



Employer Survey Overview

February 2026

Introduction/Overview

The Keene State College (KSC) Educator Preparation Office (EPO) conducted an employer survey from November 7, 2025 – January 2, 2026, to gather feedback from recent employers of 2019 - 2024 alumni of the KSC Educator Preparation Programs (EPP). The purpose was to evaluate program effectiveness, identify strengths, and highlight areas for improvement to ensure continuous quality enhancement aligned with professional standards. Email reminders were sent out weekly. The [full questionnaire](#) is in the Appendix.

Methodology

The employer survey was created in Qualtrics and distributed to area principals, who were asked to complete the survey if they have current employees who are alumni from 2019-2024 of the KSC EPP. Questions addressed the classroom preparedness of KSC EPP alumni.

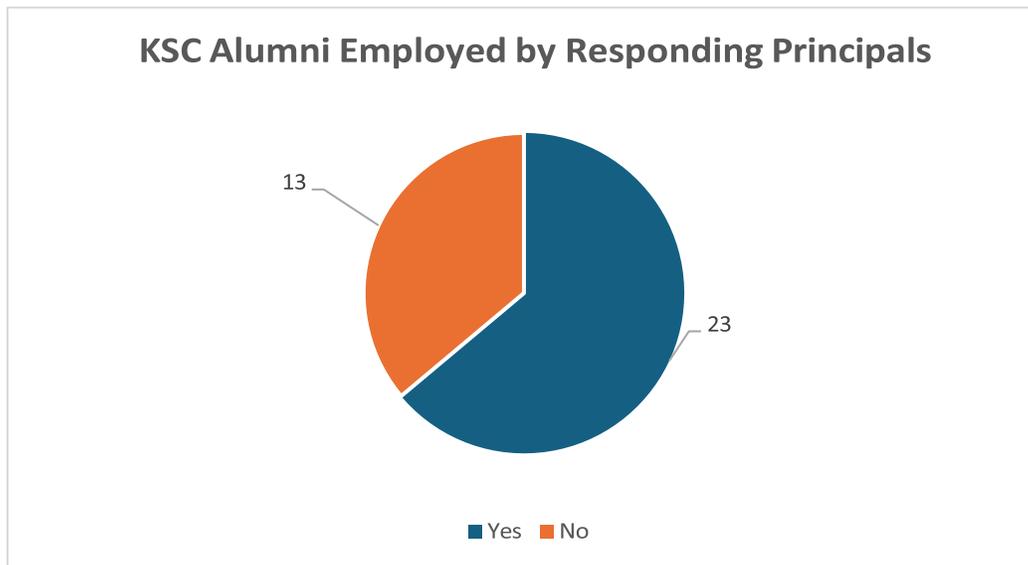
Overview of Responses

The Employer Survey responses indicated that school and district leaders view KSC EPP graduates positively overall, particularly in professional dispositions, foundational knowledge, and relationship-building skills. Most employers who have hired KSC graduates within the past five years rated them as 'Prepared' or 'Exceptionally Prepared' across most of the knowledge and disposition indicators, highlighting strong enthusiasm for teaching, professionalism, and the ability to create supportive classroom environments. These strengths were also reflected in the open-ended comments, where principals consistently recognized graduates' positive attitudes and commitment to students. Employers frequently noted that what distinguishes the strongest candidates is the combination of solid pedagogical knowledge, effective instructional practice, and the ability to build authentic connections with students and colleagues, qualities they described as central to effective teaching.

Employers identified several areas where additional preparation would better support new teachers. The most frequently mentioned themes were the need for stronger classroom management skills, supporting diverse learners, family communication, and using assessment and data to guide instruction. Respondents also emphasized the value of earlier and more frequent clinical experiences, as well as more preparation in literacy instruction. These insights confirm that KSC graduates enter the profession with strong foundational qualities and a genuine passion for working with students, while also highlighting the importance of continued growth in applying curriculum, managing classrooms, differentiating instruction, and navigating the complexities of today's ever-changing school settings. Overall, employer feedback underscores that while KSC graduates enter teaching well-prepared and student-centered, strengthening these practical, classroom-embedded skills will enhance their ability to translate their dispositions and content knowledge into consistently effective practice.

