Education. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf> (accessed 27 February 2023).

Library, Office of Information Technology, Center for Student Success, and Career Connection Center. The addition of the MAT:EC is an opportunity for Stevenson to continue to support the needs of the teaching workforce and community in Maryland, further expand its academic mission, and make career-focused education accessible to new populations of students.

In compliance with MHEC guidelines, we are submitting this cover letter, proposal, and proposal cover sheet as a PDF attachment to an e-mail message. We have also submitted under separate cover the required filing fee in accordance with MHEC procedures.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

We appreciate your consideration of our proposal, thank you.

Sincerely,



Susan T. Gorman, Ph.D.  
Executive Vice President and Provost  
Stevenson University  
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# Stevenson University

## Proposal for a New Academic Program Master of Arts in Teaching: Early Childhood Education

**Stevenson University's proposed Master of Arts in Teaching: Early Childhood Education program fills a critical statewide need and supports the three goals set forth in the 2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education: Access (priorities 1, 3, and 4), Success (priorities 5 and 7), and Innovation (priority 8).<sup>1</sup> Specific alignments (goals and priorities) are noted in the relevant sections.**

### **A. Centrality to Institutional Mission and Planning Priorities**

- 1. Provide a description of the program, including each area of concentration (if applicable), and how it relates to the institution's approved mission.*

#### **Program Description**

The Master of Arts in Early Childhood Education (MAT:EC) prepares graduates of the program to teach students in pre-kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. The proposed Stevenson University program aligns with the institution's career-focused mission and draws on its strengths in undergraduate early childhood education and graduate online MAT:STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) education to provide a curriculum specifically designed to prepare teachers to meet the growing local, state, and national employment needs for early childhood educators.

The MAT:EC is designed for individuals seeking the credentials to teach and is well-suited for recent graduates, career changers, and current teachers who are not yet certified. Upon completion, graduates of the program will be eligible for initial teacher certification by the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) in Early Childhood Education (Grades PreK-3). The curriculum includes content required by MSDE for Early Childhood licensure, critical field-based experiences, emphasis on teaching and supporting multilingual learners, and comprehensive support from university-based mentors to translate and implement evidence-based practices in the field.

The proposed MAT:EC will be delivered online and include two optional one-day residencies. The sequence of courses is based on an integration of theory, practice, and pedagogy alongside field experiences and internship for students in the program who have not yet entered the education field. The program also provides extensive support and mentoring for students in the program who are employed by schools and school systems with conditional certification, i.e., with a provisional status which allows them to teach while pursuing a pathway to initial teacher certification.

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<sup>1</sup> The 2022 *Maryland State Plan for Higher Education*.

[http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-105%28b%29%283%29%28i%29\\_2022.pdf](http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-105%28b%29%283%29%28i%29_2022.pdf) (accessed 22 September 2022).

The MAT:EC is a career-focused program designed for prospective students who have earned a Bachelor's degree in an area other than Education and wish to pursue a program that leads to teacher certification. Consistent with the MSDE Blueprint<sup>2</sup> requirements, candidates will complete an internship which consists of 100 days in a PreK-3 setting. Stevenson University's strong partnership with over 28 Professional Development and Partnership schools serves to enhance the practical aspects of the program, grounding it in career-based practice and applied learning beyond the university classroom. Stevenson is well known for producing highly competent graduates who are fully prepared to enter the workforce, and the MAT:EC program will build upon this reputation by addressing the critical workforce need for skilled, highly qualified Early Childhood Educators in Maryland and across the nation.

### **Relationship to the Institution's Approved Mission**

The proposed MAT:EC aligns with the University's mission and strategic goals, and is an institutional priority. The program has received the full support of all stakeholders, including, but not limited to, the Faculty Council, Academic Affairs Leadership Council, Cabinet, Provost, President, and Board of Trustees.

The MAT:EC program aligns with Stevenson University's Mission, set forth below:

The University is an innovative, coeducational, independent institution offering undergraduate and graduate students a career-focused education marked by individualized attention, civility, and respect for difference. The University blends the liberal arts with career exploration and planning, complementing a traditional education with applied learning beyond the classroom. The University meets students where they are and supports and challenges them to become reflective and accomplished individuals committed to a lifetime of learning and contribution. Students graduate with the competence and confidence needed to address creatively the opportunities and problems facing their communities, the nation, and the world.

Specifically, as an applied, career-focused program that supports the attainment of initial teacher certification, the proposed MAT:EC degree reflects Stevenson's mission of career preparation by providing opportunities to learn beyond the university classroom, including extending to diverse early childhood classroom settings. The coursework is specifically designed to address current research and best practices in the field coupled with strategic and supported field-based experiences.

Stevenson University operates under the philosophy of meeting students where they are, and the institution has been consistent and thorough in pursuing its mission of providing a career-focused education, grounded in the liberal arts. This mission has allowed the institution to meet the needs of the current student population of traditional undergraduate and adult online students since its founding as Villa Julie College in 1947. Building additional professional Master's Degrees such as the MAT:EC is a natural extension of the institution's intentional blend of career focus and

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<sup>2</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2022). *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/Overview.aspx>

liberal arts tradition. The addition of this MAT:EC program supports and is supported by the University's Mission and positions the institution to meet the growing demand in the state for early childhood teaching workforce. The proposed program is designed to empower individuals from diverse backgrounds and experiences to earn initial teacher certification – whether they are currently teaching with a conditional certificate or working in another field.

The Maryland State Department of Education has specific course requirements for state approval and teacher certification. In alignment with Stevenson's career-focused mission, the proposed program includes the exact courses and early childhood internship experiences required for teacher certification. Additionally, the program's emphasis on teaching and supporting multilingual learners as recommended by the Blueprint for Maryland's Future ("Blueprint")<sup>3</sup> is in keeping with the individualized attention, civility, and respect for difference that are hallmarks of a Stevenson education. The Blueprint is a landmark piece of legislation that calls for comprehensive changes to Maryland's public education system, including early childhood programs and teacher education. Among the priorities for change is a focus on supporting multilingual learners, including the recommendation to prepare all teachers to serve English Learners as noted in Recommendation 5 of the Maryland Blueprint Workgroup's Final Report on English Learners in Public Schools<sup>4</sup> (excerpted below):

**Recommendation 5a: All Teachers Prepared to Serve English Learners**

All teachers in Maryland are likely to educate an English learner at some point in their careers. General education teachers are usually the teachers of record who spend the most time with English learners in PreK-12 settings. Therefore, they must be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to support English learners. To ensure all teachers are prepared to serve English learners, **Maryland should:**

- i. Require that all educator preparation programs provide training in EL-related teacher competencies and provide EL student clinical opportunities for pre-service educators.**
- ii. Expand dual certification offerings (English for Speakers of Other Languages [ESOL] combined with another certification area).**
- iii. Invest in training for all current educators focused on the assets of multilingualism and improving academic outcomes for ELs.**

In addition to a required course focused on Teaching Multilingual Learners, each of the required courses in Stevenson's proposed program will include appropriate elements, including planning and instruction, family, community and culture, and assessment for multilingual learners. With this program, Stevenson is responding to the state workforce demand for early childhood educators by preparing our students to serve their unique communities, collaboratively solve

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<sup>3</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2022). *Blueprint for Maryland's Future*. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/Overview.aspx>

<sup>4</sup>Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2022). *Blueprint for Maryland's Future: Workgroup on English Learners in Public Schools*. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Documents/Reports122021/WorkgroupEnglishLearnersPublicSchoolsFinalReport.pdf>

problems, and create opportunities to foster meaningful and equitable learning for our youngest students.

**2. Explain how the proposed program supports the institution's strategic goals and provide evidence that affirms it is an institutional priority.**

Stevenson University's current Strategic Plan<sup>5</sup> was implemented in 2021. The Plan establishes ten strategic goals, and two of these goals pertain directly to developing the academic portfolio, illustrating that the proposed program meets an institutional priority. The Strategic Plan sets forth the overarching goals for the University that are then supported by a set of annual initiatives. The strategic goals related directly to the proposed MAT:EC program are as follows:

Goal: Develop Academic Programs

Goal: Focus on Students' Professional Success and Career Development

The proposed MAT:EC program is well-aligned with both of these strategic goals in that it will expand Stevenson's ability to offer strong career-focused programs at the graduate level. Additionally, it is a graduate degree that is open to students holding bachelor's degrees in a wide variety of academic disciplines.

Stevenson pursues the development of academic programs that support student access and success, which aligns well with the goals and priorities set forth in the 2022 Maryland State Plan. For over 20 years, Stevenson University has offered affordable, career-focused graduate programs to students, facilitating equitable access to affordable and high-quality postsecondary education for Maryland residents.

**3. Provide a brief narrative of how the proposed program will be adequately funded for at least the first five years of program implementation. (Additional related information is required in section L.)**

The proposed MAT:EC program will build on the strength of the University's bachelor's degree in early childhood education and the MAT:STEM degree in Biology, Chemistry, Earth/Space Science, Physical Science, Physics, and Mathematics. The MAT:EC program will create an additional career pathway for students who are completing undergraduate degrees in other academic programs and later decide that they want to pursue teaching.

Administratively housed in the School of Education, the proposed program will be supported by existing operational and personnel resources, including full-time faculty, adjunct faculty, instructional designers, and administrative leadership (Graduate Program Director and Associate Dean). Implementation of this program will require a

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<sup>5</sup> Stevenson University Portal, President's Office (2021). *Our Roots, Our Future: The Strategic Plan for Stevenson University*, <https://now.stevenson.edu/depts/president/University%20Documents/University%20Strategic%20Plan%202021.pdf> (accessed 22 September 2022)



small investment in course development and additional adjunct faculty, which is detailed in the budget in Section L.

**4. Provide a description of the institution's commitment to:**

**a) ongoing administrative, financial, and technical support of the proposed program**

The proposed program will be administratively housed in the School of Education (SOE) and led by the Graduate Program Director who planned, organized, implemented, and currently oversees the online MAT:STEM, M.Ed. in Integrative Learning, and MA in Community Based Education and Leadership programs. The School of Education is led by the Associate Dean, Education who also directly oversees the Bachelor of Science programs in Elementary Education and Early Childhood Education. A cross-departmental leadership team comprised of the Associate Dean, Education, Dean, Stevenson University Online, Graduate Program Director, and the Senior Associate Vice President, Academic Affairs & Research provides ongoing high-level administrative support to all education programs and ensures continued alignment with state and national accrediting standards. Since this program will be taught in an online, asynchronous format identical to the MAT:STEM program, existing space, infrastructure, technology, and administrative staffing at both the University and School levels, are sufficient to support the needs of this new program.

**b) continuation of the program for a period of time sufficient to allow enrolled students to complete the program.**

Stevenson University is committed to the continuation of this degree program beyond the time needed for students to complete. The University is centered on the success of its students and provides support services to ensure timely progression toward completion, such as high-touch advising and subject-specific tutoring. Building upon Stevenson's success with the MAT:STEM program which launched in 2014, the implementation of the proposed MAT:EC program furthers the University's commitment to providing access to graduate education for new and diverse populations of students.

**B. Critical and Compelling Regional or Statewide Need as Identified in the State Plan**

**1. Demonstrate demand and need for the program in terms of meeting present and future needs of the region and the State in general based on one or more of the following:**

- a) The need for the advancement and evolution of knowledge;**
- b) Societal needs, including expanding educational opportunities and choices for minority and educationally disadvantaged students at institutions of higher education;**
- c) The need to strengthen and expand the capacity of historically black institutions to provide high quality and unique educational programs.**

**In support of Goal 1 of the 2022 State Plan<sup>6</sup>**, Stevenson University’s proposed program will serve societal needs by filling a critical need for educational access due to the significant teacher shortage in Maryland, particularly in underserved communities (see Sections C2-4).

