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**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
CAEP ACCREDITATION COMMITTEE**

***Administrator, Mentor Teacher, and
Early Service Teacher Focus Groups Report***

November 2020

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Problem

Frostburg State University's (FSU) College of Education program is guided by the Counsel for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards. The department staff pursues accreditation of all Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) programs by evaluating educational methods and outcomes to ensure expectations of all stakeholder groups are met. To address Standard 4.3: Satisfaction of Employers and Standard 4.4: Satisfaction of Completers, the department staff appointed three doctoral students to conduct a research project to identify the strengths and weaknesses of student preparation for teaching.

Process

Members of the FSU CoE faculty met with a group of students from the 2018 FSU Ed.D. cohort to explore ways to gather data to show how FSU meets the identified CAEP standards. A list of generic topics was identified, then a series of questions was created targeted to each of three focus groups. Focus group participants also responded to a series of demographic questions prior to the group sessions. Three virtual focus group sessions were held, each of which was recorded with participants' permission.

Based on recommendations made in the initial report, an additional set of focus groups was identified in an attempt to meet two goals. The first goal was to gather similar data for each of the graduate-level programs offered by the CoE, resulting in two additional focus groups consisting of advisory committee members for each program. The second goal was to identify a group of FSU graduates who received their education more recently, after a series of changes were made to the curriculum and overall structure of the undergraduate program. The

demographics survey and focus group questions were adapted to address the difference in focus group membership.

Results

Focus group sessions were transcribed by third-party transcription services. Transcription analysis revealed several themes that were common across all focus groups. Generally speaking, FSU CoE students are good at developing classroom management strategies and creating engaging individual lesson plans. They are also reflective and interested in personal and professional growth.

Recommendations

Several areas for improvement were identified, including a general need to enhance students' fund of knowledge in communication, long-range planning, pedagogical strategies. Other recommendations include providing more opportunities for diverse internship experiences, and additional didactic instruction in student behavior.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Internship

1. Serious consideration should be given to the process of how interns are placed with mentor teachers. All three focus groups had significant concerns on placement of interns. District content supervisors, who know all the teachers in the district, need to be involved in this process to ensure that interns are placed with strong teacher mentors.
2. Create a mechanism to improve communication between FSU CoE faculty and school system mentors. Changes to experiential guidelines, such as might be contained in a handbook, should be communicated expeditiously to affected mentors. Informal outreach (e.g., email) should suffice for changes that occur with short notice, but all changes must eventually be communicated in written form (e.g., handbook updates) to maintain accountability. Improvements should address communication between main campus and USMH as well.
3. New teachers should have a certain level of comfort communicating with parents from the first day on the job. The mentors would like to see a formal learning objective related communicating with parents during internship. Methods of communication continue to evolve, and should include telephone, email, Dojo, or any other method sanctioned by the school system (access to which may be understandably restricted).
4. Although the ability of FSU CoE students to reflect is a strength of the program, it is recommended that learning objectives regarding reflection should be a part of the internship. The specific recommendation here involved a reflection after each lesson, and at the end of the unit. *(The scope of the term “unit” is unclear. ‘Unit’ may refer to a group of related lessons presented by the intern-as-teacher, or the end of the internship for intern-as-student.)*

Additionally, it was felt that a video recording during the final internship would help create more coachable teachers.

Pre-Service Education Courses

1. The CoE should continue to emphasize and expand courses and opportunities which allow interns to learn about current challenges students face, being culturally aware, and introducing and incorporating social justice into their everyday practices. Specifically, early-service teachers spoke highly of the course EDUC 310: Social Justice and Diversity in Education.
2. Mentors were unanimous in the recommendation to offer FSU CoE interns more diverse experiences. The CoE should continue to require and expand opportunities for students to get out into a variety of school settings and observe prior to their internship experience. Specifically, opportunities which were mentioned include:
 - a. Taking mini trips as a part of education courses to see local classrooms of exemplar teachers, in which the professor/instructor attends with the students and is able to debrief the observation with the students and exemplar teacher.
 - b. Experience in Baltimore City Schools
 - c. Experience through EDUC 310 in which students travel to Philadelphia to observe school urban, non-traditional school settings.
 - d. Exposure across multiple grades
 - e. Title I vs. non-Title I schools
3. FSU interns require more support in concepts related to long-range planning and backward mapping. Consider incorporating the Understanding by Design (UBD) model into curriculum relating to long-range lesson planning.

4. FSU interns and graduates require more instruction and practice on Universal Design of Learning (UDL). UDL is not the same as differentiation. UDL is about being proactive and differentiation is about being reactive.
5. To help reduce early burnout, guidance should be provided regarding over-committing to activities, projects, and additional formal education during a teacher's early-career years.
6. FSU CoE students should receive more instruction covering specific behaviors that may be encountered in the classroom, especially those that may require support outside the classroom. Instruction should cover the following topics:
 - a. Different types of behaviors
 - b. Why these behaviors may occur (social-emotional, trauma, etc)
 - c. Who to ask for help with a specific behavior (e.g., guidance counselor, school psychologist, social worker, etc.)
 - d. Tier I-III behaviors and support
 - e. De-escalation strategies
 - f. Restorative practices
7. Students should receive education in trauma and mental health issues, and how these and other issues may present in the classroom.
8. Pre-service teachers need more instruction on support strategies for special education students. While they feel that their knowledge of the law and special education terms is strong, pedagogical knowledge and strategies on how to support these students is needed.

