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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

Graduate Programs Alumni Feedback
CAEP Accreditation Report

Prepared & Submitted by:

Raegon Clutz, Jeanine Horst, & Genie Massey
Ed.D. Candidates – College of Education

Executive Summary	3
Purpose of Study/Problem Definition	3
Organization Description	3
Description of Procedures/Research Methodology	3
Team Processes	3
Determining team roles and responsibilities	3
Developing the Letter of Agreement	4
Developing the Project Management Plan	4
Problem Solving Process Utilized	4
Informed Consent	4
Sampling	5
Timeline of Communications	5
Data Collection	6
Data Analysis	6
Findings	6
Validity & Reliability of Findings	8
Program Summaries	9
Overall demographic data	9
Ed Leadership	11
Demographic Data	11
Survey Data	11
Aggregated Survey Data	11
Focus Group Data	11
Recommendations for Program	12
Counseling	14
Demographic Data	14
Survey Data	14
Focus Group Data	14
Recommendations for Program	14
Literacy	15
Demographic data	15
Survey Data	15
Aggregated Survey Data	15
Strengths & Weaknesses of the Program	16

Quantitative Data from Demographic and Likert Scales	16
Focus Group Data	16
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program	16
Special Education	17
Survey Data	17
Demographic Data	17
Quantitative Data from Demographics and Likert Scales	18
Aggregated Survey Data	18
Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program	18
Focus Group Data	19
Recommendations for the Program	19
Synthesis of Data, Limitations and Conclusions	19
References:	20
Appendices	21
Links to Supporting Documents	21
Appendices	22
Appendix A. LOA	22
Appendix B. Focus Group Questions	23
Appendix C. Transcript of Interviews	24

Executive Summary

Purpose of Study/Problem Definition

This study is a continuation of the study begun in the summer of 2021 which sought to collect longitudinal data from graduates of four Master of Education programs for the Frostburg State University Graduate School of Education's Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEOP) Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) programs accreditation. The aim was to provide evidence in reference to Standard 4 - Program Impact on completers and employers by engaging completers regarding employer satisfaction, as evidenced by achieving milestones such as promotion and retention, and completers' satisfaction as evidenced by their perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of the program to their employment experience. To gain additional participants to confirm and elaborate on the original findings, the team replicated the process established in the original study, to the extent possible.

As consultants in the "expert" role, the team gathered diagnostic data related to the client's request, analyzed the data, and developed recommendations. (Stroh, 2005)

Organization Description

Frostburg State University, founded in 1898 and a member of the University System of Maryland, is a comprehensive institution located in the rural Western Maryland town of Frostburg. The university offers forty-seven undergraduate majors, fourteen graduate programs, and one doctoral program for students to select from. The only four-year public institution of higher learning west of the Baltimore/Washington Corridor, Frostburg State University, had a Fall 2020 enrollment of 4,119 undergraduate students, 662 graduate students, and 77 doctoral students. Roughly 82% of students hail from Maryland, with 40% of students identifying as a minority. Frostburg State prepares significant economic drive in Western Maryland and prepares its graduates to be civic leaders and successful professionals in their community. Frostburg State University is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

Graduate Programs for teachers at Frostburg State University include five Master's Degree programs for teachers: Curriculum and Instruction, Educational Leadership, Literacy Education, Interdisciplinary, and Special Education. A Master of Arts in Teaching is also available at both the elementary and secondary levels, and two Master's degree programs for Non-Teachers: Interdisciplinary and School Counseling.

Description of Procedures/Research Methodology

Team Processes

Determining Team Roles and Responsibilities - the team met and collectively determined the team leader who would communicate directly with the client on behalf of the group. The team also developed norms for meetings, materials, and a plan for conducting the work. Genie Massey

volunteered to be the team leader; the team concurred. The team leader served as a point of contact to the client, as well as keeping minutes and developing the team task log to monitor progress and curate team documents. Raegon Clutz and Jeanine Horst served as focus group transcriptionists and coded the data. The team worked separately on individual program-specific data and collaborated on the creation of the Executive Summary.

Developing the Letter of Agreement - the team collaboratively developed the LOA with input from the client. The LOA included a definition of the “problem,” project objectives, a description of the process the team would use, deliverables, team consulting responsibilities, a project schedule, and approval signatures. After developing the initial language, the team leader shared the LOA with the client for feedback. The team made revisions per the client’s request, then forwarded them to the client for signature. Each team member individually signed the LOA; the final fully executed LOA was sent to the client.

Developing the Project Management Plan - the team reviewed the project proposal submitted by the client and identified vital steps in completing the project. The team held a preliminary meeting with the client to clarify project expectations and receive information to help guide the project. The team used the previous year’s project to devise a project management plan. The team then had a second meeting with the client to share the plan and clarify the next steps for the project. Each team member volunteered for specific responsibilities as part of the plan and tracked their progress on the Project Task Log. The project management closely aligned to Cook & Belliveau’s Process Flow Model.

Problem Solving Process Utilized – the team collaborated via text message and virtual meetings to discuss and resolve problems during the project. Although the team was frustrated at times with a lack of participation of subjects for the study, the team leader maintained contact with the client, who provided guidance on expanding our focus group and survey participants. The group chose a collaborative approach to problem-solving utilizing the steps in the group problem-solving process - define the problem, analyze the problem, generate possible solutions, evaluate solutions, implement and assess the solution.

Informed Consent

The team did not use formal written informed consent. In the original study, a statement was read during focus groups, and participants were given time to agree or opt-out before recording began. In this follow-up study, no completers agreed to participate in recorded focus groups. Two participants agreed to phone interviews, during which the privacy statement was read and the interviewer typed notes.

The verbal informed consent stated:

“Welcome, thank you for taking your time to provide this valuable feedback to Frostburg State University about their graduate programs in education. It is our intention to preserve your privacy. Transcripts will be turned over to Frostburg State for their use. The transcripts will be free of names of participants, but the overall list of the participants may be provided to Frostburg State University upon their request.”

Sampling

The team used both convenience and snowball sampling for the study. After eliminating the completers from the client's list who had already participated during the original study, we sent multiple emails to all participants on the list provided by the client. These emails invited graduates to participate in a survey link in the email and a focus group. The client also secured phone numbers for the completers from the Office of Alumni Relations. We placed approximately two phone calls to every completer during October 2021, leaving messages describing the studying and attempting to confirm their email addresses. The team also attempted to contact completers within our public school system through our colleagues. The survey and interview participants comprised a convenience sample of volunteers willing to participate.