KSC EPP Alumni Employed by Principals

Among the principals surveyed, 23 reported having KSC EPP alumni employed at their schools, and 13 reported none. Only principals who selected “Yes” proceeded with the full survey, yielding 36 total respondents.



EPP Preparedness

Educator Preparation Programs at KSC are grounded in elements from The Framework for Teaching (Danielson Group, 2022), the INTASC standards, and the NH DOE Professional Education Standards ED 505.03.

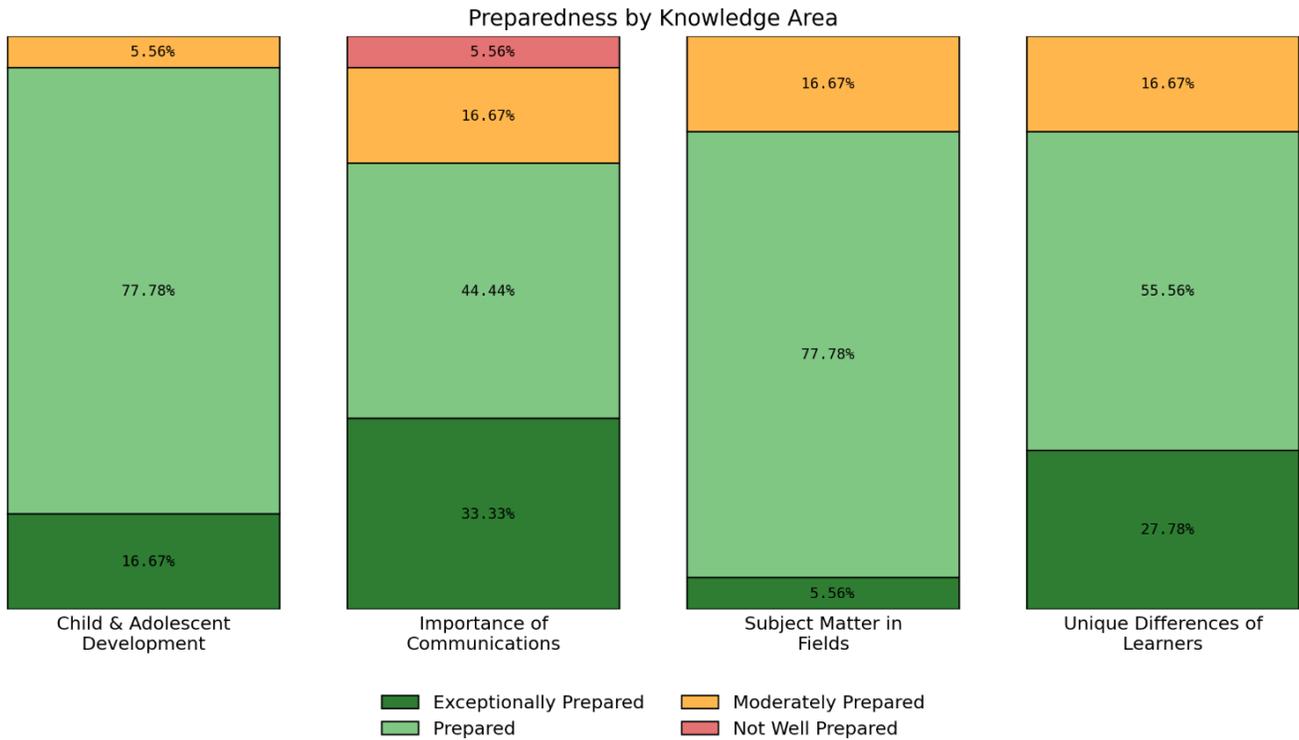
Respondents were asked to rate how well KSC alumni were prepared in the areas of Knowledge, Disposition, and Skills using the scale of Exceptionally Prepared, Prepared, Moderately Prepared, and Not Well Prepared.

