

Eight-Year Program Review IBHE Report Summary: see attached Resources page

PROGRAM REVIEW REPORT SUMMARY

- 1. Reporting Institution: Eastern Illinois University**
- 2. Program Reviewed Middle Level Education**
- 3. Date: 01/19/23**
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5. OVERVIEW

The Department of Teaching, Learning and Foundations is committed to fostering the development of professional educators within diverse settings building upon the natural leadership abilities of our students. The Middle Level Education curriculum prepares candidates to teach adolescents transitioning from childhood to adulthood, placing primary focus on grades five through eight. Teacher candidates will be endorsed in middle grades literacy/language arts and a subject area of their choice (middle grades mathematics, middle grades social science, or middle grades general science).

The Middle Level Education program does relate to the university mission through the applied learning experiences that candidates have in the public schools throughout their professional education experience within the program. The Middle Level Education program will continue to strive to prepare teachers for the students in the middle of the public school experience. The Teaching, Learning and Foundation Department will provide candidates with an opportunity to prepare teachers from birth through secondary school with the Middle Level Education program being a vital component to this continuum. The overall outcomes for this program are enumerated by the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards:

1. Teaching Diverse Students
2. Content Area and Pedagogical Knowledge
3. Planning Differentiated Instruction
4. Learning Environment
5. Instructional Delivery
6. Reading, Writing, and Oral Communications
7. Assessment
8. Collaborative Relationships
9. Professionalism, Leadership, and Advocacy

In 2017-2018, the program had approximately 36 candidates enrolled of which 8 completed the program. Based on data provided by the ISBE Annual Report Card, enrollment in 2018 was 27 with 15 program completers; 2019 had 30 candidates enrolled of which 13 were program completers; 2020 enrollment was 32 with 17 program completers and in 2021 28 candidates were enrolled with 11

completing the program. Enrollment across the last four years has remained relatively stable.

Strengths of the current middle level teacher education program include early field experiences and partnerships with area schools. Our undergraduate students continue to be selected to receive scholarships from both internal and external organizations. Registered student organizations within the department have organized and presented professional development and workshops for students and local teachers. Graduates are recruited by school districts throughout the state. Graduates of the Middle Level Education program have been successful in their career paths. Results from the most recent ISBE Annual Report indicate that 81% of the middle level respondents are employed full time. Of the 81%, 100% of candidates are employed and teaching in high needs placements. The data obtained only represent candidates who are employed in Illinois.

6. MAJOR FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program: (1) changes in the overall discipline or field, (2) student demand, (3) societal needs, (4) institutional context for offering the degree, (5) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question.

The teacher shortage has reached epidemic proportions not only in Illinois but across the nation. The negative political climate, lack of equity in funding, lack of professionalization of the field as evidenced by teacher salaries, increasing work demands on teachers resulting in burnout and attrition are all documented variables that have impacted the ability to recruit individuals into teaching. In addition, the Governor's Disaster Proclamation which remains in effect has waived the edTPA which is a required performance assessment for Illinois licensure, and has permitted candidates to enter their penultimate experience (student teaching) and graduate without passing their middle level licensure exams. The impact of these variables coupled with COVID has called for teacher preparation faculty to alter the delivery format of course content and field experiences and provide increasing support to candidates to successfully reach licensure.

Regardless of the variables impacting recruitment and retention of teachers, there is a need for all teachers including those licensed as middle-level educators. As stated earlier, 81% of the middle level respondents are employed full time. Of the 81%, 100% of candidates are employed and teaching in high needs placements. The Illinois State Board of Education data does not break down to the level of identifying the need for middle level educators. Furthermore, anecdotally, the department has received numerous emails and phone calls requesting that middle level job openings be shared with student teachers that will be graduating. For many of our middle level program completers, they have acquired a job prior to the completion of their student teaching experience.

6b. Description of major findings and recommendations including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement.

The Teaching, Learning, and Foundations department collects candidate performance data on middle level candidates as they progress through the program. Assessments align with state and national standards, and data are collected and analyzed. This data indicate that in excess of 90% of candidates are achieving Level 4 or 5 (Level 5 = Exceeds Standards) on all standard-based assessments. Data revealed that candidates in the program were successful in understanding and delivering content knowledge, attained a high degree of pedagogical knowledge and exemplify excellent dispositions in the teaching profession. With ever changing technology, our students always have room for improvement in keeping up to date with the latest tools for classrooms. The four-year average for candidates taking the Middle Level content test for licensure range from 88% (Language Arts) – 100% (Social Science and Science).

The Teaching, Learning, and Foundations department are in the curriculum evaluation phase of incorporating the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards for all Illinois Educators in the curriculum delivered to the candidates in the Middle Level teacher education program. In Fall 2025, these standards will be fully reflected in the curriculum and assessments are being revised to evaluate candidate performance on their ability to demonstrate cultural competence.

6c. Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular.

Since the last review the department has focused on enhancing its assessment program to distinguish assessment activities and results of the program. The department assessment committee has reviewed the standard assessments utilized and is utilizing a web-based assessment process to help enhance the results of such assessments based on the Professional Teaching Standards and incorporating the Culturally Responsive teaching standards in these assessments.

In order to help candidates understand and have more experience with diverse students and settings, the candidates take ELE 3050 Diverse Contexts that Influence the Learning Process. This course provides candidates with opportunities for volunteering in a school or community programming to develop a better sense of how a community works together for the benefit of its people. Candidates explore different attributes of “community” and choose projects to complete to fulfill their volunteer hours. The hours must be spent working with students and families, but they might be accomplished through a variety of activities either sponsored by the EIU Volunteerism office or approved by the instructor.

6d. Description of actions to be taken as result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular.

