WKU VANGUARD PROJECT

Partnership among Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green Independent School District, Daviess County School District, Owensboro Independent School District, and Warren County School District

GOAL: Transform the system of education in Kentucky to a level whereby schools/students will perform at levels comparable to those of schools in top performing countries in the world.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Recruit high-performing students into teacher education programs;
2. Increase standards for individuals seeking admission to and exiting teacher education programs;
3. Increase expectations of teacher candidates relative to mastery of subject matter;
4. Provide clinical experiences to ensure prospective teachers master the craft of teaching;
5. Enhance support for new teachers entering the profession; and
6. Restructure/align districts/schools with the project guidelines.

RATIONALE AND LITERATURE REVIEW: (See Appendix I)

PROCEDURES:

In an effort to develop the capacity to transform the preparation of educators and the work they will perform in the schools, we are proposing a potentially sustainable and economically feasible plan that will enable school districts to provide qualified faculty members for each and every student in their schools. Likewise, we must ensure that the proposed plan's implementation positively impacts student learning in the partnership districts and their schools. As such, we are approaching the preparation component from a phased process.

Western Kentucky University is a large educator preparation program that offers programs at four locations, with all programs offered at the main campus in Bowling Green. Elementary Education (ELED) and Middle Grades Education (MGE) Programs are offered on the main campus as well as three regional campuses (Elizabethtown, Glasgow, and Owensboro). Two of the regional campuses that provide the first two years of ELED and MGE instruction are located on or in close proximity to the Kentucky Community and Technical College campus. Nuances and differences in the delivery of the ELED and MG program between and among the various locations will necessitate different structures by location at least in the early phases of plan implementation and not all campuses are physically located in proximity to partner districts.

In an effort to phase in Vanguard Project elements while maintaining fiscal responsibility and providing qualified teachers for our partnership schools and others schools served by WKU's educator preparation program, we propose that our standard programs remain in place for the time being, while at the same time we begin to provide a parallel program focused on the guidelines identified for the Vanguard Project. In addition, we would begin the initiative with a small number of majors being located in particular school districts and gradually bringing additional majors and school districts into the project. Again, we would scale up toward future majors and future sites as processes in the earlier programs and sites are stabilized. A timeline for integrating other majors and school districts is not being proposed in this. This will be part of the final plan.

We believe that we not only have the capacity to launch the Vanguard Project initiative but also we have an established record of implementing and sustaining innovative educator preparation programs. For example, at the current time we are implementing on a pilot basis a clinical model for high school Social Studies and English in the Secondary Majors that could be a prime starting point to the Vanguard Project.

The project, called "WKU's Clinical Experiences and Practices in Teaching (CEPT) Model," integrates clinical and content components in the model and is transforming the preparation of teachers in these two majors. Discussions are currently underway to eliminate the standard program for these two majors and bring on additional majors. An extensive evaluation component in the pilot will inform program faculty and the university as to the impact of CEPT, while at the same time providing information to the participating high schools on how program is affecting student learning.

Additionally, WKU was among the first institutions to implement the UTeach replication model in Mathematics and Sciences that we refer to as SKyTeach (Southern Kentucky Teach). After five years of implementation, by all indicators the program is a success: WKU is graduating more high and middle school science and math teachers and these graduates are positively impacting student learning.

Finally, expanding on the success of SKyTeach, WKU implemented a GSKyTeach residency program in the Jefferson County School District's high poverty and hard-to-staff schools in the disciplines of Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics. Again, results have included more personnel and resources for these low-performing schools and another innovative model and route for WKU to recruit and train highly qualified math and science teachers qualified teachers for these schools.

TEACHER PREPARATION PROGRAMS:

Below is a brief description of how we envision the Vanguard Project elements will be incorporated into our educator preparation programs.

