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November 27, 2013

Ms. Mary Becker
Secretary for the State Board of Education
State of Maine
Department of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0023

Dear Ms. Becker:

Per your July 2, 2012 memo, I am pleased to submit an update report with supporting appendices on the actions taken to implement the various changes and initiatives that were outlined in the December 2012 Interim Report.

At the Maine State Board of Education May 2012 meeting, the University of Maine at Fort Kent's December 2012 Interim Report was accepted by the Board as a status report and as a plan of action. The University was encouraged to move forward and provide the update prior to the December 31, 2013. Thus, this report focuses on the implementation of the Team's recommendations concerning Standard 1, Initial Teacher Candidate Performance and Standard 3, Field Experiences and Clinical Practice.

Although this report marks the culmination of one year of work, it certainly does not signify that our implementation, planning and evaluation for UMFK's Teacher Education Program is complete. It is but a milestone - the planning, learning, creation and continuous quality improvement of our own future will continue.

I appreciate your thoughtful review and positive consideration of this report. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 207-834-7537 should you have any questions concerning this report.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Bruno Hicks
Chair & Professor of Education

cc: Anita Bernhardt, Coordinator for Standards and Instruction
Rachel E. Albert, VPAA
Wilson G. Hess, President



UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AT FORT KENT

Progress Report

Prepared for the

**State of Maine
Department of Education**

**By
Education Division
University of Maine at Fort Kent
Fort Kent, Maine**

November 27, 2013

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University of Maine Fort Kent
Education Division
Progress Report to the Department of Education

November 26, 2013

At the request of the Maine Board of Education, the University of Maine at Fort Kent's Education Division respectfully submits this Progress Report on the implementation of its Pre-Service Field-Based Teacher Education program and on its current status towards meeting the recommendations outlined in the Department of Education Review Team's report of March 21-24, 2010.

I. Program Overview

A. History

The University has been preparing future teachers for over 125 years. Founded in 1878, UMFK, formerly the Madawaska Training School, exclusively trained young men and women to be teachers. Our program prepares individuals to teach at the elementary (K-8) and secondary levels (7-12). UMFK offers students secondary certification in Mathematics. Our program offers a broad liberal arts background. Students complete general education requirements that allow them to develop competency, communication skills, and critical thinking. In addition, future teachers complete the professional education major.

B. Mission

The academic mission of the Division of Education is to prepare students as undergraduate teachers who are prepared to be reflective scholars, instructional leaders, and global citizens. Reflective scholars pursue knowledge with an open-minded and whole-hearted attitude. The process for becoming reflective is the basis of the entire program, because persons who teach from this perspective actively analyze their teaching practices and the educational, social, and political contexts in which their teaching is embedded. The teacher as instructional leader responds to the question "reflective about what and to what purpose?" Teacher as global citizen responds to the current social, economic and political realities. The growing global

interdependence must clearly be faced if prospective teachers are to be equipped with the necessary tools for teaching. One of the Division’s goals is to empower new teachers with the tools necessary to respond to the future demands of education. By preparing you to become a “reflective scholar, instructional leader, and global educator,” the Division prepares you to serve a key role in a profession that is progressive and improving. You will be qualified to educate tomorrow’s adults to reach their full individual potential and prepare them not only for a life of work, but for a life of worth.

II. Program Update

The Holistic Pre-service Experience Model (Figure 1.1) is now finishing its third semester of implementation.