All teacher education programs in the State of Illinois are required to realign/design their program to include the new the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards for all Illinois Educators. The department will monitor state licensure requirements while using assessment data to make needed program/course revisions.

The faculty continue to review program and student data and plan for course/program revisions. Results from program and unit data drive program change. As the program looks to the future, new ways to address teacher preparation are being explored including, more explicit inclusion of differentiation, integrating technologies, and addressing culturally responsive standards.

Comments from the College Dean:

Since the last IBHE review, candidate enrollment has remained stable and program completers have increased suggesting that candidates who select the middle level program tend to successfully complete the program. Across the last 4 years, candidates within the program demonstrate a pass rate of 88%-100% on their licensure exam and tend to be employed in high needs placements. Similarly, over 90% of candidates enrolled in the Middle Level program are performing at an “exceeds standards” level on EPP assessments. As the faculty move forward, the faculty are encouraged to report program assessment data as well as EPP data. Having such data would serve to further inform current practices and needed changes.

Given the teacher shortage, identifying efforts to recruit and retain candidates in the middle level program would be useful in substantiating how EIU is attempting to support the production of middle level educators.

VPAA Decision:

- Program in good standing
- Program flagged for priority review
- Program enrollment suspended

VPAA Explanation:

Middle Level Education, B.S.Ed.

The summary above describes the efforts of the program to meet the Culturally Responsive Teaching and Leading Standards for all Illinois Educators, adopted in March 2021. Such efforts include the required service-learning course, ELE 3050 Diverse Contexts that Influence the Learning Process, which immerses students in community volunteer experiences. This new service requirement and the high pass rates of students on the licensure exam are commendable. What needs greater focus, however, is the effective recruitment and enrollment of students in the program as well as the development and implementation of a reliable assessment program that measures the progress of middle level education students in their journey through the curriculum.



Resources for Completing the Eight-Year IBHE Program Review Report

Section 5. Overview

This section will focus the review for your reader.

In no more than half a page, please explain your program's mission and its relationship to Eastern's mission (and, if applicable, to the mission of graduate education). Identify similar programs in the state; distinguish your program from them. You also should identify your program's student learning objectives and career/further education objectives, and summarize significant changes, achievements (by faculty and students and the program itself), and plans for the future.

Section 6. Major Findings and Recommendations

These are the standard IBHE questions:

a. Description and assessment of any major changes in the program:

- (1) changes in the overall discipline or field**
- (2) student demand**
- (3) societal needs**
- (4) institutional context for offering the degree**
- (5) other elements appropriate to the discipline in question**

What, if any, internal or external events have affected your program since the last review? Have enrollments, degree production, costs, student satisfaction, job placement, etc. changed significantly? Has the discipline's governing body approved a new name for the programs it represents; updated/revised curricular requirements; identified new markets; developed new emphases? Have nationwide demographic changes or social policies affected enrollments or requirements for good or for ill?

In addition to the items included in the "Accountability" section of the VPAA website (see the left-hand navigation box at <http://castle.eiu.edu/~acaffair/>), the resources listed below may help you to respond to item 6.a:

1. The IBHE Data Bank <http://www.ibhe.state.il.us/Data%20Bank/default.htm> includes the *Data Book*, which provides statewide discipline-based data on enrollments, degree production, and costs; as well as a variety of other data on statewide enrollments, degree production, credit hour production, and costs.
2. The Institutional Research web page available at <https://www.eiu.edu/ir/> houses EIU's Data Books and the IBHE Alumni survey results, as well as a great deal of information about EIU students (ACT scores, degrees awarded, retention rates, etc.)
3. Occupational projections are available from many professional journals and organizations, as well as:

- a. the Bureau of Labor Statistics <http://stats.bls.gov/>
 - b. ISBE’s Educator Supply and Demand Report
http://www.isbe.state.il.us/research/htmls/supply_and_demand.htm
 - c. the Illinois Workforce Information Center
http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Pages/Workforce_Information_Center.aspx
4. Staff members in the Office of Institutional Research also are available to aid you in assembling and analyzing administrative data.

b. Description of major findings and recommendations, including evidence of learning outcomes and identification of opportunities for program improvement

While 6.b also asks you to discuss other significant findings, it is basically the assessment section of the program review. As such, the responses here are crucial to your review’s success. Departments that cannot demonstrate that their assessment programs meet the established guidelines will be expected to revise those programs within six months of the final review deadline. The IBHE’s **assessment guidelines are appended to this document.**

Since your overview already identifies your student learning objectives, focus here on the assessment program and its results. What measures are you using to assess learning? How well are students achieving the objectives identified for them? What are their specific strengths and weaknesses? What changes have you made and will you be making as a result of assessment? Emphasize direct assessment, but mention the indirect measures you are using as well. Support your generalizations with specific data/evidence. And be sure to include feedback from key stakeholders—students, alums, employers, peer reviewers, etc.—since the IBHE requires it.

c. Description of actions taken since the last review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular

d. Description of actions to be taken as a result of this review, including instructional resources and practices, and curricular

6.c and 6.d are straightforward. However, by this point, you already may have mentioned the most significant actions your department has taken/is planning to take. Do not repeat yourself. Merely refer the reader to a previous section or sections.

Section 7. Outcome

After consultation with the College Dean, the Provost’s Office will indicate whether the program will be deemed “in good standing” or “flagged for priority review.” The latter category is used to identify programs experiencing serious concerns—significantly low enrollments, high costs, negative accreditation findings, below-average pass rates on statewide exams, below-average employment placement rates, a continuing lack of satisfaction among students or employers, etc. Departments will be asked to examine and address the identified concern(s) and report the results in an interim review, due in 1-3 years. Typically, however, the IBHE program review results in a positive decision, and the next review is due in eight years.