



# MSU Professional Education Community Newsletter

**MSU Professional  
Education Community  
Newsletter**

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## College of Education Develops Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework states the unit's "intellectual philosophy" – the specifics of what the faculty believe about good teaching and learning. Because the conceptual framework reflects the unique thoughts and beliefs of the faculty at that particular institution, it tends to distinguish graduates of that institution from others. Further, it serves to provide direction for the development of programs, courses, teaching practices, performance assessments of candidates, practices and policies regarding service and scholarship, and accountability systems. Simply put, the conceptual framework should be reflected in both *what* happens and *how* things are done in the unit.

The development of the College of Education's conceptual framework, *Diverse learning communities: Nurturing all learners to their fullest potential*, began during a March 2002 retreat and was refined in department meetings and retreats during 2002 and 2003. The College of Education's conceptual framework is as follows:

Grounded in a vision of learning communities, the Professional Education unit has at its heart collaboration and connect-

edness to students, schools, neighborhoods, and society. To achieve this vision, the MSU graduate is a person of passion for and proficiency in content, with thoughtful and principled pedagogy, and a strong sense of educational purpose.

These educators possess the attributes, knowledge, and refined skills, including technology, to assist students and families to be successful. They see their own growth as a product of reflection about experience—always seeking answers to questions about student learning and development that begin with words such as "why," "how," and "what if." Similarly, these educators believe that student learning occurs in a cycle of experience, reflection, and reconceptualization—a process of seeking new knowledge that both fits into and changes existing understanding.

These educators value and have respect for diverse cultures and communities. They work to form broad-based, diverse learning communities. They foster a climate where respectful and enthusiastic conversation, collective consideration, and shared understandings emerge. They guide and nurture learners to

live in a diverse and open society. In these learning communities, understanding, honesty, openness, directness, and good will serve to move everyone forward.

The Professional Education unit and its graduates share with P-12 schools the responsibility for educating growing communities of color and English Language Learners. The focus of this responsibility is to help all students achieve the knowledge and skills needed to flourish as successful members of a pluralistic society.



Photo by John Cross

View of Armstrong Hall

## The Children's House Receives National Accreditation

**Sandra Jessen**  
Director, The Children's House

The Children's House has earned accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the nation's leading organization of early childhood professionals. This prestigious recognition has been achieved by approximately 8% of early childhood programs

nationwide.

NAEYC accreditation is a rigorous, voluntary process by which early childhood programs demonstrate that they meet national standards of excellence. In particular, The Children's House was commended for providing a curriculum that encourages children to be actively involved in the learning process,

by providing children with opportunities to explore many developmentally appropriate activities and materials and allowing children to make decisions in accordance with their own interests. We're proud of this accomplishment and extend thanks to all who made it happen!

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### Special points of interest for faculty:

- Document collection for NCATE begins
- The next NCATE retreat is March 24 in CSU 253/4/5.
- Missed the last NCATE retreat? Go to the College of Education website for an overview [www.coled.mnsu.edu](http://www.coled.mnsu.edu)
- Diversity Task Force studying issues related to teacher education
- Student teaching deadline for Fall 2004 is February 13, 2004

## Professor Appointed to Minnesota Board of Teaching, Elected Chair

Allen Hoffman of the Department of Educational Studies: K-12 and Secondary Programs, was appointed to the Minnesota Board of Teaching by former Governor Jesse Ventura in January 2001. There has consistently been an abundance of applicants from the Twin Cities area. This pattern changed somewhat as of June 2003. Of the four new appointees, three are from greater Minnesota. In his application, Professor Hoffman stressed his concern about the issues facing smaller school districts in greater Minnesota.

The Board is comprised of eleven members, six classroom

teachers, three community members (two of whom must be former school board members), one administrator and one professor involved in teacher training. The Board works with a variety of issues related to teacher licensure, including accrediting teacher training institutions, determining license types and changes brought about by new realities in schools, relicensure requirements, setting and monitoring PRAXIS test scores, granting permissions to teach outside of the scope of a license and teacher discipline.

In June of this year, Professor Hoffman was elected chair of

the Board of Teaching. This appointment has resulted in additional meetings and a greater time commitment in representing the Board among the various organizations with which it works.

Some of the "hot" topics on the Board's agenda include how No Child Left Behind legislation will play out in changing the credentialing of teachers, specifically how the definition of "highly qualified" will be defined and which body has the authority for credentialing new teachers in the state.