PRE-FOCUS GROUP SURVEY – SUMMARY

Administrator and M.Ed. Advisory

Demographics

Total Participants: 8

Sex

- Male: 6
- Female: 7

Type of Administrator

- District Head of Elementary Education: 1
- District Head of Secondary Education: 1
- District Special Education Leader: 1
- District Content Supervisor: 3
- Principal: 6
 - Elementary: 3
 - Middle: 1
 - High: 2

School System

- Allegany County Public Schools (MD): 8
- Frederick County Public Schools (MD): 2
- Garrett County Public Schools (MD): 2
- Washington County Public Schools (MD): 2

Average Number of Years in Education: 24 years

Collegiate Education

Institution from Which Bachelors Was Earned

- Frostburg State University: 7
- Gannon University: 1
- Hood College: 1
- University of Maryland, College Park: 1
- SUNY Oswego: 1
- Susquehanna University: 1
- Towson University: 1

Institution from Which Masters Was Earned

- Frostburg State University: 7
- Hood College: 2
- McDaniel University: 1
- University of Virginia: 1
- West Virginia University: 1

Institution from Which Doctorate Was Earned

- Frostburg State University: 4
- Notre Dame University of Maryland: 1

- University of West Georgia: 1
- Northcentral University: 1
- University of Virginia: 1
- West Virginia University: 1

Employment Milestones

Most common path of those surveyed:

- Classroom Teacher
- Assistant Principal
- District Supervisor OR Principal
- District Director/Asst. Superintendent

Special Recognitions Received

- MD Biology Teacher of the Year
- Garrett County Teacher of the Year
- MD Teacher of the Year Finalist
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- Ray Kroc Teacher Achievement
- USA Today Third Teacher Team
- Christa McAuliffe Fellow
- Manekin Grant Recipient
- Governor's Academy Attendee
- Delta Kappa Gamma
- Oakland Elk's Teacher of the Year
- MIT Instructor Award
- ISEF Outstanding Educator
- Phi Eta Sigma Outstanding Educator
- Hood Distinguished Instructor,
- MD Science Center Outstanding Instructor
- Arts in Education in Maryland Schools (AEMS) state Educational Distinguished Leadership Award (2015)
- Outstanding Administrator in Gifted Education/MSDE

High Needs School

- All building administrators in this focus group serve in high needs schools.

Meeting School-Wide Improvement Targets

- High School Administrator
 - Some have been met and others not. Graduation/drop out rates met. Truancy rates not. Suspension rates not. ELA met. Math not. All based on the MSDE targets set forth.
 - Yes. Although we did not complete the end-of-year summative evaluation due to COVID-19, we were well on our way to meeting our set objectives (4) and

completing many of the goals that we had established for our school. We were not required to complete the end-of-year so I am really excited to see our data, evaluate our progress, and develop our 2020-2021 plan.

- Yes: Literacy eRi increase, AP pass rate increased
- Elementary Administrator
 - Strategies are written that include all grades working simultaneously to achieve. Professional development is based on student needs as well as offering professional development to the entire school and are often individualized to specific teachers. Data is collected, analyzed and changes are made in instruction.
 - Yes. Although we did not complete the end-of-year summative evaluation due to COVID-19, we were well on our way to meeting our set objectives (4) and completing many of the goals that we had established for our school. We were not required to complete the end-of-year so I am really excited to see our data, evaluate our progress, and develop our 2020-2021 plan.
 - Yes, we have improved our attendance rate slightly and have drastically cut down on behavior referrals through the use of student supports, the PBIS program, rewards and incentives, and data meetings. Additionally, we have increased the number of students reading on grade level across all levels in our school, especially in the intermediate grades. This is a goal in our school improvement plan. Our PARCC/MCAP scores have risen each year I have been the principal here.

Evaluation Rating for 2019-2020 School Year

For the 2019-2020 School Year - What Evaluation Rating Did Your Receive? (If COVID prevented these, use those from 2018-2019)

- All earned Highly Effective

In your annual evaluation, what were the areas of strength that were mentioned?

- Organizational skills and ability to complete tasks without direction, high expectations of own performance and of students (others), collaboration with others
- Communication, Vision, Relationships, Being Proactive, Student Success
- Leadership coaching, professional development, instructional leadership, curriculum implementation and data driven decision making
- Ethics, equity and cultural responsiveness, support of students, building teacher professional capacity, and managing school operations.

In your annual evaluation, what were the areas for growth that were mentioned?

- Seeking out others and delegating responsibilities as needed, improvements to coaching and mentoring of subordinates when in supervisory position, management of budget items
- Time Balance

- Building culture (brand new school), family involvement, communication
- None. I received all effective and highly effective scores. First year in my 2nd principalship

Data on Positive Impact

For those in school buildings: Do you have any data (for example, PARCC) that provide evidence of a positive impact on student achievement in your classroom? If so, please elaborate on that.

- Yes, both AP data, CTE and PLTW data, and PARCC or MDCCRS data have all shown that our teachers (and myself when I was in the classroom at the same high school where I am AP) use data for goal setting and development of SLOs. As a result of our hard work, our data led us to achieve MD Blue Ribbon School Status and then National Blue Ribbon School Status in 2013. With the transitions in state testing, etc. it has been more difficult to follow trends over the past few years but our NHS data has always been excellent for the student population we serve - nearly 50% free and reduced meal status in a community with fewer than 20% having beyond a four year degree.
- Yes, I have data on the number of students needing interventions., reading on grade level, and standardized test scores that show positive momentum and increases in our results.
-

Teacher

Demographics

Total Participants: 16

Sex

- Male: 3
- Female: 13

School System

- Allegany County Public Schools (MD): 5
- Baldwin County Public Schools (AL): 1
- Baltimore County Public Schools (MD): 1
- Frederick County Public Schools (MD): 1
- Garrett County Public Schools (MD): 1
- Howard County Public Schools (MD): 1
- Washington County Public Schools (MD): 7

Grade Level(s) Taught

NOTE: Some teachers, teach multiple grade levels.