Knowledge of...

The comments suggest KSC EPP alumni are generally viewed as adaptable and instructionally strong more specifically among those who complete the Master’s in Special Education program. However, there were concerns mentioned as well. The most significant concern is the lack of preparation for teaching struggling readers in K-6 settings. Many candidates have limited experience and confidence communicating with parents and families, and some social studies candidates also demonstrate uneven content knowledge, particularly in world history, due to recent shifts in course sequencing.

The chart below provides a visual summary of KSC EPP alumni preparedness ‘Knowledge’ of the four areas below:

- Child & Adolescent Development
- The importance of understanding and engaging with school, family, and community contexts
- Subject matter content in subjects studied
- The unique differences among learners (i.e., skills, knowledge, language, proficiency, interests, cultural heritage, disability)

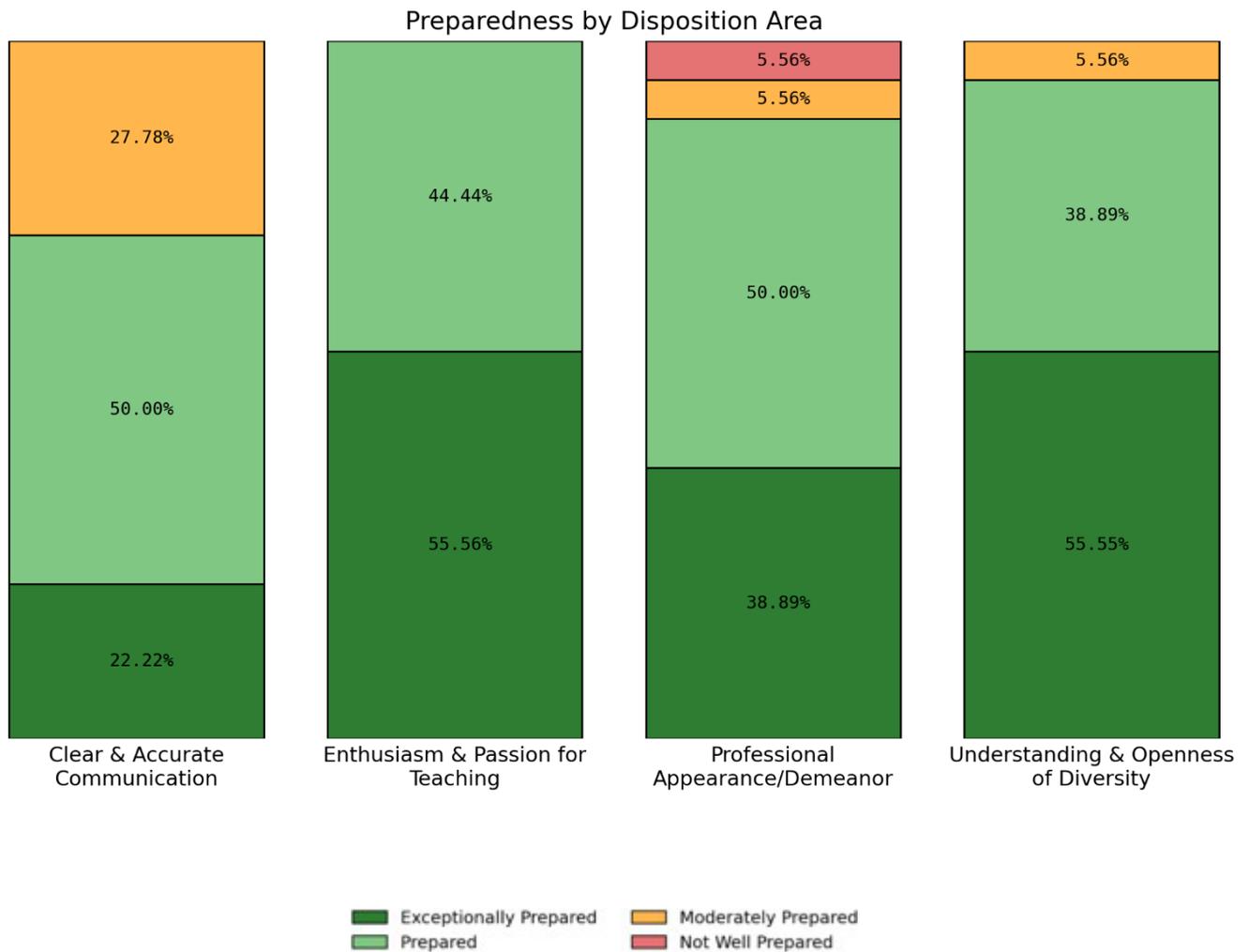


Disposition to...

Feedback indicates that while students demonstrate strong overall dispositions, areas of professional readiness require continued development. The chart indicates most students appear generally prepared, yet the accompanying comments reveal growth opportunities, particularly around professional communication and confidence in sharing beyond their classroom setting. Some respondents emphasized the need for more intentional preparation related to professional social media use.

