

Improving the Preparation of Personnel to Serve Children with High-Incidence Disabilities
Western Michigan University Intensive Recruitment, Preparation and Retention Program
for Preparing Special Education Teachers

The **Intensive Recruitment, Preparation and Retention (IRPR)** program responds to quantitative and qualitative needs for fully certified special education teachers in Michigan and the nation by preparing 50 special educators, over the four-year duration of the project who: (a) will be dual endorsed in learning disabilities and emotional disturbance and certificated in one of the following specialty areas: collaboration and teaming, transition, and/or special education technology, (b) will contribute to the diversity of the workforce, and (c) are committed to working with children from diverse cultures in underserved settings. The project will significantly increase the number of certified special education teachers in Michigan and will result in a support structure that promotes recruitment and retention of teachers from underrepresented populations, including persons with disabilities. This project will prepare special educators that can effectively meet the needs of students with disabilities and those at-risk for school failure and establish collaborative relationships with other professions and parents. The purpose of the project is to: (a) decrease the number of teachers currently working under emergency certification, (b) prepare special educators in exemplary coursework relevant to their practice, (c) utilize a cohort model for the purpose of building teamwork, collaboration, peer coaching, and on-going support, (d) provide intensive advising and mentoring, and (e) enhance relationships with school districts in Michigan by developing inclusive learning communities that emphasize the importance of partnerships between higher education and K-12 institutions.

NEED FOR THE PROJECT

In Michigan's 1998 State Improvement Plan the lack of fully certified special education teachers was addressed for the first time (SIP, 1998). Historically, Michigan has not had a documented shortage of teachers. However, at this time there is an extreme need for fully qualified special educators in Southwest Michigan. In the past 18 months WMU has granted 87 emergency certifications and within the WMU Clinical Teaching Master's program (designed for students who already carry a general education degree but want to obtain their first special education endorsement) 64 of the 67 students are currently working on an emergency certificate or as a long-term substitute. In December of 2001 a brief survey, authored by the co-directors of this grant, was mailed to all Special Education Supervisors (N=72) within a 60 mile radius of WMU. A return rate of 56% was obtained. In response to the question *Do you think an alternative certification program such as the proposed program would meet the special education needs of your school district?* Ninety percent responded YES, 0% NO, and 10% more information needed. Further, 87.5% indicated they had filled a special education position with a long-term substitute in the past three years and 85.5% indicated they currently had teachers working on emergency certification.

Michigan State Improvement Plan

In an effort to support systemic reform this proposal is in alignment with the Michigan State Improvement Plan (SIP) entitled *Investing in Our Students: Michigan's Model to Improve the Performance of Student with Disabilities* (1998). Michigan's SIP is a continuous improvement model for data-based personnel development. The model is comprised of four centers or hubs: (1) information development, (2) dissemination and awareness, (3) sustained learning, and (4) quality assurance and capacity building. The SIP identified priorities are: (1)

improve transition practices, (2) implement positive behavioral intervention and supports, and (3) address personnel shortages including underrepresentation of personnel reflecting the diversity of the student population (Michigan Department of Education, 1998). The proposed project addresses all three identified priorities from the State Improvement Plan.

Need for Increasing Special Education Teachers from Underrepresented Populations

The Michigan Department of Education (1998) has established goals to: a) “reduce the number of minority students misplaced in special education”, and b) “respond to supply and demand needs in special education and to the growing need for models that respond to the increasing diversity of the student population” (p.19). This need is highlighted by data regarding teacher and student population diversity (see Table 1).

Table 1. Supply and Demand in Michigan

Ethnic Group	Percent of Special Education Teacher Population	Percent of Special Education Student Population	Percent of Total Student Population
White	81.3	77.1	76.07
African American	9.9	17.9	19.39
Native American	1.4	0.9	1.04
Hispanic	1.1	2.5	2.87
Asian	0.8	1.7	1.63

Michigan Department of Education, 1998, p.28

Attracting persons from underrepresented populations into the teaching forces is vitally important (Artiles & Trent, 1995; Pipho, 1998). National demographic projections show that while the U.S. population is becoming increasingly multicultural and multiethnic, the nation’s

special education workforce is becoming almost exclusively “white and female” (Wald, 1996). Michigan Department of Education (1998) data indicate “the ethnic distribution of the IHE (Institutions of Higher Education) students reveals a continuing problem in recruiting university students from under-represented populations into the field of special education the mirrors that composition of the current special education workforce” (p. 27). Michigan is unique among many Northern and Midwestern states for its high-density pockets of population from African American and Hispanic communities. Two school districts that are participating in this project have particularly high African American populations- Kalamazoo, 45% and Benton Harbor, 99% (See Appendix A, Letters of Support). In addition, five of the counties in the region surrounding WMU have high Hispanic populations and host an influx of over 13,000 migrant and seasonal farm workers, and many of these families have settled out of the migrant stream to become permanent residents. Western Michigan University is 4th in the number of teachers annually prepared in the United States (WMU Office of Academic Planning and Institutional Data, January, 2002). However, this population is not reflective of the K-12 student population in the area. A snapshot picture of the K-12 population in Kalamazoo County (home of WMU) is presented in Table 2.

Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS) is the largest district in the County. It is also the district representing the highest need for fully qualified special educators reflective of the ethnic diversity of the student population (see letter of support Appendix A from Cindy Green, Director of Special Education Services, Kalamazoo Public Schools). The impact of poverty is also an issue within KPS and every school district. Twenty-eight percent of children with disabilities, ages 3-21, are living in families whose total income is less than the income threshold set by the U.S. Census Bureau (Park, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 2002). It is an issue that will be addressed in

Table 2. K-12 Students in Kalamazoo County

School District	Total Student Population	Total Special Education Population	Percent Special Education	Percent Racial/Ethnic Minority	Percent Free/Reduced Lunch
Climax Scott	755	62	8.2	0	15.2
Comstock	3233	314	9.7	9.7	37.3
Gales/Aug	1347	113	8.4	4.5	32
Gull Lake	3363	255	7.7	4.7	9.2
Kalamazoo	12,602	1343	10.7	51.3	58.4
Parchment	1923	161	8.4	6.2	31.1
Portage	9335	682	7.3	8.5	10.6
Schoolcraft	1274	98	7.7	3.1	8
Vicksburg	2956	219	7.4	2.3	14.4

Developmental Disabilities Institute (2001)

an inclusive manner throughout the proposed project. Research indicates that poverty impacts families on five dimensions including: health, productivity, physical environment, emotional well-being, and family interaction (Park, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 2002).

In addition to increasing the number of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers in the area, the proposed project will increase the number of special education teachers who have disabilities. Within the special education arena people with disabilities should be viewed as resources (Keller, Anderson, & Karp, 1998). Further, with appropriate supports, individuals with

disabilities can be successful educators (Gilmore, Merchant, & Moore, 1980; Tindall, Gugerty, Heffron, & Godar, 1988; Keller, Anderson, & Karp, 1998). Keller, Anderson, and Karp (1998) identify mentors, role models, an accepting school culture and a coordinated support structure in higher education as critical to the success of beginning teachers, including persons with disabilities. The project will employ as Project Coordinator an excellent mentor in this area, Fran Bartocci Lemley. Mrs. Bartocci-Lemley is blind and a successful upper elementary special education teacher with the Kalamazoo Public School System. Further, Mrs. Bartocci-Lemley is a graduate of the WMU special education program and current doctoral student (see Appendix D for Mrs. Bartocci-Lemley's vita and Appendix A for her letter of support). The project will also employ Elizabeth Gallagher as a part-time graduate assistant. Ms. Gallagher has a documented severe learning disability and is a graduate of our undergraduate program in special education. She is currently employed as a special education teacher at Otsego Middle School (see Appendix A for Ms. Gallagher's letter of support).

Need for Financial Support

A major obstacle to recruitment and retention of pre-service special education teachers into the WMU Master's Program is the high cost of education, even in a public university such as WMU. Tuition for the special education clinical teaching program, which includes only one endorsement area is \$11,000. This cost may hinder students from underrepresented populations from enrolling. WMU data indicates that the average loan debt of WMU students is approximately \$16,000 (WMU Financial Aids Office, January 14, 2002). Further, when students are placed on an emergency certification the Michigan Department of Education requires they only enroll in six semester hours per year. Many of the students in our program can only afford to take the minimum number of credits. Subsequently, since the program for one endorsement is

39 credits it can take multiple years for a student to complete the program. Unfortunately, this affects the retention rate for multiple reasons: (a) many simply take special education position until they can move into a general education position; (b) many burn out a faster rate since they are asked to complete a job in which they are not skilled, and (c) many start to lose credits due to the WMU policy that all courses must be completed within 6 years of entry to the university.

