

**Christa McAuliffe Award  
For Exemplary Programs in Teacher Education**

**Name of Program**

Latham Clinical Schools Network (LCSN) Partnership Program

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Leadership in School-University Partnerships

**ABSTRACT**

**The LCSN Partnership Program has documented evidence that ECU graduates are highly recruited over graduates of other programs, have high retention rates in the profession, possess the skills to overcome the critical factors that drive beginning teachers from the profession in the first 3-5 years, and directly impact student achievement.**

## **I. Please restate the mission, goals, objectives and description of your program.**

The **Latham Clinical Schools Network (LCSN)** is a university-public school partnership program between East Carolina University (ECU) and 16 public school systems in rural eastern North Carolina and is an integral part of the School of Education (SOE) at ECU. The university, a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina, is the third largest university in the state with an enrollment of over 19,000 students and the largest education program with over 900 graduates each year. Full accreditation by NCATE and Exemplary Status by the N. C. State Department of Public Instruction highlight ECU's efforts to exceed standards in developing new and better ways to prepare educators. Factors that make this network a model program are the collaborative power of 16 public school systems with the largest teacher preparation institution in the State of North Carolina; quality field placements for pre-service teachers with trained clinical teachers in diverse public school settings; a shared responsibility for the recruitment, induction, retention, and renewal of teachers in eastern North Carolina; and authentic clinical experiences in which university faculty, public school faculty, teacher education candidates, and public school students can interact.

The mission and main goal of the **LCSN** program is to provide a regional partnership in which public schools and ECU can collaborate through broad based involvement and communication links that assist the partners in identifying common purposes that improve the quality of teacher preparation and increase P-12 student achievement. The **LCSN** partnership program meets its goal through the following 4 objectives: **1)** Establish and maintain communication and support to all teacher education licensure areas and the 16 public school systems through the *Partnership Advisory Board* (PA Board); **2)** Provide support for *licensure areas* in order for them to imbed meaningful field experiences throughout teacher education coursework and seek feedback from the **LCSN** partners (school and university) for curriculum renewal; **3)** Enable teacher education candidates and graduates opportunities to make an *impact on the learning of P-12 students*; and **4)** Facilitate jointly delivered *professional development* for all **LCSN** partners based on the needs of both constituents.

### **LCSN Partnership Program Communication**

The Partnership Advisory Board (PA Board) serves as a vehicle for open and ongoing communication between the university and **LCSN** partnership schools. It consists of representative faculty from each of the 16 teacher education departments and 21 licensure areas (including the College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Education and other Professional Schools), a system liaison from each of the 16 public school districts, 3 teachers and 3 principals from partnership schools, and staff from the Office of Clinical Experiences (OCE). Meetings are held once a month to enhance partnership communication and collaboration. Teacher education policies and curricular changes are examples of reforms generated from ideas at the meetings resulting in more effective and successful candidates.

### **Licensure Area Support and Increased P-12 Student Achievement**

The **LCSN** partnership enables licensure areas to create authentic experiences for candidates during developmental field experiences that permeate through the teacher preparation programs. These field experiences begin early in the teacher education program, contain authentic instructional requirements, and culminate with a yearlong internship. Three exemplary licensure areas, elementary, middle grades, and special education are featured in this proposal due to their extensive partnerships within the **LCSN** Partnership program. Candidates in each of these licensure areas meet state and national standards, including those established by INTASC (Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium), NMSA (National Middle School Association), and CEC (Council for Exceptional Children). Clinical teachers and university supervisors trained in the **LCSN** program model work in partnership to supervise

candidates in developmental field experiences. Four ECU faculty serve as liaisons, one in each of the four PDS sites where partnership work is done on a deeper level. Additionally, four teachers-in-residence work simultaneously in the local schools and at the university. Evidence shows that linked to field experiences are authentic assignments that require candidates to demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and dispositions of teaching, and document the impact of their instruction on the performance of P-12 students. Candidate evidence produced throughout developmental teaching experiences is placed in a candidate work sample portfolio required by all three licensure areas. This portfolio is correlated with INTASC and other national standards. By the end of their yearlong internship, candidates demonstrate all knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to required standards. University faculty and clinical teachers facilitate the development of the portfolio. The LCSN partnership program provides communication to all stakeholders about portfolio criteria and monitors final portfolio products in relation to required standards. Formative, summative, and confirming evidence acknowledges the impact of the relationship between the LCSN partnership program and the licensure areas on candidate development and on student achievement.

