Championing Special Educators: Strategies for Recruitment & Retention in Educator Preparation

Session 1 – Multiple Pathways into the Profession

Check-In Question: What made you choose to be involved with Special Education?
Introductions

Wadé James, Ph.D.
Vice President, Organizational Advancement
AACTE

Brooke Evans, M.A.
Assistant Director, Research & Practice
AACTE

Sarah Haynes
Engagement Specialist, AIR/CEEDAR
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Oct. 31, 3-4 pm ET</td>
<td>Multiple Pathways Into the Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Nov. 30, 3-4 pm ET</td>
<td>Making a Special Education Degree Affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues, Jan. 23, 3-4 pm ET</td>
<td>Clinical Practice Experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Mar. 28, 3-4 pm ET</td>
<td>Special Education Candidate Wellness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, Apr. 25, 3-4 pm ET</td>
<td>Benefits of Special Education NIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs, May 2, 3-4 pm ET</td>
<td>Championing Special Education Through Advocacy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meeting Structure

Welcome & Introductions: 10 min
Example(s) in Action: 20 min
Breakout Groups: 15 min
Breakout Groups Share-out: 10 min
Final Thoughts: 5 min
Example/Exemplar

Elena Andrei, Ed.D.
Associate Professor
TESOL and DREAM Programs Coordinator
Cleveland State University

Claire E. Hughes, Ph.D.
Professor of Gifted,
Special and Twice-Exceptional Education
Cleveland State University
DREAM

A Dual Resident Educator Preparation Program

Levin College of Public Affairs and Education
DREAM is an inclusive residential educator preparation program at the graduate level that leads to two licensures, one endorsement, and a master’s degree.

- P-5 licensure
- Early Childhood Intervention Specialist (ECIS) licensure
- Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) endorsement
Inclusive

• Teachers are trained to teach in inclusive settings
• Teachers will be ready to teach students in the mainstream classroom, students with disabilities, and multilingual students identified as English learners
Residential

Each semester students have rotations or internships in conjunction with courses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 1 &amp; Seminar: Setting the Context (K-5 Placement*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotation 2 &amp; Seminar: Instruction and Assessment (K-5*)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship I: Practice and Professionalism (Pk/K - Severe Disabilities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship II: Teachers as Leaders (K-5*)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Inclusive classrooms that serve students identified as SPED and as ELs
DREAM

• Online
• Leverage students’ current classroom placements (if they are in a classroom - paras)
• Instructors (P-12 and EPP) have multiple credentials themselves (P-5 and SPED; SPED and TESOL)
Highlights

• Development and implementation has been a collaboration between EPP faculty and P-12 partners (placements, instructors, recruitment)
• DREAM unifies P-5, ECIS, and TESOL curricula
  • All courses integrate the 3 content areas
• Scholarship support
• Grant support
Time to Complete
6 semesters

Credits
22 courses totaling 66 credit hours
QUESTIONS

Elena Andrei, e.andrei@csuohio.edu
Claire Hughes, c.hugheslynch@csuohio.edu
Example/Exemplar

LeAnne Syring, Ph.D.
Coordinator & Associate Professor of Special Education Programming
Southwest Minnesota State University
Paraprofessional to Special Educator

~An unconventional path to preparing strong teaching professionals

www.SMSU.edu
Background

• Began as a grant-funded program in 2015
• Completely online
• First co-hort graduate class - four students
• Currently - 33 students enrolled in the program from across the state
Special Education: Academic Behavioral Strategist K-12

Mild to Moderate Range:
* Autism Spectrum Disorders
* Developmental Cognitive Disabilities
* Emotional Behavioral Disorder
* Learning Disabilities
* Other Health Disorders

Para-to-Sped Program

www.SMSU.edu
Para-to-Sped
Criteria

- Working Paraprofessionals
- Have an Associates of Arts degree
- Continue working as a para
- Extensive field experiences in their own school district
- Year-long student teaching mentorship
Student Centered

- Enroll in a co-hort of paraprofessionals
  - Begin to build their network
  - Small class sizes enhance collaboration and community building

- Online courses
  - Set their coursework time in their time

- One-on-one advising
  - A Special Education faculty mentor is assigned to each student

www.SMSU.edu
Support from Student’s School District

➢ Administrative Consent to be enrolled in the program
  ➢ Signed and dated by two district administrators
  ➢ Outline of the program and requirements

➢ Extensive field experience hours in students’ own district
  ➢ General education and special education placements K-12
  ➢ Apply learning directly to the classroom
Outcome

➢ Earned
  ➢ Bachelor of Science: Special Education

➢ Complete required courses for
  ➢ Minnesota Teaching license
    K-12 Special Education: Academic Behavioral Strategist

➢ Hours of practical in classroom experience
  resulting in a stronger teacher
What do graduates say about the program?

• “Entering the Para to Special Education Teacher Program was a great decision for me to make. I am able to work full-time as a para and part-time as a bus driver while taking 3 or 4 classes each semester. I'm married and have four children. The past three years have flown by. As a para, I thought I knew it all but, I've learned so much! SMSU and the school I work for have been very supportive. Everyone has been so willing to help make my dream come true!”
Para-to-Special Education Program

*Online but Never Alone*

Dr. LeAnne Syring

[LeAnne.Syring1@smsu.edu](mailto:LeAnne.Syring1@smsu.edu) or [SpecialEducation@smsu.edu](mailto:SpecialEducation@smsu.edu)
Breakout Groups

• In what ways are you leveraging partnerships or recruitment?
• How have you altered the traditional pathway to recruit more sped candidates?
• What populations have you been successful at recruiting?
Thank You

Next Session
November 30th, 3PM to 4PM ET
Disclaimer

This content was produced under U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, Award No. H325A220002. David Guardino serves as the project officer. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned in this website is intended or should be inferred.