

## **The Cost of Accreditation: Hillsdale Ends Its Teacher Certification Program**

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On December 31, 2013, Hillsdale College—a small liberal arts college in rural south-central Michigan—will no longer be authorized to recommend students to the state of Michigan for teacher certification. Hillsdale’s over a century-and-a-half tradition of preparing teachers for public schools will, sadly, come to an end. Hillsdale will lose the ability to recommend students for certification because it will be out of compliance with a recent Michigan Board of Education (MBOE) policy requiring teacher preparation institutions to earn national accreditation through one of two existing teacher education accrediting bodies: the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Teacher Education Accreditation Council. The fact that Hillsdale College as an institution is already accredited through the Higher Learning Commission is irrelevant to this requirement, because the MBOE now requires specific accreditation for the teacher education program.

### **Hillsdale College**

Founded in 1844, Hillsdale College serves approximately 1,300 students representing forty-eight states and eight foreign countries. According to its 2010–2011 catalog, the college strongly defends “the traditional liberal arts curriculum, convinced that it is the best preparation for meeting the challenges of modern life and that it offers to all people of all backgrounds not only an important body of knowledge, but also timeless truths about the

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human condition.”<sup>1</sup> This curriculum includes a rigorous core of courses in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences that *every* Hillsdale College student must complete regardless of major.

Hillsdale’s commitment to liberal arts education has attracted a great deal of attention. According to the most recent review of best colleges in *U.S. News & World Report*, Hillsdale is in the top one hundred liberal arts colleges in the country.<sup>2</sup> *The Princeton Review*, which does not rank colleges in its book, put Hillsdale in the top 15 percent of all four-year colleges.<sup>3</sup> In the last couple of years, admission has become much more competitive. In 2010, Hillsdale’s acceptance rate was 57 percent, compared to 85 percent in 2000. Over the last ten years, the academic credentials of students have also been tracking higher. The 2010 incoming freshman class had a very respectable average ACT score of 28.8 (out of 36 points) and an SAT of 1950 (out of a possible 2400 points).<sup>4</sup>

Hillsdale’s teacher education program—with four full-time faculty members and a small group of adjunct instructors—recommends about twenty students per year to the state for certification. This is a very small program compared to others in Michigan, but Hillsdale’s program is no less historic. In 1879, Hillsdale offered a program of study—referred to as a “normal course”—specifically designed for “all who desire to become teachers.” This program included both subject matter courses (e.g., “Botany,” “Civil Government,” and “Geometry”) and professional courses (e.g., “Reading and Orthography,” “Penmanship,” and “Lectures on Teaching”).<sup>5</sup> By 1893, the college was offering education courses in school finance, school law, pedagogy, and psychology. That same year, Hillsdale’s “normal course” was approved by the Michigan State Board of Education, and graduates of this program were “granted a teacher’s certificate of qualification to teach in any of the schools of this state.”<sup>6</sup> By 1927, Hillsdale’s education department offered thirteen courses.<sup>7</sup> Today, Hillsdale’s education

<sup>1</sup>“Mission Statement,” Hillsdale College, <http://www.hillsdale.edu/about/history/mission.asp>.

<sup>2</sup>See National Liberal Arts College Rankings, *U.S. News & World Report*, <http://colleges.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/best-colleges/rankings/national-liberal-arts-colleges/spp%2B50/page+2>.

<sup>3</sup>Hillsdale College, “Hillsdale College Named to ‘Best 368 Colleges’ by Princeton Review,” news release, August 5, 2008, [http://www.hillsdale.edu/admissions/news/news\\_story.asp?iNewsID=1059&strBack=/default](http://www.hillsdale.edu/admissions/news/news_story.asp?iNewsID=1059&strBack=/default).

<sup>4</sup>“College Profile,” Hillsdale College, <http://www.hillsdale.edu/about/collegeprofile.asp>.

<sup>5</sup>*Hillsdale College Bulletin*, 1879, 22.

<sup>6</sup>*Hillsdale College Bulletin*, 1893, 7.