Timeline of Communications

Sept 15, 2021	Initial client meeting
Sept 20, 2021	Initial surveys & focus group date sent to 98 email addresses (total on list - 124)
Sept 27, 2021	Phone calls placed to 114 completers
Oct 4, 2021	Emails sent to completers with the survey link & focus group link
Oct 9, 2021	Four focus groups scheduled (one per program); No participants
Oct 20, 2021	Presentation to Graduate Council Meeting
Oct 21, 2021	Emails sent to completers with the survey link & focus group link
Oct 22, 2021	Phone calls to Literacy, Ed Leadership, and Special Education completers
Oct 25, 2021	Two focus groups scheduled; No participants
Nov 8, 2021	Emails sent to completers with the survey link
Nov 22, 2021	Follow-up emails to client
Dec 8, 2021	Presentation to client

Data Collection

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from the survey sent to all graduates on the list supplied by the client. The survey captured demographic information for each participant, including graduation year, length in the program, years of experience, job title, employment site, level, Title I, undergraduate institution, teaching certification institution, race/ethnicity. It is important to note that the survey did not include a demographic question about sex/gender identity, and thus this data was not captured. Likert scale questions included information relating to the graduate's specific program and open-ended qualitative questions. This data was collected via a google form survey, then transferred to a google sheet for analysis.

Data Analysis

The team reviewed the quantitative data captured in the survey and identified all measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) for each Likert scale question. Participants scored Likert scale questions on a spectrum of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning 'strongly agree' and 5 meaning 'strongly disagree'. Each program's quantitative data were then summarized.

The team's qualitative data were reviewed by the team and themed by program and CAEP accreditation standards. Strengths and weaknesses of the program were identified based on the survey and focus group data. In-Vivo Coding (Saldaña, 2016) was used to "prioritize and honor" (p. 106) survey participants by identifying the specific language in responses that related to participants' experiences. The data was then themed using the categories of strengths and weaknesses. Survey data and focus group data were reported separately for each program.

Findings for Survey Participants in the Fall Study

Overall, the team feels confident in reporting that completers were well prepared for successful performance on the job and were satisfied with the preparation they received in the program. Of the survey respondents (n=16), 86.6% of respondents reported an average completion time of 36 months or longer (one respondent did not answer). The population of survey respondents self-identified as African American and White (n=1), Native American and White (n=1), and White (n=13). One respondent declined to choose a race, instead of saying, "I describe myself as a teacher. That is all that matters."

Approximately one-third of participants (n=6) completed both their undergraduate degree and their teaching certification at Frostburg State University. The average number of years on the job was 10.25 with a mean of 9 and 9 mode. There was some diversity in a work placement with most respondents from the elementary level (n=12), and a few from middle (n=3), and high (n=1). Over half, or 56%, of the respondents (n=9) also noted their work in a Title I school.

Indicators related to successful job performance included employer satisfaction expressed through employee evaluations, honors/awards, current employment status. All participants reported receiving high job performance scores, including superior (n=9) or effective (n=7) scores. Over three-quarters of respondents (n=13) reported that their employer was satisfied with their job performance as evidenced by their retention or promotion, although one stated that their employer's satisfaction is related to classroom teaching while their degree was in Educational Leadership. None of the respondents indicated they had received special recognition on the job.

Indicators for preparation within the program include overall program rating, mentor rating, and the program-specific Likert scale questions. There was a great degree of variance in the respondents' employment status; several of the respondents (n=4) noted they were able to retain their job in the field or (n=2) acquire a new position within the field of their program of study. Half of the respondents (n=9) indicated they teach in a general education classroom, while two (n=2) continue to pursue positions associated with their graduate degree. Although average scores varied across the Likert scale questions, all questions scored an average between 2.6 and 2.8, with medians of 2 or 3. There was more variability when respondents rated their mentors, indicating they were highly effective (n=2), effective (n=8), developing (n=3), not effective (n=1), and n/a (n=2). Finally, the overall program ratings from respondents were positive with ratings for highly effective (n=0), effective (n=12), developing (n=2), ineffective (n=1), and n/a (n=1).

Program-specific qualitative and quantitative data are addressed in subsequent sections of this report.

Figure 1. Focus Group Participation by Program - Summer & Fall 2021

	Ed Leadership	School Counseling	Reading/Literacy	Special Education
Summer	1	5	3	2
Fall	0	0	2	0
Totals	1	5	5	2

13

Figure 2. Survey Participation by Program - Summer & Fall 2021

	Ed Leadership	School Counseling	Reading/Literacy	Special Education
Summer	3	10	3	6
Fall	10	0	3	3
Totals	13	10	6	9

38

Figure 3. Demographic and Ratings for Fall Respondents

Mentor Rating	Program Rating	Employer Satisfaction	Evaluations	Honors/Awards	Level	Title I	FSU Undergrad & FSU Teaching Cert	Race / Ethnicity
2 Highly Effective	0 Highly Effective	13 Yes	9 Superior	n/a	12 E	9	6 & 6	1 African American & White
8 Effective	12 Effective	3 No	7 Effective		3 M			1 Native American & White
3 Dev.	2 Dev.				1 H			13 White
1 Not Effective	1 Not Effective							1 n/a
2 N/A								

Figure 4. Measures of Central Tendency for Summer Respondents

	Professional Core Courses	Program Specific Core	Practicum (SPED only)	Capstone/Internship/Practicum	Content & Instructional Materials
Mean	2.14	1.77	1.5	2.1	1.73
Median	2	1	2	2	1
Mode	2	1	1	2	1

Figure 5. Measures of Central Tendency for Fall Survey Respondents

	Professional Core Courses	Program Specific Core	Practicum (SPED only)	Capstone/ Internship/ Practicum	Content & Instructional Materials
Mean	2.8	2.6	2.83	2.6	2.7
Median	3	2	3	3	3
Mode	3	4	3	3	3

Figure 6. Aggregate Measures of Central Tendency (Summer & Fall Surveys)

	Professional Core Courses	Program Specific Core	Practicum (SPED only)	Capstone/ Internship/ Practicum	Content & Instructional Materials
Mean	2.47	2.22	3.14	2.19	2.25
Median	2	2	3	2	2
Mode	2	1	3	1	2

Validity & Reliability of Overall Findings

The use of a convenience sample provides some issues with validity and reliability, as does the small sample size. The team could not account for issues of representation within the sample for the survey, focus group, or both due to a lack of demographic data provided by the client. The survey sample (n=38) netted consistent results using similar questions across all four programs. The focus group and interview sample (n=13), yielded generally similar responses from completers, while also revealing the idiosyncrasies of individual experiences. To reduce variability, we used the same pre-scripted open-ended questions, delivered in each focus group or interview by the same team member. We triangulated data between the Likert Scale answers, qualitative answers (survey and focus group), and program ratings, finding that they correlated. We also used thick descriptions in this report to provide context for our findings. In addressing issues of bias, it is important to note that all team members are part of the 2019 Doctoral in Educational Leadership cohort and are thus students at the same institution studied. Further, one of the four-team members graduated from the Educational Leadership Master's program; however, we do not believe this biased the data as this individual did not lead the questions during the focus group. When discrepancies were found in the data, the team addressed those within the narrative analysis of each program.