- Elementary: 16
 - Pre-Kindergarten: 3
 - Kindergarten: 3
 - 1st: 3
 - 2nd: 4
 - 3rd: 8
 - 4th: 2
 - 5th: 3
- Middle: 0
- High: 1
 - 9th: 0
 - 10th: 1
 - 11th: 1
 - 12th: 1

Average Number of Years in Education

- Early Service: 4.1 years
- Mentor Teachers: 21.6 years

Certification Areas

- Early Childhood Education (PreK-3): 12
- Elementary Education (1-6): 12
- Middle School ELA (4-9): 1
- Middle School Mathematics (4-9): 1
- Middle School Social Studies (4-9): 1

- Secondary Social Studies (7-12): 1
- PK-12 Physical Education: 1

Collegiate Education

Institution from Which Bachelors Was Earned

- Bloomsburg University: 1
- Frostburg State University: 12
- North Carolina Central University: 1
- Towson State University: 1
- University of Maryland – Baltimore County: 1
- University of Pittsburgh: 1

Institution from Which Masters Was Earned

- Frostburg State University: 9
- Hood College: 1
- Loyola University: 1
- Mansfield University: 1
- Towson State University: 1

Preparation for Classroom Post-Bachelors (Early Service Teachers)

After graduating from your bachelor's institution, how prepared did you feel to begin teaching during your first year?

Scale – 1 Least Prepared to 5 Most Prepared

- 5: 2
- 4: 5

Why did you answer the last question the way that you did?

- Pathways 2 professions really prepared me.
- The internships through FSU were paramount in preparing my classroom and I often refer back to what professors taught me when situations arise.
- As a graduate of FSU, I felt prepared to enter the classroom as a new teacher. However, I quickly realized that being a classroom teacher is quite different than being a student-teacher in terms of expectations and responsibilities. I rated a four because I recognize that while I was well prepared, there were many things that I learned as an early career educator.
- Served as substitute teacher throughout college. Extra experience in schools gave me added confidence.
- Teaching requires experience. While I felt knowledgeable and prepared to teach, I felt overwhelmed in the everyday tasks of a teacher. There is a lot more to teaching than just teaching. All of the extra: communicating with families, IEP's, 504's, behavior issues, committees, grading, organization, etc. took time to adapt and grow accustomed to.
- Having completed my internships in WCPS classrooms allowed for me to be familiarized with their curriculum and expectations. I do wish that I would have had more experience working with the Danielson Framework.

- After graduating and starting my first teaching job, there was A LOT to learn. This just comes with the job though; not necessarily to do with how FSU prepared me.

Serving in High Needs School

- Yes: 9
- No: 8

Final Evaluation Rating for the 2019-2020 School Year

Early Service Teachers

- Allegany County Public Schools (MD): 2
 - Highly Effective: 1
 - Effective: 1
- Baldwin County Public Schools (AL): 1
 - 1-4 Scale Utilized (4 Highest)– Participant Average was 3.8%
- Baltimore County Public Schools (MD): 1
 - Highly Effective: 1
- Garrett County Public Schools: 1
 - Highly Effective: 1
- Howard County Public Schools (MD): 1
 - Highly Effective: 1
- Washington County Public Schools (MD): 2
 - Distinguished: 2

Mentor Teachers:

- Allegany County Public Schools (MD): 3
 - Highly Effective: 2
 - Effective: 1
- Washington County Public Schools (MD): 6
 - Distinguished: 5
 - Proficient: 1

Areas of Strength as Noted by Supervisor in Most Recent Observation/SLO

NOTE: These are verbatim from written submissions to the survey

Early Service Teachers

- Great questioning skills, positive environment , data driven lessons
- I have received compliments from my administrators regarding planning, providing new ideas for students, and my willingness to engage in professional learning.
- Relationships w/ students
- “Great classroom community and wonderful rapport with students.” “Incorporates PBL’s, STEAM appropriately and effectively creating high engagement.” “Highly effective reading teacher - uses balanced literacy and guided reading effectively.” “Positive, hard-working, and shows leaderships amongst colleagues.”
- Involvement in school and WCPS learning community, risk-taking, student-led classroom and discussions, integration of tech and literacy, use of assessment and small groups to enhance learning.

- "Mrs. Ash is an exceptional educator. She is an integral part of the learning community. Mrs. Ash contributes to the Schoolyard Committee, Professional Learning Community, and other school based committees. She is a reflective decision maker and a continuous learner. Mrs. Ash is a leader." "Ms. Ash does a very good job with classroom management. The students are very familiar with the class expectations and are very well behaved. Ms. Ash does a great job of making sure that all students are involved in the discussion and praises students for their good answers. She does a good job of moving around to be in proximity to students that may not be as focused as the other students." "It is clear that classroom procedures and behavior expectations are held to a high standard in this classroom. Ms. Ash frequently provides feedback on behavior and praises students for being on task and working well within the process." "If we had the ability to clone an exceptional teacher, it would be Mrs. Ash. Her ability to differentiate to meet individual student needs and at the same time plan highly rigorous lessons displays the characteristics of a devoted educator. Mrs. Ash has actively participated in professional development opportunities. In May she attended Common Ground. Early this year she attended a professional development offered by the Appalachian Lab in Frostburg where she researched and created lessons to implement in the classroom. Mrs. Ash is a reflective decision making time to research, read and ask for feedback to improve her instruction and grow as an educator. Her professionalism and love for her students and school is contagious."