<sup>7</sup>*Hillsdale College Bulletin*, 1927, 81–85.

department offers twenty-four courses ranging from “Technology in the Classroom” to “Children’s Literature” to “Philosophical Foundations of Education.” Hillsdale is currently approved by the State Department of Michigan to recommend students for certification at the elementary and secondary levels.<sup>8</sup> By the close of the fall 2013 semester, however, Hillsdale’s long and rich tradition of recommending students for certification will end. The college’s fate was sealed on November 13, 2007, when the MBOE decided to require national accreditation for all teacher preparation programs in the state.

In Michigan—as in all states—the college or university does not certify teachers. Rather, certification is the responsibility of the MBOE. Colleges and universities can only recommend students for certification. This prerogative is granted by the MBOE—through the Michigan Department of Education (MDOE)—to teacher preparation institutions (TPI) that have met a long list of requirements for the teacher preparation program and for the departments that provide subject matter coursework.

For decades, the MBOE approved college and university teacher preparation programs directly. The MDOE evaluated each institution against a specific set of standards and then recommended the institution to the MBOE for approval based on the school’s ability to meet these requirements. In recent years, this approval process has become quite burdensome, especially for smaller liberal arts colleges. For years, the MDOE has required these smaller schools—with their limited resources—to meet the same requirements as TPI at midsize and large research universities.

In 2005, the president of Kalamazoo College, another small liberal arts college in southern Michigan, decided with great reluctance to close down its teacher preparation program. The cost of maintaining a teacher education program—which included meeting the burdensome requirements of the state—became too much for this historic college, and its long tradition of preparing teachers for Michigan’s public schools came to a close. Even after Kalamazoo’s decision, Hillsdale continued to provide a complete teacher education program and maintained a solid record of success. In a 2007 assessment of all Michigan TPI, Hillsdale received an “exemplary”—the MDOE’s highest rating.

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<sup>8</sup>*Hillsdale College 2010–2011 Catalog*, 168–74.

## Michigan's Decision

In late 2007, the MBOE decided to change its TPI approval process. In an effort to provide “clear, coherent and rigorous standards” for teacher preparation institutions, Mike Flanagan, Michigan’s new Superintendent of Public Instruction, recommended to the MBOE that all TPI be required to secure national accreditation by either of two nonprofit, non-governmental teacher education accrediting bodies recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation and the U.S. Department of Education: the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC).<sup>9</sup> At the time, less than half of Michigan’s TPI were nationally accredited. The superintendent also reported that while only five states required national accreditation, in sixteen states all public TPI chose to pursue national accreditation even though it was not required. On October 9, 2007, Flanagan said before the MBOE that the decision to require accreditation was both “apparent” and “urgent.” In a November 6, 2007, memorandum to the MBOE, he admitted that the MDOE was failing to perform its duty to review TPI, and recommended that the state transfer this responsibility to a national accrediting body.<sup>10</sup>

On November 13, 2007, the MBOE voted unanimously to “support the plan of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to require national accreditation by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) or Teacher Education Accreditation Council (TEAC) for continued approval of teacher preparation institutions.”<sup>11</sup> It is worth noting that the minutes from this meeting reflect that prior to the vote, board members expressed concern—especially with reference to “smaller colleges”—about the cost of national accreditation, but these concerns were quickly lost in the ensuing discussion.

The decision to require national accreditation made sense for the MDOE because it lacked the resources necessary for the kind of TPI review the MBOE had in place. The overworked MDOE doubtless was glad to excuse itself from the obligation of training reviewers, writing reports, offering feedback, and responding to the complaints, etc., of reviewing programs—

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<sup>9</sup>See NCATE, <http://www.ncate.org/Public/AboutNCATE/tabid/179/Default.aspx>, and TEAC, <http://www.teac.org/about/>.

<sup>10</sup>Mike Flanagan to State Board of Education, “Approval of Charges to Professional Standards Commission for Teachers,” memorandum, November 6, 2007, [http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/Item\\_A\\_213996\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/mde/Item_A_213996_7.pdf).

