

REVIEW OF THE B.S., B.S.ED. IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

Classification of Instruction Programs (CIP) Code: 13.1202
Elementary Education and Teaching

OVERVIEW

The B.S., B.S.Ed. Elementary Education program at Illinois State University is housed in the School of Teaching and Learning within the College of Education. The School of Teaching and Learning awards degrees in the following programs: Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, and Middle Level Education. A teacher candidate is able to earn additional endorsements on their professional education license. Early Childhood teacher candidates may earn the following endorsements: bilingual, reading teacher, and/or English as a second language (ESL). Middle level candidates must choose two of the following endorsements for their plans of study: language arts, math, science, social science, or English as a second language (ESL). In addition to the above-mentioned endorsements, Early Childhood candidates may pursue a Special Educator Letter of Approval that is highly desired by Illinois districts, and they may also pursue a minor in bilingual education. The School of Teaching and Learning provides a professional educator sequence for many secondary education programs. Finally, the School offers graduate programs which include: a Master's in Teaching and Learning, a Master's in Reading, and an Ed.D. in Teaching and Learning. The School also offers a post-baccalaureate program for the Library Information Specialist endorsement. The last review of the B.S., B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education program occurred in 2012-2013.

The program is based on the conceptual framework "Realizing the Democratic Ideal" and closely aligned with national elementary teacher education standards, the 2010 Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTTS), and the Illinois standards for Elementary Education Teachers (2013), all of which are integrally related. Throughout the program, elementary education candidates have opportunities to link theory with practice as they participate in approximately 400 hours of clinical experiences in elementary classrooms. Elementary education candidates also may apply to one of several Professional Development Schools in which they integrate their coursework with ongoing classroom experiences in participating school districts in a year-long student teaching experience.

The Elementary Education program prepares candidates for the Illinois Professional Educator License and the Elementary Education Endorsement in grades 1-6. The completion of the Elementary Education Program curriculum and the successful completion of the edTPA (state licensure test) meets the state requirements for obtaining an elementary endorsement on a professional educator's license (PEL). Upon the successful completion of their academic program, clinical experiences, edTPA (state licensure exam), and student teaching, elementary candidates are recommended by the university to the Illinois State Board of Education for licensing. Elementary candidates may complete coursework within the program that allows them to secure additional endorsements on the professional educators license (PEL). These additional endorsements are reading and/or English as a Second Language. The ESL endorsement option was added since the last university program review cycle due to demand in the field.

Enrollment and Degrees Conferred, 2012-2019

B.S., B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education, Illinois State University

First Majors Only

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Enrollments, fall census day | 960 | 935 | 959 | 1036 | 1020 | 923 | 1030 | 1079 |
| Degrees conferred, graduating fiscal year | 301 | 241 | 213 | 234 | 247 | 303 | 166 | 210 |

Table notes:

Graduating Fiscal Year consists of summer, fall, and spring terms, in that order. For example, Graduating Fiscal Year 2018 consists of the following terms: summer 2017, fall 2017, and spring 2018.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY PROGRAM REVIEW SELF-STUDY REPORT

Program goals

The program goals are developed from the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) standards which are held as true indicators of quality by the profession. These quality indicators include programs that produce strong Elementary Education candidates prepared to meet the diverse needs of young children and families. High quality programs also provide candidates an extensive variety of field-based experiences. The Illinois State University program ensures that diversity training and technology are embedded in all coursework. Students receive 150-160 hours of clinical experience and student teaching, including opportunities across the country and abroad.

Students learning outcomes

Master syllabi are aligned to the Illinois Professional Teaching Standards (IPTTS) standards indicated below. Faculty have embedded content within their courses to address the requirements of the state Elementary content exam as well as for the edTPA (the state licensure exam). Clinical courses in the Elementary program are using elements of the edTPA and the Danielson Framework for clinical coursework evaluations. The student teaching semester is evaluated through the Danielson Framework within the student teaching course during the last semester of the senior year.