Mentor Teachers

- Instructional time is maximized due to efficient and seamless classroom routines and procedures. Students take initiative in the management of instructional groups and transitions, and/or the handling of materials and supplies. Routines are well understood and may be initiated by students. Classroom interactions between the teacher and students and among students are highly respectful, reflecting genuine warmth, caring, and sensitivity to students as individuals. The teacher links the instructional purpose of the lesson to the larger curriculum; the directions and procedures are clear and anticipate possible student misunderstanding. The teacher's explanation of content is thorough and clear, developing conceptual understanding through clear scaffolding and connecting with students' interests.
- Able to differentiate PD for staff.
- Classroom behavior management is good, metacognition is evident, good use of groupings, well prepared
- For my final evaluation I was praised for my relationship building, instructional delivery variety, and student engagement.
- Rapport with the children, differentiation, knowing the needs of my students
- Supportive of new initiatives, provides team/school leadership role, mentors new teachers and interns, uses assessments to inform instruction, plans effectively in the long and short term, commendable classroom management style, organized and deliberate in planning and carrying out lesson plans, seeks to instruct according to individual student needs

Areas for Growth as Noted by Supervisor in Most Recent Observation/SLO

NOTE: These are verbatim from written submissions to the survey

Early Service Teachers

- Giving students more responsibility in the classroom

- I am to refer to and mention the content, language, and social purposes repeatedly throughout a lesson, not just at the beginning and end.
- My supervisors have suggested behavior management as an area of growth.
- Integrating technology
- Math instruction and incorporating guided math as it is ruled out by the county.
- Student-led assessment and data collection
- Giving students time to self-assess their learning.

Mentor Teachers

- I need to work towards having students take more ownership for their learning through the use of learning goals and success criteria. Continue to ask higher level questions. Encourage students to give each other feedback on their work and work in cooperative groups.
- Continue to learn about use of management, specifically funds.
- Grow in knowing district systems and funding.
- To allow more student-led discussions
- Timing; I'm terrible about tangents. It happens mostly with current events discussions, so it's still relevant but sometimes I go down the rabbit hole with the kids.

Data Providing Evidence of a Positive Impact on Student Achievement

NOTE: These are verbatim from written submissions to the survey

Early Service Teachers

- My scores doubled on the PARCC
- We use Scantron testing. Most students grew at least one- two quartiles from fall to winter. We were unable to see the end growth due to COVID.
- Only teaching 2nd grade, we utilize Previ Learn assessments and county-based "checkpoints" to gauge student achievement. I do have those as I used them to monitor my SLO.
- As a grade level, my students have improved within the last school year in Math and Reading based on data collected from a program we use called the Reading and Math Inventory.

Mentor Teachers

- Yes, our school grew in every area on PARCC in 2018-2019 and had 5 All-Time Highs.
- All-time highs in 5 PARCC areas in 2018-2019
- My third grade students showed growth over the previous third grade on PARCC.
- AP Scores: I have tripled enrollment in my course in the past three years and still seen overall scores increase. My department has an 89% Gov HSA pass rate.
- All of my ELL children (without receiving specific ELL services) tested out of qualifying for ELL services when entering kindergarten. So the language and print rich PreK classroom environment and instruction helped them learn English. 80% of my PreK children were above grade level for reading instruction leaving PreK.
- First grade assessments are either county or personal classroom assessments, both formal and informal. Some examples include: daily data collection from individual reading/writing conferences, running records taken from increasingly more difficult reading texts per individual student, "Superkids" unit and end of year assessments, iReady math assessments, and county reading and math benchmarks.

Awards and Recognitions

Early Service Teachers

- Teachers are Hero's Award
- HCPSS Celebrates - Recognition Award
- Teacher of the Quarter (2016,2017)

Mentor Teachers

- National Board Certification
- Teacher of the Year

COMMON THEMES AMONG THE FOCUS GROUPS

Classroom Management

- They are just as well prepared, or better, than any other graduates; however, this is a skill that can really only be learned in the classroom.
- Teachers need more background in trauma/social-emotional background of students, as well as Tier 1-3 behaviors and interventions for those.
- Early teachers do not feel prepared for managing classroom behaviors of challenging students.
- Early teachers do not know the resources they have (both staff and community based) to help students, i.e. social workers, counselors, etc.

Communication Skills with Teachers, Administrators and Parents

- Graduates are well versed in Maryland law, expectations, and standards (“speaking the language”)
- Good with code-switching – communicating effectively depending on the group they are with (parents, colleagues, students, etc.)
- Good understanding with how to be professional with those they are communicating with
- There should be a requirement for communicating with parents (with the mentor teacher’s guidance) as a part of the internships so that they can practice.
- Communication skills were acquired by graduates, not from their education classes, but from other work like summer camps, etc.

Willingness to Get Involved with Initiatives and Take on Leadership

- Graduates are very willing to step up and get involved in school and district-based activities.
- Often, they over commit themselves. They need to understand that it's okay to say "no" and when to do that.
- Almost all of the administrators in Allegany and Garrett counties are FSU graduates. Many in Washington County are as well.

Challenges/Weaknesses of FSU Graduates

- Graduates are good at creating individual lesson plans, but not necessarily long-range planning.
- Often graduates will add fun/engaging activities, but they are not clearly connected to the lesson objectives.
- Graduates understand the special education laws, but they are not taught strategies for working with these student populations, which they will most definitely have in their classrooms.

Strengths of FSU Graduates

- Graduates are reflective, coachable, and interested in personal and professional growth.
- They are good team players.
- They are willing to step up and take on coaching and advisor roles and other things that are needed in the school community.

Utilization of Ed. Tech

- They are well versed in different technologies and often introduce new technologies to school and to more experienced teachers.
- Sometimes, graduates get wrapped up in the technology of a lesson, losing focus on the learning of the lesson. Great technology doesn't necessarily mean great or better teaching.

Strengths of Early Service Teachers from Administrative/Mentor Perspective

- Willingness to seek out and accept feedback.
- Bringing new technology and ideas to the school and experienced teachers.
- Willing to jump into teams, committees, and initiatives of the school community.
- Willing to get involved in the school community, extra-curricular activities, etc.
- Strong content knowledge.

Strengths of College of Education Program from Early Service Teacher Perspective

- Preparation for the interview process and obtaining a job.
- Reading/literacy instruction, strategies, and pedagogy
- Lesson planning and preparation.
- Integration of technology.
- Professors utilized personal teaching experiences to help prepare teacher interns.
- Professors asked student opinions and was always professional with students.
- Dr. Eirich takes her students into the field multiple times during her classes to observe excellent teachers. This was one of the most helpful parts of the program.