Additionally, Stevenson’s proposed program meets the present and future needs of the region and state in advancing knowledge and access to minority and educationally disadvantaged teacher candidates and their students as set forth in Maryland law.<sup>7</sup> Further, our mission to prepare individuals for a “lifetime of learning and contribution” supports **Goal 2, Priority 7 of the 2022 State Plan** in expanding opportunities for lifelong learning to these students. As a mission-driven, career-focused program, the opportunities made available through this program to new and diverse populations of students across the state, particularly in child-care desert and urban locations reported by the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium<sup>8</sup> and indicated by the MSDE Blueprint<sup>9</sup> will yield positive student outcomes that are far reaching. Moreover, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provides evidence demonstrating that students who learn from highly qualified teachers have better outcomes<sup>10</sup> and recommends that higher education programs elevate professional preparation programs designated and accredited by the early childhood education profession as the core pathway for individuals to be prepared in the relevant standards and competencies.<sup>11</sup>

**2. Provide evidence that the perceived need is consistent with the [Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education](#).**

The specific data regarding the demand and the need for the program are provided in subsequent sections of this proposal and clearly demonstrate that the proposed program is well-aligned with the three primary goals for higher education set forth in the 2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education:

1. Ensure equitable access to affordable and high-quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.
2. Promote and implement practices and policies that will ensure student success.

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<sup>6</sup>The 2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education. [http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-105%28b%29%283%29%28i%29\\_2022.pdf](http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-105%28b%29%283%29%28i%29_2022.pdf) (accessed 22 September 2022).

<sup>7</sup> State of Maryland Division of State Documents. *Code of Maryland Regulations, Title 13B Maryland Higher Education Commission Minimum Requirements for In-State Degree Granting Institutions, Need Criteria*. <http://www.dsd.state.md.us/comar/comarhtml/13b/13b.02.02.05.htm> (accessed 05 October 2022).

<sup>8</sup> *Together Juntos Needs Assessment: Early Care and Education in Maryland*. (September 2019). [https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/24/md\\_ece\\_needs\\_assessment\\_executive\\_summary\\_final.pdf](https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/system/files/filedepot/24/md_ece_needs_assessment_executive_summary_final.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2022). *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future*. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/Overview.aspx>

<sup>10</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2022). *High-Quality Early Childhood Educators Are the Key to Quality Programs for Teachers*. [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/201NAEYC\\_Childhood%20Educators.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/our-work/public-policy-advocacy/201NAEYC_Childhood%20Educators.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). (2020). *Professional Standards and Competencies for Early Childhood Educators*. [https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/standards\\_and\\_competencies\\_ps.pdf](https://www.naeyc.org/sites/default/files/globally-shared/downloads/PDFs/resources/position-statements/standards_and_competencies_ps.pdf)

3. Foster innovation in all aspects of Maryland higher education to improve access and student success.<sup>12</sup>

Throughout its 75-year history, Stevenson University has focused on meeting students where they are and providing access to high-quality education. This mission is in clear alignment with the 2022 State Plan goal to “ensure equitable access to affordable and high-quality postsecondary education for all Maryland residents.” Our admissions practices focus on student potential, not exclusion, and this equity-minded perspective informs decisions at the undergraduate and graduate levels. (**Goal 1, Priority 3**)

Cited by US News and World Report as a Best Value School for the last five years, Stevenson continues to provide an affordable, high-quality education to students at all levels of study, including master’s and doctoral programs.<sup>13</sup> In keeping with the University’s affordable model for career-focused, online graduate education, Stevenson will apply the same discounted tuition rate currently in place for the existing MAT:STEM program to the proposed MAT:EC program (see Section L.1), which supports the State’s priorities for access and affordability (**Goal 1, Priorities 1 and 4**). In addition to making graduate education affordable, the online, asynchronous delivery modality of the proposed MAT:EC makes it accessible to working adults in Maryland and beyond. Whether candidates are working in another career or teaching full-time on a conditional certification, the proposed program will allow them to continue working and earning money while also completing the master’s degree.

In support of adults currently working in early childhood environments without teaching licenses, the proposed MAT:EC aligns with **Goal 2, Priority 5** of the State Plan by enabling these conditionally certified teachers to use their employment as a paid field experience. Teacher candidates currently teaching while enrolled in the MAT:EC program will be able to continue teaching while receiving additional school and university mentoring. The coursework combined with practical experiences will lead to professional teacher certification. Additionally, the proposed program supports **Goal 3, Priority 8** of the 2022 State Plan and aligns with Maryland state law regarding certification in early childhood education (PreK – Grade 3)<sup>14</sup> by including a supervised experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school setting at the pre-kindergarten or kindergarten and primary age/grade level or one year of successful full-time teaching experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school setting at the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, or primary age/grade level. Students in the program who are not already working in an educational setting will start in-school field experiences during the first semester of the program and continue each semester.

In further alignment with the State’s focus on innovation (**Goal 3, Priority 8**), Stevenson is committed to seeking partnerships similar to those established for the MAT:STEM program, whereby *Maryland school systems pay the tuition* for their conditionally certified teachers to

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<sup>12</sup> The 2022 Maryland State Plan for Higher Education.

[http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-105%28b%29%283%29%28i%29\\_2022.pdf](http://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MHEC/ED11-105%28b%29%283%29%28i%29_2022.pdf) (accessed 22 September 2022).

<sup>13</sup> U.S. News and World Report. 2022-2023 Best Colleges. <https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges/stevenson-university-2107> (accessed 10 October 2022).

<sup>14</sup> Code of Maryland Regulations (2021). Sec. 13a.12.02.03. Certification in Early Childhood Education (Prekindergarten—Grade 3)

pursue initial certification through Stevenson’s program, which, in turn, promotes a culture of risk-taking with the potential for significant positive outcomes for the teachers, schools, systems, and, most importantly, the PreK-3 students.

For example, the program supports students who are taking risks by entering a classroom with a non-teaching bachelor’s degree and conditional certification. At the same time, schools are taking risks by hiring conditionally certified teachers. Data for the 2021-2022 school year show that Maryland School Districts employed 3,567 conditionally certified teachers, which was double the number employed five years ago.<sup>15</sup> Enrollment in an educational program leading to certification is a requirement of conditional certification, and Stevenson’s partnerships with multiple school systems provide low- or no-cost opportunities for these conditionally certified educators to fulfill their requirements for certification. The proposed MAT:EC program gives students access to a flexible, affordable, online program featuring quality mentorship to support them in learning pedagogical knowledge for teaching that they can apply immediately. Stevenson’s strong track record with the MAT:STEM program models innovation and supports teacher candidates to apply newly acquired knowledge and take instructional risks that move PreK-12 students forward.

In alignment with the 2022 State Plan’s “equity lens” and the Maryland Blueprint’s Early Childhood Education and High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders Pillars,<sup>16</sup> the proposed MAT:EC program (together with the extant MAT:STEM program) advances Stevenson’s efforts to diversify the teacher workforce and, in turn, expand access to high quality educators and leaders for PreK-12 students. The Blueprint’s Early Childhood Education pillar expands full-day PreK access in high poverty areas across the state, and increases the number of Judy Centers (Title 1 Community Centers) and other family support centers in Maryland. This expansion will, in turn, increase the demand for certified early childhood educators across the state, particularly in desert areas.

In support of student access and success and particularly relevant to students in Stevenson’s graduate-level teacher certification programs, the university’s efforts have included facilitating increased use of open educational resources (OER) at all levels of curriculum as well as inclusive access options for required texts through the University Store. Professional staff in the Center for Student Success, including the Office of Academic Advising and the Office of Accessibility & Disabilities Services, offer an array of services to all Stevenson students. Reports on Stevenson’s initiatives and support for the State’s completion goals are provided to MHEC annually<sup>17</sup>, demonstrating the University’s ongoing efforts to promote and implement policies and practices that ensure student success in close alignment with the 2022 State Plan goals.

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<sup>15</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (July 2022). *Waiver of COMAR 13A.12.01.11C Conditional Teacher Certificate*  
[https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabH13A.12.01.11CConditionalTeacherCertificate\(RequestForWaiverOfRenewal\).pdf](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabH13A.12.01.11CConditionalTeacherCertificate(RequestForWaiverOfRenewal).pdf)  
[https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabH13A.12.01.11CConditionalTeacherCertificate\(RequestForWaiverOfRenewal\).pdf](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabH13A.12.01.11CConditionalTeacherCertificate(RequestForWaiverOfRenewal).pdf)

<sup>16</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). (2022). *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future*.  
<https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/Overview.aspx>

<sup>17</sup> Maryland Higher Education Commission (December 2021). *Report on Best Practices and Annual Progress Toward the 55% Completion Goal*.

As referenced in the 2022 State Plan, Maryland has the fourth highest diversity index in the United States as of the 2020 census, with the District of Columbia a close fifth. According to the 2020 US Census report, Maryland showed the largest gain in diversity index of states in the top ten, increasing from 60.7% in 2010 to 67.3% in 2020.<sup>18</sup> In other words, the chance that two people chosen at random in Maryland will be from different racial or ethnic groups has increased to 67.3% in 2020 from 60.7% in 2010. These statistics, along with the data showing Maryland's population has grown over the last decade<sup>19</sup>, reinforce the importance of attending to matters of equity and access when considering academic programs for development.

At 44% total, Stevenson is home to the second most diverse student population among Maryland's independent colleges and universities, with only Washington Adventist reporting a larger percentage (over 60%) students of color.<sup>20</sup> **Forty-six percent (46%) of Stevenson's undergraduate students and 41% of graduate students self-identify as being part of a minority group, with 27% of the total student population identifying as Black or African American.**<sup>21</sup> The University's student demographics reflect approximately those of the state (see Table 1), and Stevenson is proud of its record as an accessible, affordable option for a diverse population of students.

In contrast, national data demonstrate that enrollment in teacher certification programs is predominantly white (65% in AY2018-2019).<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, according to 2021 data from MSDE, 71% of those who completed a traditional teacher education program in Maryland identified as white, while only 10% identified as Black/African American, 6% as Hispanic/Latino, and 6% as Asian. Enrollment and completion of alternative teacher preparation programs is only slightly more diverse, with 31% of 2021 completers identifying as Black/African American, 5% as Hispanic/Latino, and 8% as Asian.<sup>23</sup>

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<https://mhec.maryland.gov/publications/Documents/Research/AnnualReports/2021BestPractices.pdf> (accessed 10 October 2022).

<sup>18</sup> United States Census Bureau. *America Counts: Stories Behind the Numbers, 2020 Population More Racially and Ethnically Diverse than Measured in 2010*. "The Chance that Two People Chosen at Random are of Different Race or Ethnicity Groups has Increased Since 2010." <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/2020-united-states-population-more-racially-ethnically-diverse-than-2010.html> (accessed 10 October 2022).

<sup>19</sup> United States Census Bureau. *America Counts: Stories Behind the Numbers, STATE PROFILES: 2020 Census. MARYLAND: 2020 Census*. <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/maryland-population-change-between-census-decade.html> (accessed 10 October 2022).

<sup>20</sup> U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (accessed 13 October 2022).

<sup>21</sup> Stevenson University Portal, Factbook Fall 2021. All students. <https://now.stevenson.edu/depts/oira/Shared%20Documents/Fact%20Book/FACT%20BOOK%202021.pdf> (accessed 26 September 2022).

<sup>22</sup> National Center for Educational Statistics. Title II Reports. [https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/tables/ntps1718\\_ftable01\\_t1s.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/ntps/tables/ntps1718_ftable01_t1s.asp) (accessed 27 February 2023).

<sup>23</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (26 July 2022). *Maryland's Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*, briefing presented to the Maryland State Board of Education. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf> (accessed 27 February 2023).

Table 1. Selected national-level 2020 US Census results<sup>24</sup>

<b>Metric (2020)</b>	<b>National (USA)</b>	<b>Maryland</b>	<b>Stevenson<sup>a, 25</sup></b>
<b>Population</b>	Up 7.4% from 2010 to 331.4 million	Up 7% from 2010 to 6.2 million	3,454
<b>Race and Ethnicity</b>			
• White alone	61.6%	47.2%	52.0%
• Black alone	12.4%	29.1%	26.6%
• Hispanic	18.7	11.8%	8.8%
• Asian alone	6%	6.8%	3.5%
<b>Diversity Index</b>	61.1%	67.3%	
<b>Age</b>			
• Under 18 years old	Down 1.4%		
• Over 18 years old	Up 10.1%		

<sup>a</sup> When students self-identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native, Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander, and Two or more races, are added to the numbers shown in Table 1, a total of 44.6% of Stevenson students (undergraduate + graduate) are from diverse populations.