Program Summaries

Overall Demographic Data

Figure 4. Overall Survey Participants by Program

Total Survey Participations	Ed Leadership	Counseling	Lit	SPED	Total
2017	2	0	1	0	3
2018	3	0	1	0	4
2019	3	0	1	2	6
2020	1	0	0	1	2
Other	1	0	0	0	1
Programs totals	10	0	3	3	16

Figure 4. Aggregate Demographic Data for All Survey Respondents (Summer & Fall)

School Level	School System	Title I school	Years of experience in education	Race / Ethnicity	Employer Satisfaction	The MEd degree...	Performance Evaluation	Program	Graduation Year	Overall MEd Program
Birth to 3	WCPS	No	4	Hispanic, White	Yes	helped me retain my existing position	effective / proficient	SPED	2020	Effective
College	Dickinson College	No	0	White	Not in Counseling	I have left education.	effective / proficient	COUNS	2017	Developing
Elementary	ACPS	Yes	6	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	superior / highly effective	LIT		Highly Effective
Elementary	ACPS	Yes	12	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	effective / proficient	SPED	2019	Effective
Elementary	ACPS	Yes	12	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	effective / proficient	SPED	2019	Effective
Elementary	Arlington Public Schools	No	2	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	COUNS	2019	Highly Effective
Elementary	BCPS	No	1.5	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	COUNS	2019	Highly Effective
Elementary	Berkeley County Schools WV	Yes	7	White	Yes	seeking employment in a position related to degree	superior / highly effective	EdLead	2020	Highly Effective
Elementary	Chambersburg Area School District	Yes	7	White	Yes	helped me retain my existing position	superior / highly effective	SPED	2020	-
Elementary	Chambersburg Area School District	Yes	7	White	Yes	helped me retain my existing position	superior / highly effective	SPED		-
Elementary	Charter School in NYC-Uncommon Schools	No	1	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting.	superior / highly effective	EdLead	2020	Highly Effective

Elementary	MCPS	Yes	3	Black or African American	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	COUNS	2018	Highly Effective
Elementary	Mineral County Schools	Yes	5	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	effective / proficient	EdLead	2020	Effective
Elementary	N/A	Yes	N/A	White	FYT	teaching in a general classroom setting		LIT	2021	Highly Effective
Elementary	N/A	Yes	N/A	White	FYT	N/A		SPED	2020	Effective
Elementary	PGCPS	No	1	Black or African American	Yes	helped me gain a new position	effective / proficient	COUNS	2019	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	7	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	effective / proficient	EdLead	2020	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	4	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	COUNS	2018	Highly Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	8	White	Yes	seeking employment in a position related to degree	superior / highly effective	EdLead	2019	Developing
Elementary	WCPS	No	4	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	COUNS	2018	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	9	American Indian or Alaska Native, White	Yes	helped me retain my existing position	effective / proficient	EdLead		Effective
Elementary	WCPS	No	9	Black or African American, White	Yes	seeking employment in a position related to the degree	superior / highly effective	Lit	2017	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	No	7	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	effective / proficient	EdLead	2018	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	17	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	EdLead	2018	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	9	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	effective / proficient	EdLead	2019	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	10	White	Yes	helped me retain my existing position	effective / proficient	Lit	2018	Effective
Elementary	WCPS	Yes	12	White	No	teaching in a general classroom setting.	effective / proficient	Lit	2019	Developing
Elementary	WCPS	No	16	White	Yes	helped me retain my existing position	superior / highly effective	EdLead	2018	Effective
Elementary, Middle, High	Mineral County Schools, WV	Yes	2	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	COUNS ELING	2019	Highly Effective
High	SMCPS	Yes	3	Black or African American	Yes	helped me gain a new position	superior / highly effective	COUNS ELING	2019	Effective
High	WCPS	No	15	I describe myself as a teacher. That's all that matters.	No	teaching in a general classroom setting	superior / highly effective	EdLead	2017	Ineffective
Middle	AACPS	No	2.5	White	Yes	helped me gain a new position	effective / proficient	COUNS ELING	2018	Highly Effective
Middle	ACPS	No	8	White	No	teaching in a general classroom setting	superior / highly effective	EdLead	2019	Effective
Middle	BCPS	No	7	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	effective / proficient	SPED	2019	Effective

Middle	BCPS	No	7	White	Yes	teaching in a general classroom setting	effective / proficient	SPED	2019	-
Middle	N/A	Yes	6	Asian	No	teaching in a general classroom setting	superior / highly effective	SPED	2018	Highly Effective
Middle	Union County Public Schools	No	6	White	Yes	seeking employment in a position related to my degree	superior / highly effective	LIT	2017	Highly Effective
Middle	WCPS	No	9	White	Yes	seeking employment related to degree	effective / proficient	EdLead	2017	Effective

Ed Leadership

Fall Survey Data

Recent graduates of the FSU Master of Education in Educational Leadership program were sent a survey via Google Forms to complete. The survey aimed to capture participant demographic information, thoughts, and opinions on the master's degree program experience in Educational Leadership at FSU, and satisfaction with career readiness and professional preparation for career advancement as a result of completing the degree. The survey consisted of twenty-three program and demographic-specific questions using multiple-choice, Likert Scales, and short answer questions.

Demographic Data

The survey generated responses from ten graduates, eight identified as white, one identified as Native American and White, and one declined to respond. Two graduated in 2017, three graduated in 2018, three graduated in 2019, one graduated in 2020, and one did not provide a graduation year. While one teacher is employed by Allegany County Public Schools, all others (n=9) teach in Washington County Public Schools. All respondents indicated that they had earned teaching certification through the same university where they earned their Bachelor's degree, including four who matriculated at Frostburg. Five currently teach in Title I schools. Four of the ten indicated that the Educational Leadership degree allowed them to maintain or gain a new leadership role, while six indicated that they are classroom teachers.

Strengths & Weaknesses of the Program

The majority of respondents found value in the program. Eight of the ten rated the program as effective, while one said developing, and one said ineffective. None of the respondents rated the program highly effective. Additional analysis found that the two respondents who rated the overall program developing or ineffective also gave consistently poor scores across the other questions, while the eight respondents who gave the program an effective rating tended to give higher scores across the other questions.

When asked about the strengths of the program, six respondents concentrated on their experiences working with various professors in the program. One indicated that the professors were "easy to reach and fairly quick to respond to questions," while two valued having in-person classes. Three respondents indicated their professors drew on personal experiences to create learning experiences

which “definitely provided an in-depth understanding and authentic perspective for educational leadership.”

Other respondents focused on particular coursework that prepared them for their careers. Three respondents indicated the School Law course was particularly applicable. In addition, one respondent stated that the Finance and Human Resources courses “helped me to become a better teacher and allowed me to understand many parts of an administrator’s job that others might not know about.”