Figure 1.1

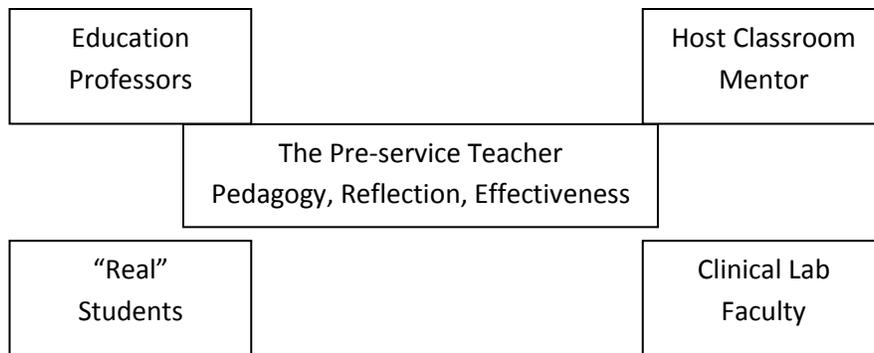


Figure 1.1 Holistic Pre-service Experience Model

Through a process of continuous quality improvement, based on data review and stakeholder feedback, the Holistic Pre-service Experience Model continues to evolve into a dynamic educational experience for our students. The new program was created to holistically address the concept of a school-based experience as a focal point of the educational experience for our students. The need for more field work and the call for a more organized process for field experience placements had been an issue raised in past alumni surveys, graduate surveys, and the 2010 Maine DOE review team.

Special attention to the University’s continuous quality improvement responses to that team’s Recommendations, especially as they pertain to Standard 1 and Standard 3, are the focus of this Progress Report. In addition, the report provides information about on-going assessment

under the Division's continuous quality improvement process that may be useful to the Board in its review.

The division's top priorities for this past year have revolved around the successful execution of the field-based program, strengthening of the portfolio assessment protocols, and the reinforcing of the divisional continual quality improvement processes. This Progress Report will address the three main areas described above, as well as lays out the divisional plan for the next year as we prepare for the Department of Education's program review in March, 2015.

As indicated in the Interim Report submitted in March 2012, the division built a course schedule for students which placed them in a weekly day long field experience for the three semesters prior to their student teaching experience. Before this schedule, students were assigned field-based time through their coursework faculty, but this proved to be a scattered approach which created inconsistencies in the number of hours each student was in the field.

The Education Advisory Team, made up of area principals and superintendents, supported the concept of a scheduled work day for our students and helped make the field-day a reality, both at the elementary and secondary level. At the beginning of each semester, for the past two years, our pre-service students have been assigned a host teacher in a public school, which has been arranged through our Director of Pre-Service Field Placement. The placement schedule for the student is based around a consistent day of the week, so that host teachers can count on and utilize the student volunteer more effectively in their class. To further advance the student effectiveness and usefulness in the classroom and to ensure each student has been fingerprinted, we also require all students entering the education major to seek and obtain an Ed Tech I license. As they progress in the program we encourage them to obtain the Ed Tech II certification to increase their legal abilities to work with students.

The UMFK field-based program is based on our pre-service teachers working with and receiving input from four different stakeholders who will influence their thinking and knowledge of educational pedagogy and classroom management as they prepare for student teaching. As described above, the students spend one day per week in a classroom with a host teacher and his/her students. To accompany this experience the division created 10 laboratory based courses for Elementary students and 8 laboratory based courses for Secondary students, to augment the regular core classes of the Elementary Education major/Secondary Education core.

The lab classes are taught by teachers or administrators who are currently working in the public schools and involve a more hands on curriculum introducing student to current practices in Maine's classrooms. This allows the students to reflect through a different lens than that of their education faculty or host teacher. In our recent survey of current student teachers, host teachers and lab faculty, 100% of respondents reported benefitting from the

three semesters of field placements and lab courses. (See Appendix A) The survey also indicated that 80% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that they saw a clear connection between the methods courses, the lab classes, and the school based practicum.

The 2012 Interim Report review team recommendations follow the format of the 2010 program review. The university's response follows that same format. After each recommendation, is a description of the work completed by the Education Division and the current efforts that are underway?

III. Narrative

A. Standard One: Initial Teacher Certification Performance

Recommendations:

1. The Unit needs to require students present a more complete body of evidence demonstrating proficiency of each Certification Standard.

Since the team's review of the UMFK Education programs in 2010, the Division has made two very substantial changes to the portfolio process.