- Partnership with Coppin State which allows students to experience urban school settings.

Weaknesses of the College of Education Program

- Teaching strategies and pedagogy for special education students. Graduates know the law, but don't have the strategies to work with these students.
- Graduates need more preparation in communicating with parents, especially in challenging situations.
- Graduates are not trained in de-escalation, RTI, Tier 1-3 behaviors and interventions, social-emotional and trauma background of students, which significantly hinder their classroom management abilities.
- Often, the College of Education will change requirements or expectations (I.e. Mentor Handbook), but this is not effectively communicated to teachers and administrators, so they are blindsided by the student interns who inform them of these changes.
 - Mentors and administrators need to be involved in the process of changing requirements, expectations, etc. of the internship so that they can share their perspective from the schools as well as be aware of the changes occurring.
- All three focus groups brought up significant concerns about the placement of interns, without being asked a specific question on this topic.
 - Content supervisors and building administrators need to be involved in this process to ensure that interns are placed with strong teacher mentors. Often, they are being placed with teachers who are not strong instructionally or a good example of what a good teacher is.

- Supervisors know all of the teachers in the content area in the entire county. They observe them and oversee them, and as a result know the best teacher placements. They should be involved in that process.

SPECIFIC THEMES FROM EACH FOCUS GROUP

Administrator and M.Ed. Advisory Focus Group

Effective classroom management

- Intern placement negative impacts student teachers ability to learn classroom management. Need to ensure they are with teachers who have strong teaching skills and teach a variety of levels of classes
- Student teachers need more instruction on social emotional aspects of our students and that many of them have trauma coming to school.
- Classroom management for beginning teachers is probably the area that needs the most work regardless of where they graduate from
- Graduates need to know what tier one, two, and three instruction looks like as well as the interventions that go with them.
- Sometimes there are issues with teachers as an authority figure and teachers as a friend.
- It would be good if interns had more opportunities in city schools, such as South Hagerstown, because the management problems are so very different from other schools.
- Interns and new teachers are prepared for effective classroom management to some degree, but not entirely until they have the chance to learn from the actual classroom experience.
- Current focus is to prepare students for growth during the actual classroom experience.

Social and communication skills with teachers, parents, and administrators.

- One thing that's noticeable from Frostburg grads compared to other schools is that they speak the "language." They are well versed in Maryland law, expectations, and standards.
 - Often the graduates are very solid in content knowledge, but not in pedagogical knowledge like UDL and the gradual release of responsibility.
 - There's too much emphasis at FSU on differentiated instruction and not enough on universal design of learning. They are similar, but not the same. UDL is about being proactive and differentiation is about being reactive.
 - Under virtual learning, student teachers are having more opportunities to communicate with teachers, which is good.
 - Interns and new teachers are generally rated high on professional disposition
 - Faculty strive to set the example
 - Relationship boundaries between students/mentors/supervisors are discussed but interns so they are prepared to learn constructively in the classroom.
 - Interns are often intimidated by communication with parents. They ask numerous questions about various possible scenarios.
 - Interns often communicate well with students.
 - Administration and mentors are often hesitant to permit intern/parent communication for fear of repercussion from unfavorable management of the situation.
 - Virtual learning provides more intern/parent communication opportunities
 - Additional opportunities for experience of intern/parent communication is needed.
- Current preparation is mostly from class simulations

Willingness to get involved in initiatives, becoming leaders in the school and district committees or collaborative teams.

- FSU grads are always willing to jump into committees and teams.
- It's more about their personality, it's more about who they are as individuals and not about the training they were given or the expectation

Challenges that administrators encounter with FSU graduates.

- If they need support in their early service years, they need to come to their colleagues and ask for it.
- Sometimes the mentor teacher gives them suggestions on how to improve, but the interns don't heed it.
- Major problems with student intern placement. Content supervisors and building administrators need to be involved in this process to ensure that interns are placed with strong teacher mentors.
- Supervisors know all of our content areas, we have some exceptionally gifted and talented teachers that would be fabulous for an intern to learn under and sometimes it seems like we're kind of scratching our heads like, "Well, gee, why did so-and-so get an intern when such-and-such in the building across the street, or even three classrooms down, would be a much better fit."
- They have little background in English as a Second Language, which is something that they will most likely encounter in Washington and Frederick counties.
- Interns often struggle to meet the demands of teaching; therefore, recruitment and retention of candidates is often a challenge.

- There is a noticeable decline in work ethic of both groups (possibly generational). More specifically pertaining to unwillingness to give extra time outside of a typical 9-5 work time. Additionally, the quality of work could be better sometimes.
- Preconceived assumption they already know the technology being used; however, they often do not.
- Virtual challenge for interns to stay engaged while having to watch mentors teach in an online environment.

Strengths of FSU graduates

- Grads are always willing to coach, to be an advisor, or step in, in other roles in the school community. It's always better to have your coaches and advisors on staff.
- Frostburg graduates are much more likely to be involved.
- "Out of the 18 candidates we put through screening interviews, probably half were Frostburg State University graduates and, honestly, if we had a position for each of those Frostburg State University graduates"
- 2020 candidates were the strongest teacher job candidates that we've ever had.
- They are generally so excited and ready to do more and more, which changes the atmosphere of the school.
- They have positive attitude and good work ethic.

Interest in leadership roles within the school

- Almost all the administrators in the county are FSU grads.
- Same with Dept. Chairs and teacher leaders in the school.

Preparation to utilize educational technology and ability to adapt to new technology

- Our young teachers are the most technologically capable. They just go and start doing things with technology.
- Younger graduates have been the “gas to the flame” for encouraging and promoting educational technology.
- They often show veteran teachers new technologies.
- They have noticed that new teachers this year, under virtual learning due to COVID, are especially strong in this area, which is of great help.