The chart below provides a visual summary of KSC EPP alumni preparedness ‘Disposition’ to the four areas below:

- Exhibit clear and accurate communication skills (e.g., listening, writing, speaking)
- Present appropriate professional appearance/demeanor
- Exhibit enthusiasm and passion for students and teaching
- Demonstrate understanding of and be open to diverse perspectives



Skills and Ability to...

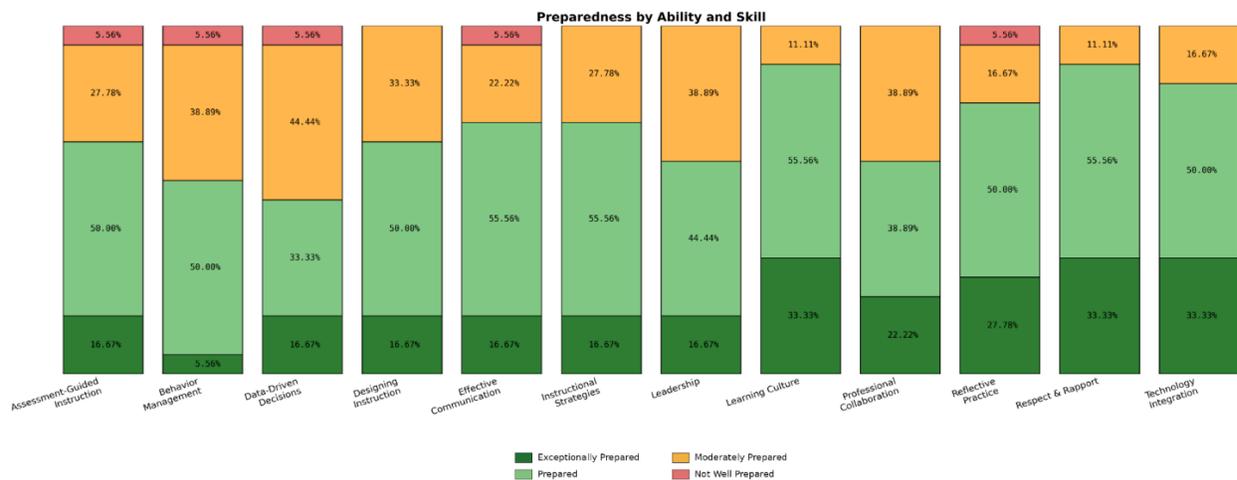
Feedback revealed that while the desire to create supportive learning environments is strong among alumni, they sometimes face challenges with student buy-in and communication expectations, and that these challenges may reflect individual or generational differences rather than program design. There is also interest in strengthening candidates’ use of data to inform instruction, as this skill was not always clear in practice.

The distribution of ratings in the chart below shows that most candidates are rated as either ‘Exceptionally Prepared’ or ‘Prepared’, indicating strong overall readiness in the targeted skill area. Only a moderate portion of responses fall into the ‘Moderately Prepared’ range, with very few identified as ‘Not Well Prepared’. Candidates are entering their placements with solid competency foundations, and significant skill gaps are relatively uncommon.