Regarding areas of improvement, expanding the program’s focus on practical experiences in the field was prioritized by six of the ten respondents. Incorporating field experiences, such as shadowing current administrators, throughout the program was suggested by two respondents, while a third suggested weighting some field experiences more than others. One mentioned that the portfolio could also be developed throughout the program, while another indicated that while the process of creating it was good for self-reflection, it did not yield a product that was useful for career advancement. One respondent felt that clarity of instructions and additional modeling was needed to ensure success in the capstone research project, saying students need to see “examples of the format used to log hours, how to write the explanations or even a list of different things that would count towards the hours.”

Several respondents mentioned specific issues with coursework or professors that left them unsatisfied, especially when they felt a course was full of time-consuming busywork. One indicated that CUIIN 651 Instructional Design for Understanding seemed out of date and somewhat redundant for a classroom teacher striving for an administrative position. One respondent indicated that all of the coursework needed improvement. The fluctuating scope and sequence also caused stress as one respondent would have preferred more predictability in the semester offerings. Additionally, one student described a professor whose grading policies seemed arbitrary and unjustifiable.

Quantitative Data from Likert Scales

Additional quantitative data was collected from four Likert Scale questions focused on experiences within the Master of Education in Educational Leadership program. The scale ranged from a score of one (Strongly Agree) to five (Strongly Disagree). When asked if the professional education core courses prepared the participant to succeed, the mean for the question was 2.8 with a median of three, a range of five, and a mode of three. When asked if the area of concentration prepared the participant for success, the mean was 2.7, the median of 2.5, range of four, and a mode of four. A survey question on the capstone practicum preparing graduates for success generated better scores than the other three Likert Scale questions, with a mean of 2.5, median of 2.5, range of five, and a mode of three. The fourth and final question on content and instructional materials is relevant to the current field garnered a mean of 2.6, median and mode of three, and range of four.

Aggregated Survey Data - Summer & Fall

Study	Graduation Year	Time to Completion	PRO EDU CORE	AREA OF CONTENT	CAPSTONE PRACTICUM	CONTENT & MATERIALS	Mentor	Overall Program
Fall	2017	36 months	1	1	2	1	Effective	Effective
Fall	2017	36 months	4	4	4	4	Not effective	Ineffective
Fall	2018	36 months	5	4	5	4	Developing	Effective
Fall	2018	3+ years	2	2	1	1	Highly effective	Effective
Fall	2018	36 months	3	4	3	3	Highly effective	Effective
Fall	2019	36 months	2	2	1	2	Effective	Effective
Fall	2019	36 months	3	4	3	3	Developing	Developing
Fall	2019	24 months	2	1	1	2	Effective	Effective
Fall	2020	24 months	3	2	2	3	Effective	Effective
Summer	2020	24 months	2	2	3	1	Effective	Effective
Summer	2020	36 months	1	1	2	1	Effective	Highly Effective
Summer	2020	24 months	5	5	5	5	Highly effective	Highly Effective
Fall	N/A	3+ years	3	3	3	3	Effective	Effective
		Mean:	2.77	2.69	2.69	2.54		
		Median:	3	2	3	3		
		Mode:	2	4	3	1		
		Range	5	5	5	5		

Focus Group Data

N/A

Recommendations for Program

In the review of the survey data collected in the fall, it seems that the ten respondents had divergent experiences. The larger group felt that, while the program was imperfect, they had benefited from it. A smaller group seemed to find little value in the degree. Concentrating on what may be improved, the program would benefit from focusing on stability in the scope and sequence and maintaining a core of highly-qualified professors as the backbone of the program. Improving the delivery of content, both online and in-person, and increasing the use of rubrics in grading will help to assure equity. In-depth analysis of the group that found value in the program reveals that the graduates and their employers appear happy with the information that graduates gained from the program, leading to professional success. Based on the emphasis many respondents placed on experiences in the field, the program might introduce additional case studies, observations in schools and school boards, and internship opportunities earlier in the program. Additionally, improvements to the delivery of the practicum would profit participants. Clear elucidation of the objectives, having high-quality models to follow, and rubrics that affirm self-reflection will promote growth and amplify their positive impact in the schools.

Counseling

Survey Data

N/A

Focus Group Data

N/A

Recommendations for Program

N/A

Literacy

Fall Survey Data

Recent graduates of the FSU Master of Education in Educational Leadership program were sent a survey via Google Forms to complete. The survey aimed to capture participant demographic information, thoughts, and opinions on the master's degree program experience in Educational Leadership at FSU, and satisfaction with career readiness and professional preparation for career advancement as a result of completing the degree. The survey consisted of twenty-three program and demographic-specific questions using multiple-choice, Likert Scales, and short answer questions.

Demographic Data

The survey generated responses from two (n=2) graduates from 2017, and 2018. One respondent took 36 months to complete the degree, while the other took more than three years. One respondent was a white male, while the other was a black female. One earned the undergraduate degree and teaching certificate from FSU, while the other matriculated at Towson University. Both are elementary school teachers (one in a Title I school) in Washington County Public Schools. The two averaged 9.9 years of professional experience.

Both participants stated that their employers were satisfied with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions developed through the graduate program. One of the participants said that they have earned superior evaluations as a magnet classroom teacher and hope to gain a position in the field of literacy. The other stated that the literacy degree helped him retain his position as an ELL teacher. When it came to the strength and support of their building-level professional mentor, both participants ranked their mentor as highly effective.

Strengths & Weaknesses of the Program

When asked about the strengths of the program, relationships emerged as a theme. One respondent stated that the small size of the classes allowed professors to get to know each student. Having full-time teachers as peers in the program was beneficial. Professors who were knowledgeable and experienced added value as well.

Both participants indicated that the overall scope and sequence of the program lacked “cohesion”. Fluctuating program requirements and changing semester offerings presented challenges to respondents. One stated, “I felt like at times, I didn't know the direction we were going in. It was hard to see the bigger picture, especially with the reading clinic. This clinic is a great idea, but I think it could use some work to make it more effective for both mentor (literacy program students) and student teachers.”

Quantitative Data from Likert Scales

Quantitative data was collected from four Likert Scale questions focused on experiences within the Masters of Education in Literacy program. The scale ranged from a score of one (Strongly Agree) to five (Strongly Disagree). Participants generally rated the program's various components highly, rating professional education core courses, area of concentration courses, and the content and instructional materials used in the program within the one to three range on the scale. The mean for professional education core courses was 2.5, with a median of 2.5 and no mode. The mean for the area of concentration courses was slightly better at 1.5, with a median of 1.5 and no mode. The mean for content and instructional materials was 2.5, with a median of 2.5, and no mode. The capstone practicum earned similar scores from respondents with a mean of 2.5, a median of 2.5, and no mode. Overall, the graduates responded positively to the components of the Master's of Education in Literacy program.