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## State Approves K-12 Reading Specialist Licensure at MSU

**Dr. Peg Ballard**  
Chair, Department of Educational Studies: Elementary and Early Childhood

The Department of Educational Studies: Elementary and Early Childhood is pleased to announce Board of Teaching approval of its new K-12 Reading Specialist licensure. This is a new licensure the state developed after having dropped three more narrow licensures in Reading.

Minnesota State University, Mankato is currently the only institution outside of the Metro area and the only institution in the Minnesota State Colleges & Universities System approved to offer this licensure.

Those who complete the program will be able to assist schools in successful implementation of instruction to support No Child Left Behind legislation and in helping improve students' performance on the Basic Skills Test

and the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments.

Students in the program will benefit by developing their own professional resource library in preparation for assisting teachers and students in their future roles as K-12 Reading Specialists. Students will also learn how to design workshops, presentations and staff development for a variety of audiences

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## PDS Responds to Districts' Needs

**Dr. Patricia Hoffman**  
Director, Center for School-University Partnerships

The Center for School-University Partnerships has as its predominant focus, Professional Development School activities that foster an array of collaborative partnerships between MSU's College of Education and P-12 partners in area school districts. The most prominent effort so far this year was the collaboration

with area educators to host our first PDS Regional Conference October 6. The conference was attended by 148 participants from 20 school districts and included P-12 administrators and ESL and classroom teachers, as well as students and faculty from MSU. The conference focus on English Language Learners was a direct response to conversations with PDS practitioners and administrators who were concerned about the impact of the

No Child Left Behind legislation on their school districts.

Another example of a direct response to school districts' staff development needs is a one-credit course offered through the Institute for Continuous Improvement taught by Dr. Jeffrey Pribyl of the Department of Chemistry and Geology with the assistance of Dr. Ronald Browne from the Department of

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*"This team is working ...to develop the districts' own capacities to gather, analyze, and interpret data that they can then use in decision making."*

Patricia Hoffman,  
Director, CSUP

## Longitudinal Study of Children's College and Career Aspirations Summary of First-Year Results

**Dr. Rick Auger and Dr. Anne Blackhurst,**  
Department of Counseling and Student Personnel

In partnership with Mankato Area Public Schools, researchers from Minnesota State University, Mankato initiated a 10-year longitudinal study of children's educational and career aspirations with students in the Mankato schools during 2000-2001. The intent of this study is to learn more about the manner in which students make decisions about their careers and their post-secondary educational plans and how factors such as gender expectations, family influences,

and knowledge about careers and college impact these decisions. The professional literature suggests children may make decisions about careers and college attendance as early as elementary school, often based on inadequate knowledge and unexamined assumptions. This study seeks to further explore these findings, with the goal of providing educators with information that would help them assist students in making the best possible decisions regarding college and career planning.

During the 2000-2001 school year students in first, third, and fifth grades were inter-

viewed about their career and college thoughts and plans. These students will be re-interviewed every two years, through their eleventh grade year. The second round of data collection took place during the 2002-2003 school year, when the students were in third, fifth, and seventh grades. Data from the second round of interviews are currently being analyzed.

Initial results suggest that students' thinking about future careers does not become more refined and specific as they progress through the elementary grades. In fact, there is some

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## MSU Representation for the Minnesota Licensing Collaboration for Educational Administration

Dr. Prudence Gushwa, Department of Educational Leadership, represents Minnesota State University, Mankato on the Minnesota Licensing Collaboration for Educational Administration. The collaboration meets twice a year with the Executive Director of the Board of Administrators. The group includes each Minnesota institution of higher education that offers one or more of the four administrative licensure programs. At this

time nine institutions are represented.

Also meeting with the collaboration are representatives from the Minnesota Department of Education and the professional organizations of the various administrators. The group's purpose is to remain updated on changes or proposed changes in the state, assist the Board of Administrators as needed, and collaborate on problems and

solutions related to licensing of K-12 Principals, Superintendents, Directors of Special Education, and Directors of Community Education.



Photo by Roberta McFall

## Leave a Legacy

Consider establishing an endowment in your name, or the name of a loved one, to help students in the College of Education. A named endowment is possible through a gift or bequest of \$50,000 or more. The interest accrued will be used to grow the endowment and to annually fund a scholarship or other purpose of your choice.

The College of Education would love to know of your intentions and to recognize you for your generosity! Please contact Bill Bernhagen, College of Education Development Director, at 507-389-6836. Bill and other experts at the University can help you plan for the interests of your heirs and the benefit of MSU students.

