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Utah Educator Preparation Program 2018 Annual Report

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[Item 1: Enrollment Counts](#)

See Appendix

[Item 2: USBE-identified Areas of Focus](#)

As we reviewed our programs for our report to the USBE, we identified areas for improvement. We continuously examine the effectiveness of the practicum experiences in each program, but this afforded us a unique opportunity to examine the topic in depth. Some changes were made as a result.

[Elementary Education](#)

In the elementary education program, there are several changes that were made and that will be fully implemented in the 2018-2019 academic year. First of all, we have redistributed practicum experiences across the phases of the ELED program. We used to have 15 days of practicum in level 2 and 25 days of practicum associated with the methods classes that comprised level 3. These practicum experience, in the past, were not graded separately; instead the performance in practicum was factored into an overall course grade, which sometimes caused problems if students did well in class but not practicum, or vice versa. So, all practicum experiences are now graded and separate from the course or courses with which they are associated.

In addition, in our elementary education program, we eliminated the concept of levels, and we now have 3 separate practicums for courses and blocks of courses. Our foundations of education course, TEAL 3000, now has a separate practicum (TEAL 3002) that consists of 4 hours a week across the full semester. Students will be placed at a variety of types of schools, including charter schools, so that they can observe a variety of school structures and cultures. Then, methods courses, which in the past were all taken during one semester called level 3, have been split into two blocks: literacy block and content block. The literacy block consists of a methods courses on assessing and differentiating reading instruction and a language arts course that largely focuses on writing instruction. These two courses will be taken concurrently with a practicum course in which students will work with individual and small groups of students to teach reading and writing. Then, a math, science, and social studies methods course will have another practicum course that students will take concurrently. This has increased the

total number of hours/days that students will spend in a formal practicum by about by about 45 hours.

Finally, in our elementary education program, if a student is not a dual or composite major and does not require two placements (e.g., one in special education and one in elementary education), students will be completing their semester-long student teaching in one 14-week placement rather than two 7-week placements. We decided to make this adjustment for several reasons. It will provide a more realistic timeline for completing their student teaching performance assessment (a capstone project modeled after the edTPA). Also, it will allow students to develop a stronger relationship with the students, which will facilitate classroom management and promote a positive and safe learning environment. Finally, it will allow for adjustments to placements to occur when necessary. For example, if the placement is not optimal, this is usually very clear by week 3 or 4 of the semester. The student could then be placed in another classroom and still have ample time (10-11 weeks) to get to know a new group of students, grade level, school/classroom schedule, and mentor teacher management style.

Secondary Education

Our secondary teacher education program is working to make clinical experiences more purposeful for student teachers as they work towards their student teaching experience. With that in mind, we are working with partner departments to have more consistency among programs and to ensure that students are active participants in schools and classrooms during their clinical experiences. Additionally, the clinical evaluation has been updated to align with the Utah Effective Teaching Standards.

The Council on Teacher Education recently dropped the minor requirement for Secondary Education students at Utah State, which means that many students will have one required clinical experience tied to a methods course. Composite majors will still have two clinicals, but we are looking at other options for student teachers that would allow for another clinical experience, especially for those who do not have a teaching minor or who are not composite teaching majors. One idea that has been considered is tying a clinical experience to the classroom management course with assignments that focus on Positive Behavior Intervention Supports and providing students an opportunity to observe master teachers who use positive classroom management strategies in their classrooms.

Special Education

In the birth-5 special education program, students used to have a preschool course and practicum in the fall semester and then an early intervention course and practicum in the spring semester, but we noticed students didn't have enough background to be able to make teaching decisions in a preschool setting. So, the special education faculty decided to switch the order so that students complete the early intervention practicum first, which better prepares them to write lesson plans and know the content for preschool practicum that occurs in the following semester. This change will take effect fall of 2018.

In the mild/moderate special education program, we recognized students need to be prepared to teach in a collaborative structure and need to learn how to manage the paraprofessional aides in the classroom. This is based on our own observation in addition to feedback we sought from LEAs and program graduates. In the past, students were placed alone in a resource room for their reading and math methods practicum placements. Now, two students will be placed together. Each student will attend practicum every day. On Mondays and Tuesdays, student 1 will teach and student 2 will provide meaningful feedback, on Wednesdays and Thursdays, student 2 will teach and student 1 will give meaningful feedback. On Fridays, the two students will co-teach. We believe that the time students spend observing and giving feedback will enhance their observation, understanding, and reflection on effective instruction and classroom management. In addition, frequent peer feedback will give students a better understanding of their teaching practices.

All of these changes to our students' clinical experiences are being continually monitored through student, faculty, and mentor teacher feedback along with formal documentation through practicum evaluations and assessments.

In response to our analysis of student outcomes and LEA suggestions we have strengthened our instruction on selecting and administering assessments and using assessment results for instructional planning and eligibility determinations. We added a stand-alone assessment course for the birth-5 special education program and added 1 additional credit to the assessment course for severe special education.

Item 3: Program Changes

Elementary Education

We have restructured the elementary education program to allow for students to begin the program without yet having passed the Praxis multiple subjects test. Students who have taken, but not yet passed, the Praxis multiple subjects test will be allowed to enter the "general studies lane" of the elementary education program. Students who have already passed the Praxis multiple subjects test will enter the "licensure lane." Licensure lane students will have priority registration so that they are not denied access to classes they need to complete the program and graduate. General studies students will have access to Praxis support and will be continually encouraged to move from the general studies lane to the licensure lane. General studies lane students will not student teach, nor be recommended for licensure, but they will graduate with a full complement of methods courses and other foundational teaching skills and pedagogical knowledge so that they might be hired by an LEA as an associate licensed teacher and be mentored as a new teacher by the LEA. Licensure lane students will complete an internship or student teaching and be recommended for licensure after successfully completing the student teaching/internship as well as the forthcoming pedagogical performance assessment.