Ongoing Involvement of Persons with Disabilities and Family Members

The need for teachers to work collaboratively with parents is critical (Pugach & Johnson, 2002). Cultural difference between teachers and families can intensify the importance the communication (Lynch & Hanson, 1992; Hyun & Fowler, 1995). Teachers need to be prepared to be responsive to the families of children with disabilities however to obtain this need teacher preparation programs must focus on the issues deemed important to families (Kroth & Edge, 1997). Most preservice teachers only have textbook preparation in working with parents and community agencies (Clark, 1995; Edge, 1995). Preservice teachers at WMU are made aware of the issues of families and procedures for accessing agencies to help support students. However, formalized and on-going contact with families and community agency members is currently not an integrated part of the program. Further, parents previously have not been involved in program development. The proposed project has solicited the involvement of two parents of children with disabilities (see Appendix A, letters of support from Cathy Rocha and Lisa Velez) and the Kalamazoo Guidance Clinic and the Kalamazoo Community Mental Health Agency personnel in the development of this project evaluation (see Appendix A, letters of support from Community Health and Kalamazoo Guidance Clinic). The project will implement a formal structure for their involvement including on-going program development, candidate selection, program monitoring, and evaluation.

Need for Increasing Preparation and On-going Support

The need for support and guidance is particularly high for teachers working without being fully certified (Karge, Lasky, McCabe & Robb, 1995). The 1997 *Recruitment and Retention of Special Educators and Related Service Personnel: National and State Initiatives* (Mullins & Morris, 1997) found new teachers are more likely to leave their position than are mid-career teachers, “particularly if they do not receive mentoring or support during their first year of teaching” (p.2). Further, Weichel (1999) found the needs of on-the-job teachers differ from those of traditional certification candidates and their needs must be identified to successfully implement programs best suited to prepare and support alternative credential candidates. Subsequently, “in addition to barriers to certification, on-the job challenges such as poor working conditions, little administrative guidance, large class sizes, heavy work loads, and overall lack of support can lead to professional dissatisfaction” (Weichel, 1999, p. 19). Currently, the WMU initial special education endorsement program does offer all classes toward the endorsement in the evenings and on weekends but much more is needed in order to bridge the gap between what is currently offered and what has been empirically proven as necessary in order to retain teachers on emergency certification. As identified within the research literature this proposed project will utilize the following identified essential methods to ensure the success of individuals participating in this program: a) a cohort model as a means of support (Dent, 2000; McKibbin, 1999), (b) mentoring from experienced and practicing special education teachers (Eifler & Poffhoff, 1998; Gratch, 1998), (c) peer coaching (Griffen, Wohlstetter, & Bharadwaja, 2001; Neuber & McAllister, 1993), and (d) implementation of theory (coursework) to practice (classroom).

Need for Follow-up and Collaboration with General Education Peers

There is a lack of common knowledge and collaboration between general educators and special educators (Whitten & Dieker, 1995). Due to this lack of understanding, many students with disabilities do not receive appropriate services reflecting their individual educational needs. We are now at a point where we must not only document the effect of merging general and special education personnel preparation programs, however we must carefully consider how we socially construct the professional learning community into this systemic change. In order for systemic change to be accomplished, programs must be allied, people must collaborate in breadth and depth, and program goals need to support standards (McLaughlin, 1998). The political climate within education is exploring post-modern trends (e.g. constructivism, systemic reform) and is conducive to the collaborative model. In order to meet the need for follow-up and collaboration and to help students within this proposed project meet the Michigan Curriculum Frameworks students will be intensely followed and supported not only during the 18 month duration of the proposed program but also after graduation. Project Co-Directors and Coordinator will continue to advise and mentor as a means to sustain the IRPR teachers.

Need for Dual Endorsed and Certificated Personnel

The majority of special education teachers in Michigan teach students from more than one disability classification (Developmental Disabilities Institute, 2001). However, teachers continue to be trained at the pre-service level by specific disability categories (e.g. emotional impairments, mental impairments, learning disabilities, autism, etc.). This discrepancy is problematic for many new teachers due to the fact they complete a program certified in one disability area and then immediately are mandated to serve another population. Therefore, this proposed project will dually endorse students in emotional impairments and learning disabilities.

Further, in alignment with the Michigan State Improvement Plan identified priorities, this program will allow students to choose at a minimum, one 15-hour certificate program in combination with their dual endorsements. The certificate programs will be in collaboration and teaming, transition, and/or special education technology.

Need for Bridging the Gap between Research and Practice in Special Education: Issues and Implications for Teacher Preparation

New research within the special education area has led to improved practice and this improved practice has noticeably improved the lives of many students with disabilities (Greenwood & Abbott, 2001). However, there continues to be a gap between empirically established practice and routine practice. Strategies for decreasing this gap include: partnership, collaboration, consultation, and professional development activities (Greenwood & Abbott, 2001; Deno, 2000). The proposed project addresses all of these strategies as well as the WMU Department of Educational Studies-Special Education Program acknowledges and is a strong proponent of teacher educators being at the forefront in the preparation of teachers to deal effectively with the issues related to reducing the gap between research and practice (see Appendix D for faculty vita).

The proposed project will make a significant impact on the shortage of certified special education teachers in Michigan, and in particular, the shortage of certified special education teachers from underrepresented populations. Outcomes of this proposed project are:

► **Fifty** (two cohorts of 25) **uniquely and timely prepared special educators** eligible for full certification and committed to teaching **ALL** students.

- ▶ A **recruitment and support structure** that: a) results in a large and diverse pool of qualified applicants; b) utilizes a cohort model for the purpose of teamwork, collaboration, peer coaching, and on-going support, and c) provides excellent advising and mentoring.
- ▶ A **model of inclusive learning communities** that emphasize the importance of partnerships between higher education and K-12 institutions.

QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

The purpose of this proposed project is to: a) decrease the number of teachers currently working under emergency certification, b) prepare special educators in exemplary coursework relevant to their practice, c) utilize a cohort model for the purpose of building teamwork, collaboration, peer coaching, and on-going support, d) provide intensive advising and mentoring, and e) enhance relationships with school districts in Michigan by developing inclusive learning communities that emphasize the importance of partnerships between higher education and K-12 institutions. This project will significantly increase the number of fully certified special education teachers in Michigan and beyond and will result in a support structure that promotes recruitment and retention of teachers from underrepresented populations and persons with disabilities. This proposed project is an intensive competency and field-based preparation program designed to prepare and support two cohorts of 25 professionals for a total of 50 professionals within the duration of the proposed project. Each cohort will complete the program within eighteen months and receive intensive follow-up support from project personnel upon completion of the program. In addition to a Masters degree, the students will receive dual endorsements in emotional impairments and learning disabilities and will also be certificated in one or more of the following areas: collaboration and teaming, transition, and/or special education technology. Further, this program will facilitate the collaboration among institutions

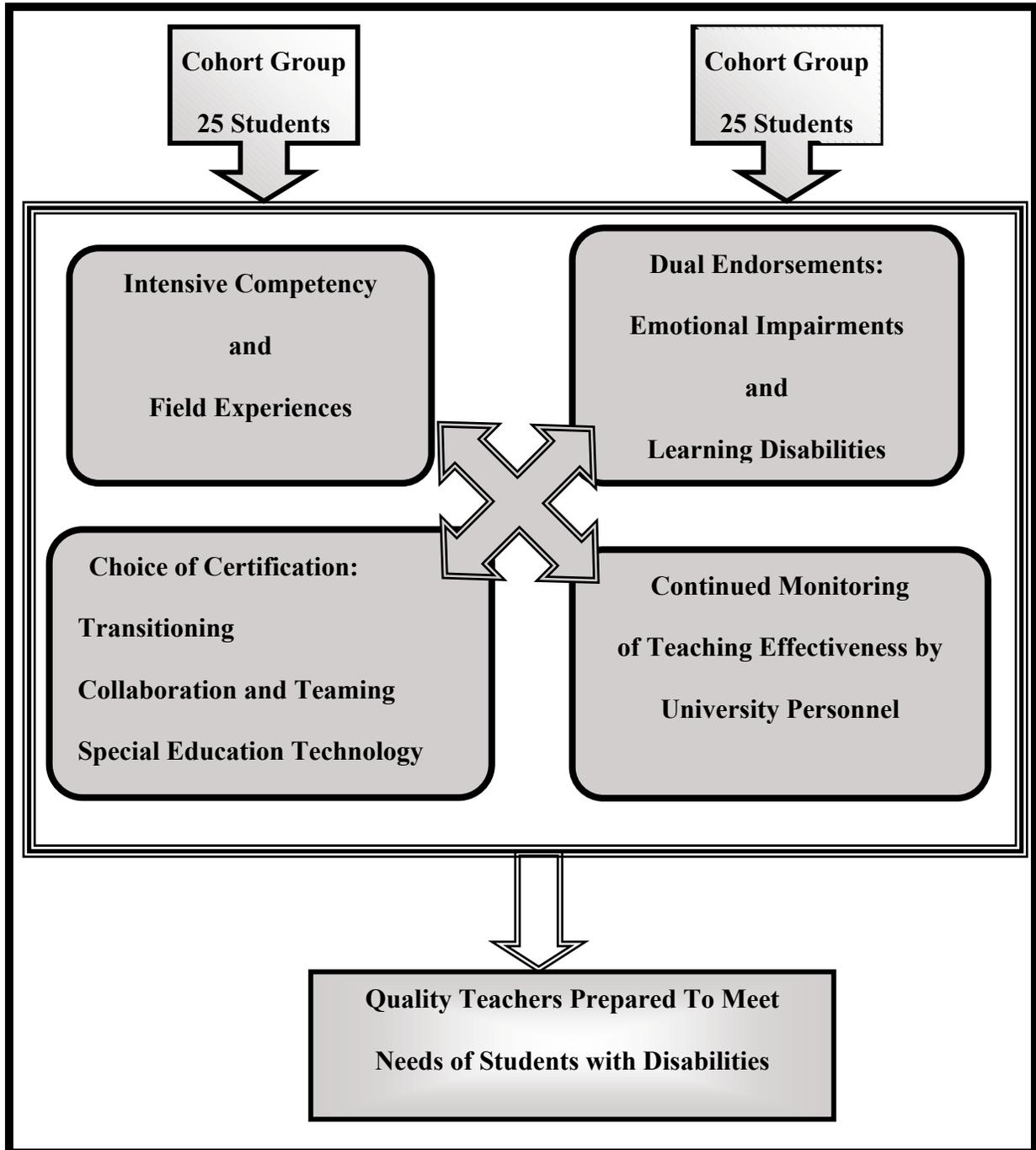
of higher education, public schools, and agencies at the local and state level by placing students in field-based experiences within these organizations. It will, through its collaborative nature, provide professionals with instructional and collaborative skills (see Figure 1, p. 13).