<sup>11</sup>Minutes of the Michigan State Board of Education, 13 November 2007 meeting, Lansing, Michigan, 17, [http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MinutesNov07\\_218308\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/MinutesNov07_218308_7.pdf).

and relished the opportunity to grant approval based on the recommendation of a national accrediting body. Rather than revising the burdensome TPI approval process to make it more manageable for the MDOE, the MBOE simply voted to surrender its obligation to review these programs to a national accrediting body. But for the MBOE to *require* national accreditation for all TPI in Michigan it had to assume that national accreditation was a sound measure of TPI quality.

Unfortunately, that assumption may be wrong. The National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), a nonpartisan reform group focused on increasing the number of effective teachers (its advisory board includes E.D. Hirsch, Jr., of the Core Knowledge Foundation, Wendy Kopp of Teach for America, and Stefanie Sanford of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), argues:

States should not cede oversight authority over their teacher preparation program to accreditors [because] no solid evidence exists that shows that nationally accredited teacher preparation programs produce better teachers than unaccredited programs....These policies are inappropriate, since they require that public funds and institutional resources be spent meeting the standards of a private organization that has yet to be recognized as the undisputed guarantor of minimum quality in its field.<sup>12</sup>

In 2007, prior to the MBOE's decision to require TPI accreditation, Michigan earned the third-highest rating of "state nearly meets the goal" on the NCTQ's evaluation of program approval. Responding to this evaluation, the MDOE assured NCTQ that "it has always been very clear with institutions that the state approval and review process is not an accreditation process."<sup>13</sup> But NCTQ was not convinced by this claim and correctly predicted Michigan's move to require national accreditation later that same year when it said that despite Michigan's acknowledgment about the difference between program approval and accreditation, "[t]he state seems to be ceding control of its approval process for programs that maintain state approval through accreditation only."<sup>14</sup> In 2009, after Michigan did indeed mandate national

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<sup>12</sup>National Council on Teacher Quality, *NCTQ 2009 State Teacher Policy Yearbook: Michigan* (Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2009), 141, 142, [http://www.nctq.org/stpy/09/reports/stpy\\_michigan.pdf](http://www.nctq.org/stpy/09/reports/stpy_michigan.pdf).

<sup>13</sup>National Council on Teacher Quality, *NCTQ 2007 State Teacher Policy Yearbook: Michigan* (Washington, DC: National Council on Teacher Quality, 2007), 68, [http://www.nctq.org/stpy/reports/stpy\\_michigan.pdf](http://www.nctq.org/stpy/reports/stpy_michigan.pdf).

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*

accreditation, it earned NCTQ's lowest rating on TPI approval. Based on this evaluation, NCTQ recommended that Michigan "should articulate its own benchmarks for program approval and make that process distinct from national accreditation."<sup>15</sup> Michigan, however, shows no signs of heeding this recommendation and seems committed to national accreditation for all TPI by 2013.

### **National Accreditation**

The MDOE recognizes the two national teacher education accrediting bodies: NCATE and TEAC. NCATE has been accrediting teacher education programs since the 1950s, when it was established by five major stakeholders in teacher training: the National Education Association (NEA), the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education, the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification, the Council of Chief State School Officers, and the National School Boards Association. Of the 1,300 TPI in America, NCATE currently accredits about 660 and close to one hundred more are currently seeking NCATE accreditation. With more than half of the TPI choosing to be accredited through NCATE, there is little doubt that it is the establishment's choice. Its connection to the nation's largest teachers union (the NEA) and other recognizable teacher education associations only solidifies this reputation. Representatives from these associations occupy prominent positions on NCATE's board and on the review teams—known as the "board of examiners"—that visit the institutions during the accreditation review process.

NCATE operates under the assumption that there exists a clear understanding of professional standards for teaching, and it is these standards that drive the NCATE accreditation review process. TPI must demonstrate that they are helping preservice teachers develop specific kinds of knowledge, skills, and dispositions that NCATE and the other teacher associations identify as necessary for all teachers. The consensus on professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions among these prominent teacher-training stakeholders gave weight to the NCATE standards and made NCATE very appealing to many midsize master's degree-granting regional

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<sup>15</sup>2009 *Teacher Policy Yearbook*, 41.

universities that lacked the gravitas of larger research universities or the distinctive niche of the smaller liberal arts colleges. Many research universities and liberal arts colleges balked at NCATE accreditation, however, because they found the process to be time-consuming, expensive, and ultimately unnecessary. NCATE's narrow view about teaching and learning only made accreditation less palatable.