- KPI-based artifacts -- students are required to present at least three artifacts per standard, with rationales attached to defend their meeting of a standard. The artifacts and rationales must be based in the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that were provided to students when they began collecting artifacts in the freshman and sophomore years. These KPI's are outlined in course syllabi and reinforced throughout the program course work. They have been shared with host teachers, lab teachers, and mentor teachers as part of an effort to get all stakeholders involved with students in the creation of their professional portfolio. The students may and many do present more than the three artifacts, but the rationales need to be presented with three works which clearly demonstrates proficiency with the standard. Appendix B provides an example of three different student rationales that were written by pre-service candidates in last spring's portfolio review for our current student teachers.
- Portfolio Assessment -- adjustments in the assessment process under which the portfolio is reviewed includes rubrics that define effective artifacts (see Appendix B for artifacts related to the portfolio process). Students are required to present their portfolio in a workshop environment to their peers and the Education faculty as a whole. Every faculty member reviews each portfolio and presentation, then meet collectively to evaluate whether the student has demonstrated proficiency to begin student teaching. The portfolio continues to be evaluated by the mentor teachers and supervisors while the student is student teaching and they ultimately are the last ones

to report an assessment to the director of student teaching. This has raised the rigor of this process and has served as a filter in student teaching applications.

2. The Unit needs to establish and articulate consistent expectations between sections of classes. This is particularly important for the field experiences and practica program coursework.

Currently all courses in the education major and the secondary educational core, carry common expectations for the following five components:

- Two hours of practicum experience – for a three hour class
- Student outcomes based on the ten standards for pre-service teachers, with associated Key Performance Indicators (KPI)
- Assignments that are related to KPI's and an indication of their appropriateness as portfolio artifacts
- Reference to the Maine learning Results and the Common Core of Learning Standards
- A statement on the relationship of the core class to the associated lab class

Appendix C provides a sample syllabus from this fall semester's class, Edu 454 Reading and Writing Across the Secondary Curriculum.

B. Standard Three: Field Experience and Clinical Practice

Recommendations:

- 1. Build upon established school and community partnerships to increase opportunities for students to have real time in classrooms, and have designated faculty direct and monitor these required field experiences. Students should be engaged early and often in classroom settings.**

The academic programs created from the Holistic Pre-service Experience Model have been successful in bringing a more systematic approach to our field experiences. It has provided students with a more dependable schedule, which in turn has allowed students to have more productive time with the host teacher and the students in the class.

Flexibility is one of the features of the lab component. The time spent in the public school on the work day is determined by the number of lab classes a student is enrolled in. A student in only one lab class would spend 2 hours per week in a school and a student with 2 classes would spend 4 hours a week in a school setting. When a student enrolls in their third education class of the semester they spend a complete work-day in the school. This policy allows part-time and non-traditional students some flexibility when they are only taking a few classes.

Figure 1.2 outlines the amount of time each student spends with the core components of the education major. This summarization will be helpful as the Progress Report reviews each

recommendation from the Team Report in 2010 and comments on our work since the Interim Report in 2012. The current students in the education program who will begin student teaching this spring have taken all three semesters of the new curriculum. Each student has logged or will log by the end of this semester, the following experiences which will be documented in their professional portfolio and in their application for student teaching.