Facilitating Sustainable Change

We have drawn on a number of documents to help us develop a vision for change that address the critical importance of transforming relationships between institutions of higher education, state departments, public schools, community agencies, and students with disabilities which include *Michigan's State Improvement Plan (SIP)* (1998), *Michigan Curriculum Framework*, (1996), The Council for Exceptional Children's *What Every Special Educator Must Know: The Standards for the Preparation and Licensure of Special Educators* (2000), *NCATE's Professional Teacher Project* (1996), *Michigan Definition and Standards for Professional Development* (1995), and *The Forum on Change: Creating Unified Educational Reform* (1994). Aligning with the goals outlined in **Michigan's SIP (1998)** and the **Reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997)** we intend to implement a program that prepares graduates to be reflective teachers, competent researchers, and active service providers in better meeting the needs of students and youth with disabilities (see Appendix B, Program Competences).

Although this proposed project is a new program, it benefits from what Project Director Whitten has learned while implementing and evaluating the Transdisciplinary Collaboration Preparation Program (TCPP), funded from July, 1994 through July, 1997 and Dual Preparation Program in Special Education for Teaching Children with Visual Impairments and Orientation and Mobility (TCVI and O&M) Training funded July, 1997, through June, 2000. TCPP was successful in meeting its objectives to prepare masters level transdisciplinary teams to act as

Figure 1. Intensive Recruitment, Preparation and Retention (IRPR) Program



change agents within their systems (see Appendix A, Letters of Support, see Appendix J TCPP Brochure and see Appendix K WMU Research Article). The coursework developed from the TCPP grant has been institutionalized into the graduate core curriculum and will be offered as one of the certificate programs in this proposed project. This project will, in the same manner, provide for the student assistance and sustainability of the teacher preparation program. The TCVI and O&M preparation program has had three successful years with a strong distance education program and a high percentage of underrepresented students and students with disabilities (21%). This project has been approved for five more years of funding under the direction of Dr. Annette Skellenger.

Focus Areas of the Intensive Recruitment, Preparation, and Retention Program

This progressive teacher preparation program proposed to engage participants in a culture of collaboration and construction of knowledge through exemplary coursework and meaningful dialogue, purposeful field experiences, a cohort model, mentoring, peer-coaching, and a transdisciplinary approach to teamwork. The program will provide students with advanced knowledge, skills, and experiences in the use of tools of the 21st century. Students are provided a solid foundation in the principles of teaching and learning, transition practices, assistive technology, collaboration and teaming, research and evaluation, positive behavioral interventions, diversity issues, and policy development and implications. These are explained briefly below and more specific coursework and experiences for each focus area is provided under Course Descriptions and Syllabi, Appendix C.

Teaching and Learning

Teachers in special education must have a thorough understanding of the teaching-learning process and skill in applying instructional methods and strategies for individuals with

disabilities. In addition to understanding instructional theories and practices appropriate for students with disabilities, teachers must demonstrate skill in developing educational curricula while considering the needs, competencies, cultures, and skills of all learners. As we increase our knowledge bases in alternative instructional formats, such as co-teaching, distance education, and computer based instruction we must apply various theories of teaching and learning to develop effective educational interventions for ALL students. In addition students will be prepared to provide constructive feedback into the development of each other's teaching and projects through the use of the cohort model (Barnett, Bason, Yerkes, & Norris, 2000; Griffin, Wohlstetter, & Bhjaradwajo, 2001) and peer-coaching (Wynn & Kromrey, 1999; Neubert & McAllister, 1993).

Transition Practices

Teachers must have a thorough understanding of a variety of issues facing students with disabilities. Educators must understand the need for effective secondary education and transition services (Kohler, 2000) specifically promoting attainment of transition related goals for low-income and ethnic minority students with disabilities (Taylor-Ritzler, Balcazar, Keys, Hayes, Garate-Serafini, & Espino, 2001). Personnel must be prepared to deliver these services in light of the fact that a large number of students with disabilities are reported exiting school each year. It is important that educators strive to improve the outcomes of these students through an understanding of the needs and skills that will be required of these exiting students.

The IRPR program provides participants with expertise in research, policy, and best practice as they relate to the field of transition. Students participate in coursework that will present education concepts, history, legal issues and the mandates under the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act. The focus of this piece of

curriculum is upon the development of awareness, exploration, and preparation to deliver self-determined transition-focused education. Further, students interested in pursuing the area of transition will have the opportunity to select transition as their certification area (see Appendix C for Transition Certification Syllabi).

Assistive Technology

The ability to use technology effectively to support teaching and learning is an essential skill for educators at all levels. Special educators must be able to integrate technology into their instruction. They must be able to select and use instructional software to support the individual learning needs of students, incorporate multimedia applications in the classroom, use electronic systems to communicate and collaborate with parents, colleagues, and other professionals around the world, and navigate a vast array of information resources to extend student learning beyond the walls of the classroom. In addition, special educators must be able to select and use a wide array of assistive technology hardware and software to accommodate the physical, sensory, and cognitive needs of students with disabilities. Students will demonstrate their ability to use technology as an instructional tool and as a tool to support the conducting of research (see Appendix C course syllabi). Further, students interested in pursuing the area of special education technology will have the opportunity to select technology as their certification area (see Appendix C for Special Education Technology Certificate Syllabi).

Positive Behavioral Interventions

There is perhaps no greater challenge facing education professionals than understanding and addressing the variety of behavioral issues students are presenting. The issues of behavior management and intervention should not be in response to the presence of undesired behavior but should instead incorporate proactive intervention strategies (Horner, Sugai, Lewis-Palmer, &

Todd, 2001; Bradley, 2001; Frankland, Edmonson, & Turnbull, 2001). However, this process of incorporating proactive intervention strategies or positive supports is not completed in isolation and is the result of collaborative effort of all parties involved. Kendrick, Kurtz, Son, Gilmore, and Zeph (1998) define positive supports as “actions and beliefs that reflect respectful interpersonal relationships, choice, communication, inclusive communities and self-determination to assist a person to become more interdependent, contributing member of the community” (p.1). Establishing a learning community that consistently employs positive behavior supports is a process and many skills are needed to implement this process. These skills are integrated throughout the coursework within IRPR (see course descriptions and syllabi, Appendix C).

Policy Development and Implications

The American Education system is currently experiencing many new school initiatives/reforms (i.e. higher standards, site-based management, school choice and vouchers, accountability and testing, charter schools, private contracting etc.). The pressures of these new demands can be great and are often misunderstood. The focus of preparing educators in the area of policy development and its subsequent implications allows for graduates of the program to address these initiatives in a confident and competent manner. Educators also need to understand these initiatives from many different professional perspectives/cultures and a variety of localities (rural, suburban, and urban).