Aggregated Survey Data - Summer & Fall

Study	Graduation Year	Time to Completion	PROF EDU CORE	AREA OF CONTENT	CAPSTONE PRACTICUM	CONTENT & MATERIALS	Mentor	Overall Program
Summer	2003	24 months	3	1	3	1	N/A	Effective
Fall	2017	36 months	2	2	3	3	Effective	Effective
Summer	2017	24 months	1	1	1	1	Highly effective	Highly Effective
Fall	2018	3+ years	3	1	1	2	Effective	Effective
Summer	2018	24 months	1	1	2	1	Highly effective	Highly Effective
Summer	2021	12 months	1	1	1	1	Highly effective	Highly Effective
Summer	N/A	36 months	4	4	4	5	Highly effective	Highly Effective
		Mean:	2.14	1.57	2.14	2.00		
		Median:	2	1	2	1		
		Mode:	1	1	1	1		
		Range:	4	4	4	5		

Qualitative Interview Data

Demographic Data

Two Frostburg graduates (n=2) participated in phone interviews in the fall of 2021. One serves as an EL teacher in a Title I elementary school in Washington County Public Schools. The other participant, a 2018 graduate, indicated that she teaches middle school in Montgomery County Public Schools and had earned the Masters in the Art of Teaching at Frostburg.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program

Both participants praised the overall program which allowed them to apply theory to practice. One participant appreciated having professors who were “well-versed in current trends.” The two participants were split on how well the literacy program exposed them to EdTech tools and platforms. While one said that coursework included apps like Screencastify and Padlet, the other indicated that a stronger emphasis on the variety of EdTech tools, including for EL and foreign language learners, would support better teaching.

Both participants praised the program’s emphasis on programs, curricula, instructional strategies, and data-driven instruction. Understanding phonics, decoding, fluency, and math skills have supported better teaching. The emphasis on John Hattie’s Visible Learning aligned well with one participant’s public school’s preferences. The other participant mentioned that the program offered a good framework for success in three different counties.

The program’s orientation towards collaboration and communication provided engaging coursework that prepared both participants for professional success. One participant mentioned that working with pre-service teachers within the coursework had allowed him to practice coaching teachers. Group projects generally and the Special Education courses specifically helped build communication skills. Praise was offered for the PALS program, as a model for building community relationships, and for the way several professors incorporated empathy as a framework for teaching.

Both participants indicated that the unprecedented nature of the pandemic has placed enormous stress on teachers and students and that hybrid classes are “too much to ask” of teachers. That being said, they offered constructive criticism to improve the program. Regarding school culture, one participant noted that the program did not have a strong emphasis on social-emotional learning, multicultural resources, and anti-bias training. While the program did a good job exposing students to the International Literacy Association, the EL teacher stated that those standards did not apply to his position. One participant mentioned that the professors and adjunct professors seemed “overworked” and the program fluctuated too much over time.

Recommendations for the Program

Incorporating the data from both the summer and fall studies (survey: n=7; focus group/interviews n=5) allows for some clarity to emerge. All of the graduates indicated that having high-quality professors has supported their professional success in the field of literacy. Anchoring the program around a dedicated core of professors and committing to some stability in the scope and sequence would likely resolve some of the minor stresses noted in interviews. Continuing to focus on the many

tools (both old and new) within the field supports teachers' ability to meet any situation with a variety of strategies. All of the graduates indicated that collaborative projects with various groups provided valuable experiences. As the Blueprint for Maryland's Future makes it possible for more counties to establish community schools, this effort to break down silos and encourage collaboration will position graduates for success.

The qualitative and quantitative data imply that the program is doing much that is right, yet some interesting possibilities emerged from the graduates' individual experiences. Expanding coursework from its reliance on the standards of the International Literacy Association to expose students to other frameworks, such as WIDA, would help prepare graduates for a variety of roles in different school systems. Additionally, the program might incorporate some lessons into the curriculum that empower teachers as advocates and grant-writers. Exposing students to differentiated reading resources in many subject areas and grant-making institutions will enable graduates to build high-quality classroom libraries that embrace the philosophy of DEI already embedded in the program. This could take a continuing education approach, as well, if the program has the capacity to support an online community for literacy teachers.

Special Education

Fall Survey Data

Demographic Data

Recent graduates of the FSU Master of Education in Special Education program were sent a survey via Google Forms to complete. The survey aimed to capture participant demographic information, thoughts, and opinions on the master's degree program experience in Special Education at FSU, and satisfaction with career readiness and professional preparation for career advancement as a result of completing the degree. The survey consisted of twenty-three program and demographic-specific questions using multiple-choice, Likert Scales, and short answer questions.

The survey generated responses from three graduates across two years, (n=2) - 2019, and (n=1) 2020. All three respondents were white females. Two indicated that it took more than 36 months to earn the degree. The third did not indicate how long it took. One of three respondents earned their undergraduate degree from FSU. One earned their undergraduate degree from a small liberal arts school in Maryland. One earned their undergraduate degree at a public university in Pennsylvania. All three respondents earned their teaching certificates from the same college that granted their undergraduate degrees.

Two respondents teach at Title I elementary schools in Allegany County Public Schools and the Chambersburg Area School District, and one teaches at a middle school in Baltimore County Public Schools. All three are mid-career, with an average of 8.6 years of professional experience. 100% (n=3) of the participants stated that their employers were satisfied with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions developed through the graduate program. One respondent indicated they were rated superior in work performance, and two were rated effective.

Quantitative Data from Likert Scales

Quantitative data was collected from five Likert Scale questions focused on experiences within the Masters of Special Education program. The scale ranged from a score of one (Strongly Agree) to five (Strongly Disagree). Participants were split regarding the value of the program's various components, with one giving all fours (Disagree), one giving a mixture of twos and threes (Agree and Neutral), and one choosing not to answer. The mean for professional education core courses was 3, a median of 3, with no mode. The mean for the area of concentration courses was a 3, the median of 3, with no mode. The mean for content and instructional material was 3, the median 3, with no mode. The responses for the Capstone Practicum were slightly less enthusiastic, with a mean of 3.5, a median of 3.5, with no mode. The limited responses to the quantitative questions in the fall limit their usefulness in evaluating components of the Special Education program.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the Program

The emphasis on special education content prepared the three respondents (100%) for success in the classroom. One participant noted that exposure to a variety of diagnostic tools for identifying students' needs and monitoring their progress was beneficial. Another strength of the program identified by one participant was the flexibility of the program. The structure of coursework appealed to one respondent who was able to apply learning immediately in the classroom setting.

Regarding areas of improvement, one participant noted that while the program included hands-on practice with developing a behavior plan, the school system used a different format. Another respondent indicated that upon completion of the Master's degree he was surprised to learn he still needed two reading courses or the Reading PRAXIS for certification. The third participant in the survey indicated that the degree program helped her retain her position in a special education classroom. Unfortunately, she declined to respond to any of the quantitative or qualitative questions.