### **Professional Development**

Professional development through the LCSN partnership program is available in a true collaborative fashion with the university and public school partners delivering the sessions as co-presenters. Examples of professional development opportunities available for all LCSN partners are National Board Certification Workshops, Thinking Strategies Training, Diversity Awareness Training, and Technology Training. One Teacher-in-Residence (TIR) in the LCSN program, entitled the Coach2Coach facilitator, is a NBPTS certified teacher on loan to the university. This position expands the work of the network beyond teacher education candidates and their clinical teachers to beginning teachers, their mentors, and master teachers in 33 northeastern NC public school systems.

## **II. What evidence do you have that supports the program's positive impact on the learning of program graduates?**

Formative, summative, and confirming data are collected from candidates, faculty, graduates, and school partners in the LCSN including employing principals. This evidence supports the LCSN Partnership Program's assistance with the elementary, middle grades and special education areas' ability to positively impact the learning of their graduates. Candidate feedback provides both formative and summative evidence and is a valued source of information about changes that should be made to the program. Faculty collaboration and program review evidence ensures use of the formative and summative data to create standards based authentic assessments that optimize teacher preparation. Confirming evidence from graduates and the LCSN partners affirms that the formative and summative data are accurate reflections of a high functioning, continuous improvement program. The following data support this assertion.

### **Program Entrance, Graduation and State Licensure Requirements**

ECU admits candidates to upper division coursework in professional studies and licensure areas in their junior year based upon several criteria, which include a GPA of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale; satisfactory completion of a speech and hearing screening, written essay, technology requirements, and a 16-hour early field experience with a grade of C or higher; and a passing score on PRAXIS I: Reading, Writing, and Mathematics. Thirty-five percent of applicants do not meet these requirements and are not admitted to the program. Candidates must also meet minimum criteria to apply for North Carolina licensure at the end of their program, which are passing scores on PRAXIS I and II exams, 2.5 GPA, documented computer competencies in candidates' portfolios; and a grade of C or higher in the year-long internship based on a

holistic scoring rubric that correlates with the state's Teacher Performance and Appraisal Instrument for Beginning Teachers (TPAI-BT).

### **Authentic Assessments**

A variety of authentic assignments have been created based on state initiatives, needs of candidates to acquire skills and knowledge in authentic ways, and the adoption of the INTASC standards. Presentations of these assessments to peers and faculty consistently demonstrate the candidates' growth and acquisition of skills and knowledge. Each authentic assignment is assessed using a rubric or checklist with criteria based on INTASC standards and SDPI guidelines for the program agreed upon by faculty in the licensure areas. In addition, clinical faculty provide structured feedback to students using state teacher evaluation criteria. These authentic assessments provide evidence of the program's impact on the positive learning of candidates through their acquisition of positive knowledge, skills, and dispositions related to teaching. Candidate feedback and employing principal feedback overwhelmingly confirms the effectiveness of authentic assignments and varied field experiences. Table B in the Appendix shows examples of authentic assignments that are embedded throughout the program that link to National and State competencies.

### **Candidates' Work Sample Portfolios**

The authentic culminating activity for candidates in all three licensure areas is the presentation and review of their teaching portfolios. INTASC standards are introduced during the sophomore year, followed by assignments imbedded throughout courses that require the collection of evidence that demonstrates effectiveness with the standards. Reflections include evidence of candidates' abilities to assess P-12 students and track their academic growth. Candidates' presentations of their portfolios consistently show growth and acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes about teaching in relation to standards. The work samples are assessed using a rubric based on INTASC standards and can be viewed at ([www.soe.ecu.edu/KappaDeltaPi/seniors/seniorintro.htm](http://www.soe.ecu.edu/KappaDeltaPi/seniors/seniorintro.htm)). Candidates bring their portfolios to each meeting with their advisor for progress monitoring. Additionally, they must share their portfolio during their interview for admission to Upper Division in the program. Feedback gained from these informal reviews has resulted in modifications to forms and monitoring tools, to course materials, and to rubrics.