Coming to administrators when they’re unsure about what to do in a difficult situation

- They often try to handle it on their own and then they go to either their grade level team and then they’ll come to an administrator.

General strengths and weaknesses seen in teacher evaluations (observations, SLOs, etc.)

- They legitimately want to improve.
- They are not set in their ways and they are willing to change.
- “Sometimes I will give two or three developing’s (rating) during that first observation, and then when I go back in the springtime, I want to see that that has been corrected, and honestly, 99% of the time, it has been. And that's just not a dog and pony show on that day because sometimes I will stop in there, and you can tell”
- Interns and new teachers both value feedback and are willing to improve
- Interns tend to have high expectations for themselves so are often disappointed with evaluation; however, they are provided the explanation that experience is often needed to be at the same skill level as their mentors.

Completer (Early Service) Focus Group

Preparation for effective classroom management strategies.

- Internships more beneficial than coursework
 - Application was key
 - Lose it if you don't use it
- Positive influence from mentor teachers and professors
 - Ideas from professors - "O" Bucks
- Individual personality and expectations affect classroom management
- Needed help knowing what to expect and what is expected out of students in the classroom
- Felt inadequately prepared to manage students with behavioral problems
 - Behavior issues are becoming more common
 - Need more classes on managing behavioral issues
- More prepared for whole group management
- PE Dept. provided adequate classroom management preparation
- classroom management is very different in the virtual environment
- exposure during internships translates well within similar grade levels

Communication skills and relationships with parents, students, and administrators

- Other experiences besides FSU helped with feeling comfortable with interactions
(working summer camps, having other jobs w/interactions with boss', Children's Literature GA position)
- Internship Checklist of following tasks (possibly only optional though)
 - FSU Call Home Internship Assignment (calling home to a parent)

- Felt nervous
- Need more experience
- Fear of saying something wrong and causing the mentor teacher to have to deal with the repercussion
- At Home Newsletter Assignment
 - Wasn't personal interaction
 - Didn't help build communication skill
 - Internship at Mt. Savage lacked opportunities to communicate w/parents
- Approach an Administrator Task – ask an administrator to observe you teach a lesson
 - Need more collaboration w/administrators
- Mock interview w/administrator possibly optional but helpful
- Substituting during internships helped build relationships w/administrators
- Ways of communication: Remind, FB group pages, Phone (call/text), FB Messenger, Class Dojo, Google Classroom, Seesaw App, Email
 - Need to teach more about technology tools used for communication, especially now w/COVID and online learning
 - Three participants gave parents their personal cell# instead of Google Voice. Said it was easier and they didn't mind, especially during COVID
- best opportunity to communicate with parents was during school events
- good foundation to build on for communication with different groups
- not much opportunity to interact w/administrators during internships

Ability to identify problems and offer solutions

- Felt timid being new and now knowing everyone
- Didn't want to upset the status quo
- Didn't want to appear like a know-it-all
 - Need to find a fine balance
- Felt confident in knowledge base to support an idea
 - Experience at other schools helped build confidence
 - Each school's culture is different
 - Knew buzz words enough to contribute to conversations
 - Knew how research if didn't know
- Depends on administrator

Teamwork skills

- Internship provided adequate preparation of working in diverse teams
- First teaching experience is with a partner
 - A lot required in little time so learned to trust and depend on each other
- Team planning is good but need to understand that each teacher must do what's best for their own students
- PE perspective – felt well-prepared because most experiences involved co-teaching
- Numerous projects that required a partner or team effort
- Worked with a variety of different personalities within your block
- Prepared for instruction aspect of teaching 100%
- Advised to have good relationships with all workers at a school
- teamwork exercises in class will carry forward in future role as mentor

Challenges faced first year or two that you felt FSU did not provide adequate preparation

- Behavior management
 - Realizing there will be difficult kids and each one is unique
 - Working with special teams like safety care
 - Knowledge of different behaviors, steps to take to manage, and resources available
 - More info. of different tiers of discipline, strategies for each, and traumas students face that cause behaviors is needed and training
- Social Emotional training needed
 - SEL should be its own course
- Special Ed. class taught laws instead of useful information on how to manage
 - Learned nothing from it, not memorable, not applicable
 - Felt embarrassed not knowing more about Special Ed. challenges
 - Mentor or the school was more helpful than FSU
- More Special Ed. classes needed
- Need to learn de-escalation
- Dr. Mattern was a pro but need more time with her (too many important topics covered with not enough time)
- Evaluation Process – SLOs
 - Need a mock assessment
- Portfolio night wasn't enough
- Unprepared for certificate process
- Not prepared to work with 504RTI or IEP students

- Felt thrown into it
- Inadequate IEP preparation
- RTI training needed
- dealing with EL students

How prepared teachers were for their first year teaching

- Interview process
 - Knew the buzz words
- Securing a job
- Several courses incorporated valuable literature
- Well prepared for reading education
- Planning and preparation
 - Confident in lesson planning
 - Learned how to prepare detailed lessons
- Confident in knowing student's needs
- Internships were beneficial***
 - Provided confidence to teach the first day
 - Head start experience in Early Childhood was valuable
 - Internship at the beginning when students are not present was beneficial to getting to know your classroom and preparation
 - Gradual experience of 6 wk internship and then 15 wk internship was beneficial in learning responsibility
 - Length of internships compared to other schools is satisfactory
 - The longer the better

- PE program lacked early internship experience to help students decide if career choice is desired
- assistantship provided very useful experience in preparing for internships in [public] school
- The feeling of knowing more about some topics than some of the more seasoned teachers
 - STEM, project-based learning, integration of different cross-cultures, technology
 - Seasoned teachers use their ideas and class material
 - Feel like they offer a fresh perspective to schools and established teachers
- the fact the spring internship was cut short due to pandemic provided very positive experience for virtual teaching in the fall