Figure 1.2

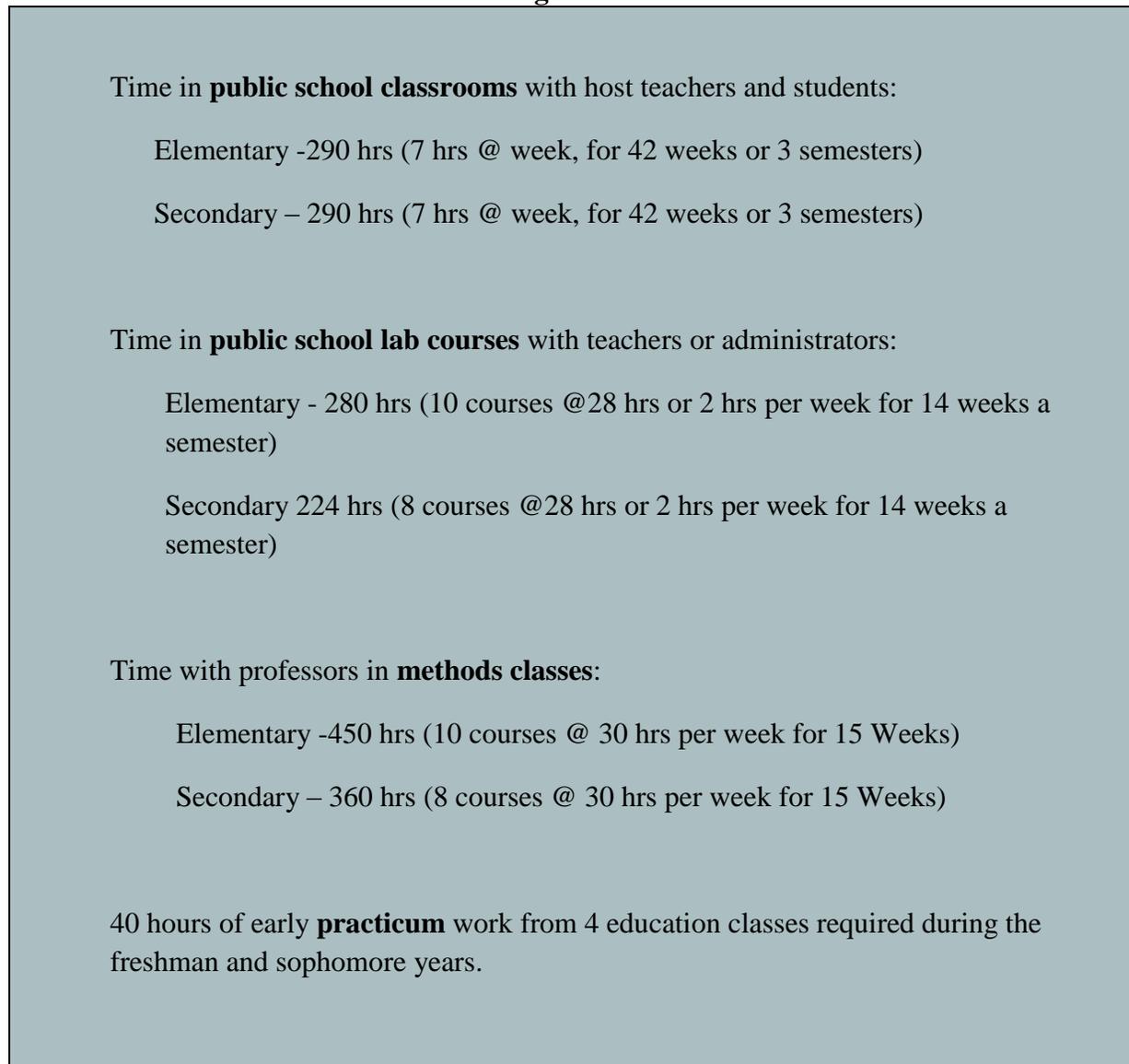


Figure 1.2 Student Time per Core Program Component

2. For each field experience, as well as student teaching experiences, set clear goals and expectations for students, supervisors, and school faculty.

The education division has developed a set of clear goals and expectations for students, host teachers, lab faculty, and education professors. As seen under Standard one, recommendation two, all core classes carry a common expectation that they require two hours of clinical practicum experience per week, and that the syllabus will clearly define the relationship between the core class and the lab class. Along with the faculty protocols, the division has created the following documents which can be reviewed in Appendix D:

- Guidelines and Expectations for Field Experience Host/Mentor Teachers
- General Rules and Responsibilities for Lab Experiences
- Serving as our Clinical Lab Faculty at UMFK.

These documents were created and shared through stakeholder meetings and have incorporated host teacher, student, and faculty feedback.

3. Develop a clearly articulated system to coordinate field placements for practicum experiences to meet the needs of traditional pathway and non-traditional pathway students, as well as the needs of the incoming students of the newly initiated STARS program, which begins in the fall of 2010. The practicum handbook should clearly address all pathways to student teaching.