Admission to Teacher Education

Admission to the WKU Vanguard will include two phases that together incorporate multiple measures and provide multiple opportunities for candidates to demonstrate their ability and commitment to the field and the craft of teaching. Phase One will require that an entering student exhibit: a) class rank within the top quarter of the high school graduating class; b) ACT composite score of 24 or higher or SAT combined score Math and Critical Reading of 1040 or higher; c) Teacher Insight or similar instrument evaluating dispositions; d) an essay responding to the guiding principles of the WKU Vanguard Project; e) public service/extracurricular summary; and f) qualifying scores on a nationally recognized pre-professional skills assessment of basic knowledge. Applicants meeting Phase One requirements will continue to Phase Two, which will entail a candidate interview with education faculty, as well as other university and district personnel and related professionals. Candidates will respond to a series of situational probes related to the WKU Vanguard Project guiding principles and will also discuss information shared in the essay and public service/extracurricular summary submitted as part of Phase One.

Examples of Proposed Structure for Teacher Education Programs

The Five Year WKU Vanguard Teacher Preparation Program

The Five-Year WKU Vanguard teacher preparation program for **Elementary Education** teachers will include minors in either STEM or ELA/SS. Participants will participate in a clinical seminar comprising 35 hours per semester for a total of 70 pre-service clinical experience hours per year, culminating in a total of 280 hours of clinical experience at the end of the undergraduate program. The fifth year requires residency in a school.

Students will complete a bachelor's degree in education and an integrated minor including: a) 39 hours of Colonnade general education courses; b) 30 hours in an integrated minor (e.g.; STEM or ELA/SS) which could potentially be a major; c) 51 hours of education coursework, with 15 hours in educational seminar; d) Bachelor's degree is an eight semester sequence with 15 hours each semester; e) within each semester,

candidates will take a combination of Colonnade, minor, and education courses; and f) clinical experiences will begin during semester one of the program and continue throughout the eight semester sequence.

The fifth year of the Vanguard Project constitutes a residency year that stretches from the beginning of summer one to the end of summer two. In summer one, students participate in a study away or study abroad experience comparing US/KY schools with those abroad/away and identifying promising practices or problems of focus. Three classes will be held each summer, with a boot camp and two classes each semester. In addition, summer classes will be held in partnership with local schools. Collaborative "academies" will be offered for struggling learners or children with high needs. Teacher candidates in the second half of the summer one and the full summer two will work and learn in these academies. From assessment data, candidates will design and implement differentiated instruction with various learners specifically targeting concerns from TELL data related to English Language Learners, children with special needs and high ability learners.

Throughout the academic year, candidates will engage in classes hosted at local school sites following teaching hospital methodologies (table rounds, instructional rounds etc.). The teacher candidates will be evaluated via the PGES framework and will implement action research throughout the residency year.

The Five-Year WKU Vanguard teacher preparation program for **Middle Grades and Secondary Education** teachers will include a major in their subject area and discipline specific pedagogy. The fifth year is a residency year and follows the same sequence as described above.

A One-year Program Building on a Bachelor's Degree in a Certifiable Content Area

Another viable program option that with embedded Vanguard Project elements would be the one-year post-baccalaureate. Below are the basic elements of such a program:

- Students apply to a 1-year Masters program in the teaching residency model as described above
- One year of instruction in the craft of teaching
- Includes 350 hours in a clinical experience while in full-time residency

Toward Clinical Model of Teacher Education

According to Ripley (2013), the best way to prepare for teaching is to actually teach and to receive meaningful feedback on ways to improve. Additionally, "data shows that, for good or for ill, teachers' initial classroom experiences, especially in the first one or two years, are consistently a predictor of teacher effectiveness" (Rowan, Correnti, & Miller, 2002). Thus, as WKU moves toward implementation of Vanguard Project elements, coursework will be developed to allow for problem-based instruction organized around situations that teachers will actually experience in the classroom. Students will set learning goals and discuss ideas with professor and classmates (See **Appendix I** for additional theoretical and research rationale related to a clinical teaching model).