Specific FSU College of Ed. professors who helped you feel well prepared

- Dr. Ornstein***
 - Talked about her own experiences and was personal, amazing person
- Dr. Mattern****
 - Asked student's opinions, was knowledgeable, viewed students as professionals, challenged students with teaching and work ethic
- Dr. O'Neal and any other professors working in literacy space
- Dr. Rankin (math)
 - Felt confident in math strategies after this course, teaches well, amazing person
- Dr. Welsch**
 - Knowledgeable, experienced, passionate, established trust, taught behaviors to notice on reading assessments, challenged and motivated students, assessment running records were applicable

- Dr. Nichols (Eirich)
 - Loved all her classes, she offered field experiences in schools, did interviews (Q&A's) w/principals, teachers, and students
- Good experiences with all courses except Special Ed.
- Need to have new teacher orientation at FSU so students observe experienced teachers and classroom environment

Anything else to add

- Coppin Exchange was best FSU experience
 - Forced to push yourself outside of your comfort zone
 - Promoted personal growth
 - PTP grant experiences were beneficial
- didn't use portfolio at all during hiring process

Teacher Mentor Focus Group

Classroom management

- The Frostburg State University (FSU) College of Education (CoE) interns and program completers are well-prepared to develop classroom management strategies. Developing this skill is difficult to teach and requires classroom experience to perfect. The preparation FSU provides is a boon to completers who are hired by the same system(s) where they were interns.

Professionalism

- FSU interns have a good understanding of the different aspects of professionalism required when interacting with other teachers, administrators, and students. They are good at adapting their level of conversation to a specific audience (e.g., academic or professional vs. students).
- Although FSU interns understand the different levels of professionalism required of teachers, sometimes they treat their mentors as friends and co-workers. (*This may be somewhat related to the relative closeness in age between intern and mentor.*) There have been other limited reports of “unprofessional” behaviors, such as using a cell phone in inappropriate situations.

Personal/professional Growth

- FSU interns and completers are reflective, coachable, genuinely interested in professional growth on a personal level, and are not afraid to reach out for guidance. New teachers are harder on themselves than necessary during their first observations.

- FSU completers in roles as new teachers sometimes struggle with different responses from different people with respect to asking for help. They should learn to understand that, most commonly, different responses are related to different circumstances and are not meant to be off-putting. New teachers should learn to “stand up a little bit for themselves” and be more confident in requesting the help they need.

Lesson Preparation vs Long-Range Planning

- FSU interns are well-versed in creating engaging lessons using a variety of instructional tools.
- Although FSU interns are good at creating engaging lesson plans, they don't understand where a given lesson fits into the big picture. Some may not realize that extra technology is “not always something that necessarily would have enhanced the learning.”

Teamwork

- FSU completers are comfortable fitting into the structure of a team and are eager to take control of various committee activities.

Communication

- Communication between mentors, interns, and the FSU CoE is somewhat lacking. Mentors guide interns according to information contained in a handbook, but an intern may make a statement like, “Oh, nope. That was something we're not responsible for doing.”

- Although not identified as specific to FSU CoE interns or completers, new teachers are reluctant to initiate any type of contact with parents.
- The lines of communication between FSU CoE faculty/administration and mentor teachers needs improvement.

APPENDIX

Institutional Review Board Approval (FSU)



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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
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E-MAIL: irb@frostburg.edu

To: Janet Mattern
From: Christopher Masciocchi, IRB Chair
Date: Tuesday, September 8, 2020
Subject: Notice of Protocol Review

We have received your human research protocol application and reviewed it.
Thank you for submitting this proposal in compliance with FSU and USM policy.

Title: CAEP Accreditation Focus Groups

Number Assigned: H2021-004

Received on: 8/31/2020

The Institutional Review Board has determined that the research you describe in your application qualifies as research that is exempt from the Code of Federal Regulations (45 CFR 46) under §46.101(b). As long as you follow the protocol described in your submission, no further action on your part is necessary at this time.

Note that this determination does not mean that the IRB has approved the research. It means that IRB approval is not necessary and the investigators are responsible for conducting the research in an ethical manner.

If you make substantial changes to this project or begin another research project involving human participants, the IRB will be required to review that project, as well.

Reviewer Comments:
(None)





Certificate of Completion



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Rachel Farris** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."



Date of Completion: 07/10/2018

Certification Number: 2858040





Completion Date 30-Aug-2020
Expiration Date 30-Aug-2023
Record ID 38124854

This is to certify that:

Janet Mattern

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Subjects Research (Curriculum Group)
Human Subjects Training (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic Course (Stage)

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME. Do not use for TransCelerate mutual recognition (see Completion Report).

Under requirements set by:


Frostburg State University




Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w43222200-2416-4577-9ae6-7ff866622625-38124854



Certificate of Completion



The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that **Robert May** successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants."



Date of Completion: 07/08/2018

Certification Number: 2858964



ADMINISTRATOR QUESTIONS

Focus Group Meeting Wednesday June 24 @ 1:00PM

1. Did FSU provide graduates with the tools for effective classroom management?
2. How would you describe the communication and social skills of FSU graduates?
3. How interested were FSU graduates in participating in administrative endeavors such as committees and collaborative teams? Would you say FSU students tend to become leaders of these efforts?
4. How would you describe FSU graduates during the evaluation process?
 - a. Promotion milestones
 - b. Recruitment
 - c. retention
5. Describe any challenges you may have encountered with FSU graduates.
6. Describe any outstanding moments you may have encountered with FSU graduates.
7. Describe FSU students' interest and ability in pursuing leadership roles within your organization.
8. How well are FSU students prepared to use educational technology in the classroom?
9. How do FSU students apply critical thinking to problem-solving situations?
10. How do FSU grads contribute to school-wide improvement targets?
 - a. What evidence do you have for this?
11. What did we not talk about today that you feel is worth sharing?
12. Potential: What percentage of your (school, system) teachers are FSU grads?