In recent years, NCATE has received considerable criticism. In 2006, for example, NCATE rolled out a new set of *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education*.<sup>16</sup> Unit Standard 1 says that all teacher candidates must “demonstrate the content, pedagogical, and professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to help all students learn.”<sup>17</sup> At first glance, this standard appears vague, but harmless. But consider NCATE's definition of the word “disposition”:

the values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behavior towards students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect student learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator's own professional growth. Dispositions are guided by beliefs and attitudes related to values such as caring, fairness, honesty, responsibility, and social justice.<sup>18</sup>

Critics of these new standards—prominently including the National Association of Scholars and the American Council of Trustees and Alumni—protested that NCATE, a federally authorized accrediting body, was encouraging TPI to impose an ideological litmus test for teacher candidates through its use of vague, politically loaded terms such as “dispositions” and “social justice.” When free speech organizations petitioned the U.S. Department of Education later that year regarding the use of such terms in TPI accreditation, NCATE modified the dispositions requirement in its standards.

NCATE received another blow in 2006 when Arthur Levine, former dean of Teachers College at Columbia University, released a comprehensive

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<sup>16</sup>National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, *Professional Standards for the Accreditation of Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education* (Washington, DC: National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2001), <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-educ/account/upload/NCATEstds.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, 57.

five-year study of TPI in America titled, *Educating School Teachers*.<sup>19</sup> Among the many findings in this landmark study, Levin concluded that “the peer review process of accreditation fail[s] to maintain a sufficiently high floor for the nation’s teacher education programs because requirements focus on process, not substance....Accreditation by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education...does not assure program quality.”<sup>20</sup>

For many years, NCATE was the only national accrediting agency for TPI. This changed in 2003 when TEAC—founded in 1997—was approved as an accrediting body by the U.S. Department of Education and the Council of Higher Education Accreditation. TEAC’s founding is due in no small part to skepticism of and dissatisfaction with NCATE’s rigid standards and burdensome accreditation process on the part of many large research universities and smaller liberal arts colleges. TEAC’s founders wanted to address public concern about the quality of teacher preparation programs without subjecting these programs to NCATE’s onerous review. TEAC’s accreditation process allows for greater flexibility and, for the most part, does not require TPI to fashion themselves around a single model or template. TEAC asks institutions to form their own goals regarding the preparation of “competent, caring, and qualified educators.” TPI must then present evidence in an “Inquiry Brief” that they are indeed meeting their goals.

TEAC’s founders designed its accreditation process to be much more frugal in terms of paperwork, personnel, time, and money than the NCATE review. But even TEAC’s accreditation process is very expensive, and TEAC accreditation requires an annual member fee. These fees are miniscule compared to the cost associated with preparing for the accreditation review. This process requires formal TEAC training, which includes travel for multiple team members. TEAC requires TPI to collect, process, and catalog artifacts relating to the teacher education program and the institution—artifacts that then must then be housed in an “evidence room” on campus. The process also includes an onsite, multi-day visit by TEAC auditors in which the institution under review pays all expenses.

Initial accreditation is for five years if all standards are met. If they are only partially met, initial accreditation is for just two years. After initial

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<sup>19</sup>Arthur Levine, *Educating School Teachers* (Washington, DC: The Education Schools Project, September 2006), [http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating\\_Teachers\\_Report.pdf](http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating_Teachers_Report.pdf).

<sup>20</sup>*Educating School Teachers*, executive summary, 6, [http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating\\_Teachers\\_Exec\\_Summ.pdf](http://www.edschools.org/pdf/Educating_Teachers_Exec_Summ.pdf).



accreditation, TPI can—in the best circumstances—renew its accreditation for up to ten years. The accreditation process never really stops because TEAC requires ongoing annual reporting.