The Holistic Model of Pre-service Experience has effectively created a coordinated approach to early practicum placement. Because the requirements of the early practicum experiences are an integral part of the elementary education major and the secondary educational core they are required for all students, whether they are in a traditional four year program or they are attending the program as a certification student. The early experiences are now a required component of the student teaching application, which can be reviewed in Appendix E, and have been incorporated with the other gateways into student teaching. The current practicum handbook, which can be seen Appendix F, is suitable for both traditional and non-traditional candidates.

Ultimately the current student numbers in the Education Division programs did not warrant the funding of the new full time position of Director of Pre-Service Education and Placement, as described in our Interim Report in March 2012. However, value of implementing the new program requirements did result in administrative support to fund for release time for two faculty members to split the work of the proposed position as part of their regular duties. The position has been divided into two components: pre-student teaching placement and student teaching placement. Former chair, Professor Roland Caron, is now serving as the Director of Student Teaching and Associate Professor Doris Metz is now serving as the Director of Pre-Service Field Placement. She also oversees the lab

experience courses, early practicum, and portfolio assessment. As long as our incoming classes stay at 15 students (Elementary and Secondary combined) or below it will serve the divisional needs. This sharing of duties has been effective for the division and has brought about a systematic coordinated experience for students.

With two faculty members responsible for the oversight of the field programs, their work has been shared frequently with other divisional members to coordinate their areas of specialization. This sharing has been very effective for the faculty working in educating stakeholders about the programs.

As indicated in Standard three, Recommendation one, the program has made further adjustments for non-traditional students by modifying the hours of field time per semester based on the number of courses in which they are enrolled.

4. Develop purposeful, frequent and open communication avenues between the Director of Student Teaching, Education faculty, cooperating school personnel, university supervisors and student interns to support the professional development and collaboration among all constituents. For example, institute a formal student teacher orientation to address key points of the student teaching process.

Each semester the division is in contact with all stakeholders involved in student teaching. The mentors and supervisors that are working at a distance are invited to join our meeting by Skype or telephone conference. Each semester candidates are introduced to student teaching protocols, expectations, and assessments processes as part of the formal student teaching orientation. We are currently reviewing and revising student teaching evaluations and portfolio protocols and will be meeting in December with mentor teachers to share our work and to create a more cohesive launching of our revised materials. The division included a wide variety of stakeholders in the process that established and implemented the lab classes and field experiences and will continue that process with our future efforts.

One important vehicle for accomplishing this collaboration is our bi-annual working dinner with student teachers, host teachers, lab instructors, mentor teachers, and education faculty. This gathering serves multiple purposes. As well as a deserved thank you for the individuals that make this program work it also provides an avenue to talk about divisional issues, collected feedback on programs, and to review new documents and protocols. During our recent meeting in November 2013, the group reviewed a document designed to assess student disposition as part of UMFK's education programs. Other topics have included writing rationales for portfolio standards, common syllabi issues, common expectations for courses, and unity of purpose in our efforts in generating effective teachers.

The follow-up surveys taken at these dinners over the past two semesters (see Appendix G) have indicated a perceptual improvement in the cohesiveness of the Holistic Pre-service Experience and have created a refinement of lab classes as the division became aware of student perceptions that some lab classes seemed repetitive in their content and experiences.

5. Curriculum should reflect current pedagogy and the diverse methods (mechanics) of teaching specific content. In particular, in elementary education, students should be exposed to current methodology in teaching reading and math skills; in secondary education, students should be exposed to teaching science skills. Additionally, all students develop classroom management skills.

This recommendation concerns the curricular offerings which are the focal point of the Education division's purpose. The introduction of lab classes taught by approved adjuncts, coming from a pool of teachers and/or administrators currently working in public schools, along with the 290 hours of practicum time in schools has had an excellent impact on our student's readiness to teach in the public schools. As can be seen by the sample lab syllabus for the Edu 451L Teaching of Reading Lab, our students are exposed to current methods in the public schools. The Holistic Pre-service Experience was designed to ensure that our students had direct instructional experience with current methodologies being used in our schools. This approach has taken our students far beyond what they might have gleaned from the practicum experience alone, as it includes the lab faculty and the core professor. This experience includes lab experiences in the teaching of reading, writing, science and math, as well as 290 hours of practicum where student see this methods in action. Appendix H includes a sample syllabus and materials from these lab classes.