The diversity of Stevenson’s graduate student enrollments positions the proposed MAT:EC program to contribute to increasing diversity in teacher education. As illustrated in Table 2 below, the proportion of graduate students at Stevenson who identify as African American is substantially greater than the corresponding proportion at all but one of the non-HBI institutions listed with approximately 41% of our graduate students identifying as students of color and approximately 29% of our graduate students identifying as African American. The diversity of Stevenson’s graduate student population underscores our opportunity to contribute to diversifying the PreK-12 teacher workforce. Related, Stevenson’s program can also contribute to building a pipeline of diverse students for Maryland’s extant doctoral programs in education.

<sup>24</sup> United States Census Bureau. Census Infographics and Visualizations, Census Interactive Gallery. *Racial and Ethnic Diversity in the United States: 2010 Census and 2020 Census*. <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/racial-and-ethnic-diversity-in-the-united-states-2010-and-2020-census.html>. (accessed 05 October 2022).

<sup>25</sup> Stevenson University Portal, *Factbook Fall 2021 All Students*. <https://now.stevenson.edu/depts/oira/Shared%20Documents/Fact%20Book/FACT%20BOOK%202021.pdf> (accessed 26 September 2022).

Table 2. Proportion of Graduate Students Who Identify as African American at Maryland Universities<sup>26</sup>

Institution	Percentage of Graduate Students Who Identify as African-American
John Hopkins	8%
UMCP	9%
McDaniel College	9%
Hood College	11%
Salisbury University	13%
Towson University	13%
Frostburg State University	14%
UMBC	14%
UMB	17%
UMES	27%
<b>Stevenson</b>	<b>29%</b>
University of Baltimore	35%
Morgan State	60%
Bowie State	72%
Coppin State	73%

Clearly, and consistent with the 2022 State Plan goals, Stevenson is well-positioned to attract and educate a population of diverse MAT students and, by extension, to contribute to diversifying the teacher workforce.

### C. Quantifiable and Reliable Evidence and Documentation of Market Supply and Demand in the Region and State

#### 1. Describe potential industry or industries, employment opportunities, and expected level of entry (ex: mid-level management) for graduates of the proposed program.

The primary outcome of the MAT:EC program is to prepare students to become licensed PreK-3 teachers. Through the MAT:EC program, students have the opportunity to successfully complete the MSDE requirement of 27 semester hours of professional education coursework and internship experiences and become eligible to take the appropriate Praxis licensure exams. Students will earn MSDE PreK-3<sup>rd</sup> grade initial certification through successful completion of both the MAT:EC program and Praxis exams. Certified Early Childhood teachers are prepared to teach in public and private school and early childhood settings, direct early childhood programs, work in Judy Center Early Learning Centers located in every Maryland Title 1 School<sup>27</sup>, and support and advocate for families with young children.

<sup>26</sup> U.S. Department of Education. Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (accessed 07 November 2022).

<sup>27</sup> Maryland State Department of Education. (2022). Division of Early Childhood: Judy Center Learning Hubs. <https://earlychildhood.marylandpublicschools.org/families/judy-center-early-learning-hubs>

2. *Present data and analysis projecting market demand and the availability of openings in a job market to be served by the new program.*
3. *Discuss and provide evidence of market surveys that clearly provide quantifiable and reliable data on the educational and training needs and the anticipated number of vacancies expected over the next 5 years.*
4. *Provide data showing the current and projected supply of prospective graduates.*

Note: Given the overlap between the referenced topics, Stevenson is addressing C.2, C.3, and C.4 holistically in this section.

### **National**

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the national employment projections for preschool teachers are strong. As shown in Table 2, national employment opportunities for preschool teachers are anticipated to grow 15% in the next nine years, much faster than projected for other occupations. Employment for kindergarten and elementary teachers are expected to grow about 4%.

Table 2: National Employment Projections<sup>28, 29</sup>

Occupational Title	SOC Code	Employment 2021	Projected Employment 2031	Change 2021-2031	
				Percent	Numeric
<b>Preschool Teachers, except special education</b>	25-2011	483,100	556,000	15	72,900
<b>Elementary Teachers, except special education</b>	25-2021	1,362,300	1,417,100	4	54,900
<b>Kindergarten teachers, except special education</b>	25-2012	124,800	130,100	4	5,300

### **State**

At the state level, the employment projection for preschool teachers is dramatic, with a 40% increase expected by 2030. Projections for kindergarten and elementary teachers are also positive (hovering between 9% and 10%), and all are well above the national projections.

<sup>28</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook, Preschool Teachers.

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/preschool-teachers.htm#tab-6>

<sup>29</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook, Kindergarten and Elementary Teachers.

<https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/kindergarten-and-elementary-school-teachers.htm#tab-6>



Table 3: Maryland Employment Projections: Preschool, Kindergarten, and Elementary Teachers 2020-2030<sup>30</sup>

Occupational Title	2020	2030	Change	Percent Change
<b>Preschool Teachers, except special education</b>	10,280	14,465	4,175	40.61%
<b>Kindergarten Teachers</b>	2,716	2,993	277	10.20%
<b>Elementary Teachers, except special education</b>	29,205	31,896	2,691	9.21%

Maryland continues to struggle to prepare enough teachers to fill vacancies as the number of people completing a teacher-education program declined by almost a third. If every teacher prepared in Maryland in 2022 stayed to teach in Maryland, there would be still be 329 vacancies remaining. Of the approximately 2,000 Maryland teaching vacancies at the start of the 2022 school year, there were 358 early childhood and elementary vacancies representing approximately 19% of the total teacher vacancies in Maryland.<sup>31</sup>

The attrition of certified teachers exacerbates the demand. In the 2021-2022 school year, 10% of teachers did not return to teach from the prior school year. Attrition by school system varied with a low of 7% in Allegany and Cecil Counties to a high of 18% in Dorchester County.<sup>32</sup>

The Blueprint legislation, passed in 2021, is currently providing guidance to PreK-12 schools and the higher education community. The legislation includes comprehensive changes to Maryland’s early childhood education programs. Increasing education funding by \$3.8 billion each year over the next 10 years, the Blueprint will enrich student experiences, accelerate student outcomes and improve the overall quality of education in Maryland.<sup>33</sup> The Blueprint includes five pillars, two of which are of particular importance here:

- 1) Early Childhood Education
- 2) High Quality and Diverse Teachers and Leaders

The Early Childhood Education pillar expands full-day pre-kindergarten access in high poverty areas across the state and increases the number of Judy Early Education Centers (Title 1 Community Centers in Title 1 Schools) and other family support centers, thereby increasing the demand for certified early childhood educators. Both pillars describe the legislation to increase the number of highly qualified educators in early childhood. Specifically, the Blueprint

<sup>30</sup> Maryland Department of Labor. Maryland Occupational Projections – 2020 - 2030 – Workforce Information and Performance. <https://www.dlir.state.md.us/lmi/iandoproj/maryland.shtml>

<sup>31</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (26 July 2022). *Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*, briefing presented to the Maryland State Board of Education. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf> (accessed 27 February 2023).

<sup>32</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (26 July 2022). *Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*, briefing presented to the Maryland State Board of Education. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf> (accessed 27 February 2023).

<sup>33</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2022). *Blueprint for Maryland’s Future*. <https://blueprint.marylandpublicschools.org/>

legislation outlines increasing early childhood programs and services for 3-year-olds and 4-year-olds through both private providers and public schools in Talbot Counties and Baltimore City, offering mixed delivery PreK systems to five school systems (Garrett, Kent, Somerset, Talbot Counties, and Baltimore City), and providing universal PreK to all four-year-old students in those school systems. As shown in Table 5, if only one preschool teacher is added to each school in the school systems targeted in the Blueprint, a minimum of 136 new positions will be needed.

Table 5: Number of Elementary Schools by School System.

School System	Number of Elementary Schools
Baltimore City Public Schools	115
Garrett County Public Schools	8
Kent County Public Schools	3
Somerset County Public Schools	5
Talbot County Public Schools	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>

The Blueprint aims to support continued education of the current early childhood educator workforce by creating a pathway to success that supports individuals working in the early childhood field to pursue PreK-3 certification. There are currently 55,471 childcare workers in Maryland. Approximately 2,000 current early childhood teachers possess a bachelor’s degree in childcare or another related field, demonstrating a significant number of potential candidates without the required Early Childhood Education degree needed for certified teaching positions.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, the issuance of Conditional Certificates for those currently teaching has increased by 136% in Maryland over the last 5 years.<sup>35</sup> Currently, these conditionally certified teachers must earn initial teacher certification to continue teaching in Maryland.

Recognizing these urgent needs to address this shortage of qualified PreK teachers, federal money has been allocated to support school systems in sending their conditionally certified teachers through teacher certification programs such as the MAT:EC. Three federal COVID-relief bills passed in the last year, each of which includes funds for stabilizing schools through Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Funds (ESSER I, II, and III):

- Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act;
- Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act; and
- American Rescue Plan (ARP).

All three rounds of ESSER funds can be spent on any activity authorized by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act or Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, which include initiatives to improve teacher effectiveness and retention, advanced certification, professional

<sup>34</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2022). *Blueprint Deep Dive: Early Childhood Education*. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0426/BlueprintDeepDiveEarlyChildhoodEducation.pdf>

<sup>35</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (26 July 2022). *Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity*, briefing presented to the Maryland State Board of Education. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf> (accessed 27 February 2023).

development, and mentoring programs. School systems use this funding to pay for the courses conditionally certified teachers need to earn MSDE initial teacher certification. Similar to the partnerships Stevenson has cultivated with school systems for its for its MAT:STEM initial teacher certification program, multiple school systems have demonstrated interest in contracting with Stevenson University to develop cohorts for the proposed MAT:EC program. Cohorts are typically conditionally certified teachers, identified by the school system, who will work together in the same program, progress through the program together, and complete the degree together to become fully certified teachers in PreK–3.

Nearly all Maryland public school systems started the 2021-2022 school year with a greater number of teacher vacancies as compared to prior school years.<sup>36</sup> Across the state, there were nearly 2,000 educator vacancies. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 44% of public schools reported full-or part-time teaching vacancies at the start of the 2021-2022 school year.<sup>37</sup> Currently, there are 358 vacancies at the early childhood and elementary level in the state of Maryland. Maryland Educator Preparation Programs do not produce enough teachers to fill the state’s vacancies. As a result, conditional certificates in the State of Maryland have increased by 136% over the last 5 years.<sup>38</sup>

In summary, national and state level employment projections predict significant growth for Preschool Teachers over the next 9-10 years. Furthermore, MSDE data demonstrate that there are 358 openings for early childhood and elementary educators annually, indicating that the approximately 1,593 graduates<sup>39</sup> from existing teacher preparation programs are not enough to close the employment gap. The recent Blueprint legislation, with its emphasis on improving and expanding access to early childhood education, promises to increase the demand for skilled educators, particularly in early childhood. Stevenson’s program is well-positioned to meet this significant and growing need and to contribute to the diversity of the pipeline of early childhood educators.

#### **D. Reasonableness of Program Duplication**

- 1. Identify similar programs in the State and/or same geographical area. Discuss similarities and differences between the proposed program and others in the same degree to be awarded.***

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<sup>36</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2021). Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf>

<sup>37</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (March 2022)., U.S. Schools Report Increased Teacher Vacancies Due to COVID-19 Pandemic, New NCES Data Show. [https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press\\_releases/3\\_3\\_2022.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/whatsnew/press_releases/3_3_2022.asp)

<sup>38</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2021). Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf>

<sup>39</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2021). Maryland’s Teacher Workforce: Supply, Demand, and Diversity. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0726/TabGBBlueprintAndDataDeepDiveTeacherPipelineAndDiversity.pdf>

**There are no early childhood teacher certification programs offered fully online in the state of Maryland at this time.** The *Maryland Approved Programs Traditional Preparation Directory by Certification Areas* demonstrate the significant need for an online Early Childhood MAT program<sup>40</sup>. As shown in Tables 7, 8, and 9 below, there are eleven institutions that offer one or more degrees at the bachelor’s or master’s level that lead to certification for early childhood education<sup>41</sup>, either as a stand-alone certification or in combination with certification for elementary or special education. Two institutions offer Post-Baccalaureate Certificates (PBC). All of the existing programs meet MSDE requirements for teacher certification and are delivered in a *campus-based, in-person format*.