Research and Evaluation

The needs of the field of special education require personnel who can engage in action research. Teachers must be able to incorporate research findings and the procedures developed in model programs into daily practice in field-based settings. Graduate preparation is one of the

most effective and important means of disseminating research and model program procedures to the field. Only the combination of a rich research environment and significant university investment in field-based service is likely to provide the background necessary to prepare the highest caliber of special education personnel and begin to bridge the gap between empirically established practice and routine practice (Greenwood & Abbott, 2001). Strategies for decreasing this gap include: partnership, collaboration, consultation, and professional development activities (Greenwood & Abbott, 2001; Deno, 2000). If graduates are to assume roles within an organization, then they must have opportunity during their graduate preparation to conduct research in action-based service settings and to develop skills in the implementation and evaluation of existing program models. In preparation for completion of the program, students must submit a research proposal, and participate in development of a Human Subject Institutional Review Board application and a grant proposal.

Diversity Issues

Understanding the growing diversity needs in our schools is a priority for educators (Rogers-Adkinson & Griffith, 1999). Culturally diverse and sensitive educators can impact attitudes and achievements of all students. They can transform the learning in all environments by creating a community that represents the diversity. Teachers with authentic knowledge about differences can better gauge their influence on student outcomes. The proposed project will embrace diverse perspectives in developing a new cadre of educators representing a broader segment of the population. Boykin's (1998) model of talent development will be incorporated throughout the curriculum. In fostering this climate throughout the interdisciplinary coursework and field experiences, we expect the outcomes of the project to reflect the full range of talents and perspectives present in our society.

Collaboration and Teamwork

Roles are changing in education. There is an increased demand for higher levels of collaboration among professionals and the people and communities they serve. Educators must strive to create a community of learners that foster collaboration across schools and communities. The focus on preparing educators in the area of collaboration enables graduates to more effectively meet the diverse needs of current and future student population at-risk for school failure. Project Director Whitten has the research, teaching, and consultative background to ensure the quality preparation and implementation of collaborative best practices (Bahr & Whitten, 1999; Zebehazy & Whitten, 1998; Dieker & Whitten, 1998; Dynak, Whitten & Dynak, 1996; Whitten, 1996; Whitten & Dieker, 1995).

IRPR students will understand the necessity of collaboration and teaming in educating students with disabilities. They will develop skills in providing professional development or inservice workshops, consultation, co-teaching, collaborative problem solving, conflict resolution, and teaming. They will also develop the communicative skills necessary to serve as an collaborative consultant, team member, or facilitator. In addition, students will understand the importance of a holistic approach to meeting learners' needs.

Graduate preparation must be designed so that professionals are accountable for their products and competent in the tasks that reflect the skills of the positions for which they are being prepared. The proposed program provides mentoring experiences, which allow frequent opportunities for students to engage in teaching, research, and service activities in conjunction with practicing faculty members and other professionals. In addition, students will graduate with a web-based professional portfolio enabling them to be competitive in securing positions in educational and community service agencies. Further, students interested in pursuing the area of

collaboration and teaming will have the opportunity to select collaboration and teaming as their certification area (see Appendix C for Collaboration and Teaming Syllabi).

Course and Program Sequence

IRPR Program instructional core includes a specific group of courses in special education. The concentration of 38 semester hours is detailed below:

IRPR PROGRAM JOINT COURSEWORK AND FIELD EXPERIENCES

SPED 530 Introduction to Special Education (3 credits)	Summer, 2002
SPED 533 Assessment and Prescription in SPED (3 credits)	Summer, 2002
SPED 534 Curriculum and Instruction in SPED (3 credits)	Summer, 2002
SPED 638 The Application of Behavioral Theory (3 credits)	Summer, 2002
SPED 630 Clinical Practice in SPED (3 credits)	Spring, 2003
SPED 580 Introduction to Learning Disabilities (3 credits)	Summer, 2003
SPED 585 Advanced Theory and Practice in Learning Disabilities (3 credits)	Summer, 2003
SPED 570 Introduction to Emotional Impairments (3 credits)	Summer, 2003
SPED 575 Education of Learners with Emotional Impairments (3 credits)	Summer, 2003
SPPA 595 Oral Language Development and Dysfunction (2 credits)	Winter, 2003
EDLD 640 Introduction to Education Research (3 credits)	Fall, 2002
SPED 674 Intern Teaching in Special Education (6 credits)	Fall, 2003

IRPR CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS- EACH STUDENT CHOOSES AT LEAST ONE

Collaboration and Teaming (15 Credits)

SPED 661 Transdisciplinary Teaming (3 credits)	Summer, 2002
SPED 662 Service Delivery Models that Foster Collaboration (3 credits)	Spring, 2003

SPED 663 Professional Field Experience in Collaboration (3 credits)	Fall, 2003
ED 634 Culture and Politics of Educational Institutions (3 credits)	Summer, 2003
ED 675 Multicultural Education (3 credits)	Winter, 2003
Transition (15 Credits)	
SPED 636a Transition (3 credits)	Spring, 2003
SPED 636b Field Experience in Transition (3 credits)	Fall, 2003
SPED 661 Transdisciplinary Teaming (3 credits)	Summer, 2002
SPED 656 Seminar in Special Education (3 credits)	Spring, 2003
CTE 650 Business/Industry/Education Work-Based Learning (3 credits)	Summer, 2003
Special Education Technology (15 Credits)	
SPED 661 Transdisciplinary Teaming (3 credits)	Summer, 2002
EDT 541 Telecommunication for Teaching and Learning (3 credits)	Winter, 2003
EDT 542 Teaching with Technology (3 credits)	Spring, 2003
SPED 680 Instructional Software in Special Education (3 credits)	Fall, 2002
SPED 681 Assitive Technology (3 credits)	Fall, 2003

Course Descriptions for Graduate Program and Faculty Course Matrix

Detailed course descriptions and syllabi can be found in Appendix C. The first session students will participate in an intensive, integrated summer institute. Students will engage in twelve hours of coursework that will prepare a strong foundation for advanced theory and practice. The summer institute will be collaboratively taught by the co-directors, program coordinator and other faculty members identified on page 33. Further, in order to connect assessment to instruction to the classroom students will receive intensive (every other week)

field supervision from project co-directors during each semester and for a minimum of 6 months upon completion of the grant.

Project Outcomes and Overview

The major objectives of this program (listed on pages 36-41) will address the continuum of professional development needs emphasized in the project. The accomplishment of these objectives will result in the following overreaching outcomes:

To recruit, support and retain two cohorts of 25 graduate student participants (50 over the four year span of the project) who can increase the diversity in the workforce and who have expressed commitments to work at least two years following graduation in demographically diverse schools, particularly in underserved communities. (Accomplished by objectives 1,2,4,8)

Recruitment

- Partnerships with Historically Black Colleges will be developed in collaboration with Dr. William Weiner, Associate Dean of the WMU Graduate College, WMU Division of Multicultural Affairs and Disabled Student Resources and Services (see Appendix A, letters of support)
- An Underrepresented Student Advisory Council that assist with the development and distribution of recruitment brochures, recruitment visits, and mentoring. The council will include professionals from diverse communities who are graduates of our program, current students in the second year of their graduate program, and representatives of WMU offices responsible for recruiting and retaining students from diverse communities.
- A recruitment brochure designed for IRPR to attract members of targeted populations and will describe the criteria for receiving financial assistance (see sample brochure from Whitten's previous grant in Appendix J).

- Graduate student applications will be rated for strength across multiple factors: (potential to contribute to the diversity of the student body, b) academic record and test scores, c) letters of recommendation, and d) expressed intention to work with children in school settings, particularly in underserved communities
- Departmental Visits will be co-sponsored by the department, the Graduate College, and the Division for Disability Services to bring to campus at least four of the strongest applicants from traditionally underrepresented groups to meet with departmental faculty and consultants.

Retention

- Four factors known to improve retention (Parker, 1998) also will be represented in this proposed project
 - **Positive faculty-student relationships** will be facilitated by Project Coordinator, Fran Bartocci Lemley, who will serve as a mentor and role model for underrepresented students considering WMU. She also will mentor faculty about strategies for providing early and repeated contacts to students.
 - Retention efforts will include strategies for **fostering positive and supportive relationships** between diverse community members, institutions, and participants, helping students with a sense of unity and community. Such strategies will include a **welcome reception** and **networking meetings** during the fall and winter semesters.
 - The center for Disabled Student Resources and Services will be enlisted in making sure that trainees with disabilities have access to any special supports and resources that they will need.

- Project Co-Directors Whitten and Summy will continue **to provide intensive support** for each participant for six months upon completion of the program and assist in developing **sustainability plans** incorporating **co-teaching** with the project directors, establishment of **mentors** and **peer coaches** within each school district, and at least **8 formal supervision** sessions with the individual student and their respective school districts. Further, each **cohort** will continue to have **monthly** meetings.