Candidates will begin pre-service clinical experiences, connected with coursework throughout every semester in the program. As the candidates progress through the program, they will have increased opportunities to engage in clinical experiences, culminating with engagement in our Residency Model (teaching hospitals) during the 5th year of the program.

Courses throughout the WKU Vanguard Project will be taught by a collaborative team of pedagogical, content and clinical faculty. Field experiences will be clearly connected to course content and provide rich opportunities for practice and feedback by a team of professionals. Faculty roles and responsibilities will address the delivery of content, integration of pedagogy and application in various clinical settings,

feedback, revision and the cycle continues (see "The Blue Ribbon Report" commissioned by NCATE, 2010).

PRINCIPAL PREPARATION PROGRAM:

Transformation of the educator preparation programs for classroom teachers also necessitates adjustments in the preparation of school leaders. A member of the WKU faculty has participated in the NISL Executive Development Program and the faculty members are prepared to integrate the Program into new Principal Preparation Program as part of the overall Vanguard Project. A research-based program, the NISL EDP is aligned with the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards (see attached) and will be a definite asset to the courses of study our students must undertake in order to be school administrators in the state of Kentucky. Incorporating these units into our courses can be accomplished in a variety of ways. One method of incorporation may be to use some of the EDP units from NISL as substitutions for specific course assignments in our program of study. Examples would include:

- Substituting materials from EDP Phase Two, Unit 10: The Principal as Ethical Leader for a course requirement in our EDAD 641: Building Culture and Community course.
- Substituting materials from EDP Phase Two, Unit 11: The Principal as Driver of Change materials for some course assignments in the EDAD 645: Practicing the Principalship course.
- Giving WKU Level II Principal Preparation course credit for completing NISL EDP to school administrators whose districts have elected to place them in a Kentucky NISL cadre. As such, participants could receive 3 hours of course credit for the EDAD 694 Special Topics course for completing all of the NISL EDP.

SCHOOL DISTRICT STRUCTURES TO SUPPORT VANGUARD PROJECT:

In an effort to ensure existing teachers have opportunities to advance professionally the following pathways are being explored. Progression through the various pathways is based on expertise that could lead to different levels of certification that would be distinct from state ranks and certification and could be gained through agreed on professional development/learning experiences. Higher levels of certification would be connected with compensation. Evaluation mechanisms would be developed to ensure that alignment of certifications with district, school, and student learner needs, such as:

- National Board certification
- Multiple steps with entry at various levels
- Development of Teacher Leader type of positions that carry different responsibilities and accompanying compensation (e.g., Vanguard + extra duty, Teacher Leader + extra duty, Administrative Intern + extra duty, etc.)
- Professional development aligned with different pathways and designed to facilitate professional growth of the educators and student learning (See **Appendix II** for examples of master teacher benchmarks and associated professional development.)
- Adjunct faculty with WKU helping in the delivery of the learning experiences in the school

Through a process similar to the process used by National Board, teachers would need to re-certify themselves on a periodical basis to retain their certification and accompanying duties and stipends.

Appendix I – Rationale and Literature Review

If we were to go back in time, would we find that teachers and the schools in which they work look much different from what we find today? While we as professionals would respond that there are many differences, there are probably many similarities. Regardless of the perceptions we bring to the quality of our education system and the capacity of our graduates to complete in the global economy, our students, by many measures, are falling behind their peers in many countries around the world (Ripley, 2013; Tucker, 2011; Wagner, 2008). In addition, there is a gap between various cultural groups in the United States (Ravitch, 2010) and by various measures, students with special needs and those in high poverty schools are not achieving at their fullest potential (Dwyer, 2007). While these achievements gaps are personal tragedies for some students, the negative impact on the economic growth and overall economy of the United States has long term ramifications (Friedman, 2005; Friedman & Mandelbaum, 2011). Schools in many ways are a reflection of the community, region and state in which they are located and it is at the local and state level where the gaps are felt by cultural groups the hardest. Kentucky is no exception. Spees (2014) states that the rate of poverty in Kentucky in 2012 was 18.6 percent compared to the overall rate of poverty in the United States of 14.9 percent. This high poverty can only be combated with rigorous, standards-based, intentional education provided in schools by highly trained teachers. As we work to educate students for the current work place and for careers that are currently unknown, it is imperative that we address the current infrastructure to transform our system of education, including but not limited to how we educate our teachers and school leaders and the environment in which our educators work.