MENTOR QUESTIONS

Focus Group Meeting Wednesday June 24 @ 2:30PM

1. Do you feel that FSU graduates were sufficiently prepared for classroom management strategies than other students?
2. Are FSU students sufficiently prepared with effective communication skills to navigate relationships with administrators, students, and parents upon entering the profession? If so, how? If not, how could FSU improved their preparation?
3. Describe the overall ability of FSU graduates to identify problems and offer solutions.
4. Can you elaborate on how well-prepared FSU grads are to design engaging and collaborative learning experiences for their students?
5. How would you compare the teamwork skills of FSU graduates with others you may have worked with?
6. Are FSU graduates prepared to effectively communicate with parents, students, colleagues, and supervisors? Why or why not?
7. Describe any challenges FSU grads encountered could have been addressed by their FSU education?
8. How do your new teachers reach out when seeking advice on such topics as pedagogy, classroom management, or educational technology?
9. What did we not talk about today that you feel is worth sharing?

COMPLETER QUESTIONS

Focus Group Meeting Wednesday June 24 @ 4:00PM

1. Do you feel as an FSU graduate, you were prepared with effective classroom management strategies?
2. Do you feel that you were prepared with effective communication skills to navigate the relationships with administrators, students, and parents upon entering the profession? If so, how? If not, how could FSU have improved in preparing you?
3. Describe the overall ability of FSU graduates to identify problems and offer solutions.
4. Can you elaborate on how prepared you were to design engaging and collaborative learning experiences for your students?
5. How would you describe your teamwork skills and those of other FSU graduates you may have worked with?
6. Describe your FSU preparation for interactions with parents, students, colleagues, and supervisors.
7. Describe any challenges you encountered that your FSU education left you unprepared for.
8. Describe any outstanding moments you experienced that were a direct result from your FSU education?
9. How do your peers reach out to you when seeking advice on such topics as pedagogy, classroom management, or educational technology?
10. What did we not talk about today that you feel is worth sharing?
11. Are you participating in a grant-funded or induction group?

Fall 2020 Focus Group Questions

M.Ed. ADVISORY QUESTIONS

1. Did FSU provide graduates with the tools for effective classroom management?
2. How would you describe the professional and ethical standards of FSU graduates?
3. Are FSU graduates prepared to effectively communicate with parents, students, colleagues, and supervisors? Why or why not?
4. How interested were FSU graduates in participating in administrative endeavors such as committees and collaborative teams? Would you say FSU students tend to become leaders of these efforts?
5. How would you describe FSU graduates during the evaluation process?
 - Promotion milestones
 - Recruitment
 - Retention
6. How would you describe FSU graduate's content knowledge and their ability to communicate it at an appropriate level to their students?
7. How do FSU graduates work with you to create a supportive school environment?
8. Describe any challenges you may have encountered with FSU graduates.
9. Describe any outstanding moments you may have encountered with FSU graduates.
10. How well are FSU students prepared to use educational technology in the classroom?
11. How do FSU students apply critical thinking to problem-solving situations?
12. How do FSU grads contribute to school-wide improvement targets?
 1. What evidence do you have for this?
13. What did we not talk about today that you feel is worth sharing?

RECENT COMPLETERS QUESTIONS

1. Do you feel as an FSU graduate, you were prepared with effective classroom management strategies?
2. Do you feel that you were prepared with effective communication skills to navigate the relationships with administrators, students, and parents upon entering the profession? If so, how? If not, how could FSU have improved in preparing you?
3. Describe the overall ability of FSU graduates to identify problems and offer solutions.
4. Can you elaborate on how prepared you were to design engaging and collaborative learning experiences for your students?
5. How would you describe your teamwork skills and those of other FSU graduates you may have worked with?
6. Describe your FSU preparation for interactions with parents, students, colleagues, and supervisors.
7. Describe any challenges you encountered that your FSU education left you unprepared for.
8. Describe any outstanding moments you experienced that were a direct result from your FSU education?
9. How do your peers reach out to you when seeking advice on such topics as pedagogy, classroom management, or educational technology?

10. What did we not talk about today that you feel is worth sharing?
11. Are you participating in a grant-funded or induction group?

Statistics from CAEP Administrator Survey (includes MEd advisory groups)

Participants with any degree from Frostburg State University

Preliminary Notes

- Sex/gender are omitted from this update because there was no opportunity for participants to identify.
- Generally there were two types of participants, administrators and “other teachers.” All “other teachers” are currently on faculty at FSU; responses from these participants have been omitted (marked with *).
- One participant has no FSU degree but is enrolled in the EdD program; responses have been omitted (marked with +).
- Because free-text fields are not easily interpreted, this summary includes a best-guess at the more salient data points. More detailed interpretation is left to the reader.

<i>Total participants</i>	18
Administrators	14
Other teachers	3
enrolled in FSU EdD	1

<i>FSU degree</i> ⁺⁺	
Undergraduate	8
Graduate	10
Doctoral	2
FSU EdD in progress	1

<i>Years in education</i> ⁺⁺	
Mean	24.92
Median	25
Mode	25 (3)

<i>School system</i> ⁺⁺	
Allegany County	8
Frederick County	2
Garrett County	2
Washington County	1

<i>Number of administrators</i> ⁺⁺	12
Principal (HS)	2
Principal (MS)	1
Principal (unspecified)	2
Asst. HS principal	1
Content supervisor	3

Common employment milestones⁺⁺

Classroom teacher	11
Assistant principal	11
Principal	6
Supervisor	5
District director	2
SE teacher	2

High needs schools⁺⁺

5

Meeting improvement targets⁺⁺

Met all targets	2
Met some targets	2
Met no targets	1 (new school, establishing baselines)

Latest available evaluation rating⁺⁺

Highly effective	2
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