Having two lanes led us to use the metaphor of a bridge as a conceptual framework for the elementary education program. Students who are in the licensure lane will also be able to take advanced courses at the master's level and work towards an endorsement. They will be able to use them in their bachelor's degree or set them aside using a split registration form and use them later in a master's degree after they graduate. Thus, they will have the opportunity to cross the bridge to professional practice. We seek to support prospective teachers to become teacher scholars who anchor their teaching in self-awareness, educational beliefs, understanding of child development, and cultural relevance as they learn and apply skills of collaboration, assessment, and differentiation.

We have also restructured the classroom management class so that it will be a 3-credit class instead of three 1-credit classes. The purpose for making this change is to provide a more focused and coherent set of research-based classroom management practices and skills that are grounded in positive behavioral intervention systems as well as appropriate and effective tier one strategies and systems. During student teaching, in the seminar course and in their placement, students will be expected to refer back to and use what they learned in the classroom management course.

[Secondary Education](#)

In secondary education, we are also trying to adjust to the new licensure landscape in Utah. In the past, we had courses at the 6000 level for ARL teachers and at the 5000 level for traditional undergraduate secondary teaching majors. This resulted in replication of curriculum and courses that did not take advantage of the useful cross-pollination of having prospective teachers and ARL teachers taking classes together. We have restructured the secondary pedagogy classes to allow for these students to take classes together, capitalizing on their shared perspective as new and developing teachers who are encountering for the first time the best practices and research on classroom management, diversity in the classroom, assessment and curriculum development, and integrating literacy strategies across the curriculum.

As has been planned for the elementary education program, the secondary level classroom management class has been updated and revised and connected to the student teaching seminar.

[Special Education](#)

See Item 3 above.

[Item 4: Program-identified Areas of Focus](#)

[Elementary and Secondary Education](#)

We recognize that we need to further the professional development that we provide to mentor teachers and supervisors in both the elementary and secondary teacher education programs. We are working with our partner districts to integrate this professional development for

mentor teachers into the beginning of the school year activities. Mentor teachers will be taught essential coaching skills, basics of the co-teaching model, and how to provide formative feedback to teacher candidates. For supervisors, we are seeking to provide additional training on our evaluation system and how to provide useful formative feedback.

We are seeking to choose or develop a dispositions assessment to use as part of the admissions process in both the elementary and secondary teacher education programs. We are working on deciding which dispositions we want to assess and the format for the assessment. This new, yet-to-be determined assessment will serve to supplement an already robust system for monitoring students who are not meeting (or are at risk of not meeting) the academic or professional expectations during all phases of our teacher education programs.

[Special Education](#)

Please see Item 2 above. Also, in general, we continue to focus on improving the quality of the program for preparing outstanding new special education teachers and increasing accessibility of our programs in underserved areas of the state and to non-traditional students who desire to become special education teachers.

We updated our final assessment of student teaching using the PAES (Utah Preservice Teacher Evaluation Rubric). We aligned the Utah Effective Teaching Standards with the Council for Exceptional Children Initial Level Special Educator Preparation Standards. The PAES allows our students to be evaluated on the same type of instrument that will be used in Utah once they are teaching.

We initiated a study of the relationship between a range of potential admission criteria and student performance in our program. We anticipate adjusting our admission standards based on this analysis.

We care about our students and we want them to be safe. Suicide is on the rise for teenagers and young adults. As a faculty we have invited the CAPS Office (Counseling and Psychological Services) and the SAAVI Office (Sexual Assault and Anti-Violence Information) into our major classes to provide information and help to our students.

[Item 5: Enrollment Requirement Waivers](#)

To qualify for a waiver for the ACT or GPA requirement, students must meet one or more of the following criteria.

- The candidate is a non-traditional student (25 or older)
- The candidate is the sole care-giver for a family member
- The candidate is from an underrepresented population in the teaching workforce
- The candidate is applying to a program to prepare them to meet a moderate shortage or critical shortage area according to the TH Bell critical shortage list
- The candidate's ACT scores that don't meet the minimum are outside of the content area in which the candidate is licensing

Finally, because we want to meet the workforce needs for teachers in Utah, at the end of the calendar year, if there are any unused waivers, students are allowed to apply for a limited number of slots using a lottery to decide who will be admitted.

For the period beginning August 1, 2017 and ending June 1, 2018, USU's teacher education programs approved 36 waivers (Elementary – 11 waivers; Secondary – 15 waivers; Special Education – 14 waivers). Both the Elementary and Secondary Education programs have fall and spring semester admission deadlines. Special Education has only one admission period during fall semester. The combined student admissions for Elementary, Secondary, and Special Education for the 2017-2018 academic year was 405.

Elementary Education – 11 waivers

- 8 were admitted because they were applying to a program that is a moderate critical shortage area
- 3 were admitted because they are from an underrepresented population (in this case, all were American Indian)

Secondary Education – 15 waivers

- 5 were admitted because they were non-traditional students
- 1 was admitted because the specific ACT score that didn't meet the minimum was outside the content area that she will be teaching
- 3 were admitted because they were applying to a program that is a moderate critical shortage area
- 1 was admitted because they were applying to a program that is a critical shortage area
- 3 were admitted in a lottery at the end of the calendar year

Special Education – 14 waivers

- All were admitted because they were applying to a program that is a critical shortage area