- *Teaching Diverse Students* – The competent teacher understands the diverse characteristics and abilities of each student and how individuals develop and learn within the context of their social, economic, cultural, linguistic, and academic experiences. The teacher uses these experiences to create instructional opportunities that maximize student learning.
- *Content Area and Pedagogical Knowledge* – The competent teacher has in-depth understanding of content area knowledge that includes central concepts, methods of inquiry, structures of the disciplines, and content area literacy. The teacher creates meaningful learning experiences for each student based upon interactions among content area and pedagogical knowledge, and evidence-based practice.
- *Planning for Differentiated Instruction* – The competent teacher plans and designs instruction based on content area knowledge, diverse student characteristics, student performance data, curriculum goals, and the community context. The teacher plans for ongoing student growth and achievement.
- *Learning Environment* – The competent teacher structures a safe and healthy learning environment that facilitates cultural and linguistic responsiveness, emotional well-being, self-efficacy, positive social interaction, mutual respect, active engagement, academic risk-taking, self-motivation, and personal goal-setting.
- *Instructional Delivery* – The competent teacher differentiates instruction by using a variety of strategies that support critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, and continuous growth and learning. This teacher understands that the classroom is a dynamic environment requiring ongoing modification of instruction to enhance learning for each student.
- *Reading, Writing, and Oral Communication* – The competent teacher has foundational knowledge of reading, writing, and oral communication within the content area and recognizes and addresses student reading, writing, and oral communication needs to facilitate the acquisition of content knowledge.
- *Assessment* – The competent teacher understands and uses appropriate formative and summative assessments for determining student needs, monitoring student progress, measuring student growth, and evaluating student outcomes. The teacher makes decisions driven by data about curricular and instructional effectiveness and adjusts practices to meet the needs of each student.
- *Collaborative Relationships* – The competent teacher builds and maintains collaborative relationships to foster cognitive, linguistic, physical, and social and emotional development. This teacher works as a team member with professional colleagues, students, parents or guardians, and community members.
- *Professionalism, Leadership, and Advocacy* – The competent teacher is an ethical and reflective practitioner who exhibits professionalism; provides leadership in the learning community; and advocates for students, parents or guardians, and the profession.

Program curriculum (2018-2019)

The graduation requirements for the B.S., B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education program consists of 33 credit hours of required major courses, 27 credit hours of education-related courses, 12 hours of student teaching, 36 credit hours of general education courses, and 12 credit hours of elective courses.

Program delivery

The program is offered on the Normal campus.

The program is delivered primarily through face-to-face or blended face-to-face/online instruction.

The School of Teaching and Learning sponsors short-term cultural immersion experiences through partner institutions in United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Finland, Japan, Taiwan, Costa Rica, Ireland, and Panama.

Department faculty (Fall 2019)

42 tenure track faculty members (12 Professors, 16 Associate Professors, and 14 Assistant Professors)

75 non-tenure track faculty members (12 full-time, 63 part-time, totaling 35.50 FTE)

Undergraduate student to faculty ratio: 22 to 1

Undergraduate student to tenure-line faculty ratio: 40 to 1

Specialized accreditation

All teacher education programs at Illinois State University seek accreditation from the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (now Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation). The program was reaccredited by CAEP in November 2019. The next review cycle is scheduled for 2025-2026. In addition, the review of individual programs is a review conducted by the state or electronically through NCATE/CAEP and the specialized professional organizations.

Formerly, an individual program review of the elementary program was conducted by the Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI), a specialized professional organization (SPA) resulting in National Recognition and accreditation of the program in August, 2011; however, ACEI no longer exists and elementary programs are using the CAEP review process as their accreditation process. Elementary programs must now choose to align to InTasc-Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium standards and/or CAEP elementary standards. This is work that has begun and is expected to be completed by fall of 2020.