Over the past several decades numerous attempts have been made to enhance the quality of educators going in to Kentucky's schools and to dramatically change how students are educated in the schools of Kentucky and the United States. Since the publication of the National Commission of Excellence in Education report in 1983, the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (1990), and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future report in 1996, numerous attempts have been made to address the challenges faced by schools in Kentucky. Change has occurred; however, gaps persist and as a country we continue to fall behind other countries around the world. As a profession and a country, we have the responsibility to provide a quality education for all students. Unfortunately individual perspectives and self-interests often present barriers to meaningful reform (Pankratz & Petrosko, 2000). One such barrier involves the fact that we have not addressed the opportunities, challenges, and failures from a systemic perspective. Using such a lens could truly transform how we educate teachers for the classrooms, leaders for our schools, and how schools are structured to prepare graduates for postsecondary education and/or careers of their choosing. As a system, we must prepare individuals to work in a knowledge economy and this transformation must couple innovation within the system of education and policy changes that support innovation (Institute for a Competitive Workforce, 2011).

Sahlberg (2011) purports for meaningful transformation to occur, we must focus on "improving the teaching force, limiting student testing to a necessary minimum, placing responsibility and trust before accountability, and handing over school-and district-level leadership to education professionals" (p. 5). Likewise, we must move away from market model of decision making relative to education. According to Stone (2002) in the market model, decisions are often based on self-interest and participants are often in competition. The focus must be on the student and what is best for the student from a personalized perspective.

The mission of schools has changed, from sorting and ranking students by degrees of academic successes, to educating everyone to a certain level of competency based on sets of standards. Learning environments today must not only accommodate differences in learning rates and allow for extra time for students to experience success, but also teachers must foster in students the belief that success is within their reach if they keep trying (Stiggins, 2005). This is now an economic and moral imperative, and due

to No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and state-level mandates, also a legal imperative. Moreover, new expectations for student learning are clashing with old conceptions of teaching and outmoded approaches and structures for teacher practices. An increasingly diverse range of student skills and needs can challenge teachers' abilities to complete their professional responsibilities (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Hawley & Valli, 1999; Stein, Smith, & Silver, 1999). In previous decades teachers were expected to prepare only a small minority for ambitious, intellectual work, whereas today they are expected to prepare virtually all students for higher order thinking and performance skills which were once reserved for a few (Tucker, 2011). To make the shift to the new mission, teaching practice has to change, and research is clear that the teacher is the number one variable in student learning (Metlife Inc., 2013; Rice, 2003; Sanders, 1998; Sanders & Rivers, 1996).

Good teaching is a reciprocal process: The teacher's content and pedagogical choices are determined by the instructional requirements of the students, and the teacher needs a vast knowledge base to be able to do that (Darling-Hammond, 2006). It takes more than desire to be a quality teacher today; it takes effective planning, instructional knowledge, teaching skills, and, most importantly, it extends to the teachers' dispositions and the ways beliefs and attitudes are displayed by their actions (Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007).

Historically, variables used in the process of admitting students to professional education programs have not been highly predictive of teacher performance (Heller & Clay, 1993). We must move beyond basic assumptions that have and continue to undergird our work. Gordon (2006) has identified six such assumptions.