Increased number of teachers with a masters in special education and a minimum of two endorsements, learning disabilities and emotional impairments in special education and one certification in transition, collaboration and teaming, and special education technology at the K-12 level by providing: (Accomplished by Objectives 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

- master level coursework that dually prepares graduates in general and special education and endorsements in learning disabilities and emotional impairments and one certification area
- master level students with a comprehensive 53 hour graduate program in special education

Increased collaboration with parents and professionals across disciplines that foster inclusion and participation of students with disabilities in academic and social, settings with their peers by understanding: (Accomplished by Objectives 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10)

- the advantages and disadvantages of transdisciplinary teaming with educators, professionals and parents who have different goals, training and perspectives;
- the roles of each team member, both as direct service provider and as collaborative consultant, and an understanding of the overlap among roles;

Increased collaboration among Colleges at WMU and effective evaluation of the program with the goal of making it a permanent, validated, institutional offering at the end of this

grant period by involving: (Accomplished by Objectives 1, 4, 5, 9)

- master level students from Colleges of Education, Health and Human Services, Arts and Sciences, and Fine Arts;
- professors from other departments in co-teaching core courses;
- collaboration with other funded personnel preparation grants at WMU (school psychology and visual impairment & orientation and mobility training)
- formative and summative evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the IRPR Program.

Enhanced teaming skills among graduate level team members and summer institute

participants by facilitating the use of: (Accomplished by Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)

- a collaborative problem-solving process and a collaboration log;
- skills for effective communication;
- personal profiles to better understand their own working style and that of their teammates.
- generalization of teaming skills in field based experiences

Improved quality of education for students with disabilities and those at-risk for school failure

by preparing graduates to become change agents and promote systemic change within their

organization by providing: (Accomplished by Objectives 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)

- an innovative, seamless graduate preparation program for professionals responsible for meeting the needs of students with disabilities and those at-risk for school failure;
- a collaborative environment for students to observe, interact and construct knowledge.

Increased ownership among the community, University, and school districts by enriching the

knowledge base of school/agency personnel on meeting the needs of students with disabilities

and those at-risk of academic failure by offering a summer institute and on-going

consultation which includes assisting: (Accomplished by Objective 7, 8)

- school personnel in developing specific interventions for specific students;
- school personnel with direct inservice on transdisciplinary teaming which will involve effective communication, problem solving, conflict resolution;
- school personnel with indirect consultative services to teachers and support personnel by working with building based intervention assistance teams;

National dissemination of the program accomplished by: (Accomplished by Objective 2, 8, 9):

- recruitment of participants from preservice, graduate, and continuing professional development training opportunities through advertisements in professional newsletters.
- establishment of a network of support to sustain participants
- establishment of an information site for recruitment and dissemination on the WWW.
- presentations at National and Regional professional conferences.
- publications in professional journals.

Student Recruitment

The monocultural nature of the traditional personnel pool does not mirror the heterogeneous student population. Programs directed toward increasing the supply of qualified educators from underrepresented populations recognize the acute shortage of diverse personnel in the field. These shortages have both instructional and social implications in the schools. Therefore, a unified effort enlisting students from diverse backgrounds including students with disabilities will be a priority of IRPR Program.

The President of Western Michigan University has already identified this priority and has outlined specific goals relating to increasing the representation of students from underrepresented groups. This effort includes the development of a Director of Graduate Diversity to pursue

minority applicants and the evolution of a faculty/student mentorship program to assist in retaining students of traditionally underrepresented groups.

Individuals from underrepresented groups will be recruited through a variety of means. We have aligned with many organizations to assist in this endeavor (e.g. Center for Transformational Leadership associated with the Office of the Vice President for Research, the Michigan Association of Minority Affairs Program, the National Alliance of Black School Educators, the Kings Chavez Parks Initiative, and the Citizens Alliance to Uphold Special Education).

In addition to the previously stated alignments, this project plans to recruit candidates from traditionally underrepresented groups as follows:

- Secure names and test information from Minority Student Services at WMU.
- Secure names from past minority students who have completed programs within the department.
- Secure names from faculty members who have made presentations throughout the region.
- Secure names of potential minority and candidates with disabilities from other institutions with undergraduate level programs and those that have membership in HECSE.
- Identify and contact all prospective students through university faculty, former students, and participating agency contacts.

The Department of Educational Studies has also established a direct and ongoing relationship with the WMU Center for Students with Disabilities to provide support to students who are disabled. Both the department and Center for Students with Disabilities will focus on:

- Bringing together groups of minority and students with disabilities for communication purposes to enhance coping skills, and to provide social and emotional support.

- Listening to individual problems that are related to department insensitivity's to disability, ethnic or cultural concerns, and where appropriate, to brainstorm and help the student problem solve; but not to engage in academic counseling with respect to the student's coursework or degree program, nor replace existing grievance mechanisms;
- Referring students to sources of appropriate help within the larger university, as needed;
- Educating department personnel as to those problems requiring heightened sensitivity by faculty and staff to minority and disability concerns;
- Collaborating with appropriate campus agencies to facilitate recruitment, outreach additional campus services, and scholarship information and dissemination.

The Directors will select a member within the Student Advisory Committee to help socialize and integrate minority and students with disabilities into the department. These students will also be assisted with their socialization and integration into professional special education activities.

In summary, the timing is critical for personnel preparation programs designed to provide quality education and services to students with disabilities and to the professionals that meet the needs of these students. It is recognized that the TCPP has and IRPR PROGRAM will have a **significant impact** on the **qualitative aspects of service delivery** in the state of Michigan and beyond.

PROJECT PERSONNEL

Involvement of Personnel from Traditionally Underrepresented Groups

This section of the proposal describes the capacity of WMU to provide a high quality masters degree program to prepare special education teachers with a transdisciplinary focus. Increasing the diversity of the teaching force in Michigan will require the involvement of

professionals who can attract and mentor students while serving as role models. Fran Bartocci Lemley, who is visually impaired, and Elizabeth Gallagher, who has a learning disability, have unique perspectives on issues associated with recruiting and retaining students with disabilities in the teaching force. Fran is a graduate of Western Michigan University's master's program in special education. She is currently teaching special education in Kalamazoo Public Schools, one of our partner school districts. Elizabeth Gallagher is a graduate of WMU's undergraduate special education program and is currently teaching in Otsego Public Schools, another one of our partner school districts (see Appendix A for letters of support). Additionally, Liliana Rodriguez and Rigoberto Rincones, Hispanic members of the Project Team will be recruiting students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Vitae of the key personnel and of faculty are provided in Appendix D.

Qualifications, Accomplishments, and Time Commitments of Key Personnel

Elizabeth Whitten, Ph.D., Project Director. Associate Professor, Chair, Department of Educational Studies. Dr. Whitten has served as a special and general education teacher and administrator. She has been a professor in higher education for the past 12 years and chair of the department for the past five years. Dr. Whitten has been consulting with a number of school districts for the past ten years, providing training in areas of collaboration and teaming, co-teaching, curriculum-based assessment, data-based instruction, and intervention strategies. Dr. Whitten directed the Transdisciplinary Collaboration Preparation Program (1995-98) which was funded through the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) and co-directed another federal grant named the Visual Impairments and Orientation & Mobility Preparation Program (1997-2000). This grant was also funded through the DOE. Her research interests are in the areas of teacher

education, collaboration among professionals, working with students with disabilities, and effective instructional practices.

Dr. Whitten's responsibilities will include overall administration of the program. These will include monitoring the recruitment process, maintaining budgetary control and assisting with the program evaluation. A detailed description of responsibilities is available in the Plan of Operation. During the academic year (August 28 to April 26), Dr. Whitten will devote 25% time to the project as a cost share from Western Michigan University. From May 1 to August 20, Dr. Whitten will devote 22% Years 1-3 and 20% Year 4 of her time to the project. Duties outside of the proposed project involve chairing the Department of Educational Studies.

Sarah E. Summy, Ed.D., Project Co-Director. Assistant Professor. Dr. Summy obtained her doctoral degree in 1997 from the University of Northern Colorado. She has presented her research at numerous professional conferences and has published specifically on transitioning students identified as Emotionally Disturbed from more to less restrictive environments. She teaches theory and intervention of emotional disturbance that will be incorporated into the 15 credits the cohort will take. Currently, Dr. Summy is involved in an Exemplars of Education project with four other WMU faculty members (funded at \$300,000 for 3 years) and a GEAR-UP Grant where she serves as the special education consultant. Dr. Summy is a member of the WMU College of Education Diversity Committee.

Dr. Summy's responsibilities will include general administration of the project (e.g., coordinating activities with the program coordinator, supervision of graduate assistants, serving as a liaison to internship sites, assist in conducting the program evaluation and assist the project coordinator with budgetary control. A detailed description of responsibilities is available in the Plan of Operation (see Person Loading Chart and Responsibilities sections). During the

academic year (August 28 to April 26), Dr. Summy will devote approximately 25% of her time to the implementation of this project. This 25% will be a cost share from Western Michigan University. From May 1 to August 20, Dr. Summy will devote 22% Years 1-3 and 20% Year 4 of her time to the project. Duties outside of the project involve advising students and teaching.