The proposed Stevenson MAT:EC program will be delivered *fully online*, which will expand access to conditionally certified teachers, those working in other fields, and those who recently graduated from an undergraduate program in another discipline. All extant early childhood programs are delivered in a face-to-face, campus-based format. Notre Dame of Maryland University and Bowie State University offer evenings/weekends options for early childhood education courses, but again, these are campus-based programs.

Table 7: Maryland Early Childhood Education Programs by Institution

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Delivery Modality</b>	<b>Degree/Certificate</b>
Coppin State University	PreK-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's
Hood College	PreK-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's, PBC
Salisbury University	PreK-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's
Stevenson University	PreK-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's
Towson University	PreK-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's, Master's
University of Maryland, Baltimore County	PreK-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's, Master's
University of Maryland, College Park	PreK-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's

<sup>40</sup> Maryland State Department of Education (July 2022). *Maryland Approved Programs Traditional Preparation Directory by Certification Areas*, [https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DEE/ProgramApproval/MAP/MAP Traditional Preparation Certification Areas June 2022.pdf](https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/about/Documents/DEE/ProgramApproval/MAP/MAP%20Traditional%20Preparation%20Certification%20Areas%20June%202022.pdf) (accessed 22 February 2023).

<sup>41</sup> Cambra, A. Director, Teacher Preparation and Program Approval. Email Communication. (August 2022).

Table 8: Maryland Early Childhood and Elementary Education by Institution

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Delivery Modality</b>	<b>Degree/Certificate</b>
Frostburg State University	PreK-3, 1-6	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's
Notre Dame of Maryland University	PreK-3, 1-6	Face-to-Face (some evenings and weekends)	Bachelor's, PBC, Master's
Salisbury University	PreK-3, 1-6	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's
St. Mary's College of Maryland	PreK-3, 1-6	Face-to-Face	Master's
Towson University	PreK-3, 1-6	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's

Table 9: Maryland Early Childhood Special Education (Infant/Primary) Education by Institution

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Delivery Modality</b>	<b>Degree/Certificate</b>
Bowie State University	PreK-3 Birth-3	Face-to-Face (some evenings and weekends)	Bachelor's
Notre Dame of Maryland University	PreK-3 Birth-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's, Master's
Towson University	PreK-3 Birth-3	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's
University of Maryland, College Park	PreK-3: 1-6	Face-to-Face	Bachelor's

Nationally, only six (6) institutions offer an online master's degree in early childhood education (see Table 10 below). All of these out-of-state programs lead to licensure in the state of the of the institution. Completers would be required to apply to Maryland and complete additional requirements in order to satisfy Maryland licensure regulations. The online degree from Grand Canyon University is advertised as an initial licensure but is an M.Ed., which would not satisfy Maryland initial licensure requirements. Stevenson's online program would satisfy all Maryland initial licensure requirements, including a four-course reading requirement not currently matched by other out-of-state initial licensure programs, and would not require additional requirements to be fulfilled to meet the state's standards.

Table 10. Out-of-State Early Childhood Education Programs by Institution

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Delivery Modality</b>	<b>Degree/Certificate</b>
Northwestern State (University of Louisiana)	PreK-3	Online	Master's
Eastern Michigan University	PreK-3	Online	Master's
Cumberland University (Tennessee)	PreK-3	Online	Master's
New Mexico State University	PreK-3	Online	Master's
Grand Canyon University	PreK-3	Online	(Advertises an M.Ed. in Early Childhood Education that leads to initial licensure.)
Northeastern (Illinois)	PreK-3	Online	Master's

Stevenson’s proposed MAT:EC would be Maryland’s **first and only fully online graduate education degree** that leads to initial certification in early childhood education. As such, it is well-positioned to meet the needs of the high number of conditionally certified teachers currently working in Maryland’s schools and address the significant and growing need for early childhood educators.

**2. Provide justification for the proposed program.**

As noted in Section C, the number of certified early childhood educators produced by existing programs is not sufficient to meet the current demand. Currently, there are 358 vacancies at the early childhood and elementary level in Maryland. These vacancies are associated with a 136% increase of issuances of conditional certificates over the last five years. In addition, the Maryland Blueprint legislation is expected to increase the number of early childhood positions in Title 1 Schools, escalating the need for highly qualified certified early childhood educators.

While other colleges and universities offer Early Childhood Certification through bachelor’s or master’s degrees, **no college or university in Maryland provides a fully online MAT:EC program that leads to licensure to teach Pre-kindergarten through third grade students.** The fully online format of the Stevenson MAT:EC program will support:

- career changers with non-education bachelor’s degrees,
- current working teachers holding conditional certification who require enrollment in an approved program,
- individuals working as paraprofessionals, substitutes, or long-term substitutes who want to pursue certification,
- school systems who are hiring those conditional teachers

Additionally, the Maryland State Board of Education Blueprint Deep Dive<sup>42</sup> calls for high staff qualifications, including state certification for teaching in Early Childhood Education. This is stated in their Prekindergarten Structural Elements, phased-in by FY2026. This element includes funding available for child care providers to earn a college degree in Early Childhood Education through The Child Care and Professional Development Fund (CCCPDF).

Stevenson University already has successful partnerships with school systems such as Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPS), through which conditionally certified teachers can earn full initial teacher certification in Secondary STEM subjects. We currently have three cohorts of conditionally certified teachers in the MAT: STEM program and the teacher candidates and school partners have provided positive feedback. BCPS and other Maryland school systems have demonstrated a high need for the same type of cohort in Early Childhood Education. We intend to pursue these agreements with school systems to meet the current and anticipated need for certified early childhood educators. These programs help ease the critical teacher shortage currently overwhelming many Maryland public schools. Stevenson University has a proven track record of collaboration and success with our current MAT:STEM students.

As an affordable online program, Stevenson’s program will provide access to students who lack proximity to a university providing graduate-level initial PreK-3 certification or students who are not able to enroll in one of the existing face-to-face programs due to work and family obligations. This aligns with the Maryland Blueprint Early Childhood Pillar<sup>43</sup> which promotes support of educating conditionally certified teachers, paraprofessionals, long-term substitute teachers and other potential teacher candidates working in non-related fields. The program is also well-positioned to develop cohort partnerships with high-need school systems.

As demonstrated in this section, Stevenson’s proposed program is not duplicative of any existing graduate teacher preparation program in Maryland, given that it would be the first and only fully online program. The online delivery of the program makes it accessible to a wide variety of students who are working and/or may be place-bound, thus it is well-positioned to expand access to education in the state. In this way, the MAT:EC program will help address the critical teacher shortage and meet the growing demand that is anticipated as the Blueprint legislation is fully implemented.

## **E. Relevance to High-demand Programs at Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)**

### **1. Discuss the program’s potential impact on the implementation or maintenance of high-demand programs at HBIs.**

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<sup>42</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2022). Blueprint Deep Dive: Early Childhood Education. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/stateboard/Documents/2022/0426/BlueprintDeepDiveEarlyChildhoodEducation.pdf>

<sup>43</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. (2022). Maryland Blueprint: Early Childhood Pillar. <https://www.marylandpublicschools.org/Blueprint/Pages/ECE.aspx>

In Section D, Stevenson demonstrated that no college or university in the State of Maryland offers a fully online MAT:EC program.

Stevenson University fully acknowledges the historical and current effects of discrimination that have had a negative impact on academic program development at Maryland’s Historically Black Institutions (HBIs). We therefore recognize and embrace the critical importance of the program review process as a means to ensure equity of opportunity and prevent unreasonable program duplication.

For this reason, we acknowledge here the four HBIs offering education programs leading to teacher certification in the state of Maryland: Bowie State University, Coppin State University, Morgan State University, and the University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES). Two of the HBIs, Bowie State University and Coppin State University, offer early childhood education degrees at the bachelor’s level, while Morgan State University and UMES offer Master of Arts in Teaching degrees (see Table 11). **Stevenson’s proposed online MAT:EC does not duplicate any program offered by a Maryland HBI due to differences in modality, student population, and/or certification area.**

Table 11: Early Childhood Teacher Certification Programs at Maryland HBIs

Institution	Level	Delivery Modality	Degree
Bowie State University	PreK-3 Birth – age 3	Face-to-Face Some evenings and weekends.	Bachelor’s
Coppin State University	PreK-3 Birth – age 5	Face-to-Face Online	Bachelor’s
Morgan State University	K-12, various subjects	Face-to-Face	MAT
University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES)	K-12, various subjects	Face-to-Face	MAT

The MAT degrees offered at Morgan State University and UMES are campus-based, in contrast to the proposed program which is fully online. Further, Morgan State University’s and UMES’s programs focus on specific content areas and do not lead to certification of early childhood educators below the kindergarten level, while the proposed program will prepare students to be generally certified to the pre-kindergarten level. Thus, Stevenson’s MAT:EC program is not duplicative of programs at Morgan State University or UMES.

Bowie State University and Coppin State University both offer programs at the bachelor degree level which lead to certification of early childhood educators. Because these programs are offered only at the bachelor degree level, Stevenson’s program is not duplicative, however we address the specific differences between Stevenson’s proposed MAT:EC and all of the education programs at Bowie State University and Coppin State University below.



Bowie State University offers three bachelor’s degree programs and three master’s degree programs in education, only one of which (BS in Early Childhood Education) prepares certified early childhood educators (Table 12). In addition to not having any graduate level early childhood education programs, the majority of Bowie State University’s education programs are delivered in person, in contrast to Stevenson’s proposed fully online MAT:EC. The only online education program offered by Bowie State University is the M.Ed. in Reading Education, which prepares already certified teachers to become Reading Specialists in grades K-12. This is in contrast to the proposed program, which prepares students for initial teacher certification in grades PreK-3. **Given that Bowie State University does not offer a graduate level early childhood education degree program and the majority of programs offered by Bowie State University are campus-based, Stevenson’s proposed program does not duplicate and will not cause harm to the implementation and maintenance of the education programs at Bowie State University.**

Table 12: Bowie State University Programs

<b>Program</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Certification</b>	<b>Delivery</b>
BS: Early Childhood Education	Initial teacher certification	PreK-3	Face-to-Face
BS: Elementary Education	Initial teacher certification	Grades 1-6	Face-to-Face
BS: Secondary Education	Initial teacher certification, various subjects	Grades 7-12 (English, History, Dance, Mathematics, Science)	Face-to-Face
MAT: Elementary Education Track	Initial teacher certification	Grades 1-6	Face-to-Face
MAT: Secondary Education Track	Initial teacher certification, various subjects	Grades 7-12 (English, History, Mathematics, and Science)	Face-to-Face

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<sup>44</sup> Bowie State University. (2022). College of Education. <https://www.bowiestate.edu/academics/colleges/college-of-education/>

M.Ed.: Reading Education	Certification of teachers as Reading Specialists	K-12	Online
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Coppin State University<sup>45</sup>

Coppin State University offers four Bachelor of Science degrees leading to initial teacher certification in Early Childhood Education, Early Childhood Human Development, Elementary Education, and Special Education (Table 13). With the exception of the Early Childhood Human Development degree, which is offered online, all of Coppin State University’s bachelor’s degree education programs are offered in a face-to-face format. In addition to being at the bachelor’s degree level, the Early Childhood Human Development program prepares students for certification to teach birth to age 5, distinct from Stevenson’s proposed graduate program which focuses on Prek-3 certification. At the master’s level, Coppin State University offers an MAT in Elementary Education, and a M.Ed. in Special Education, neither of which focus on early childhood education. Additionally, the M.Ed. in Special Education is not an initial certification program. Both of Coppin State University’s master’s level education programs are offered in a face-to-face format, in contrast to Stevenson’s fully online program.