### **PRAXIS II Exam**

PRAXIS II scores provide a summative evaluation for the graduates of the program. A 92.2 % PRAXIS II pass rate was found from a sample 129 graduates, from 1999-2002, from the three licensure areas highlighted for this award. An additional 5.4 % did not have scores to report since the State of North Carolina has recently given graduates through the first 2 years of teaching to pass.

### **Student Opinion Survey on Coursework**

Each semester candidates in each of the licensure areas complete an anonymous survey on the instructor and the course. These include quantitative and qualitative comments. Some examples of changes implemented based on such candidate feedback are creation of course sections of existing courses in order for content to be tailored to the needs of specific groups of candidates, inclusion of more authentic products, addition of more public school (on-site) practicum experiences in courses, elimination of overlapping assignments, and clarification of and early candidate exposure to grading rubrics. These changes are a direct result of candidate feedback and provide more authentic opportunities for candidates.

### **Student Surveys on Field Experiences and the Senior Year Internship**

These surveys provide formative and summative evidence of the work of the three licensure areas. After each field experience and the final internship experience, candidates complete a survey on the effectiveness of the experiences. From these surveys, field experiences have been enhanced, and

assignments, organization, and products from experience have been refined. For example, during the Senior I Experience students and clinical teachers felt that the experience needed more structure and monitoring; therefore, the Senior I Agreement Form was created to ensure that experiences were clear, concise and consistent with program area and public school partners' expectations.

### **Faculty Self-Review and Program Review**

Licensure area faculty, through the use of task force assignments and subcommittees, meet regularly with each other, the department chairperson, and clinical faculty from the university and public schools to discuss needed changes in the program. Sample results of these meetings include the implementation of technology requirements as a result of state initiatives, the creation of authentic products to use with candidates, the enhancement of field experiences and the onset of cross course assignments. Examples of current collaborative efforts resulting from feedback from candidates, faculty members, and clinical teachers in the LCSN are the refinement of the portfolio work sample evaluation model, movement toward an electronic portfolio process, development of an on-line M.A.Ed. program, on-going revision of the undergraduate programs to reflect state/local needs, dissemination of scholarships and awards to candidates, and development of collaborative research grant applications. Curriculum revisions have included regular meetings with a committee of public school teachers and faculty to develop and integrate the four key areas of the university's conceptual framework - diversity, technology, assessment and reflection- into authentic assignments. The collaborative nature between the university and public schools to improve curriculum and delivery of instruction as well as enhancing the field experiences developmentally throughout the three licensure areas is confirming evidence of the functionality and success of the LCSN model.

### **Summative Internship Reports on Candidates**

During the internship evaluations are completed on each candidate. The evaluations contain seven areas of teacher performance and appraisal paralleling the state's teacher evaluation system (TPAI-BT). This data provides summative evidence of candidates' abilities to function in the seven areas of planning, knowledge of content, management of instructional time, managing student behavior, lesson presentation, instructional monitoring and feedback, and professionalism. Candidates can be rated Above Satisfactory (AS = 4), Satisfactory (S = 3), Needs Improvement (NI = 2), or Unsatisfactory (U = 1) on each of the seven appraisal areas at each of the four evaluation sessions. This information when transposed to numerical data creates a maximum score of 112 for receiving AS on each of the seven areas at all four evaluation sessions. A minimum satisfactory score would be 84 corresponding to an average of S on all seven factors for all four sessions. Of the 129 graduates sampled 98.4 % had progress reports rated at S or AS indicating cumulative scores of 84 or higher on progress reports.