## Updates on Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Licensure and Master of Arts in Teaching Degree

### Dr. Scott Page

Graduate Coordinator, Department of Educational Studies: K-12 and Secondary Programs

Recruitment for the 2004-2005 Post-Baccalaureate Teacher Licensure (Rapid Response) cohort and the 2004-2006 Master of Arts in Teaching cohort is underway and faculty continue to refine both programs based on feedback from preceding cohorts. With every refinement, program strengths are solidified and areas of concern are addressed.

Candidates in the initial teacher licensure programs continually highlight the community of learners and Minnesota Stan-

dards of Effective Practice as program strengths. Assessment of candidate progress and coursework within the programs are designed around Minnesota Standards of Effective Practice. Therefore, throughout the licensure programs candidates are provided a variety of opportunities to discuss, model, document and reflect on the standards as applied to the coursework, the program, the K-12 environment, and the teaching profession.

A significant component of the MAT and Rapid Response programs, as indicated by students and faculty, is the development of a community of learners. This is accomplished by developing effective methods of

communication through team activities, course assignments, peer reviews, and cohort grouping. Beginning in fall 2004, MAT course offerings will be restructured so that all pedagogy courses will be taught Tuesday evenings in order to better serve our students and continue fostering learning communities.

Student feedback suggests three areas for program modification. First, candidates currently work with a paper portfolio. In the future, candidates will access an electronic portfolio, which will enable opportunities for continual feedback and comments from their instructors and

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## Board continued from page 2

In addition, applying new licensure standards to teachers prepared from out of state, and assessing work outside of the typical teacher training path in order to credential teachers in shortage areas are concerns with which the Board is working. Looking at changing licensure science is another area that must be seriously considered. Currently, the Board has a committee that is hard at work on this topic. Also, the Board is re-

sponding to the need for charter schools and Alternative Learning Centers to be in compliance with NCLB and the "highly qualified" definition with a committee looking at possible alternative licensure.

Professor Hoffman has been teaching in the KSP department since fall semester 2004. He has found that this understanding of the broader issues of teacher preparation and teacher

credentialing have helped immensely in his talks with new teachers coming into the field.

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including parents, para educators, and K-12 teachers.

The K-12 Reading Specialist students will also become members of the International Reading Association which will allow for their continued professional growth for years to come.

The K-12 Reading Specialist licensure program at MSU consists of five graduate courses (15 graduate credits) to be completed within 12 to 18 months.

The coursework may be used as the focus area of a master's degree or as a stand-alone licensure. Coursework may also be completed online.

The five program courses consist of foundations in reading, which involves students interacting with research-based best practices in reading instruction; administration and supervision of reading programs; effective research-based strategies for content areas; assessment and in-

struction for the struggling reader; and a practicum to support application of the knowledge, skills and dispositions of a K-12 Reading Specialist.

Persons interested in the K-12 Reading Specialist licensure should contact Dr. Peg Ballard, EEC Chair, at 507-389-1516 or [peggy.ballard@mnsu.edu](mailto:peggy.ballard@mnsu.edu).



Photo by John Cross

## Study continued from page 3

evidence that their career aspirations actually become less specified and less realistic as they get older. The implication is that there is a benefit to providing career development activities (which traditionally are provided by schools no earlier than middle school) in elementary school. These results indicate that many elementary-aged students are aspiring to gender-type occupations. The professional literature suggests that children may eliminate from consideration occupations that they consider inappropriate for their gender, and never reconsider those occupations. Career development activities in the elementary grades could assist students in consider-

ing a wider range of occupations, thereby maximizing their chances of eventually finding an occupation that is a good fit for their interests and abilities.

Further evidence for the importance of implementing career development activities at the elementary level is provided by the findings related to the students' educational aspirations. These findings suggest that by fifth grade, students have developed the conceptual framework necessary for understanding vocational preparation requirements. Nonetheless, fifth graders in the study were highly inaccurate in their assessment of the vocational preparation required for specific occupations. The

professional literature indicates that by the sixth or seventh grade, students begin adjusting their educational and occupational aspirations based on perceptions of how their own abilities mesh with the preparation requirements for particular jobs. Providing specific information about the vocational training required for various occupations is therefore not only developmentally appropriate, but also necessary if students are to formulate realistic and congruent educational and occupational goals.