**Given that Coppin State University does not offer a program specifically focused on early childhood education at the master’s level and the graduate education programs offered at Coppin State University are campus-based programs targeted to different populations of students, Stevenson’s proposed online MAT:EC does not duplicate and will not have any adverse impact on the implementation or maintenance of Coppin State University’s education programs.**

Table 13: Coppin State University Programs

Program	Purpose	Certification	Delivery
BS: Early Childhood Education	Initial teacher certification	PreK-Grade 3	Face-to-Face
BS: Early Childhood Human Development	Initial teacher certification	Birth-5	Online
BS: Elementary Education	Initial teacher certification	Grades 1-6	Face-to-Face
BS: Special Education	Initial teacher certification	Grades 1-8	Face-to-Face
MAT: Elementary Education	Initial teacher certification	Grades 1-6	Face-to-Face

<sup>45</sup> Coppin State University. (2022). School of Education. <https://www.coppin.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/college-arts-sciences-and-education/school-education>

M.Ed.: Special Education	Certification of teachers as Special Education Generalists	Grades 1-8	Face-to-Face
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## Summary

In summary, Stevenson’s proposed program does not duplicate the early childhood education programs at Bowie State University and Coppin State University because these programs are delivered in person and enroll students who have not yet earned a bachelor’s degree. At the master’s level, Bowie State University and Coppin State University both offer MAT degrees leading to initial teacher certification. However, the Bowie State University and Coppin State University programs prepare students to work with different age-group populations and meet different state requirements for teacher education. Additionally, these MAT programs are delivered in person. Stevenson’s MAT:EC is a fully online program that will prepare students to teach pre-kindergarten through third grade and therefore it does not duplicate graduate education programs at Bowie State University or Coppin State University. **Thus, the proposed program is not duplicative and will not have any negative impact on the implementation or maintenance of education programs at either Bowie State University or Coppin State University.**

### **F. Relevance to the identity of Historically Black Institutions (HBIs)**

#### **1. Discuss the program’s potential impact on the uniqueness and institutional identities and missions of HBIs.**

As noted above, Stevenson University fully and respectfully acknowledges the historical and current effects of discrimination that have had a negative impact on academic program development at Maryland’s Historically Black Institutions (HBIs). We therefore recognize and embrace the critical importance of the program review process as a means to ensure equity of opportunity and to prevent adverse effects on Historically Black Institutions.

None of the HBIs in Maryland offer a fully online Master of Arts in Teaching: Early Childhood degree. For this reason, the proposed program is not anticipated to have any impact on the uniqueness, institutional identity, or mission of our state’s Historically Black Institutions.

As noted in Section E (Table 11), two HBIs, Bowie State University and Coppin State University offer undergraduate, campus-based early childhood education programs leading to teacher certification in the state of Maryland. The online MAT: EC will not compete with these programs as this program is for students who have a bachelor’s degree in another area and wish to pursue teacher certification.

### **G. Adequacy of Curriculum Design, Program Modality, and Related Learning Outcomes (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.10)**

#### **1. Describe how the proposed program was established, and also describe the faculty who will oversee the program.**

According to the Maryland State Department of Education, there is a *significant need* for initial teacher certification programs in the state of Maryland. Based on Stevenson University's experience and success with the Bachelor of Science in Early Childhood Education and the MAT:STEM, coupled with the 100% job placement rate in both programs, it is evident that Stevenson University is well-positioned to fulfill the strong demand for a fully online MAT in Early Childhood that supports the increased demand for certified teachers. The proposed program will focus on theory, research, and the translation of those ideas to teaching practices in field-based experiences. Coursework will integrate best practices for teaching early childhood learners with a multilingual focus.

Institutional assessment and planning processes have informed the ongoing refinement and expansion of the portfolio of academic options available to Stevenson University students and have driven interest in identifying new academic programs that align with Stevenson University's career-focused mission. Cognizant of the enrollment trends noted in the 2022 State Plan, our strategic planning efforts include serving career-preparation through graduate-level academic programs.

The program will be overseen by the Graduate Program Director who reports to the Associate Dean, School of Education and also oversees the MAT:STEM program. Courses in the MAT:EC program will be taught by existing full-time and adjunct faculty in the School of Education as outlined in Section I. All full-time faculty have a doctorate in an appropriate field and have professional experience in teaching. Adjunct faculty hold master's degrees and doctorates in education and education-related fields and are practicing teachers in classroom settings. Teacher Candidates will also be supported in field-based experiences and internship by University Mentors who are former classroom teachers. These faculty and mentors will meet regularly to discuss curriculum, advising, field placements, assessment, and certification to ensure that students are successfully advancing through the program. The Program Director and Associate Dean hold 12-month appointments to ensure program continuity during the summer. Faculty also collaborate with Stevenson's Admissions department on program recruitment. Both the Program Director and Associate Dean regularly meet with the Senior Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs and Research and the Dean of Stevenson University Online and Vice Provost for Online Learning to discuss program development and needs.

***2. Describe educational objectives and learning outcomes appropriate to the rigor, breadth, and (modality) of the program.***

The educational objectives and learning outcomes have been designed to fully align with or exceed the requirements of the Maryland State Department of Education. Students enrolled in the MAT: EC must complete 27 credits in child development, human learning, teaching methodology, special education, assessment of students, processes and

acquisitions of reading, reading instruction, and reading assessment, mathematics instruction, and complete a teaching experience in one of the following ways.<sup>46</sup>

- (a) A supervised experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school setting at the prekindergarten or kindergarten and primary age/grade level; or
- (b) 1 year of successful full-time teaching experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school setting at the prekindergarten, kindergarten, or primary age/grade level.

### *Educational Objectives*

1. To prepare students to become culturally responsive early childhood educators.
2. To foster the ability to effectively use educational research and pedagogical content knowledge to design and implement instruction.
3. To promote respect and appreciation for diverse backgrounds and enable students to create equitable and safe learning environments for all learners.
4. To facilitate equitable assessment practices to inform instructional decision-making that supports student success.
5. To promote professionalism, integrity, inquiry, reflection, and active engagement in the profession.

### *Learning Outcomes*

Upon successful completion of the MAT: EC, students will be able to demonstrate foundational skills and competencies in the following areas:

1. Apply knowledge of discipline content and content-related pedagogy to design and implement effective instruction for all learners.
2. Use knowledge of diverse learner to design instruction and create a culturally responsive, equitable environment to support achievement for all learners.
3. Design and implement instruction that engages students, encourages student participation, promotes higher-level thinking, and supports instructional outcomes.
4. Design and implement assessment that monitors student learning, provides purposeful feedback on progress, and furnishes evidence to inform instruction.
5. Reflect on teaching, collaborate in a professional learning community, seek professional development opportunities, engage in inquiry, persist toward goals, and exhibit integrity and professionalism.

### **3. Explain how the institution will:**

- a) provide for assessment of student achievement of learning outcomes in the program**
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<sup>46</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. COMAR 13A.12.02.03. 03 Certification in Early Childhood Education.

***b) document student achievement of learning outcomes in the program***

Assessment and documentation of student achievement of learning outcomes will occur according to institutional and departmental assessment processes. General graduate program outcomes for each course level (600, 700, 800) have been defined as part of the curriculum development process, and these graduate level student learning outcomes are directly aligned to the program outcomes and will inform the development and evaluation of course level outcomes. The course level definitions and alignment matrices are reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Faculty Council, Assessment Coordinator, Deans' Council, and Provost as part of the institution's new course proposal process to ensure that all course content supports the achievement of program outcomes. Following the institutional assessment process, student achievement of program learning outcomes will be assessed on an annual basis, with a subset of program outcomes and/or courses being assessed on a rotating basis each year.

*Graduate Course Level Outcomes*

600-level: At this level, students are learning content and theory as well as basic skills, practices, and concepts for further graduate study and working in clinical placements if not employed as a teacher with a conditional certificate.

700-level: At this level, students are moving to more complex topics and sociocultural factors and beginning to apply the skills, practices, and theories from 600-level courses and working in clinical placements if not employed as a teacher with a conditional certificate.

800-level: At this level, students are working in clinical placements applying the skills used in previous coursework, analyzing and reflecting on their clinical practice, and providing feedback to others.

Documentation and evaluation of student achievement of learning outcomes is part of the institution's assessment process. Following an established five-year assessment cycle, student artifacts are collected from specific courses at all levels of the program. Artifacts are scored by discipline faculty, in consultation with the Assessment Coordinator, to determine the level of student achievement of learning outcomes. Data are then analyzed and appropriate changes to the program are made as needed based on the results.

The Stevenson School of Education is engaged in collecting, analyzing, and revising assessment data in a continuous improvement cycle as they maintain state approved programs and seek National Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation Accreditation (AAQEP).

***4. Provide a list of courses with title, semester credit hours and course descriptions, along with a description of program requirements.***

Students in the MAT:EC program will meet all MSDE COMAR regulations and program requirements, including the completion of a credit-bearing internship. Per COMAR 13B.02.03.24.K, "An institution may award a Master's Degree for successful completion of at

least 30 credit hours or the equivalent of graduate-level courses.”<sup>47</sup> In addition, the licensure COMAR 13a.12.02.03. Certification in Early Childhood Education (Prekindergarten—Grade 3) regulations include 27 semester hours of professional education course work taken at an IHE, including a course in each of the following at the appropriate age or grade level: (a) Child development; (b) Human learning; (c) Teaching methodology; (d) Inclusion of special needs student populations; (e) Assessment of students; (f) Processes and acquisition of reading skills; (g) Best practices in reading instruction that include the cuing systems of graphophonics, semantics, and syntactics; (h) Use of reading assessment data to improve instruction; and (i) Materials for teaching reading to gain literary experience, to perform a task, and to read for information; and complete a teaching experience in one of the following ways:

(a) A supervised experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school setting at the prekindergarten or kindergarten and primary age/grade level; or

(b) 1 year of successful full-time teaching experience in a public or accredited nonpublic school setting at the prekindergarten, kindergarten, or primary age/grade level.”<sup>48</sup> The MAT:EC program will follow all graduate program policies outlined in the Stevenson University Catalog.

Table 16: MAT: EC Program Requirements

Course Prefix	Course Name	Credits	Semester	Year	MSDE Requirement
ED 506	Psychology and Development of Young Children	3	Fall (8-week 1)	1	X
ED 570	Early Childhood Curriculum Principles and Practice	3	Fall (8-week 2)	1	X
ED 530	Processes and Acquisition of Reading Literacy	3	Spring (8-week 1)	1	X
ED 572	Principles of Special Education for Early Childhood	3	Spring (8-week 2)	1	X

<sup>47</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. COMAR 13B.02.03.24.K Degree Programs.

<sup>48</sup> Maryland State Board of Education. COMAR 13A.12.02.03. 03 Certification in Early Childhood Education.



ED 571	Principles of Assessment for Early Childhood	3	Summer (8-week 1)	1	X
ED 631	Instruction of Reading Literacy	3	Summer (8-week 2)	1	X
ED 618	Methods for Teaching Mathematics to Early Childhood Learner	3	Fall (8-week 1)	2	
ED 665	Materials for Reading Literacy	3	Fall (8-week 2)	2	X
ED 610	Assessment of Reading Literacy	3	Spring (8-week 1)	2	X
ED 622	Teaching Multilingual Learners	3	Spring (8-week 2)	2	
ED 715	Internship	3	Spring (Semester)	2	X
ED 725	Capstone Early Childhood Educators	3	Spring (Semester)	2	X
<b>Total</b>			<b>36 credits</b>		

### **Course Descriptions**

#### **ED 512 Psychology and Development of Young Children (3 credits)**

Focuses on theories and research, as well as their application to young child development from conception to age 8. Concentrated attention is given to the physical, cognitive, and social/personality areas of growth.

#### **ED 570 Early Childhood Curriculum Principles and Practice**

Provides theoretical and practical introduction to an understanding of the teaching-learning process from an early childhood perspective. The topics discussed in this course include the role of teacher, planning, and cultivating a positive student environment.

#### **ED 530 Processes and Acquisition of Reading Literacy**

Provides teacher candidates with an understanding of the reading acquisition process through observation and analysis of reading and written language development and the study of current

issues in reading research. The course is organized around current, accepted, research-based theoretical models that account for individual differences in reading. Introduction to language structures, including spoken syllables, phonemes, graphemes, and morphemes is included in this course. Candidates apply knowledge of the core areas of language to reading acquisition in terms of first and second language learners, typical development and exceptionalities.