Aggregated Survey Data - Summer & Fall

Study	Graduation Year	Time to Completion	PROF EDU CORE	AREA OF CONTENT	PRACTICUM	CAPSTONE	CONTENT & MATERIALS	Mentor	Overall Program
Summer	2018	36 months	2	2	3	2	2	Effective	Highly Effective
Fall	2019	3+ years	4	4	4	4	4	Effective	Effective
Fall	2019	3+ years	2	2	3	3	2		Effective
Summer	2019	36 months	2	2	2	3	1	Developing	Effective
Fall	2020	N/A	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Summer	2020	12 months	2	2	3	2	2	Effective	Effective
Summer	2020	24 months	2	1	2	1	1	Effective	Effective
		Mean:	2.33	2.17	2.83	2.50	2.00		
		Median:	2	2	3	2.5	2		
		Mode:	2	2	3	2	2		
		Range:	2	4	3	3	4		

Focus Group Data

N/A

Recommendations for the Program

In a review of both the survey and focus group data, several themes emerged regarding coursework, internships, and working with faculty. Overall, the graduates and their employers appear happy with the information and skills that graduates gained from the program, leading to professional success.

Related to strengths, completers felt prepared for their professional career aspirations based on the core and content area courses. The emphasis on diversity and inclusiveness was listed as a strength. The program should more deliberately pursue diverse experiences and settings for program participants in securing internship placement, ranging from urban to rural, socioeconomic level, and racial and ethnic backgrounds. Additionally, the program's flexibility offers value to students who are balancing coursework with teaching duties. Professors and advisors should continue to encourage a healthy work-life balance for degree seekers. Crafting assignments that are relevant to participants and their teaching duties has the added benefits of allowing practice and self-reflection while adding relevance to the coursework.

The summer and fall studies reveal several areas of improvement. Although the survey participants seemed pleased with the content and materials in the program, the focus group data reveals that several would value more practices in the preparation of legal documentation necessary for a special education teacher or case manager. Efforts should be made to expose students to a variety of different diagnostic and assessment tools and to continue to expand the deliberate instruction in various online learning platforms, software, and apps to facilitate student achievement.

Synthesis of Data, Limitations and Conclusions

The data from the surveys and focus groups highlighted many strengths of FSU's graduate programs in education while calling out a few areas for improvement.

Limitations of the research include the low number of participants that the team was able to draw from the four programs for both the survey and the focus groups. A total of thirty-eight graduates participated in the survey, with Literacy only drawing six participants. Focus group participation during the summer included eleven graduates. Only two additional completers participated in interviews in the fall, bringing the total to thirteen. The data collected is from a small sample and may not provide an accurate total representation of the thoughts and feelings of the many recent graduates of Master's degree programs in FSU's College of Education.

This research project has the potential to provide the specific data FSU is looking for relating to strengths and weaknesses in its College of Education graduate programs.

In conclusion, the data gathered by the research team for this project shows that FSU has four healthy, successful programs that are doing a good job of preparing graduates for the demands and expectations in the specific academic fields of study. Students gave above-average scores to the program in many areas, including satisfaction of learning, instructional strategies and techniques, and preparation for a different career path related to their degree.

References:

Cook, R. C., & Belliveau, P. (2006). *The experiential student team consulting process*. Dog Ear.
Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. (3rd. ed.). Sage.
Stroh, L. (2005). *The basic principles of effective consulting*. Routledge.

Links to Supporting Document

[Frostburg COE MEd CAEP Study Spreadsheet](#)

[Google Slides Presentation](#)

Appendices

Appendix A. Letter of Agreement

Appendix B. Focus Group Process & Questions

Appendix C. Program Reports

Appendix D. Interview Transcripts

Appendices

Appendix A. LOA

This letter confirms the working agreement between Frostburg State University College of Education and Frostburg Doctoral Cohort 2019 Research Team, Frostburg State University College of Education doctoral student consultants.

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to collect data from Master's in the Arts of Education graduates regarding their program outcomes. The consultants will survey and hold focus groups with Special Education, Counseling, Literacy, and Educational Leadership.

Timeline

The project duration is from August 30, 2021 through December 10, 2021 with the following target dates:

- Signed letter of agreement due to course instructor – within one week of Client Intake Meeting
- Project work plan – Sept 27
 - Phone calls to graduates - Sept 27 to Nov 1, Surveys sent upon request
 - Focus Groups - Oct 9 & 16, and Nov 6
- First complete draft due to the Frostburg University College of Education – Nov 29
- COE comments on first complete draft due to consultants – Dec 6
- Final draft due to Frostburg University College of Education – Dec 10
- Completed presentation to client and instructor - week of Dec 6

Responsibilities of Each Party

All parties agree to share their data and insights on the project. Doctoral Cohort 2019 Research Team agrees to do their best and adhere to the deadlines set forth in the bullet list above. Doctoral Cohort 2019 Research Team will consult Dr. Janet Mattern as to the research direction and inform him/her of their progress regularly. Dr. Janet Mattern agrees to assist the Doctoral Cohort 2019 Research Team by providing them with **graduates' contact lists, resources from the 2018 Doctoral Cohort pilot study, and the CAEP program reports** and timely feedback and guidance on their research draft. Dr. Janet Mattern will review and facilitate feedback from Frostburg State University College of Education on the group's work by the times set forth in the timeline above.

Deliverables

In addition to meeting the academic requirements for the project, Doctoral Cohort 2019 Research Team will complete the following client-specific deliverables:

- Survey data
- Focus group transcripts
- Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data
- Executive Summary of Findings

Any changes to the scope of work must be approved in writing by Dr. Janet Mattern, the Doctoral Cohort 2019 Research Team, and Dr. Tom Striplin.

Signed:

Raegon Clutz, FSU Student Consultant

Jeanine Horst, FSU Student Consultant

Genie Massey, FSU Student Consultant

Dr. Janet Mattern, Frostburg State University College of Education

Appendix B. Focus Group Process & Questions

Process for Focus Group:

1. Introductions - greeting and intro (Raegon)
2. Attendance in the spreadsheet - (Colleen)
3. 1 person asks the questions (Genie)
4. 1 person drops questions into the chat (Jeanine)
5. Transcription - 2 ppl using Otter.ai - Colleen

Confidentiality Statement:

- It is our intention to preserve your privacy
- Transcripts will be turned over to Frostburg for their use
- Transcripts will be free of names of participants, but overall list of participants may be provided to FSU upon their request
- The recording of this meeting will not be turned over to Frostburg but will be retained as a video file on Genie's personal computer that is password protected. The video will be deleted at the conclusion and satisfactory completion of the Practicum in December 2021.

Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation - Standards for the Advanced Programs Certification

- relevance and effectiveness of their preparation
- reach employment milestones such as promotion and retention
- relevant to the responsibilities they confront on the job
- and that the preparation was effective.