Changes in the academic discipline, field, societal need, and program demand

Changes in the manner in which students in the discipline are taught: Elementary Education program faculty within the School of Teaching and Learning have designed instruction to effectively address culturally responsive teaching, framing mindsets from an asset-based perspective of the learner, and effective instruction for diverse learners. Program faculty have designed instruction related to standards-based grading, strategies for engaging students in learning (as opposed to “classroom management”), reading and writing workshop, new science standards and STEM instruction (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), and Common Core standards—all constructs that are now guiding the field.

Program faculty utilize flexible seating, collaborative learning opportunities, embedded technology expectations and requirements, and often forms of standards-based in their instructional methods for their college coursework.

Changes in the professions for which students are trained: Elementary teacher candidates are now able to secure an endorsement in English as a Second Language instruction since the last cycle of program review. The coursework towards this endorsement was developed to meet the demand in the field for teachers who are able to effectively instruct children for whom English is not their first language. Many districts in Illinois are requiring applicants for teaching positions to have an ESL endorsement on their professional educators’ license in order to secure an interview and to potentially be hired to teach in the district. The School has met this demand through the creation of the ESL endorsement within the plans of study for Elementary candidates.

Program faculty designed a science inquiry course to better support Elementary teacher candidates' understanding and implementation of instructional strategies that support inquiry across disciplines. The field of education has moved towards an inquiry-based curricular model for elementary children, and this instruction supports teacher candidates' preparation for working effectively with curricula and with children in Illinois schools.

Changes in the demand for program graduates: Illinois is currently experiencing a teacher shortage. Demand for teachers (particularly in urban and rural areas) has increased while the number of Elementary teacher candidates enrolled in most Illinois universities has significantly decreased since the last cycle of program review.

Anecdotally, the School administration believes the decrease in enrollment in state-wide Elementary teacher preparation programs is due to a number of factors, including, but not limited to, the following: ongoing negative media publicity related to state workers' pension plans and compensation rates; the increased competition for students from out-of-state institutions; the cost of a higher education degree compared to the starting salaries of novice teachers; and the increased number of families/potential students moving out-of-state.

Graduates of the School of Teaching and Learning remain in high demand for hiring by Illinois districts as well as many districts in the United States due to their strong reputation as conscientious, highly professional educators with a solid knowledge of instructional strategies and theories that support children in today's classrooms. Anecdotally, principals, human resource directors, and school superintendents (among other district personnel) continue to share that they begin their hiring processes with graduates from the School of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University.

Changes in the demand for the program by prospective students: Per available PRPA data, prospective Elementary educators are choosing the School of Teaching of Learning when they decide to matriculate as teacher candidates. While other Elementary programs in the state have seen as much as a 73 percent decrease in enrollment in their Elementary numbers within the last cycle of program review, enrollment for the same program in the same time period has experienced an 8 percent increase. Since the last cycle of program review, the Illinois State Board of Education has changed the licensure band structure to create "specialists" in the following grade bands: Early Childhood (birth through 2nd grade); Elementary (1-6 grade); and Middle Level (5-8 grade). This has caused candidates to identify their chosen grade range early in the program.

An average of 578 applicants applied as freshman to the Elementary program from 2011-2018. An average of 131 applicants enrolled as freshman from 2011-2018. The number of freshman student applicants and transfer student applicants has varied and/or decreased since 2011; however, the percentage of freshman applicants and transfer student applicants actually enrolling has generally increased between 2011 and 2018.

Responses to previous program review recommendations

The 2012-2013 program review resulted in five recommendations.