For a large or even a midsize university that uses its teacher preparation program as a cash cow for other more expensive programs, these obligations may appear minimal. Indeed, in light of the economic stakes, many universities in Michigan and elsewhere simply hire one or more people whose sole responsibility is TPI accreditation. But for a small liberal arts college, the cost of accreditation is overwhelming, and hiring someone to manage the process is financially unrealistic. Instead, faculty would have to pull away from an already heavy workload of classroom instruction, field supervision, and student advising to meet, as the NCTQ report states, “standards of a private organization that has yet to be recognized as the undisputed guarantor of minimum quality in its field.”<sup>21</sup>

The MBOE was correct to question the state superintendent at the November 13, 2007, board meeting regarding the financial burden smaller institutions would have to bear with this new accreditation, especially when so many institutions—both public and private—are struggling to make ends meet. In hindsight, the board should have pushed further on this matter.

While TEAC is much less doctrinaire than NCATE in its view of teaching and learning, it still promotes a particular image of teacher education. This image can be seen in something as basic but vitally important as the definition of “liberal arts education.” According to its *Guide to Accreditation*, TEAC claims to support the notion of liberal arts education: “TEAC calls special attention to some liberal arts and general education dimensions of the teacher education curriculum,” and indicates that “the program faculty must also address and provide evidence about [these dimensions].”<sup>22</sup> This sentiment is encouraging for anyone who recognizes the need for teachers to have a liberal arts education. However, does TEAC define “liberal arts education” as a broad plan of study that includes courses in literature, history, mathematics, and the natural and

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<sup>21</sup>2009 *Teacher Policy Yearbook*, 142.

<sup>22</sup>Teacher Education Accreditation Council, *Guide to Accreditation, 2011–2012* (Washington, DC: Teacher Education Accreditation Council, 2011), 20, <http://www.teac.org/wp-content/uploads/2009/03/TEAC-Guidelines1.pdf>.

social sciences? No. According to the *Guide*, a liberal arts education consists of “technology, learning how to learn, and multicultural perspectives.”<sup>23</sup> This is not an isolated statement. Under the heading “liberal education” in the glossary, the *Guide* reads, “TEAC requires that the programs it accredits provide evidence that their graduates have the cross-cutting skills and habits of mind that come from liberal education: learning how to learn, multicultural perspectives, and an understanding of the use of technology in learning.”<sup>24</sup>

This definition is troubling. It says nothing of the content-rich (i.e., knowledge-based) curriculum in the humanities, natural sciences, and social sciences that should be fundamental to a liberal arts education. Rather, TEAC uses what it perhaps believed is a safe definition by focusing on vocational/professional tools (“technology”), ambiguous education-speak (“learning how to learn”), and political correctness (“multicultural education”). Whether these three elements should hold a central position in a teacher education curriculum is a matter of debate. But even a cursory review of the history of “liberal arts education” will show this definition to be misguided. It is difficult to take the accreditation process seriously when TEAC gets such a fundamental issue so wrong.

In recent years, NCATE and TEAC have begun to move closer together, and the once obvious lines of distinction are beginning to blur. Both accrediting bodies require a lengthy initial report informed by specific data collected over multiple years. Both require on-site visits that include classroom visits, stakeholder (i.e., students, college faculty, host teachers, local school administrators, and university administrators) interviews, third-party testimony, facilities review, and verification of evidence provided in what is commonly known as an “exhibit area,” typically a room on campus designated to house the supporting documentation. Both make their accrediting decision based on an institution’s initial report and the findings of the visitation team.

Any remaining distinctions were further blurred in 2009 when NCATE and TEAC formed a “joint design team” to work out their differences. In a joint letter supporting the design team, NCATE president James Cibulka and TEAC president Frank Murray wrote that they “believe the field as a whole

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 29.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 130.

welcomes this forward movement.”<sup>25</sup> At a joint meeting on October 22, 2010, the governing boards of NCATE and TEAC voted unanimously to approve a merger of the two accrediting bodies. Over the next two years, NCATE and TEAC will form a single organization known as the Council for Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP). Although one can’t speculate where this collaboration will lead, it’s not a stretch to guess that CAEP’s definition of a liberal arts education will differ greatly from the curriculum offered at Hillsdale College.