**ED 572 Principles of Special Education for Early Childhood**

Provides background in special education principles for the classroom teacher. This course includes information on the requirements of specific disabilities, and how to adapt the curriculum, environment, and assessment to meet the needs of young children with special needs. Teacher candidates examine state and federal legislation and survey-related services and resources.

**ED 571 Principles of Assessment**

Introduces principles and practices of educational assessment for early childhood students. Teacher candidates examine a variety of assessments, with an emphasis on performance-based assessment, and formative assessment.

**ED 631 Instruction of Reading Literacy**

Focuses on the fundamentals of research-based best practices and provides familiarity with a representative array of instructional techniques and strategies in the area of reading for young learners. Teacher candidates learn instructional routines and techniques to address the five major components of reading instruction (phonological and phonemic awareness; phonics, spelling and word study; fluency development; vocabulary; and comprehension) suitable for various age and ability groups. Attention is given to differentiated instruction.

**ED 618 Methods for Teaching Mathematics**

Focuses on methods, materials, and procedures to help children learn number meanings and relationships. This course examines organization of mathematics content, lesson preparation, and the use of instructional materials that help children understand the number system and early childhood mathematical concepts.

**ED 665 Materials for Reading Literacy**

Assists teacher candidates in the selection and evaluation of materials for teaching reading to early childhood learners and related skills that are consistent with the findings of scientifically based reading research. Candidates demonstrate an understanding of research-supported programs, approaches and methods, and address different levels of reading proficiency within a classroom to enable students to become strategic, fluent, and independent readers. Candidates are prepared to involve parents and members of the school and surrounding community to promote daily reading inside and outside of school.

**ED 610 Assessment for Reading Literacy**

Assists teacher candidates in becoming proficient consumers and users of classroom-based assessments and assessment data. In this course, instruction focuses on building a knowledge of how to administer and use several valid, reliable, research-based formal and informal assessments of reading and related skills. Teacher candidates also learn how to effectively

interpret the results of assessments, and how to communicate assessment results in a variety of contexts. Candidates demonstrate that they can use assessment data to guide instructional decisions.

**ED 622 Teaching Multilingual Learners**

Equips teacher candidates with a wide range of instructional strategies to assist multilingual students in accessing content-specific language, comprehending complex texts, and demonstrating their knowledge and ideas in ways that leverage students' strengths. This course supports teacher candidates in utilizing an asset-based perspective in their work with multilingual students, students' families, and the communities in which students live and supports teacher candidates in engaging the families and communities of multilingual students by valuing their linguistic capital in the classroom.

**ED 715 Early Childhood Internship**

Provides full-time classroom experience in a PreK-3 school classroom. Includes responsibility for all aspects of teaching, including planning and implementing the curriculum on both a long-term and daily basis. Candidates complete 75 days of clinical experience in a school as a course requirement. Co-requisite: Capstone Seminar.

**ED 725 Early Childhood Capstone**

Synthesizes contemporary issues in education and the theory and practice of teaching, with emphasis on classroom management, communication, curriculum planning, assessment, and special education. Co-requisite: Internship.

**5. *Discuss how general education requirements will be met, if applicable.***

This item is not applicable because the proposed program is at the master's level.

**6. *Identify any specialized accreditation or graduate certification requirements for this program and its students.***

All current Stevenson School of Education programs are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. Upon approval by MHEC, this program will be submitted for approval to the MSDE. Additionally, the university will seek accreditation of this program from the Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation (AAQEP) Association, along with all other education programs at the university.

**7. *If contracting with another institution or non-collegiate organization, provide a copy of the written contract.***

Stevenson University is not contracting with another institution or non-collegiate organization to deliver the proposed program.

**8. *Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the proposed program will provide students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system,***

***availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.***

Information regarding curriculum, course and degree requirements, and program policies will be available via the Stevenson University Graduate Catalog. Each student will be able to access the learning management system (Blackboard), academic support services, financial aid resources, and student accounts information via the University website as well as the secure internal SU Portal (login required). Information about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, and faculty/student interaction will be provided in program marketing materials as well as throughout the admissions process.

Information about program costs, financial aid services, and payment policies will also be made available in program materials, including the external website and Admissions communications, and targeted information sessions will be held for students during the application process.

Once accepted into the program, each student will be paired with a faculty student success coach who will follow the student throughout the program and assist with all registration needs as well as either answer questions or put the student in contact with the individual who will provide clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.

Stevenson assures that the proposed MAT:EC program will provide students with clear, complete, and timely information on the curriculum, course and degree requirements, nature of faculty/student interaction, assumptions about technology competence and skills, technical equipment requirements, learning management system, availability of academic support services and financial aid resources, and costs and payment policies.

***9. Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials will clearly and accurately represent the proposed program and the services available.***

The University website plays a significant role in program advertising and recruiting and includes information on academic requirements, admissions criteria and deadlines, and financial aid, among other relevant topics. The Academic Affairs Division works closely with the Office of Admissions and Office of Marketing and Digital Communications to develop and maintain program-specific marketing and recruiting materials and ensure that both the website and printed materials clearly and accurately represent the proposed program and services available.

Stevenson assures that advertising, recruiting, and admissions materials will clearly and accurately represent the proposed MAT program and the services available. We will ensure compliance with MSDE's requirements.

## H. Adequacy of Articulation

1. *If applicable, discuss how the program supports articulation with programs at partner institutions. Provide all relevant articulation agreements.*

This section is not applicable because the proposed program is a master's degree program.

## I. Adequacy of Faculty Resources (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.11).

1. *Provide a brief narrative demonstrating the quality of program faculty. Include a summary list of faculty with appointment type, terminal degree title and field, academic title/rank, status (full-time, part-time, adjunct) and the course(s) each faculty member will teach in the proposed program.*

Courses in the proposed MAT:EC program will be taught by existing full-time and adjunct faculty in the School of Education (Table 17). All faculty have appropriate earned credentials for their rank and the areas in which they teach. The faculty include full and part-time faculty who currently teach in the undergraduate early childhood education program or in the graduate programs. Every faculty member listed has extensive experience teaching in K-12 school settings, mentoring teacher candidates in field-based settings, and facilitating learning experiences in various higher education contexts.

Table 17 Stevenson Faculty

Faculty	Degree/Field	Rank	Courses
Beth Kobett	EdD, Entrepreneurial Leadership	Professor, Associate Dean (Full-time)	ED 618: Methods for Teaching Mathematics to Early Childhood Learners
Lisa Moyer	PhD, Curriculum and Instruction	Assistant Professor, Graduate Program Director (Full-time)	ED 725: Early Childhood Capstone
David Nicholson	PhD, Curriculum and Instruction	Professor (Full-time)	ED 715: Internship
Robert Pelton	EdD	Professor (Full-time)	ED 715: Early Childhood Internship
Jesse Schneiderman	EdD, Urban Leadership	Assistant Professor (Full-time)	ED 571: Principles of Assessment
Valerie Valdez	PhD, Teacher Education	Assistant Professor (Full-time)	ED 610: Assessment for Reading Literacy, ED 631: Instruction for Reading Literacy, ED 665: Materials for Reading Literacy, ED 622: Teaching Multilingual Learners

Barbara Lutz	MS, Reading Specialist	Adjunct Professor (Part-time)	ED 530: Processes and Acquisition of Reading Literacy, ED 570: Curriculum, Principles, and Practices
Kelsie Rites	M.Ed., Special Education: Autism	Adjunct Instructor (Part-time)	ED 572: Special Education for Early Childhood
Khadeeja Shafi	M.S., Community Based Leadership	Adjunct Instructor (Part-time)	ED 506: Early Childhood Development, ED 270: Curriculum Principles and Practices for Early Childhood, Internship
D'Andrea Jacobs	PhD, Educational Psychology, NCSP	Adjunct Instructor (Part-time)	ED 506: Early Childhood Development
Maya Lars	M.Ed., Reading Specialist	Adjunct Instructor (Part-time)	ED 610: Assessment for Reading Literacy, ED 631: Instruction for Reading Literacy

- 2. Demonstrate how the institution will provide ongoing pedagogy training for faculty in evidenced-based best practices, including training in:**
- a) pedagogy that meets the needs of the students**
  - b) the learning management system**
  - c) evidence-based best practices for distance education, if distance education is offered.**

Faculty Professional Development at Stevenson University is under the purview of the Zirkin Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (ZCETL) which integrates Stevenson’s ZCETL Faculty Teaching Fellows, ZCETL Faculty Librarian, and the Instructional Design Team. The Faculty Fellows, Faculty Librarian, and the Instructional Designers prepare and implement faculty relevant and responsive programming throughout the academic year on topics such as inclusive pedagogy, promoting student engagement and learning, teaching writing across the disciplines, and creative assignment design. In addition, appropriate learning opportunities, such as multi-level training on the Blackboard learning management system and best practices for online course presentations are offered on an ongoing basis. In summer 2020, all full-time and part-time faculty completed two required professional development modules that prepared them to adapt their courses to fit a range of modalities—face-to-face, hybrid, and online—and ensured that all faculty understood federal requirements for regular and substantive interactions in online courses. This professional development module is now required of all new campus-based faculty upon hire. Biannual faculty in-service meetings include faculty development sessions led by faculty as well as by staff and administrators from across campus (example: Campus Wellness Center), and include a range of resources for evidence-based best practices in pedagogy are available via the Zirkin Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning Portal page (login required). Discipline-specific faculty development programming is also offered within individual Schools and Departments. In addition, faculty have access to professional development funds to support attendance at professional meetings that include pedagogy workshops and presentation on the scholarship of learning and teaching.

## **J. Adequacy of Library Resources (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.12)**

- 1. Describe the library resources available and/or the measures to be taken to ensure resources are adequate to support the proposed program.***

Library resources at Stevenson University are available through the library's webpage and at three campus locations: Greenspring, Owings Mills, and Owings Mills North.<sup>49</sup> Currently, a new library space is under construction at Owings Mills North with a planned opening in fall 2023, which will provide additional space for library collections and archives as well as individual and group study areas. This new building will also include instructional space and space for library events.

In addition to the print and e-resource materials related to their program, MAT: EC students will be provided research guides, tutorials, and other learning tools created and maintained by the Library. These resources will help MAT: EC students develop research skills and become proficient consumers of discipline-specific literature. The Stevenson University Library provides access to extensive physical and electronic collections through the library's website and at three physical locations. Library databases with educational content include Academic Search Complete

APA PsychINFO, Chronical of Higher education, EBSCO eBook Academic Collection, Education Source, ERIC, Kanopy, Proquest Ebook Central. Over 600 scholarly journals devoted to education are part of SU's journal collection including *Journal of Teacher Education*, *Educational Researcher*, *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, *Learning and Instruction*, *Child Development*, *Race, Ethnicity, and Education*, and *Reading Research Quarterly*. Additional print materials and/or electronic subscriptions will also be purchased as needed.

The interlibrary loan program uses a dedicated courier service which facilitates sharing educational materials among college campuses in the Baltimore/Washington area. In addition, students have borrowing privileges through Stevenson's partnership with the Baltimore Area Library and MICUA Consortia.

Individual help is available for students who visit the Library, or by telephone, email, text, or chat service. Professional staff members are available to answer questions when the Library is open, as well as during evenings and weekends, and online tools (tutorials, videos, research guides) will enable MAT: EC students with reference questions to access resources 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

## **K. Adequacy of Physical Facilities, Infrastructure and Instructional Equipment (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.13)**

- 1. Provide an assurance that physical facilities, infrastructure and instruction equipment are adequate to initiate the program, particularly as related to spaces for classrooms, staff and faculty offices, and laboratories for studies in the technologies and sciences.***

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<sup>49</sup> The SU Library webpage can be found at: <https://stevenson.libguides.com/stevensonlibrary> (accessed 26 September 2022).

The MAT: EC is an online program; therefore, physical, campus-based classroom facilities are not needed for implementation. There is adequate existing space for faculty offices and program events, so no new physical facilities are needed.

Stevenson University has been delivering academic programs online since 2009 and has in place the technology infrastructure, equipment, and software necessary to support the implementation and delivery of this fully online program.