Fran Bartocci Lemley, MS. In Ed., Project Field Coordinator: Fran Lemley will share partial responsibility with Drs. Whitten and Summy for many aspects of the proposed project. For each year of the grant, Ms. Lemley will contribute .50 FTE to project operation plus all fringe benefits. She will coordinate and manage the field-based experiences of the students as well as ensure the theory and instruction provided during coursework is put into practice in practicum settings. In addition, Ms. Lemley will be heavily involved in recruitment of students with disabilities.

Elizabeth Gallagher, BS. In Ed., Graduate Assistant: Ms. Gallagher will share partial responsibility for recruitment and mentoring of students with disabilities. She will contribute 10 hours per week to the project operation. She will work closely with Drs. Whitten and Summy and Project Coordinator, Ms. Lemley.

Liliana Rodriquez, Ph.D. Candidate, Project Evaluator. Ms. Rodriquez is currently studying evaluation at Western Michigan University and will complete her Ph.D. in April 2002. In 2000, she received her Masters in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Evaluation. She has also received Honorific Mention for her Bachelor's in Systems Engineering, and Summa Cum Laude Honors for her masters and specialists degree in Project Management in Engineering. Dr. Rodriquez has been awarded with several honors and educational scholarships in Venezuela and the USA. She has worked in and acted as a consultant in education and the business industry. She has had extensive experience as an evaluator in both education and business. Ms. Rodriquez

has had the opportunity to work with nationally recognized scholars and professors (Dr. Dan Stufflebeam and Dr. James Sanders) at WMU, publish papers in professional journals, and present research findings at international, national, and local conferences.

Collaborating WMU Faculty. In addition to the WMU faculty mentioned in Table 3, other outstanding faculty from the Departments of Educational Studies, Teaching, Learning and Leadership, Department of Psychology as well as other departments will teach core courses, advise students, and serve as important resources on this project as part of their regularly assigned and their area of expertise. Brief vitae for these faculty members can be found in Appendix D.

Personnel Recruitment and Selection & Nondiscriminatory Employment Practices

WMU is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action institution, committed to providing equal educational and employment opportunities to qualified participants regardless of race, sex, color, religion, national origin, marital or parental status, physical or mental disability, or age. There are clearly stated policies in place at the University that will be followed in carrying out this personnel preparation project in order to achieve these ends. All hiring of faculty at WMU and personnel for this project have been and will be conducted in accordance with the Affirmative Action policies of the University. The EEO/AA Policies (refer to page ii for policy) have involved procedures to attract individuals who are minorities and underrepresented populations.

PLAN OF MANAGEMENT

This proposed project will foster collaboration among schools, agencies, and parents who are a focus of the Michigan SIP (See Appendix A, Letters of Support, Dr. Jackie Thompson, State Director). Participants will be prepared to contribute to the educational reform in this

Table 3. Faculty Members

Activity	Teaching Specialty Related to IRPR PROGRAM
E. Brooks Applegate, III, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Educational Studies	Educational Research Methods and Statistics, Computer Applications, Educational Measurement
James Bosco, Ph.D. Professor, Educational Studies	Technology, International Studies, Educational Research Methods
Tracy DuBay, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Educational Studies	Technology, Special Education
George Haus, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Educational Studies	Behavior Assessment & Interventions, Emotional Impairments, Technology
Dona Icabone, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Educational Studies	Mental Retardation, Program Evaluation, Learning Disabilities
Paula D. Kohler, Ph.D. Educational Studies	Transition from School to Community, Education Restructuring, Secondary Education Curricula
Elena B. Lisovskaya, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Educational Studies	Ethnic Intolerance in Michigan Schools, Non-State Schools in Russia
Gerald Pillsbury, Ph.D. Associate Professor, Educational Studies	Nature and Development of Self, Interconnection of Self and Community, Family and Community Life
Howard Poole, Ph.D. Professor, Educational Studies	Technology, Survey Research
Annette Skellenger, Ph.D. Assistant Professor, Educational Studies	Visual Impairments, Early Childhood and Orientation and Mobility

country and systemic change within their schools or agencies by using service delivery models that enhance the goal of inclusion of students and youth with disabilities in the school and community.

The project is based on a management plan used by other previous successful proposals, Management by Objectives (McConkey, 1979). This plan emphasizes (a) clearly identified objectives, (b) sequenced activities for each objective, (c) timelines for completing the specified activities, (d) systematic collection of data, (e) clearly identified program outcomes (see pages 16-19), and (f) program modification based on on-going formative and summative evaluation. This management plan impacts not only the objectives and activities, but the evaluation plan by integrating the different components into a clearly articulated and unified whole.

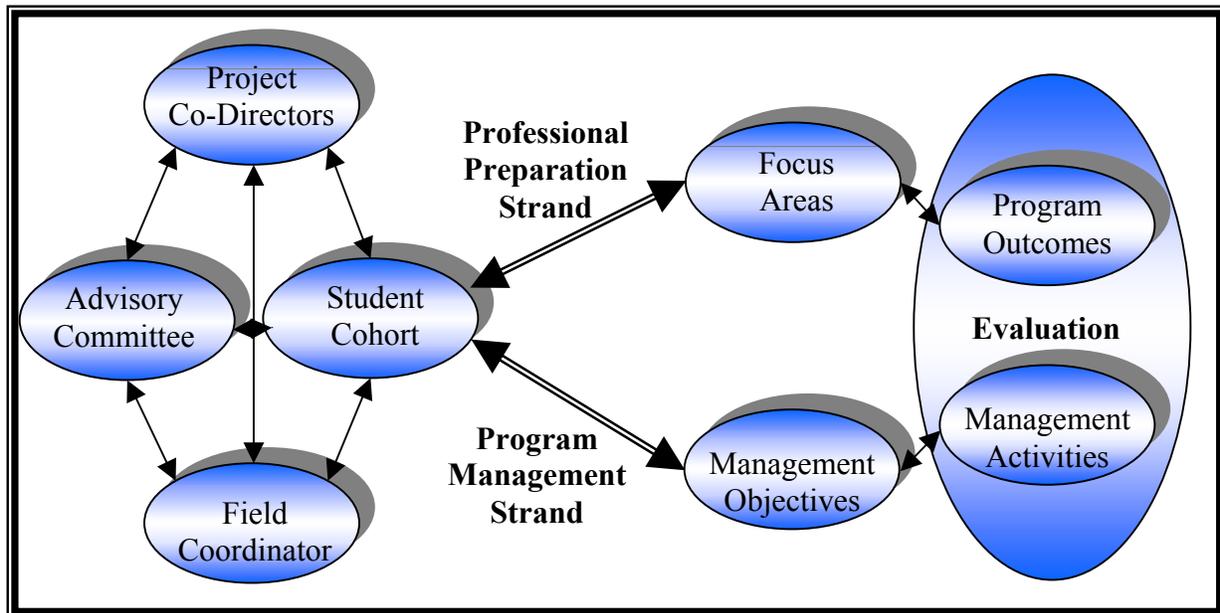
Management of Project Objectives

The management of the project objectives and activities will primarily be the responsibility of the project directors, who will be assisted in this effort by the project team and receive additional input and assistance from the Advisory Committee (see Appendix E) and collaborating faculty listed on page 34. If the evaluation data indicates that objectives are not being adequately met, modifications to the program will be developed and changes will be documented.

Organization and Management Plan

There are two major strands that guide the success of this program: (1) Personnel Preparation Strand and (2) Program Management Strand. Figure 1 provides a graphic representation among constituents and the need for “flow” within the project.

Figure 2. Management Plan: Two Major Strands of Intensive Recruitment, Preparation and Retention (IRPR) program



The Program Management Strand drives the success of the Personnel Preparation Strand.

The Personnel Preparation Strand identifies the focus areas and outcomes of the program that can only be accomplished by meeting the stated objectives and activities

The Project Co-Directors report to the Dean of the College of Education who is directly responsible to the Provost. The Project Secretary, Field Coordinator and Project Evaluator both work closely with and are responsible to the Project Co-Directors. The Project Co-Directors will be the mechanism of direct contact with the Advisory Committee and will coordinate the work with the Project Team. Below is the specific plan of operation for this project. Overall nine objectives have been developed and are presented and described in detail in this section.

Project Objectives and Activities

Objective 1: To appoint an Advisory Committee (AC). We will establish an advisory committee that is representative of the stakeholders involved in the education of students

with disabilities (See Appendix A, Letters of Support).

- 1.1 Identify members that are stakeholders responsible for providing appropriate educational programs (i.e., parents, students, teachers, administrators, other professionals) for students and youth with disabilities.
- 1.2 Provide initial orientation for committee
- 1.3 Develop a calendar of regularly scheduled meeting of AC on a monthly basis.
- 1.4 Design a flow chart that outlines how advisory committee members will make collaborative decisions.
- 1.5 Establish telecommunications operation for committee members residing outside of immediate area or state.