The chart below shows a visual summary of KSC EPP abilities and skills in the following areas:

- Use formative and summative assessments to guide instruction and be responsive to the needs of students

- Manage student behavior effectively or contribute to the development of systems to support the management of student behavior
- Use multiple data points to inform decision-making and instruction
- Design and/or support differentiated instruction as appropriate for individual learners
- Communicate effectively with students, families, colleagues, and communities
- Use and/or support a broad range of instructional strategies
- Take leadership in teamwork, group projects, and make decisions
- Establish a culture of learning
- Collaborate with Special Education colleagues and the professional community
- Use reflection to critique one's own performance, set goals, and make decisions
- Create an environment of respect and rapport
- Integrate a variety of technologies into practice



Professional Development requests with EPP and SW Center

Teachers are seeking practical, immediately usable professional development that directly addresses the challenges they face in today's classrooms. Overall, teachers want professional development that is targeted, hands-on, and responsive to modern classroom realities.

They emphasized a desire for:

- Provide local, high-quality workshops, similar to UNH's offering, especially those focused on intervention, specialized instruction, and classroom behavior support.
- Strategies for responding to challenging behavior
- Guidance on writing behavior plans and classroom management support, particularly for early grades, where attention spans, stamina, and behavioral expectations have shifted significantly
- Math-focused professional development, especially within an MTSS framework, since teachers often create their own intervention materials.
- Structured support for early career teachers, including mentorship, cohort models, and professional communication skills.
- Strategies for supporting social-emotional learning (SEL) across grade levels

- Trauma-informed practice, as societal stressors continue to impact students' behavior and readiness to learn.

Themes

Strengths

- Strong dispositions & relationships
- Solid instructional skills and content knowledge
- Overall partnership with KSC graduates

Challenges

- Reading instruction for struggling readers (K–6)
- Classroom & behavior management
- Family/parent communication & professional digital presence
- Data use & assessment literacy
- Differentiation & serving all learners
- Earlier and more varied clinical experiences to build confidence
- Planning & time management

Summary of Results

Employers express strong overall confidence in the KSC EPP. Across knowledge, dispositions, and abilities, most ratings fall within the 'Prepared' and 'Exceptionally Prepared' categories. This indicates graduates enter teaching with a solid foundation and professional readiness. Dispositions, such as communication, professionalism, and openness to diverse perspectives, are a particular strength. Skill-based areas also received positive ratings, though with more variation, reflecting the developmental nature of applying instructional and classroom management practices in real settings.

In their feedback, school leaders commend graduates for their enthusiasm, relationship-building, and collaboration. At the same time, they identify several opportunities for program enhancement. Common recommendations include strengthening preparation in reading instruction, classroom and behavior management, family communication, and data-informed instructional decision-making. Employers also emphasized the value of earlier and more varied clinical placements. The results affirm that KSC graduates are well regarded and well prepared, while offering clear, actionable guidance for ongoing program improvement.

Next Steps/Action Plans

- Foundational reading instruction for struggling readers (K–6)
- Expand coursework in classroom and behavior management
- Enhance training in effective family communication
- Begin clinical experiences earlier
- Increase the variety of placements

APPENDIX

1. Survey Questions

Keene State College Employer Satisfaction Survey

Q1 Educator Preparation Programs at Keene State College (KSC) continually evaluate our programs and candidate preparedness as part of our state approval and continuous accreditation. As employers who have hired our graduates, your feedback on their preparedness for the classroom is essential in our continuous improvement process. This survey should only take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The survey seeks your feedback on the skills, dispositions, and knowledge of our recent KSC graduates (those from the last five years) whom you have hired to teach in your schools.

Q2 Informed Consent Acknowledgment: I understand that completion of this survey confirms my willingness and consent to participate.

Yes

No

Q4 Please note that your responses, comments, and personal information will remain confidential, and the report will share aggregated data and general overviews.