1. *Begin a program-wide initiative to align the curriculum with the student teaching experience, the newly mandated Teaching Portfolio Assessment/Performance Based Certification Assessment, and the 2010 Illinois Professional Teaching standards; make appropriate curricular changes as warranted.* The elementary faculty systematically revised syllabi and course content to reflect the identified Illinois Professional Teaching Standards; revised coursework to reflect additional supports for the mandated performance-based teaching portfolio (edTPA, formerly known as the Teaching Portfolio Assessment); revised a key performance assessment to provide feedback that would inform edTPA; and worked with the undergraduate coordinator to provide necessary orientations and/or course discussions to familiarize elementary candidates with the new assessment. These efforts have been successful in preparing candidates as reflected by the 98-99 percent average passage rate of our elementary candidates.
2. *Examine all required program course objectives for content crossover and gap.* The examination of all required program course objectives for content crossover and gaps was accomplished through an extensive program redesign completed in 2013. At that time, alignment of objectives across courses was considered, alignment of course objectives with the IPTS was considered, and all program assessments were updated to reflect the necessary changes to alignment. Elementary faculty have recently engaged in another process of

review to ensure the necessary alignments across courses and will continue this process during the 2019-2020 academic year.

3. *Continue working to increase tenure track to non-tenure track ratios.* Increasing tenure track to non-tenure track ratios remains an ongoing goal for the department. The Interim Director of the School of Teaching continues to request tenure-track lines each year. In 2019 he requested 6 lines for the department to help to increase these ratios, and the School received 2 lines, one of which would be to fill an elementary bilingual teaching position.
4. *Work with departments across campus offering marketable elementary endorsements to improve access to courses.* School administration has worked with necessary department directors, advisors, and course instructors through the program redesign process to ensure access to necessary courses within other programs.
5. *Continue to monitor "sculpted enrollment" for each of the undergraduate teacher programs.* School administration routinely work with academic advisors and the director for enrollment and transfer services for the College of Education to monitor the enrollment within the elementary program. For example, the Early Childhood program has increased in size due to concerted efforts to sculpt the Elementary enrollment.

Major findings

The Elementary Education program in the School of Teaching and Learning at Illinois State University is an exemplary program for candidates wishing to teach children in first through sixth grades. Faculty continue to engage in robust research implementing effective instructional strategies that maximize the learning of the program's students. Demand for the program remains strong even in the face of decreasing numbers of individuals choosing the field of education.

Elementary faculty have evidenced a robust research agenda related to issues of diversity, and they have infused content related to issues of diversity throughout their curricula. Program faculty remain committed to supporting students and faculty of color and continue to support the diversity initiatives of the School of Teaching and Learning and the College of Education.

The program's cycle of assessment and redesigned curricula continue to effectively meet the state's requirements for licensure. As indicated above, program faculty will be engaging in alignment work with newly developed state competency-based standards during the next cycle of review.

As a result of the self-study related to the recent CAEP accreditation process, the Elementary faculty will be reinstating an advisory board comprised of state and community leaders, teachers, and other school personnel to provide ongoing feedback, support, and guidance to program faculty and students. Members of the advisory board have already been identified, and the board will commence in October 2019. This advisory board is scheduled to meet twice during each academic year. Additional involvement will be determined at those meetings.

Recognizing the issues with the newly redesigned content test for Elementary teacher candidates, the state board of education has announced that they will be redesigning the content test to better reflect current norms in the field and to address the problematic wording of the questions. However, as a result of the self-study related to program assessment, Elementary faculty have begun embedding additional curricular support related to the state content test to support candidates while the re-design is occurring. Working with the undergraduate program coordinator, program faculty have targeted specific content areas and edTPA portfolio rubrics for designing embedded curricula that supports candidates towards licensure.

Elementary faculty and the administration within the School of Teaching and Learning will continue to work to secure tenure-line faculty to teach the large number of candidates within the elementary program. While the number of applicants has slightly decreased, the percentage of enrolled students has increased keeping numbers steady over the last cycle of review; therefore, the consideration related to decreasing the ratio of nontenured line faculty members to tenure-line faculty members (cited in the last program review cycle) remains an ongoing concern.