*“The implication is that there is a benefit to providing career development activities...in elementary schools.”*

Dr. Rick Auger and  
Dr. Anne Blackhurst

## PDS continued from page 2

Educational Studies: Elementary and Early Childhood. Elementary teachers in a PDS partner site are meeting with the professors over the course of the year to develop age-appropriate curriculum that addresses the new science standards put forth by the state of Minnesota.

Finally, PDS districts identified data analysis expertise as a criteria needed. Dr. Mark Zunker from the Department of

Mathematics and Statistics along with Dr. Jean Haar from the Department of Educational Leadership and Dr. Dottie Engan-Barker from the Department of Educational Studies: K-12 and Secondary Programs will assist districts in identifying their specific needs in data analysis. This team of three is working with curriculum directors, administrators, and other selected school personnel in PDS districts to develop the districts' own ca-

pacities to gather, analyze, and interpret data to allow for data-driven decision making. Data Analysis for School Professionals is being offered through ICI spring semester 2004 for P-12 educators.

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peers. A second area being modified is K-12 clinical and field experiences. The Department of Educational Studies: K-12 and Secondary Programs is currently completing a plan for a K-12 mentorship program. The mentorship program pairs each candidate entering the MAT program with a K-12 mentor teacher in his/her content area. Working with the mentor and MSU faculty throughout the program, each candidate com-

pletes and reflects on a variety of tasks in the K-12 setting. This innovative approach provides candidates both depth and breadth in an on-going field experience and challenges the candidates to apply the standards in an actual classroom.

Distance education is the third program area under modification. Presently, our candidates come from all areas of the country, as far as California, Alaska, and Maine. To better serve our

candidates, faculty are committed to developing a series of hybrid courses allowing candidates to take a portion of the coursework online. It is our goal to provide a quality graduate teacher licensure program that builds on our strengths and continually strives to improve in order to meet the future needs of education as we prepare the teachers of tomorrow.

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## Course Provides Service-Learning Experience for Students

**Dr. Darrol Bussler**

Department of Educational Studies: K-12  
and Secondary Programs

Service-Learning has become a method for many teachers to integrate active learning into their teaching. All undergraduate teacher candidates at Minnesota State University experience Service-Learning early in their professional program through the course "Human Relations in a Multicultural Society" where students complete a minimum of 18 hours of service in the community. Over 40 area agencies partner with MSU in providing Service-Learning sites.

Students are asked to rank their comfort with eight societal groups experiencing oppression in U.S. culture: age, ability, gender, class, sexual orientation, religion, race and ethnicity. Comfort is defined as having had experience with members of the group, having knowledge about the group, and/or being comfortable in their presence. Students place themselves in a community agency that serves people with whom they are uncomfortable.

Students consistently report that Service-Learning is one of the most effective ways in which they have addressed their own discrimination and oppression.

## From the Dean

It is with great pride that we offer an update on activities and accomplishments of the College of Education at Minnesota State University, Mankato. Our connections with you are important in building an ever-growing professional education community. We plan to use this newsletter, a number of electronic means, and regular meetings of several formal and informal advisory bodies to strengthen collaborations with students, alumni, and partners.

The College has accomplished much this past fall. We are considering and pursuing ways to live our mission more fully as we strive to help children, families, and communities to succeed and thrive. We have shaped a conceptual framework that helps us to define how we

work and who we are. This framework (provided on page one) guides us to build community, use principled reflection in order to improve, and to think and work inclusively to advance learning for all children and youth. This effort has clarified our thinking about what we teach, how we teach, how our processes and procedures operate, and how we relate with one another. It is helping us to change.

The College finds itself in a context of unprecedented accountability, competition, and change. We are responding assertively! We are building and using a unique, interactive system of databases to use assessment data to understand and improve our programs. We are, together with school partners,

assuming a greater degree of ownership of the responsibility for kids' success. We are using our resources for capacity-building in the form of partnership development, professional development, and support for faculty creativity. The College is finding new ways to customize the focus and delivery of our offerings in order to better meet the educational needs of educators, schools, organizations, and communities in the region. Finally, we are finding new ways to have a strong voice in professional and legislative policy-making.

I trust that you'll find this edition interesting. Ultimately we hope for more -- your support, your partnership, and your involvement. Happy New Year!



Photo by Agnes Lumenta

Dr. Michael Miller, Dean  
College of Education

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The information in this newsletter will be made available in alternative format, such as large print or on cassette tape, upon request to the College of Education  
507-389-5445 (voice), 800-625-3529 or 711 (MRS/TTY).

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