2. ***Provide assurance and any appropriate evidence that the institution will ensure students enrolled in and faculty teaching in distance education will have adequate access to:***
  - a) ***An institutional electronic mailing system, and***
  - b) ***A learning management system that provides the necessary technological support for distance education***

Students and faculty in the proposed MAT:EC program will have adequate access to an institutional electronic mailing system and related collaboration tools via Office 365, as well as to a learning management system that provides the necessary technological support for distance education. As noted in Section K.1, Stevenson has been successfully delivering online academic degree programs for nearly 15 years.

Stevenson University uses Blackboard as its learning management system (LMS) and has made a major upgrade to the platform in 2023. All media or other course production equipment necessary for the development of the program is also currently in place. Blackboard is supported by the Learning Technologies and Instructional Design (LTID) team and the Office of Information Technology (OIT).

In addition to the necessary technological support for the use of Blackboard just noted, Stevenson provides additional resources to faculty for optimizing use of the LMS. Workshops, webinars, and individual consultations are available to all faculty and are provided regularly as part of Stevenson's faculty development programming and services through the Zirkin Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning.

#### **L. Adequacy of Financial Resources with Documentation (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.14)**

1. ***Complete [Table 1: Resources and Narrative Rationale](#). Provide finance data for the first five years of program implementation. Enter figures into each cell and provide a total for each year. Also provide a narrative rationale for each resource category. If resources have been or will be reallocated to support the proposed program, briefly discuss the sources of those funds.***

#### **Resources: Narrative Rationale**

The first class of students is anticipated to enroll in Fall 2023. Stevenson University's MAT: STEM program has demonstrated strong retention at or near 100%; nonetheless, for budgeting purposes, year-to-year retention has been conservatively estimated at 90%. Based on our



experience with the MAT:STEM program, cohort size for the MAT:EC has been conservatively estimated at 9 students.

**Reallocated Funds (Row 1):**

The University does not anticipate the need to reallocate funds to support the proposed program.

**Tuition/Fee Revenue (Row 2):**

Row 2 reflects the projected total revenue from credit-hour tuition for the first five years of program implementation. For each column, the number in the cell in this row represents the sum of the numbers in Rows 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, 2e, 2f, and 2g (i.e.  $\text{Row 2a} + \text{2b} + \text{2c} + \text{2d} + \text{2e} + \text{2f} + \text{2g} = \text{Row 2 subtotal}$ ).

Row 2a (number of full-time students): No full-time students will enroll in the program, which is reflected by the number zero (0) in each cell in this row.

Row 2b (annual tuition/fee rate): Because no full-time students will enroll in this program, there is no annual full-time tuition, which is reflected by the number 0 in each cell in this row.

Row 2c (annual full-time revenue): Since no full-time students will enroll in this program, no full-time tuition revenue is projected, which is reflected by the number zero (0) in each cell in this row.

Row 2d (number of part-time students): Enrollment is projected based on admitting a cohort of 9 students each year and a 10% attrition rate.

Row 2e (credit hour rate): The credit hour rate for online graduate education programs is \$495 per credit.

Row 2f (annual credit hours): Each student will enroll in 18 credits per year. For each column, the number in the cell in this row represents the product of the number in 2d (number of part-time students) and 18 (the number of credits taken).

Row 2g (total part-time revenue): For each column, the number in the cell in this row represents the product of the numbers in Row 2e and 2f (i.e.  $\text{Row 2e} \times \text{2f} = \text{2g}$ ).

**Grants, Contracts, and Other External Sources (Row 3):** The University does not anticipate receiving funds from grants, contracts, or other external sources at this time, which is represented by the number zero (0) in each cell.

**Other Sources (Row 4):** There are no additional sources of revenue for the proposed program at this time, which is represented by the number zero (0) in each cell.

**Total (Last Row):** For each column, the number in the cell in this row represents the sum of the numbers in Rows 1, 2, 3, and 4, providing a total figure for program resources (i.e. Row 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = Total).

Table 18: Program Resources: MAT: EC

<b>TABLE 1: RESOURCES:</b>					
<b>Resource Categories</b>	<b>Year 1</b>	<b>Year 2</b>	<b>Year 3</b>	<b>Year 4</b>	<b>Year 5</b>
1. Reallocated Funds	0	0	0	0	0
2. Tuition/Fee Revenue (c + g below)	\$80,910	\$151,470	\$151,470	\$151,470	\$151,470
a. Number of F/T Students	0	0	0	0	0
b. Annual Tuition/Fee Rate	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
c. Total F/T Revenue (a x b)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
d. Number of P/T Students	9	17	17	17	17
e. Credit Hour Rate	\$495	\$495	\$495	\$495	\$495
f. Annual Credit Hour	162	306	306	306	306
g. Total P/T Revenue (d x e x f)	\$80,910	\$151,470	\$151,470	\$151,470	\$151,470
3. Grants, contracts & Other External Sources	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
4. Other Sources	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
TOTAL (Add 1 - 4)	\$80,910	\$151,470	\$151,470	\$151,470	\$151,470

2. Complete [Table 2: Program Expenditures and Narrative Rationale](#). Provide finance data for the first five years of program implementation. Enter figures into each cell and provide a total for each year. Also provide a narrative rationale for each expenditure category.

## **Expenses: Narrative Rationale**

As noted above, no additional expenditures are anticipated to deliver this program other than course development and adjunct faculty salary.

### **Faculty (Row 1):**

Row 1 reflects the total anticipated expenses in the faculty category. For each column, the number in the cell in this row reflects the sum of the salary and benefits for faculty (i.e., Row 1b + Row 1c = Row Subtotal).

Row 1a (number of full-time equivalent faculty): No additional full-time faculty will be needed for this program. However, we do anticipate additional expenditures related to adjunct faculty salary for course development and teaching. It is estimated that 0.75 full-time equivalents will be needed to teach in the first year of the program, and 1.5 full-time equivalents in the subsequent years.

Row 1b (total salary): Stevenson's current salary for adjunct faculty at the graduate level is \$1,397 per credit/contact hour. The program will offer 18 credits in Year 1 and 36 credits in all subsequent years. The total salary in each cell is calculated as the number of credits taught multiplied by \$1,397.

Row 1c (total benefits): Benefits for adjunct faculty cover employer taxes and are calculated at 7.65% of total salary.

### **Admin Staff (Row 2):**

Row 2 reflects the total anticipated expenses in the administrative staff category. For each column, the number in the cell in this row reflects the sum of the salary and benefits for staff (i.e., Row 2b + 2c = Row 2 subtotal).

Row 2a (number of full-time equivalent staff): As noted above, no additional staff are needed beyond what already exist in the School of Education and no additional expenses in staff salary are anticipated related to the proposed program. Since Stevenson does not anticipate the need to hire additional full-time staff to support the proposed program, the number zero is entered in each cell of this row.

Row 2b (total salary): No staff salaries are projected since the University does not anticipate hiring any additional full-time staff to support the proposed program.

Row 2c (total benefits): No benefits are projected since the University does not anticipate hiring any additional full-time staff to support the proposed program.

**Support Staff (Row 3):**

Row 3 reflects the total anticipated expenses in the support staff category. For each column, the number in the cell in this row reflects the sum of the salary and benefits for staff (i.e., Row 3b + 3c = Row 3 subtotal).

Row 3a (number of full-time equivalent staff): No additional support staff are needed and no additional expenses in staff salary are anticipated related to the proposed program. Since Stevenson does not anticipate the need to hire additional full-time staff to support the proposed program, the number zero is entered in each cell of this row.

Row 3b (total salary): No support staff salaries are projected since the University does not anticipate hiring any additional full-time support staff to support the proposed program.

Row 3c (total benefits): No benefits are projected since the University does not anticipate hiring any additional full-time support staff to support the proposed program.

**Technical Support and Equipment (Row 4):**

All information technology needs have been met and ongoing maintenance needs are budgeted for in the existing education program budgets. Since the University does not anticipate additional expenses to support the proposed program, the number zero (0) has been entered into each cell in this row.

**Library (Row 5):**

The library has already purchased resources to support the existing education programs and has budgeted for ongoing maintenance of relevant resources. Since the University does not anticipate additional library expenses to support the proposed program, the number zero (0) has been entered into each cell in this row.

**New or Renovated Space (Row 6):**

The University does not anticipate additional expenses to build or renovate space to support the proposed program, the number zero (0) has been entered into each cell in this row.

**Other Expenses (Row 7):**

The proposed program will incur the MHEC new program fee. This is entered in the first column of the table, as the cost will be incurred in FY23.

**Total (Last Row):**

For each column, the number in the cell in this row represents the sum of the numbers in Rows 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, providing a total figure for program expenses (i.e., Row 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 = Total).

Table 19: Anticipated Program Expenses: MAT: EC

Expenditure Categories	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	FY 26	FY 27
<b>1. Faculty (b+c below)</b>	\$27,070	\$54,140	\$54,140	\$54,140	\$54,140
<b>a. Number of FTE</b>	0.75	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
<b>b. Total Salary</b>	\$25,146	\$50,292	\$50,292	\$50,292	\$50,292
<b>c. Total Benefits</b>	\$1,924	\$3,848	\$3,848	\$3,848	\$3,848
<b>2. Admin Staff (b+c below)</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>a. Number of FTE</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>b. Total Salary</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>c. Total Benefits</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>3. Support Staff (b+c below)</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>a. Number of FTE</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>b. Total Salary</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>c. Total Benefits</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>4. Technical Support &amp; Equipment</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>5. Library</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>6. New or Renovated Space</b>	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>7. Other Expenses</b>	\$850	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>TOTAL (add 1-7)</b>	\$27,920	\$51,140	\$51,140	\$51,140	\$51,140

**M. Adequacy of Provisions for Evaluation of Program (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.15)**

***1. Discuss procedures for evaluating courses, faculty and student learning outcomes.***

All course evaluations of faculty are managed centrally by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). Course evaluations are administered online each semester. Stevenson currently uses the Watermark Course Evaluation & Surveys system, which integrates with Blackboard, the campus learning management system. This integration allows faculty and administrators timely and efficient access to student feedback. Faculty are expected to reflect on the feedback received using the “Faculty Response to Student Feedback” form, which is submitted to the appropriate Academic Program Administrator who supervises the faculty member. These data are part of the annual faculty performance review process as well as used in the faculty promotion process.

Assessment of student learning outcomes takes place at the course and program level. Each course is required to provide a syllabus that conforms to the institution’s syllabus template and includes a list of approved, measurable student outcomes. At the departmental or program level, samples of student artifacts from required key assessments that have been linked to critical course outcomes are used to document student achievement of course and program outcomes in an annual cycle of assessment. The strategic alignment of course outcomes with program outcomes is integrated into the new course proposal process, which includes the development of a matrix to demonstrate outcome alignment. This alignment at all levels of the curriculum helps to support program effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

In addition, each academic program undergoes a comprehensive program review including an external review component on a five-year cycle. Programs with oversight by external accreditation follow the review cycle of the relevant accrediting body. To support the program review process, each program receives an annual data report with information about enrollment, student demographics, course-level pass rates, year-to-year retention, use of support services, and graduation rates.

***2. Explain how the institution will evaluate the proposed program's educational effectiveness, including assessments of student learning outcomes, student retention, student and faculty satisfaction, and cost-effectiveness.***

The above-mentioned program review process concludes with the development of a yearly action plan and steps for ongoing improvement to ensure that programs remain relevant and continue to align with the mission and vision of the University as well as to support the changing needs of the marketplace and the community. Programs provide yearly progress reports on the steps outlined in the action plan.

Student retention is monitored by multiple individuals and units including, but not limited to, the Vice Provost for Student Success and other academic administrators, faculty, advisors, and the Office of Student Success. With the proposed program, high-touch faculty advising will provide students with the information they need about program requirements as well as analysis of their

individual academic progress. This advising is provided by a designated student success coach who is paired with a student once they are accepted into the program. The student success coach not only assists the students with course registration, the coach is the go-to person for any student issue, concern, or question throughout the entire program. Faculty work closely with the student success coach as they assist whenever there is a concern that may impact a student's successful completion of a course or programmatic requirement. Program progression standards will be developed and published in the University catalog to ensure that students are aware of expectations and are performing at an appropriate level for master's work.