Also, elementary program faculty, School administration, and the placement coordinator for pre-student teaching clinical experiences will work to continually identify and secure quality placements for teacher candidates within the School of Teaching and Learning. Faculty and School administration recognize that quality placements are

currently at maximum capacity, especially those placements related to English as a Second Language experiences, and will seek to enlist the help of university administration to problem-solve these issues in light of continued expectations for increasing enrollment.

Initiatives and plans

Elementary faculty will work to do the following related to supporting diverse students in the next review cycle (to continue the work already begun and to build upon the work already begun):

- Work to increase the number of students of color who decide to be teachers through the work with Future Teachers Clubs and community colleges and the National Center for Urban Education
- Support students of color more effectively in coursework, clinical experiences, and campus life by:
 - Conducting annual student surveys to measure the department's effectiveness in this endeavor
 - Making this support a key element of program review and assessment
 - Forming a student committee/panel to examine the issues and to offer suggestions for support and ways of moving forward
- Ensure that the infusion of content related to issues of equity and diversity is measurable and comprehensive
- Continue conversations with faculty of color to determine how best to support them and their work
- Continue and increasing targeted support for clinical experiences and faculty research opportunities that relate to issues of diversity and equity
- Award more scholarship monies to diverse student populations
- Provide professional development related to supporting students of color for faculty
- Most importantly, better identify the challenges for students of color experience at Illinois State University and work more intentionally to support them in their coursework, clinical experiences, and campus life

Elementary faculty will embed state-created and approved competency-based standards to all program assessments during the next program review cycle.

The program will conduct a targeted campaign in the 2019-2020 academic year (and beyond) to make Elementary teacher candidates more aware of the social media accounts of the School of Teaching and Learning and will engage more faculty and alumni in posting and updating the accounts.

Elementary faculty will develop the role of the newly formed advisory council in the next cycle of review.

PROGRAM REVIEW OUTCOME AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE ACADEMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Review Outcome: The Academic Planning Committee, as a result of this review process, finds the B.S., B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education to be in Good Standing.

The Academic Planning Committee commends the program on its efforts to engage in an ongoing review process and prepare a self-study report that included faculty input over a period of three semesters. The committee further recognizes the faculty efforts from their review that have resulted in the creation of advisory councils, the development of additional supports for the Elementary/Middle Grades content test required for licensure and administered by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and the use of survey data from both students and faculty to determine areas of celebration and concern and to inform program planning and development.

The committee also commends the program on its ability to continue to limit enrollments in their courses. This is in keeping with the University's commitment to fostering a small-college atmosphere with large-university opportunities and continues to set the program apart from other options at other institutions.

The committee recognizes that 98% of Illinois State Elementary Education graduates scored at the "proficient" or "excellent" levels on their first-year performance evaluations administered by their school districts. These high evaluations are a reflection of the thorough preparation students receive while in the program. The committee also commends the program on the success of their graduates with respect to the increases in employment rates within

the industry. The committee also recognizes the efforts of the program to continuously conduct assessments and curricular redesign to effectively meet the State's requirements for licensure.

The committee makes note of the numerous opportunities the program provides students to study abroad and commends faculty for remaining committed to providing a variety of these transformative experiences to students. The committee also makes note of the many outside-the-classroom opportunities for their students through participation in registered student organizations and other co-curricular opportunities, as well as the percentage of students participating in the University's Honor's program that consistently has been higher than the University-wide percentage.

The committee notes that in Fiscal Year 2016, 81.1% of first-time in college Elementary Education students graduated within four years in comparison to the University-wide average rate of 63.9%; in Fiscal Year 2017; 80.3% graduated in four years (compared to 67.3% across the University); and in Fiscal Year 2018, 86.3% graduate in four years (compared to 72.0% across the University). The committee encourages faculty and staff to continue monitoring time to degree during the next program review cycle. The committee also notes that retention rates are at or above University-wide averages over the period of review.