1. Higher expectations and accountability testing are the keys to ensuring that students are learning what they need to be successful in life.
2. Focusing on and improving areas of weakness for students and teachers is the key to making them more successful.
3. Selecting and developing teachers and principals on the basis of their knowledge and skills is the more reliable way to promote student success.
4. There exists a perfect curriculum that can help solve student achievement problems in a way that work for all students and teachers.
5. Differences in workplace culture are largely irrelevant to schools because a teacher's working environment doesn't make much difference in the classroom.
6. Through greater involvement in America's schools is needed, schools can do little to improve parents' commitment to their children's education. (pp. 18-20)

The rejection of these assumptions necessitates changes in the identification of those admitted to the profession and changing the workplace environment. Gordon (2006) contends that the selection process should focus on identification of those who have the talent to positively impact student learning. Students must be motivated and excited about learning as knowledge aligned with specific careers is less useful than in the past. Teachers must engage students in the learning process and help them develop the talent they bring to the learning environment. Likewise, selecting teacher candidates with talent necessitates a change in how we prepared them for the profession. The overregulation of talented teachers often results in the individual becoming disillusioned and leaving the profession. Therefore, top-down decision-making is less productive in helping teachers develop ownership in day-to-day operation of a school. Distributed leadership has the potential to increase "on-the-job leadership development experiences...members' experience of work" (Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004, p. 28).

Integral to transforming the structure of schools and the learning environment for students is the opportunities for educators to engage in meaningful professional development. Most educators are

working at the limit of their practice based on their existing skill and knowledge base so they need professional development to improve their practice (City, Elmore, Fiarman, & Teitel, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2006; Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; The Holmes Group, 1995). However, professional development efforts often fail to change the teachers' levels of effectiveness (Burke, 2000; Guskey, 1986; Saxe, Gearheart, & Nasir, 2001; Stein, et al., 1999). Given the new mission of schools, finding strong models of professional development is imperative.

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APPENDIX II - Master Teacher Benchmarks

- Leadership Experience and Capabilities
- Coaching Experience and Ability
- Practices Adult Learning Theory
- Mastery in curriculum, pedagogy, and content
- Proven successful teaching
- Understanding of assessment procedures for P-12 students, pre-service students, and professional teachers
- High self-efficacy in curriculum and instruction
- A flexible and creative innovator
- Technical Ability
- Participates and serves the local, regional, state, national, international
- Fosters parental on-going communication and parental involvement
- Strong communication skills: aural, speaking, writing, presentation
- Strong interpersonal Skills
- Self-confident
- Calm, consistent, caring demeanor
- A lifelong earner
- Practices Ethical and Legal Responsibility

*Applicants for the positions would provide evidence of the above.

Professional Development to address the practicing teachers' transition to a clinical model would include:

- Introduction to The Vanguard Project – To understand the…
  - History and purpose
  - Research supporting project
  - Benefits to teaching profession
  - Roles and responsibilities
- Examine the Objectives of Pre-Service and Emergent Teacher Support
  - To coach co-teachers to facilitate the process of pre-service teachers learning the craft of teaching, including content, pedagogy, and curriculum
  - To facilitate pre-service and emergent teachers to learn and/or elevate their teaching practice and communicate their effectiveness as related to standards of teaching.
  - To develop co-teachers recognition the project as a professional development opportunity
  - To facilitate co-teachers in understanding standards and what determines evidence of the standards in real world practice
  - To promote co-teacher ownership in the development of pre-service and emergent teachers
- Assessment
  - To use data to drive instruction of P-12 students, pre-service students, and professional teachers
  - To facilitate assessment construction
- Development of instructional models appropriate for content and developmental levels
- Working effectively with pre-service and emergent teachers
  - To honor the adult learner
  - To communicate effectively

- To identify and overcoming communication barriers
- To encourage reflective thinking through questioning
- To develop presentation skills
- To recognize biases and respecting individual differences
- To instruct and refine thinking processes
- To learn to develop collegial and collaborative networking with teacher partners in their own buildings