### **Hillsdale’s Decision**

Like many of the small liberal arts colleges in Michigan, Hillsdale did not previously pursue TPI accreditation because of the cost, but, more importantly, because it believed the entire process to be unnecessary. Once Michigan began to require national TPI accreditation, the Hillsdale administration faced a very difficult decision: whether or not to spend substantial time, money, and effort pursuing national accreditation by an organization that does not share its position on fundamental educational issues. The administration asked itself if this accreditation process would ultimately improve Hillsdale’s ability to prepare great teachers. In the end, Hillsdale’s leadership concluded that the MBOE had gone too far in its new policy and reluctantly decided not to pursue national accreditation for its teacher preparation program. Under the new state board policy, without accreditation Hillsdale would lose its authority to recommend students for certification. And without certification, students upon graduation from Hillsdale would no longer have access to teaching positions in public schools that require state certification.

Recognizing Hillsdale’s long tradition of preparing teachers for public school instruction made this a very difficult decision, and everyone involved—administration, faculty, and students—would have preferred to continue this noble, and by all accounts (state reports, principal surveys, etc.) successful, work.

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<sup>25</sup>NCATE, “NCATE and TEAC Announce Joint Design Team Members for Future System of Teacher Education Accreditation,” news release, September 2, 2008, <http://www.ncate.org/Public/Newsroom/NCATENewsPressReleases/tabid/669/EntryId/67/NCATE-and-TEAC-Announce-Joint-Design-Team-Members-for-Future-System-of-Teacher-Education-Accreditation.aspx>.

This cloud does have something of a silver lining. About the time that the MBOE was voting to require national accreditation for all TPI, the chairman of Hillsdale's education department made an interesting discovery. According to the Career Placement Office, the college was producing more practicing K–12 teachers than had been heretofore believed, because many Hillsdale graduates were accepting teaching positions in private and charter schools that did not require certification. In some years, the number of graduates acquiring teaching jobs without certification outnumbered the graduates who had completed Hillsdale's teacher education program. Apparently, Hillsdale's reputation as a strong liberal arts institution had garnered the attention of a number of private and charter K–12 schools, and principals and human resource managers at these schools were contacting Hillsdale in search of high-promise teachers.

The department quickly learned that these schools respected Hillsdale's strong commitment to the liberal arts. Many claimed that through Hillsdale they had a good chance of finding a teacher candidate who had a broad liberal arts education, a deep understanding of subject matter, a strong command of the English language, and a desire to serve. Although some administrators expressed concern that many of these students had little to no teaching experience, these schools were willing to take this risk to reap the benefit of hiring smart, dedicated, and well-educated graduates. Hillsdale decided to embrace this opportunity and focus on providing more opportunities for students who want to teach and for the schools that want to hire them.

### **The Costs**

What are the costs of accreditation? So far, the MBOE's decision to require TPI accreditation has cost the state at least one teacher education program that by Michigan's own standards was "exemplary." To be fair, the board did not see Hillsdale College's decision coming. Indeed, it probably assumed that all Michigan TPI would follow this new policy with little more than half-hearted complaints. The board most likely never thought that any college or university would balk at this new policy and risk losing a "cash cow" like teacher education. With this TPI accreditation policy, the MBOE has lightened the workload of the MDOE. But in doing so, the board may have also ceded part of its constitutionally mandated responsibility to oversee

public education in Michigan. While the board technically retained its final authority for approving TPI, there is little doubt that its connection to Michigan teacher preparation programs is weakened by this new policy. The responsibility for reviewing Michigan TPI is now in the hands of *national* organizations with *national* interests.

One wonders if the MBOE ever considered that the push for national accreditation in Michigan and elsewhere is part of a larger effort by national “professional” organizations—and the universities that support them—to squeeze out smaller, more *independent* programs and to gain more control over local educational institutions. With all of the additional labor and expense that come with accreditation, the board’s policy has not only made it difficult for small and independent liberal arts colleges to continue to offer teacher education programs, but it has also empowered larger TPI—many of which are connected to these professional organizations—to produce a growing percentage of teachers for Michigan public schools trained not in the broad liberal arts tradition but in the narrower politicized concerns of the contemporary educational establishment.