### **Senior Year Evaluation of Teacher Education Program**

Table A in the Appendix is a summary of the percentages of senior candidates over the last three academic years, by licensure area that agreed or strongly agreed with the questions on the teacher education evaluation. These questions are designed to solicit feedback from candidates about their total teacher education program and they have a direct link to the INTASC standards. High percentages of agreement from candidates in each licensure area and on each question related to the INTASC standards provides strong summative evidence of the program's effectiveness to prepare quality teachers who meet demanding standards. Beginning teachers often note classroom management/student behavior, planning, diverse needs of students, and student assessment/evaluation as their areas of concern often citing some or all of these as reasons why they leave the classroom (Veenman, 1984). From the evidence presented here, candidates agree that they are able to perform in these high concern areas for beginning teachers. A summary of the Teacher Education Evaluation questions that pertain to quality field experiences within

the LCSN is found in Table 1. The evidence is presented by licensure area as an average of the last three academic years. Candidates report high agreement with the quality of their clinical teachers and the opportunities they were afforded during their internship to gain necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions about teaching and learning. This evidence also informs the LCSN PA Board about the quality of field placements provided to the three licensure areas. This evidence is used to refine Clinical Schools Network Training to ensure that clinical teachers demonstrate best practices, employ strategies of coaching for learning, and provide professional support to candidates during the capstone event of their teacher education program.

**Table 1: Teacher Education Evaluation**

Evaluation of Teacher Education Program By Seniors II Candidates <b>100% Placed within the Latham Clinical Schools Network</b>	% Agree or Strongly Agree <b>ELEM</b> 3-Year Average	% Agree or Strongly Agree <b>MIDG</b> 3-Year Average	% Agree or Strongly Agree <b>SPED</b> 3-Year Average
My Clinical Teacher served as a positive role model	91.5	87.3	95.2
My Clinical Teacher supported my efforts to become an effective and competent teacher.	90.5	89.6	96.8
My Internship gave me the opportunity to develop skills.	98.6	96.0	98.4
My Internship gave me the opportunity to assess my students' learning.	98.4	97.0	96.8
My Internship gave me the opportunity to demonstrate competencies.	97.2	94.1	98.4
My Internship gave me the opportunity to apply theory.	94.1	87.4	96.8

### **Hiring Rates/Retention Rates of Graduates**

Over the past four years, one hundred percent of graduates who sought jobs were hired. Principals and other LCSN personnel rank ECU graduates above graduates from any other institution in North Carolina because of their level of preparedness to teach effectively in the classroom. Graduates of the ECU teacher preparation program are surveyed every year beginning in their second year after graduation. A questionnaire is also sent to the employing principal with the graduate's name on it to ensure the response is specific to the graduate in question. The return rate is about 70% for the half of the 800-900 yearly graduates that the university is able to locate. The primary goal of the survey is to track retention rates. For those who return the surveys retention rates show 90% remaining in teaching for three years or more.

### **III. What evidence do you have that supports the program's positive impact on the learning of pupils in the P-12 schools?**

The federal No Child Left Behind legislation (2002) states that having a highly quality teacher in the classroom plays the largest role in increased student achievement. The LCSN has confirming evidence of quality graduates who become quality teachers who positively impact P-12 student achievement.

### **End-of-Grade Test Scores**

In North Carolina, students take End-of-Grade (EOG) tests in grades 3-8 and End-of-Course (EOC) tests in grades 9-12 in all core subject areas creating an enormous amount of scoring and test data for the state and local education agencies (LEA) to manage. Despite these huge challenges, testing coordinators in the LCSN have begun to find ways to provide the university with this data. Preliminary results of 45 pieces of data that could be directly correlated to individual graduates working within the LCSN from 1999-2002 show 22 cases (51 %) where graduates' pupils had proficiency ratings in writing, reading, or math that were higher than their school building proficiency ratings for that particular grade level. Nine cases (20 %) occurred where graduates' pupils had scores that were equal to, or so close as to not be statistically different from, the building level scores. In addition, six more cases (13 %) had student proficiency ratings above 86 % even though building levels were slightly higher. Of the remaining 8 pieces of data, student proficiency ratings were between 50 – 71 %; however, of these 8 the greatest difference between the graduates' class proficiency rating and the building's was 9 % or less. Thus, 82 % of these graduates were able to positively impact student achievement as measured by the State of North Carolina's Accountability System.