The committee commends the program's efforts to promote a climate of inclusiveness through their varied activities related to diversity, equity, and culturally responsive teaching. The committee applauds the program's development of multifaceted plans to increase and support both student and faculty diversity and strongly encourages the faculty to pursue the self-identified areas of growth in these areas. The committee notes the leadership role that many of the faculty have taken with the Culturally Responsive Campus Community Conference held at Illinois State University.

Follow-up Reports.

Assessment Plan. The Academic Planning Committee recognizes faculty efforts in developing an assessment plan that aligns with the standards of external bodies, such as ISBE, and in implementing the assessment plan to address these standards and modify the curricula. However, in its current form, there are no indirect measures of learning in the assessment and the processes for using assessment information to revise the program are not specified. The committee notes that references to both these components were made throughout the self-study report and asks that the program work with University Assessment Services to refine the existing plan so that it not only continues to align with the standards of external bodies (such as the competency-based InTASC and CAEP elementary standards), but also provides meaningful information to guide faculty in their program revisions. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to submit a revised assessment plan to the Office of the Provost by May 1, 2021.

Comparator and Aspirational Programs. The committee has included analyses of comparator and aspirational programs in the self-study report guidelines to provide faculty with opportunities to consider the niche their program has among its peers and to gather information for program planning. The committee would like the program to revisit the aspirational section of the self-study. Although the faculty did discuss other institutions when describing the creation of a MAT in Elementary Education, the same process was not followed in the discussion of the Grow-Your-Own partnership or the creation of additional supports for state licensing exams. In a subsequent follow-up report, the committee asks the faculty to address this section through an expanded analysis of aspirational programs, including aspirational programs nationwide, that could help faculty develop strategies for addressing priority initiatives faculty has identified for the next review, such as increasing student-faculty research collaborations, expanding professional development opportunities for faculty members, and further increasing faculty scholarship. Studying aspirational programs might also help faculty with the exploration of alternate program delivery methods. Accordingly, the committee asks faculty to revisit their discussions of comparator and aspirational institutions and to summarize the findings of those discussions in a report submitted to the Office of the Provost by May 1, 2022.

Recommendations.

The Academic Planning Committee thanks faculty and staff of the B.S., B.S.Ed. in Elementary Education program for the opportunity to provide input regarding elementary educator preparation at Illinois State University through consideration of the submitted self-study report submitted by faculty. The following committee recommendations to be addressed within the next regularly scheduled review cycle are provided in a spirit of collaboration with Elementary Education faculty and staff. In the next program review self-study report, tentatively due October 1, 2027, the committee asks the program to describe actions taken and results achieved for each recommendation.

Continue to focus on diversity, inclusion, and equity. As indicated in the self-study report, the committee encourages the program to pursue its goals related to further developing a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment that effectively supports students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Complete a review of the curriculum. The committee encourages faculty to complete a comprehensive review of coursework in the Elementary Education program to ensure it appropriately aligns with forthcoming competency-based InTASC standards. As part of the review of curriculum, the committee suggests a consideration of how the program might also focus on incorporating clinical placements in rural areas in order to broaden students' preparation for work in diverse settings.

Continue to monitor enrollment trends. In light of concerns related to statewide teacher shortages, the committee encourages faculty to continue to actively evaluate the program's (and the School of Teaching and Learning's broader "sculpted enrollment") recruitment and retention plans to make ensure that the needs of both the program and the State are met. The committee also encourages the faculty to develop plans that address the declining rates of minority students matriculating in the program.

Continue implementing and refining the student learning outcomes assessment plan. The committee encourages faculty to continue its implementation of the student learning outcomes assessment plan for the program during the next program review cycle, to continue to utilize information gathered through plan implementation to make program revisions as necessary, and to document how that has been done. The committee encourages faculty to periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the plan in assessing student learning to identify any modifications to the plan faculty may deem necessary.