Student and faculty satisfaction is measured by campus-wide surveys, some of which are nationally normed. Surveys are administered by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment on a rotating schedule in order to optimize response rates. The cost-effectiveness of academic programs and related initiatives is evaluated through the University's annual planning and budgeting process, which includes a continuous cycle of data reporting and assessment in each unit. At the start of the fiscal year, university-wide initiatives that align with the campus strategic plan are developed and budgeted, and the implementation and assessment of those initiatives—including financial impact and cost-effectiveness—takes place over the coming year. Planning for the subsequent fiscal year is informed by the assessment of the previous year's initiatives.

## **N. Consistency with the State's Minority Student Achievement Goals (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.05)**

### ***1. Discuss how the proposed program addresses minority student access & success, and the institution's cultural diversity goals and initiatives.***

Stevenson University's minority student population is among the highest within Maryland's private colleges and universities. In the 2021-2022 academic year, 46% of undergraduate students and 41% of graduate students represented minority groups, with 27% of all students identifying as African American.<sup>50</sup> Stevenson is well-positioned to provide opportunities to minority students to enroll in master's educational programs.

Standing as a touchstone with the University's mission is Stevenson's Diversity and Inclusion Statement:

Stevenson University commits itself to diversity as it relates to awareness, education, respect and practice at every level of the organization. The University embraces people of all backgrounds, defined by, but not limited to, ethnicity, culture, race, gender, class, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, physical ability, learning differences, and political perspectives. The University believes its core values are strengthened when all of its members have voice and representation. The resulting inclusive

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<sup>50</sup> Stevenson University Fact Book, Fall 2021.

<https://now.stevenson.edu/depts/oira/Shared%20Documents/Fact%20Book/FACT%20BOOK%202021.pdf>

organizational climate promotes the development of broad-minded members of the University who positively influence their local and global communities.<sup>51</sup>

One of the ways we operationalize our commitment to cultural diversity goals and initiatives is through a university-wide Diversity and Inclusion (D & I) Committee, which is led by two Vice Presidents of the university and has a membership that includes faculty and staff from across all divisions of the University. Stevenson integrates the work of the D & I Committee with the annual initiatives process that is under the aegis of the Cabinet and is central to our strategic planning framework. The two Vice Presidents who chair the D&I committee participate in Cabinet discussions of the annual initiatives, and the goal of this integration is to ensure that topics raised by the D & I Committee are given appropriate voice and thereby consideration for inclusion in the annual initiatives. This approach asks Cabinet members to consider a variety of goals through the lens of diversity and inclusion, and to monitor and report on progress. Stevenson also has a student-facing Center for Diversity and Inclusion, with a full-time staff member serving as Director of Diversity and Inclusion reporting directly to the Vice President for Student Affairs.

For academic year 2022-2023, related University-level D & I initiatives include:

- Continue to assess the implemented curricular changes in ENG 152 and First Year Seminar, and implement and assess the pilot program for incorporating Intercultural Knowledge and Competency into the curriculum of the disciplines.
- Support the efforts of the Faculty Council's Anti-Racism Committee.
- Explore options to expand access to and use of Open Educational Resources, Inclusive Access, and other free/lower cost learning materials in courses across the curriculum.
- Evaluate and enhance the "Winning Together" collaboration between Athletics and the student Center for Diversity & Inclusion.
- Pursue outreach to traditionally underrepresented students and families through print, social media, and digital advertising platforms.
- The Provost's Office will continue to explore and develop ways to support the recruitment and retention of BIPOC faculty.
- In addition to the completed and continuing efforts of (1) advertising positions on BIPOC-specific sites, (2) reviewing search panels for diversity, (3) providing required Unconscious Bias training to search panel members, and (4) posting sample diversity interview questions on the HR Portal. In FY23 explore additional recruiting strategies will be implemented, such as outreach to Maryland HBCUs, evaluations of new BIPOC recruitment sites, and/or creating standardized processes and rubrics for reviewing applications and scoring candidate interviews.
- In partnership with the D & I Committee, conduct survey to gauge interest in Employee Support Groups (BIPOC/LGBTQ/Religious), and implement with the help of Student Affairs.

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<sup>51</sup> Diversity and Inclusion at Stevenson. <https://www.stevenson.edu/about/diversity-inclusion/> (accessed 26 September 2022).



- Update exit interview form (in consultation with D&I Committee) to gain more useful feedback about reasons employees are departing.

On the innovation front, Stevenson is pioneering an affordable model for career-focused graduate education that ensures equitable access to affordable and high-quality postsecondary education for Maryland residents. The success of this pricing model is demonstrated in our educator discount. Additionally, the geographic proximity of our campus to traditionally underserved populations further supports student access, as does our commitment to finding and utilizing no or lower cost educational resources when possible. Our diverse student population demonstrates that our commitments and aligned actions have yielded tangible results. Our 75-year history of meeting students where they are and helping them to realize their full potential is true to our mission. Stevenson is a university focused on student potential, not exclusion, which is reflected in our approach to admission and pricing and clearly supportive of the State’s minority student achievement goals.

#### **O. Relationship to Low Productivity Programs Identified by the Commission**

This section is not applicable to independent institutions.

#### **P. Adequacy of Distance Education Programs (as outlined in COMAR 13B.02.03.22)**

Stevenson University is in full compliance with COMAR 13B.02.03.22 (Distance Education):

- A. Stevenson offers a total of 34 distance education programs (13 master’s degrees, 11 bachelor’s degrees, and 10 post-baccalaureate certificates), all of which have been approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission.
- B. Stevenson is approved as an In-State State Authorization Reciprocity Agreement (SARA) Institution and is recognized by the State of Maryland as an institution eligible to provide distance education. Stevenson is also fully approved and accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) to offer distance education.<sup>52</sup>
- C. Stevenson develops academic offerings and operates in full compliance with the C-RAC guidelines.

The Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions (C-RAC) established “*Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education*” that have been in place since 2011.<sup>53</sup>

1. Online learning is appropriate to the institution’s mission and purposes.

<sup>52</sup> Stevenson University Statement of Accreditation Status, MSCHE. <https://www.msche.org/institution/0184/> (Accessed 13 March 2023)

<sup>53</sup> Council of Regional Accrediting Commissions, *Interregional Guidelines for the Evaluation of Distance Education*. <https://www.nc-sara.org/sites/default/files/files/2019-08/C-RAC%20Guidelines%282011%29.pdf> (accessed 10 March 2023)

2. The institution’s plans for developing, sustaining, and, if appropriate, expanding online learning offerings are integrated into its regular planning and evaluation processes.
3. Online learning is incorporated into the institution’s systems of governance and academic oversight.
4. Curricula for the institution’s online learning offerings are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats.
5. The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its online learning offerings, including the extent to which the online learning goals are achieved, and uses the results of its evaluations to enhance the attainment of the goals.
6. Faculty responsible for delivering the online learning curricula and evaluating the students’ success in achieving the online learning goals are appropriately qualified and effectively supported.
7. The institution provides effective student and academic services to support students enrolled in online learning offerings.
8. The institution provides sufficient resources to support and, if appropriate, expand its online learning offerings.
9. The institution assures the integrity of its online offerings.

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Stevenson is fully accredited by MSCHE and MHEC to offer online degree programs and has been since 2009. Stevenson’s portfolio of online programs includes graduate and undergraduate degree programs, as well as post-baccalaureate certificates, delivered in fully asynchronous online mode. Stevenson’s Distance Education program is consistent with the institution’s mission of providing a career-focused education that meets students where they are and blends the liberal arts and applied learning beyond the classroom. The development, maintenance, and expansion of online learning programs are integrated fully into the governance and oversight systems and processes already in place at Stevenson for all academic programs, including the University’s strategic and annual planning and budgeting processes, the standard vetting and approval cycles for courses and programs, the established cycle for academic program review, and the submission of annual assessment reports evaluating status relative to articulated goals and initiatives, for example.

Reporting to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Stevenson University Online (SUO) is the administrative unit responsible for the delivery of Distance Education at the University. Responsibility for the curriculum rests with the faculty, and academic programs are overseen by academic program administrators who report to the dean of the school in which the program is housed. This organizational structure ensures that online programs are integrated fully into Stevenson’s systems of governance and academic oversight, and that they are coherent, cohesive, and comparable in academic rigor to programs offered in traditional instructional formats. Further, Stevenson is a participating institution in NC-SARA, and the Vice Provost for Online Learning & SUO Dean serves on the Board of Directors of Maryland Online (MOL), as well as on the newly formed Chief Officers of Online Learning (COOL) Council in Maryland.

Stevenson’s faculty are highly educated content experts and practitioners. Those who teach online are supported by a team of instructional designers to design and facilitate effective and engaging courses that reflect online teaching best practices. Course design is driven by Quality

Matters standards and Universal Design Principles to ensure that students have equitable access to course content. Our faculty are held to the highest expectations for teaching excellence. The faculty evaluation process includes pre-observation conferencing, observation, and a post-observation debrief. Faculty are regularly observed by supervisors and peers and evaluated using an extensive observation tool aligned to the following principles:

- Encourages contact between students and faculty;
- Develops reciprocity and cooperation among students;
- Encourages active learning;
- Gives prompt and effective feedback;
- Communicates high expectations.

In addition to supervisor and peer feedback, students complete course feedback surveys at the completion of every course. Faculty reflect upon and incorporate constructive student feedback to strengthen the course and overall teaching practices.

Stevenson University's online students receive specialized services in addition to the full realm of student support services offered by the University. Unique to SUO, online students are assigned to a Student Success Coach (SSC) upon admission who remains with them throughout their program. The SSC provides continuous, accessible academic support through one-on-one advising and troubleshooting. Also reserved for SUO students is access to an online tutoring and writing support service that is integrated into the Blackboard Learning Management System and available to students 24 hours a day throughout the year. Online students also have access to offices and services including, Accessibility and Disability Services (if eligible), Financial Aid, Student Accounts, the Registrar's Office, and all library resources, including extensive print and electronic resources, interlibrary loan program, and borrowing privileges through Stevenson's partnership with the Baltimore Area Library and MICUA Consortia. Professional staff members are available to answer students' questions when the Stevenson Library is open as well as during evenings and weekends. Students may access online tools and resources (tutorials, videos, research guides) 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

In addition, Stevenson's Career Connection Center provides online students full support as students and alumni. Students are invited to participate in career assessments, one-on-one advising, resume and cover letter reviews, and mock interviews. Students have full access to the Career Connection Resource portal to locate sample resumes, self-assessment tools, and job postings. They are also able to use Handshake (web-based job application) to search for jobs, internships, and related career events. Also worth noting in this context, the Office of Information Technology supports all campus constituencies through a web-based online helpdesk system (Tech Connection). Students and faculty may post a ticket to receive support for any concerns or issues related to the Learning Management System (Blackboard). Once the ticket is submitted, students and faculty participate in a dialogue until the issue is resolved.

Assuring the integrity of the University's online offerings requires a multifaceted approach, which includes taking steps to ensure that enrolled students are the ones completing the courses and that they are doing so while adhering to the principles and policies related to academic integrity. Applicants to SUO programs complete a rigorous admissions process that includes submission and verification of formal transcripts of degrees, credits, and diplomas obtained previously, ensuring the authenticity of prior academic achievements. While enrolled at

Stevenson, student interactions with the faculty, staff, and institutional systems are facilitated through a secure single-sign-on mechanism and a uniquely assigned email address. Information on Stevenson's academic integrity policy is included in the online orientation course that all students are required to complete. Any student found to be in violation of SUO's academic integrity policy is required to successfully complete an online academic integrity course before they are given permission to enroll in another class. Furthermore, all written homework and projects are submitted and examined through tools that detect and flag plagiarism (e.g., Turnitin), integrated with the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS). With the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology and generative tools such as Chat GPT, Stevenson is actively exploring the implications for learning writ large and, in the context of this proposal, for online learning in particular. Stevenson's Zirkin Center for Excellence in Teaching & Learning has already hosted sessions for faculty members on AI and creative pedagogical approaches that reduce the opportunity for cheating.

In summary, Stevenson University is a fully accredited, experienced provider of high quality online educational programs that meet COMAR expectations and are aligned with C-RAC guidelines. The proposed MAT:EC program has been developed and approved through our established governance, planning, and vetting processes and, if approved by MHEC, will be delivered, supported, assessed, and sustained per established standards to ensure ongoing compliance.