### **Focus Graduate Interview**

Groups of graduates and clinical teachers are invited to campus or participate at their schools in focus groups to provide feedback with the vast majority of the comments being highly favorable. The graduates note the program is student-centered instead of being lecture-oriented, it balances content and pedagogy, and it gives them confidence in their ability to teach. These graduates were asked about their confidence in teaching and their student scores on the NC EOG tests or EOC tests. What we find are a confident group of teachers – they feel confident about teaching upon graduating and just as confident after a year or two of teaching. In addition, they feel that they have made strong impressions on principals and mentors who have observed their teaching. Of a sample of 78 graduates from 1999-2002 across the three licensure areas, 97.4 % of them reported that they were well prepared for their first year of teaching.

### **Performance-Based Licensure**

In 2000-2001, second year teachers in the State of North Carolina were required to submit a portfolio consisting of three components, which are Instructional Practice, Classroom Management and Unique Learners. Trained assessors score the portfolios and a minimum score of 318 is needed to pass and obtain a continuing teaching license in North Carolina. Failure to pass at the end of the third year of teaching results in the inability to be licensed in the state. Of a sample of graduates from 1999-2002, 100% of those who submitted products passed the PBL requirement for licensure. Scores ranged from 318-402 and show that ECU graduates meet and exceed the standards for licensure in NC, which are based on the INTASC standards. Additionally, principals and district representatives continually applaud the work that the LCSN does to maintain a parallel experience for teacher preparation candidates and initially licensed teachers. For example, external reviewers C. Dean and J. Hange with McRel (2002) conducted a focus group with members of the LCSN and reported the following data. "Members of the LCSN interviewed for this study said they thought that ECU graduates' understanding of the INTASC standards and the portfolio process required by the state were confirming evidence of their ability to teach. They consider ECU teacher education graduates as better prepared than graduates of other programs because the program gives them experience in the two key skills needed to produce a quality portfolio – reflection and self-assessment." Also, the LCSN partners commented about their confidence in the abilities of ECU graduates, prompting Dean and Hange to write "they have so much confidence in how well prepared ECU candidates are that they hire them before they finish their internships" and network members stated "that ECU graduates seem to be more comfortable in the role of teacher and more confident than graduates of other programs."

### **Employing Principals' Feedback and Evaluations of Graduates**

Employing principals are solicited for their input about program graduates. Of 111 responses from 129 employing principals 100 % rated their employee at Standard or Above Standard on the TPAI with 76.6 % being Above Standard and 0 % Below Standard. Employing principals rated 76.7 % of these graduates above graduates of other institutions based on the TPAI. Principals also commented on the characteristics of graduates and when this feedback is correlated to the 10 INTASC standards principals reveal that ECU graduates know their content and can teach it well are excellent planners; have outstanding relationships with colleagues, parents, and students; are skillful at and have the desire to assist diverse learners with developmentally appropriate lessons; are extremely capable of motivating and managing student behavior; and reflective practitioners who value continuous learning. This evidence confirms that the LCSN is an effective vehicle for ensuring that courses offered in the teacher preparation program are aligned with the needs of the schools in which graduates will most often be employed.

### **Graduate Feedback**

Feedback from graduates who are actively teaching provides some of the best confirming evidence that ECU graduates have a positive impact on the learning of P-12 pupils. When asked to list the attitudes and behaviors that they acquired in their programs at ECU that contribute to their effectiveness as a teacher, graduates responded with examples of knowledge, skills and dispositions that can be matched to the INTASC standards and correlate equitably with what employing principal's think about them as well. Graduates most often cited their strengths as the knowledge of content and pedagogy; knowledge of student development and the ability to apply it in meeting the demands of diverse learners; use of multiple instructional strategies to reach all students; management of student behavior; planning; and reflection. Just as candidates rate many of these abilities high on their teacher education evaluations, graduates confirm with their feedback that these knowledge, skills and dispositions are taught well within the program at ECU, practiced well by graduates in the classroom, and recognized as effective by employing principals within the LCSN. ECU and its LCSN Partnership Program produces highly qualified teachers and impacts the 16 public school systems in which all candidates are trained and the majority of candidates are hired.