Q26 Employer Information:

Q5 First Name:

Q6 Last Name:

Q7 Current role or position:

Q8 School Name:

Q9 Do you currently have teachers who graduated from an Educator Preparation Program at Keene State College within the last five years?

Yes

No

Q10 Educator Preparation Programs at Keene State College use domains and elements based on The Framework for Teaching (Danielson Group, 2022), INTASC standards, and NH DOE Professional Education Standards ED 505.03 to prepare future educators. Please rate how well the Educator Preparation Programs at KSC prepared your current educators in the areas of **KNOWLEDGE**, **DISPOSITION**, and **SKILLS** using the rating scale below. After completing the ratings in each area, you will be provided with a comment box to share any additional information. We are particularly interested in areas where the candidates were not well-prepared.

Q11 Rating scale:

- **Exceptionally Prepared:** The program prepared the educator exceptionally, providing the necessary knowledge, skills, materials, and experience to lead a classroom effectively.
- **Prepared:** The program prepared the educator well, providing the necessary knowledge, skills, materials, and experience to lead a classroom effectively.
- **Moderately Prepared:** The program prepared the educator adequately, providing the necessary knowledge, skills, materials, and experience to lead a classroom effectively.
- **Not Well Prepared:** The program did not prepare the educator, inadequately providing the necessary knowledge, skills, materials, and experience to lead a classroom effectively.

Q12 The Educator Preparation Programs at Keene State College prepared their graduates with the KNOWLEDGE OF...

	Exceptionally Prepared	Prepared	Moderately Prepared	Not Well Prepared
the subject matter content in a field of study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
the importance of understanding and engaging with school, family, and community contexts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

child and
adolescent
development



the unique
difference of
learners (i.e.
skills,
knowledge,
language,
proficiency,
interests,
cultural
heritage,
disability



Q13 Knowledge comments:

Q14 The Educator Preparation Programs at Keene State College prepared their graduates with the DISPOSTION TO...

	Exceptionally Prepared	Prepared	Moderately Prepared	Not Well Prepared
exhibit clear and accurate communications skills (e.g. listening, writing, speaking)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
present appropriate professional appearance/demeanor	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
exhibit enthusiasm and passion for students and teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
demonstrate understanding of and be open to diverse perspectives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



Q15 Disposition Comments:

Q16 The Educator Preparation Programs at Keene State College prepared their graduates with the ABILITY AND SKILLS TO ...

	Exceptionally Prepared	Prepared	Moderately Prepared	Not Well Prepared
create an environment of respect and rapport	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
establish a culture of learning	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
manage student behavior effectively or contribute to the development of systems to support the management of student behavior	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
design and/or support differentiated instruction as appropriate for individual learners	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

collaborate with
Special
Education
colleagues and
the professional
community



use and/or
support a broad
range of
instruction
strategies



integrate a variety
of technologies
into practice



use formative
and summative
assessment to
guide instruction
and be
responsive to the
needs of
students



use multiple data
points to inform
decision making
and instruction



use reflection to
critique one's
own
performance, set
goals, and
decision making



take leadership in
teamwork, group
projects, and
decision making



communicate
effectively with
students,
families,
colleagues, and
communities



Q17 Ability and Skills Comments:

Q19 **General Feedback** Please share your thoughts and feedback on the questions below that we can use to improve our programs.

Q20 1. What knowledge, dispositions, and skills do you value when hiring teachers and other school professionals?

Q21 2. What are the current challenges and issues that teachers and other school professionals are experiencing in schools? What knowledge, dispositions, and skills could we incorporate into our programs to prepare our future educators to address these challenges and issues effectively?



Q22 3. What are your recommendations that KSC could incorporate into our Educator Preparation Programs?

Q23 4. How can the Educator Preparation Programs at KSC/Southwest Center support your school/district with professional development opportunities?

Q25 Is there anything else you'd like to share?

Q24 Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. We appreciate all that you do to support public education in the state of New Hampshire. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact: Tanya Sturtz, Director of Educator Preparation tsturtz@keene.edu (603)358-2913