Objective 2: To recruit and select 25 new students every other year. We propose to recruit, prepare, and retain 50 master's level students in special education currently teaching on emergency certifications. Our plan is support 50 students with full tuition and class fees that will cover the required coursework in special education. We will also fund two students pursuing a graduate degree (masters or doctoral) in special education with graduate assistantships.

We will attempt to recruit traditional underrepresented groups including those with disabilities. Students selected to participate in the project will be required to complete a repay agreement to work with children with disabilities for two years per each year of federal funding (see Appendix I). We have provided six months of intensive retention support to assist program participants in fully implementing effective teaching practices. Specific recruitment activities are outlined on the following pages:

- 2.1 Develop a program brochure and disseminate to students, other departments, & schools
- 2.2 Brochure to recruit students of diversity including those with disabilities.

- 2.3 Send recruitment materials to previously established contacts in school districts with high Hispanic and Native American populations to assist in the recruit of minorities.
- 2.4 Contact each school district requesting a partnership with the IRPR Program to encourage teachers on emergency certificates to apply to the grant program.
- 2.4 Attend local, state, and national conferences for recruitment and program promotion.
- 2.4 All 50 students will be required to complete an application addressing their desire to be prepared in special education, as well as a personal interview.
- 2.5 Accept 25 applicants per cohort for the program

Objective 3: To provide continuous advising and monitoring of student progress.

Throughout the project, participants will receive on-going advising and support from project personnel and from the respective departments. More specifically the Project Team will be responsible for communicating information about the project, coordinating schedules, arranging field-based experiences, etc. In addition, the Project Team will monitor the progress of the participants on a semester by semester basis. Any difficulties or potential problems can be immediately addressed, increasing the likelihood of the participant's success in the project.

- 3.1 Meet individually with students each semester for advisement and progress review.
- 3.2 Hold monthly cohort meetings
- 3.3 Mentor students in field experiences by providing on-going guidance and feedback

Objective 4: Provide quality masters program in Special Education through continuous development, delivery, and validation of coursework and field experiences.

Students pursuing a masters in special education will be required to complete Special Education core, endorsement, and certification courses. This set of courses will be continually reviewed and

evaluated to ensure an interrelated spiral of academic content preparation, professional knowledge, pedagogical skills, collaborative and consultative skills, and guided clinical practice.

- 4.1 Establish a seamless preparation program that involves coursework and field experiences for special education teachers.
- 4.2 Review course objectives and evaluate the alignment of courses in the program
- 4.3 Develop or revise course syllabi
- 4.4 Ensure the course is being taught to meet stated objectives
- 4.5 Develop a plan to offer coursework so a continuous program can be provided to students
- 4.6 Evaluate the effectiveness of course delivery

Objective 5: Provide continuous development, delivery, and validation of IRPR Program

core courses. Students will receive specific instruction in their selected Master's Degree program, in addition, they will receive two endorsements in special education (learning disabilities and emotional impairments) and complete 15 hours of a selected certification program (Collaboration and Teaming, Transition, or Assistive Technology) of specially designed courses. The twelve hours of core coursework offered during the first summer session will be co-taught by the project team as well as professors from other disciplines using the co-teaching models described by Dynak, Whitten, and Dynak (1997) (see Appendix L). One course will be taught by several professors from different disciplines to provide insight on the various disciplines involved with students with disabilities and those at-risk for school failure

- 5.1 Enhance graduate level preparation for students working on degrees in special education or related fields by emphasizing the development of skills in the areas of transdisciplinary instruction and collaboration.
- 5.2 Review course descriptions and objectives and evaluate the alignment of each course

in the program-modify and expand syllabi to reflect more relevant or intensive training.

5.3 Collaboratively teach courses.

5.4 Ensure each course is being taught to meet stated objectives

5.5 Evaluate the effectiveness of course delivery through collaborative teaching and make revisions, if necessary

Objective 6: Ensure theory presented in coursework applies to students' field

experiences. A critical component of this program is the connection between coursework and field experiences. Not only will field experiences generalize the skills taught through coursework, but they will enhance the likelihood of students retaining employment in the school districts. For IRPR Program, courses and field sites are connected by ensuring course objectives are implemented in the classroom and through school-based team collaborations (see Appendix A, Letters of Support). IRPR Program participants will have the opportunity to connect theory to practice to gain a full understanding of the concept of school-based interdisciplinary service programs.

6.1 Develop field-based goals

6.2 Maintain communication with personnel from field-based sites to ensure ongoing opportunities to work in school district or agency

6.3 Meet with students to determine most appropriate field experience

6.4 Arrange placements between project students and participating school/agency

6.5 Finalize arrangements and supervise field placements

6.6 Project team will visit field placements on a weekly basis

6.7 Maintain contact with school and agency supervisors

6.8 Evaluate placement sites and student performance during placement

Objective 7: Ensure that students develop program competencies. A list of the program competencies is in Appendix C. The appropriate development of student competencies and experiences are at the core of this preparation project. Student performance will be evaluated according to the identified competencies and experiences. The specific activities to be accomplished to achieve this objective are as follows.

- 7.1 Review student program of study annually (courses, grades, experiences)
- 7.2 Project team will evaluate student work on an on-going basis
- 7.3 Review field-based evaluations for competency attainment
- 7.4 Provide students with multiple observations of their teaching (See Supervisor Evaluation Form, Appendix ()).
- 7.4 Identify students with deficit areas and develop an academic intervention plan

Objective 8: Assist students in retaining employment upon graduation. By preparing our students with competencies to meet the needs of students with disabilities, it is easy to support the retention of our graduates. The reputation of the current TCPP and department graduates has school district administrators inquiring if there are available graduates for hire. In addition, for fieldwork, students are often placed in Intermediate School Districts or related agencies, the quality of their work has spread and heightened the requests for TCPP graduates.

- 8.1 Encourage students to attend state and regional conferences to enhance their knowledge base.
- 8.2 Include professionals from surrounding communities to serve on advisory board
- 8.3 Present IRPR Program at local, state and national conferences and provide information on specific students for recruitment

8.4 Provide students with six months of intensive retention support.

Objective 9: Evaluate and revise overall effectiveness of IRPR PROGRAM. This objective will be met through the evaluation plan designed for this project.

9.1 Conduct weekly problem solving meetings with project team

9.2 Conduct monthly progress reviews and make appropriate revisions

9.3 Conduct annual review of program and make appropriate revisions

9.4 Meet with stakeholders/advisory committees including parents

Time Commitment of Key Project Faculty

A close estimate of how much time each of the key personnel will devote to the various project activities has been provided. These time estimates are based on time in days, representing FTE for a 12-month period and are presented in the following person loading chart, Table 4 on page 41. We feel confident from our previous experience with federal grants that these personnel figures are reasonable to run a high quality personnel preparation project, while being conservative and cost effective.

Project Timeline for Objectives and Activities

The timeline for project activities (see Appendix F) will differ each of the four project years. As the anticipated starting date for this project (in terms of funding) is July, 2002. Project objectives are abbreviated and activities are identified with appropriate timelines.

Evaluation

Weiss (1998) states that the root of evaluation is value. Moreover, Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997) define evaluation as the identification, clarification, and application of defensible criteria to determine an evaluation object's value (worth or merit) in relation to those

Table 4. Person Loading Chart for IRPR PROGRAM

Activity	Time in Day(s) by Person					
	Whitten	Summy	Lemley	Secretary	Rodri-quez	Faculty
Fiscal and Resource Management	15	15	2	0	0	0
Project Operations Management	10	10	5	20	0	0
Advisory Committee	4	4	4	4	1	4
Recruitment and Selection	10	10	10	8	0	5
Program Development	10	10	5	20	0	5
Teaching	30	30	10	0	0	30
Student Scheduling & Advisement	4	13	5	0	0	5
Coordination of Field Sites	10	10	50	20	0	0
Program Evaluation	10	10	10	0	5	1
Student Evaluation and Review	8	15	10	0	0	1
Problem Solving Meetings	22	22	10	22	0	5
Preparation of Reports	5	5	2	10	1	0
Total Days for Year 1	138	169	123	104	7	56
Total Days for Project	552	676	492	416	28	224

Times are based on 260 person days/year

criteria. Therefore, evaluation will be an important tool for optimizing IRPR Program's value in relation to its intended purpose.

Two approaches will be chosen for conducting this evaluation; they are (a) the management-oriented evaluation approach (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 1985), and (b) the naturalistic or participatory-oriented evaluation approach (e.g., Stake, 1970; Patton, 1987; Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Cousins & Earl, 1985). As Telfair, Leviton, and Merchant (1999) state, "...evaluation practice in community settings requires an eclectic toolbox of knowledge and skills that will allow evaluators to engage community stakeholders in a flexible yet rigorous evaluation process" (p. 1). Furthermore, these evaluation approaches are well matched to programs in which there are likely to be multiple realities (Worthen, Sanders, & Fitzpatrick, 1997).