Questions:

1. How well-prepared did you feel to apply current educational research, theoretical, conceptual, historical and evidenced based practices to your area of professional practice? (Standard 1)
 - a. Could you provide an example?
2. The dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges to delivering instruction in remote and hybrid modalities. What did the Frostburg program do well to expose you to current technologies in education? (Standard 5)
 - a. Follow up - How could Frostburg better support future students' technology skills?
3. How did the Frostburg program prepare you to design and evaluate programs and curricula, and implement instructional strategies? (Standard 2)
4. Data-driven instruction is a core component of the continuous improvement cycle in education. What tools did your Frostburg program teach you that have helped you assess student needs, measure student progress, and design new programs? (Standard 3)
5. What tools and strategies did your specific program provide you with to enable you to collaborate with colleagues and communicate with stakeholders within an ethical, moral and legal framework? (Standard 6?)
 - a. In loco parentis
6. How did your Master's program support your ability to build a school culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion within your workplace? (Standard 4)
7. How can Frostburg better prepare students for the realities and challenges encountered in today's educational setting? (Standard 7)
8. Do you have any additional comments about your Frostburg program and experiences you would like to share?

Appendix C. Program Reports

ED LEADERSHIP PROGRAM REPORT

- Standard 1.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaboratively facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a shared school vision of learning through the collection and use of data to identify school goals, assess organizational effectiveness, and implement school plans to achieve school goals; promotion of continual and sustainable school improvement; and evaluation of school progress and revision of school plans supported by school-based stakeholders.
- Standard 2.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning through collaboration, trust, and a personalized learning environment with high expectations for students; creating and evaluating a comprehensive, rigorous and coherent curricular and instructional school program; developing and supervising the instructional and leadership capacity of school staff; and promoting the most effective and appropriate technologies to support teaching and learning within a school environment.
- Standard 3.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by ensuring the management of the school organization, operation, and resources through monitoring and evaluating the school management and operational systems; efficiently using human, fiscal, and technological resources in a school environment; promoting and protecting the welfare and safety of school students and staff; developing school capacity for distributed leadership; and ensuring that teacher and organizational time is focused to support high-quality instruction and student learning.
- Standard 4.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by collaborating with faculty and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources on behalf of the school by collecting and analyzing information pertinent to improvement of the school's educational environment; promoting an understanding, appreciation, and use of the diverse cultural, social, and intellectual resources within the school community; building and sustaining positive school relationships with families and caregivers; and cultivating productive school relationships with community partners.
- Standard 5.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner to ensure a school system of accountability for every student's academic and social success by modeling school principles of self-awareness, reflective practice, transparency, and ethical behavior as related to their roles within the school; safeguarding the values of democracy, equity, and diversity within the school; evaluating the potential moral and legal consequences of decision making in the school; and promoting social justice within the school to ensure that individual student needs inform all aspects of schooling.
- Standard 6.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context through advocating for school students, families, and caregivers; acting to influence local, district, state, and national decisions affecting student learning in a school environment; and anticipating and assessing emerging trends and initiatives in order to adapt school-based leadership strategies.
- Standard 7.0: A building-level education leader applies knowledge that promotes the success of every student through a substantial and sustained educational leadership internship experience that has school-based field experiences and clinical internship practice within a school setting and is monitored by a qualified, on-site mentor.

COUNSELING PROGRAM REPORT

- Standard 1. Foundational Knowledge. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of the history of school counseling, and the structure and organization of the American education system. Candidates understand the development trajectories of diverse learners in the school environment.
- Standard 2. Core Theories and Concepts. Candidates demonstrate knowledge of established and emerging counseling and educational theories and methods and evidence-based techniques and utilize relationship-building skills that are foundational to successful outcomes for students.
- Standard 3. Instructional and School Counseling Interventions. Candidates use multiple data points to assess individual students' needs and identify a range of school counseling techniques to meet those needs. Candidates utilize digital literacy and technology tools to support the school counseling program and to track the academic, college/career, and social/emotional development of all students.
- Standard 4. Student Learning Outcomes. Candidates create and implement data-informed school counseling programs that positively impact student outcomes and promote educational equity and access. Candidates use pedagogical skills, collaborative strategies, and referral systems to support student learning.
- Standard 5. Designing, Implementing, and Evaluating Comprehensive School Counseling Programs. Candidates use school data and school counseling program assessments to evaluate areas of strength and needed improvement for program activities and interventions.

- Standard 6. Professional Practice. Candidates demonstrate the appropriate scope of school counseling practice in varied educational settings, understand their role as a leader, collaborator, advocate, and agent for systemic change, and engage in opportunities to support their professional growth and identity development.
- Standard 7. Ethical Practice. Candidates demonstrate ethical and culturally responsive behavior, maintain the highest standard of professionalism and legal obligation, and use consultation and ongoing critical reflection to prevent ethical lapses.

LITERACY PROGRAM REPORT

- Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge: Reading Specialist Candidates demonstrate knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language, the ways in which they interrelate, and the role of the reading/literacy specialists in schools.
- Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge: Literacy Coach Candidates demonstrate knowledge of major theoretical, conceptual, historical, and evidence-based foundations of literacy and language and the ways in which they interrelate; demonstrate knowledge base of effective schoolwide professional learning; demonstrate knowledge of research about schoolwide literacy programs; demonstrate understanding of the role of the literacy coach.
- Standard 2: Curriculum & Instruction: Reading Specialist Candidates use foundational knowledge to design literacy curricula to meet the needs of learners, especially those who experience difficulty with literacy; design, implement, and evaluate small group and individual evidence-based literacy instruction for learners; collaborate with teachers to implement effective literacy practices.
- Standard 2: Curriculum & Instruction: Literacy Coach Candidates develop, analyze, and evaluate the school's literacy curriculum; design, implement, and evaluate effective classroom literacy instruction; collaborate with and coach teachers to guide teaching practices and improve literacy learning of individuals and groups of students; facilitate or participate in efforts to develop a vision and goals for the literacy program.
- Standard 3: Assessment & Evaluation: Reading Specialist Candidates understand, select, and use valid, reliable, fair, and appropriate assessment tools to screen, diagnose, and measure student literacy achievement; inform instruction and evaluate interventions; assist teachers in their understanding and use of assessment results to advocate for appropriate literacy practices to relevant stakeholders
- Standard 3: Assessment & Evaluation: Literacy Coach Candidates foster teachers'/specialist knowledge of assessment and assessment tools to monitor student progress; inform and evaluate schoolwide instruction and interventions; facilitate professional learning and school improvement initiatives; disseminate and facilitate schoolwide assessment communication with relevant stakeholders as a means of advocating for effective literacy practices.
- Standard 4: Diversity & Equity: Reading Specialist Candidates demonstrate knowledge of research, relevant theories, pedagogies, and essential concepts of diversity and equity; demonstrate an understanding of themselves and others as cultural beings; create classrooms and schools that are inclusive and affirming; advocate for equity at school, district, and community levels.
- Standard 4: Diversity & Equity: Literacy Coach Candidates demonstrate knowledge of foundational theories, pedagogies, and essential concepts of diversity and equity as well as the ability to apply this knowledge to their daily practice of working with teachers and students; facilitate the operation of the school's literacy program; advocate for change in education practices and institutional structures that are inherently biased or prejudiced.
- Standard 5: Learners & The Literacy Environment: Reading Specialist Candidates meet the developmental needs of all learners and collaborate with school personnel to use a variety of print and digital materials to engage and motivate all learners; integrate digital technologies in appropriate, safe, and effective ways; fosters a positive climate that supports a literacy-rich learning environment.
- Standard 5: Learners & The Literacy Environment: Literacy Coach Candidates support and facilitate colleagues' ability to meet the developmental needs of all learners; use a variety of digital and print materials to engage and motivate all learners; integrate digital technologies in appropriate, safe, and effective ways; foster a positive climate that supports a literacy-rich learning environment.
- Standard 6: Professional Learning & Leadership: Reading Specialist Candidates demonstrate the ability to be reflective literacy professionals, who apply their knowledge of adult learning to work collaboratively with colleagues; demonstrate their leadership and facilitation skills; advocate on behalf of teachers, students, families, and communities.
- Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership: Literacy Coach Candidates demonstrate ability to be reflective literacy professionals who critically analyze and synthesize research, policy, and promising practices; apply their knowledge of adult learning to work collaboratively with individuals and groups of colleagues; demonstrate their leadership and coaching skills; advocate on behalf of teachers, students, families, and communities.
- Standard 7: Practicum/Clinical Experiences: Reading Specialist Candidates complete supervised, integrated, extended practica / clinical experiences that include intervention work with students and working with their peers and experienced colleagues; practica include ongoing experiences in school-based setting(s); supervision observation and ongoing feedback by qualified supervisors.
- Standard 7: Practicum/Clinical Experiences: Literacy Coach Candidates complete supervised, integrated, and extended practica/clinical experiences that include both collaborative and coaching roles with teacher(s) and

schoolwide collaboration and leadership for instructional practices, curriculum design, professional development, or family/community- school partnerships; practicum experiences are ongoing in school-based setting(s); supervision includes observation and ongoing feedback by qualified supervisors.

SPECIAL ED PROGRAM REPORT

- Standard 1: Learner Development and Individual Learning Differences -Beginning special education professionals understand how exceptionalities (language, culture, and family background) may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.
- Standard 2: Learning Environments - Beginning special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well-being, positive social interactions, and self- determination.
- Standard 3: Curricular Content Knowledge - Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of general(15) and specialized (16) curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.
- Standard 4: Assessment - Beginning special education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data- sources in making educational decisions
- Standard 5: Instructional Planning and Strategies -Beginning special education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence- based instructional strategies (15) to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities.
- Standard 6: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice - Beginning special education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional Ethical Principles and Practice Standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession.
- Standard 7: Collaboration - Beginning special education professionals collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences.

Appendix D. Interview Transcripts

Two completers consented to participating in a phone interview. One earned the MEd in Literacy in 2018 and teaches middle school in Montgomery County Public Schools. The second was also in the Literacy program and serves as the EL teacher in a Title I elementary school in Washington County Public Schools. No recording was possible at the time of the call, so the following notes were taken.

1. The graduate program intends to introduce students to a great deal of information ranging from historical trends to current educational research and strives to prepare graduates to apply theory to practice. How well-prepared did you feel to apply what you learned in your coursework to your area of professional practice? (Standard 1)

Completer #1: Well-prepared - now that I've walked it for awhile. The program was overwhelming, but that's like teaching.

Completer #2: Fair preparation, balanced, professors were well-versed in current trends

2. The dynamics of the COVID-19 pandemic created unprecedented challenges to delivering instruction in remote and hybrid modalities. What did the Frostburg program do well to expose you to current technologies in education? (Standard 5)

Completer #1: Yes, we were exposed to lots of EdTech. We used screencastify, padlet, and other apps in courses and I felt comfortable trying other apps as a result.

Completer #2: Tech wasn't a big emphasis when I was in the M.Ed. There was one class that did expose us to some online tools. One piece of advice I would offer is to tell all teachers that Google Translate is not reliable and there are better programs out there.

3. How did the Frostburg program prepare you to design and evaluate programs and curricula, and implement instructional strategies? (Standard 2)

Completer #1: Implementation - every county is different, I've worked at 3 counties, FSU prepared me to be flexible and succeed.

Completer #2: Both our professors and my county use John Hattie's system - feedback has been essential in my work. The PALS program in Hagerstown was great and working with pre-service teachers gave me practice for working as an EL teacher who sometimes coaches classroom teachers. The MEd helped me support math AND reading skills. I live and breathe phonics, decoding, and reading fluency.

4. Data-driven instruction is a core component of the continuous improvement cycle in education. What tools did your Frostburg program teach you that have helped you assess student needs, measure student progress, and design new programs? (Standard 3)

Completer #1: Because each county is different, the program did the best they could in exposing us to different systems. Some of the professors were great at this.

Completer #2: Professors introduced the components of reading instruction and fluency comprehension. Frostburg focused on International Literacy Assoc, but it doesn't apply to my area of education. EL teachers use WIDA.

5. What tools and strategies did your specific program provide you with to enable you to collaborate with colleagues and communicate with stakeholders within an ethical, moral and legal framework? (Standard 6?)

Completer #1: Group projects prepared me to group plan with colleagues. SPED classes helped me communicate more carefully regarding aspects of 504s and IEPs, although I had already been in the classroom.

Completer #2: Mentorship of pre-service teachers helped me work on how to give feedback to classroom teachers and respond in the moment. Co-teaching with younger teachers in WCPS helps me have confidence.

6. How did your masters program support your ability to build a school culture that values diversity, equity, and inclusion within your workplace? (Standard 4)

Completer #1: Both MAT & MEd emphasized empathy, and the Literacy program included children's books for demographics

Completer #2: Being in western Maryland, the professors and students in the program didn't reflect the diversity I see in a Title I school. I don't remember professors introducing a lot of multicultural resources. We could have benefitted from understanding our own blind spots, race relations.

7. How can Frostburg better prepare students for the realities and challenges encountered in today's educational setting? (Standard 7)

Completer #1: What we did in the last year and a half and I don't know that any college could have prepared us well. Hybrid is too much to ask of us.

Completer #2: The program seemed to fluctuate while I was in it which makes sense because education is always changing, but I feel the program would benefit from a strategic plan and long-term planning. Some professors and adjunct professors seemed overworked.

8. Do you have any additional comments about your Frostburg program and experiences you would like to share?

Completer #1: MEd helped with positive evaluation - reach more kids as a classroom teachers,

Completer #2: Preparing teachers for SEL lessons, we have many emotional students right now. Teachers need additional support to advocate for themselves and collaborate to address teacher burnout.