Brinkerhoff (1989) states that in doing an evaluation "the challenge is to do more of a different order of evaluation—proactive, directive evaluation that will lead the training profession and practice to a new level of operation and impact" (p. 5). Therefore, the primary purpose of this evaluation will be for formative improvement of IRPR Program. This formative evaluation will provide program team information useful in improving the program (Worthen, Sanders & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Furthermore, a summative evaluation will be conducted to present judgments about the program's value in relation to particular criteria established for this evaluation. The overall evaluation of this program will focus on seven standards or criteria: Ethics, Promotion, Implementation, Consumer Satisfaction, Impact, Management, and Dissemination (see Appendix O, Evaluation Criteria).

According to Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997), "Audiences include individuals, groups and agencies who have an interest in the evaluation and receive its results" (p. 192). The primary audiences identified for this evaluation are (a) IRPR Program's staff, (b) program

participants, (c) community participants and agencies, (d) parents and (e) schools. By maintaining a participatory-oriented evaluation approach to the questioning and data collection processes, the external evaluator, Liliana Rodriguez-Campos, will be able to acknowledge the issues and concerns of all the different audiences and will reflect these perspectives in the evaluation report.

This program evaluation will be taking into account the thirty Standards of the Joint Committee's Standards for Educational Evaluation. According to Worthen, Sanders, and Fitzpatrick (1997), "...the quality of an evaluation study can be determined by looking at its (1) utility, (2) feasibility, (3) propriety, and (4) accuracy. The 30 Program Evaluation Standards are grouped according to their potential contribution to each of these four attributes" (p. 442). Those standards will be adequately applied to this program evaluation. Furthermore, the external evaluator and a meta-evaluation advisory panel will continually exercise professional judgment, in order to reflect best practices.

As to the summative evaluation, we will evaluate the proposed project against the specific objectives, including among others, the percentages of the students who are from underrepresented groups or with disabilities, the number of graduates successfully moving into leadership roles, graduates' leadership qualities, and the level of satisfaction of graduates and employers partnering with the proposed project.

More importantly, we will conduct formative evaluation to help facilitate and improve the program. The focus of the formative evaluation will be two fold. First, we will evaluate the impact of the following features of the proposed program on student satisfaction: (a) the collaborative teaming of faculty members from WMU, partner schools and agencies; (b) a cohort group of diversified students in relation to ethnicity and disability; (c) the combination of

coursework, action research, data-based instruction, student reflection, and peer evaluation. On an annual basis, the evaluator will use data collection techniques such as focus groups, interviews, reflective essays, and thinking aloud in response to the evaluative criteria involving both general and special education. Also, this evaluation will use an established teacher survey instrument to inquire into how participant's conceptions of effective teaching evolve through the program. As to established instruments, in accordance with the objectives of IRPR Program to prepare a diversified group of teachers who enlist equity, access, and the full participation of all children, the following evaluation tools will be used: Graham and Miller's (1995) Cross-cultural Interactive Preference Profile, Musslewhite's (1995) Change Style Indicator, or Hagberg and Jackson's Leadership Development Report. The annual data collected on student's conception of effective teaching and collaboration will be discussed with each student during reflective sessions to facilitate his or her further professional growth.

In summary, evaluation will be treated as an integral part of this proposed program. Through both formative and summative evaluations—which emphasize both qualitative and quantitative data—it will be improved the program, while providing judgments about its value in relation to established criteria. The formative aspect of this evaluation will have more implications for ensuring the success of the program, and its summative aspect will have more ramifications for disseminating the program. Finally, evaluation should be looked at as a vital part of IRPR Program, and an ally for program improvement. According to Scriven (1991), “evaluation is the process whose duty is the systematic and objective determination of merit, worth, or value. Without such a process, there is no way to distinguish the worthwhile from the worthless” (p. 4).

ADEQUACY OF THE RESOURCES

WMU is a student-centered Doctoral/Research University-Extensive institution ranked among the top tier of universities in the country by the Carnegie Foundation and in surveys conducted by U.S. News and World Report. WMU has earned national and international recognition for its high quality teaching, graduate education, and research. WMU is a member of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges, the oldest higher-education association in the United States.

Founded in 1903, WMU currently has approximately 28,600 students – of which 21 percent are graduate students - and over 800 faculty in seven colleges. WMU is the fourth largest university in Michigan and ranks among the nation's 60 largest universities. One-fourth of WMU's students are pursuing graduate degrees. The vigor of University outreach is illustrated by Michigan's second largest extension program, bringing up to 34 complete degree programs to 30 communities through six regional centers.

The University seeks students, staff, and faculty populations characterized by a diversity that reflects society at large and meets student needs through cultural, academic, financial support, and enrichment programs designed to promote student persistence, independence, and success.

The WMU mission statement for the next decade provides a focus on research and graduate education, institutional outreach and economic development, assessment of institutional and student performance and institutional diversity, in addition to the ongoing commitment to undergraduate education and community service. WMU's research mission requires faculty to create new knowledge and to address social needs and concerns. The commitment to the discovery and dissemination of new knowledge and insight at WMU facilitates and rewards

faculty and student research, scholarship, and creative activity. Last year, University faculty and staff conducted more than \$45 million in externally funded research - a 30 percent increase over the prior year.

The WMU library system includes the main library, Waldo Library, and four branch libraries: the Education Library, Archives and Regional History Collection, Music and Dance Library, and the Visual Resource Library. The collections include more than 4 million volumes including 1,841,600 million unique titles. The libraries maintain at least 80 electronic databases such as ERIC (education) or PSYCHINFO (psychology). Additionally, more than 40 databases are available on FIRSTSEARCH including journals, newspapers, and government documents. Additionally, an interdisciplinary enabling technology laboratory has been developed that houses a Multidisciplinary Enabling Technology Laboratory (METL). In summary, WMU is a wireless campus allowing faculty and every student access to Web-based courses, programs and degrees.

Capacity to Cooperate with Local Education Agencies Participants will experience their field-based experiences in their local education agencies. Project personnel have established partnerships with school districts and intermediate school districts in Southwestern Michigan (see Appendix A, Letters of Support). Kalamazoo, where the University is located, is a large, diverse, urban community connected to several suburbs. Specifically, three urban/suburban districts (Comstock, Gull Lake, Kalamazoo, and Portage) have demonstrated interest in partnering with IRPR program. Additionally, there are multiple rural communities (Bangor, Climax Scott, Galesburg-Augusta, Parchment, Schoolcraft, Vicksburg) within a sixty-mile radius of the University interested in partnering with the IRPR program (see Appendix A, Letters of Support).

Capacity to Cooperate with the State Education Agency and Others

The Intensive Recruitment Preparation and Retention Program is aligned with the state improvement plan currently plan being implemented in the State of Michigan (see Appendix A, Letters of Support). This plan mandates the use of collaboration and teamwork among institutions of higher education, behavioral support interventions, and transitions practices. The state improvement plan also encourages interagency collaboration between universities and agencies with programs designed to support students with disabilities. Further, partnerships have been established with Kalamazoo Guidance Clinic, Kalamazoo County Mental Health, and CAUSE. These partnerships will allow are students to expand their knowledge of collaboration beyond the school system.

Capacity to Recruit Well-Qualified Students

Over the past 20 years the Special Education Program has worked on ensuring students receive a high quality program with course work that is directly applied through field-based experiences. The field-based experiences are closely supervised and on-going collaboration with mentors is an essential part of the program. Because of the excellent reputation of our special education masters program, the department has a successful history of attracting well-qualified students. From the statistics compiled over the past three years of the TCPP and TCVI and O&M grant, there has been an average of approximately three applicants for every student slot available, and 100% of students who were accepted into TCPP actually enrolled and completed the coursework. All TCPP and TCVI and O&M graduates are currently employed within the field of education. Of the TCPP students four are of racial and ethnic minority status and one is disabled and 21% the TCVI and O&M graduates have been underrepresented students.

Budget and Cost-Effectiveness

For the next four years we have requested funding in the sum of \$721,395 or approximately \$180,000 per year. The majority of the costs (over 65%) requested will go to support students participating in the grant project. It has been our experience with TCPP and TCVI and O&M that student stipends and tuition support recruit well-qualified students. We believe the requested funds will allow us to attract quality students. The federal funds that we have requested to support other components of the project have proven to be valuable assets in our past experiences with federal grants. We have added addition travel monies to increase the opportunity for students to travel to professional meetings and conferences to disseminate their work and that of the project. Justification for each dollar request is documented in the Budget Justification. Although federal funds will make a substantial contribution to this project, especially in student support, WMU is providing support in terms of faculty, time, and resources.