In an effort to keep our faculty up to date on the importance of the newly adopted Common Core standards for English/Language Arts, the division hosted a workshop on October 29th, with Leeann Larson from the Maine Department of Education, on the Common Core standards and how they differ from the past learning results. This was particularly focused on their impact to the pedagogy of teaching of reading and writing in elementary classrooms. Leeanne also reviewed our present syllabi and program offerings as part of the continuous quality improvement our current program. Her workshop was a valuable experience for the division faculty.

The division requires all students (elementary and secondary) to complete Edu 339, "Classroom Management" as part of the required coursework in the spring semester of their sophomore year. This ensures that all students will have this class before they begin the field-based experience program in their junior year. The new curriculum also includes advanced classroom management components in Edu 406, "Educational Psychology" along with an attached lab -- Edu 406L, "Classroom Management Lab", which is taught by an area elementary school principal who is an adjunct instructor. These core classes, along with the

increased field components, provide our students with multiple opportunities to learn and practice classroom management skills. The group of students applying for student teaching this spring semester will be the first group to have fully participated in this multi-pronged approach.

6. Address the discrepancies between the required number of pre-practicum hours, especially in methods courses, and those reported by students. Review syllabi and make students accountable for pre-practicum experiences.

Practicum experiences are routinely reviewed in the required core and lab classes, along with discussions with host teachers. The hours students complete are logged and reported as part of their professional portfolio process and they are required to document the practicum hours for their student teaching placement.

The accountability measures are in place for the Fall semester 2013 portfolio evaluation and have been incorporated in the portfolio checklist. This protocol holds all students accountable for the practicum hours that they are required to take prior to student teaching placement. Common expectations for field placements and host teacher obligations have been shared through pre-semester meetings and reviewed at the annual working dinner.

The current curriculum systemically assigns pre-student teaching field experiences through the Director of Pre-Service Field Placement. The hours are set in conjunction with the number of courses students are enrolled in. A student has 2 hours of practicum work for each education course. If students have 3 classes in a semester they are responsible for a full day in the schools. The arrangement for the practicum with the school and the host teacher is arranged through the director. This process has been in place for 3 semesters and has eliminated the above inconsistencies.

7. Either the teacher advisory board, or a new version of a collaborative team, should meet at least once per semester as a working team and once a year for an informal social gathering. The charge of the team should be to inform constituents of not only best practices and current trends in education, but also the realities of working in the school culture in the 21st century.

The division has adopted a two prong approach to this recommendation.

- An advisory board of principals and superintendents meets once each semester.
- Host teachers, student teachers, clinical faculty and division members meet once a semester.

In each case, definitions, documents, assessment protocols and divisional expectations are vetted in a multi-stakeholder venue. The Holistic Pre-service Experience and its stakeholders

are committed to the preparation of educators who embrace the realities of 21st century schools.

IV. Continual Quality Improvement and Assessment Processes

The Education Division's continuous quality improvement process includes a variety of measures which are shared with its stakeholders as part of our successful growth. These measures include:

- Variety of survey data from stakeholders
- Survey data from Alumni – based on program effectiveness
- Survey data from teacher candidates -based on program effectiveness
- Course evaluations– both core classes and lab classes
- Portfolio review of students

The data collected and reviewed has been beneficial in many ways. Our survey results from 2012 and 2013, conducted at the bi-annual dinner, clearly showed the benefit of working with stakeholders groups. The survey indicated 80% of the respondents “strongly agree” or “agree” that they see a clear connection among the components of the program. However, because this relationship is key to the program, the faculty have set a future goal of bringing that number to 100% by 2014. Please see Appendix I for the material covered in the workshop and Appendix A for the survey results from 2012 and 2013.

The continuous quality improvement process, through student survey data, prompted a systematic review our conceptual framework to focus our future curricular efforts, based on our newly created programs. The education faculty have met twice this semester to review and augment the current conceptual framework. A meeting with students is planned for this December and the framework will be shared widely through our stakeholder groups who will help transform it into a working document, before the division adopts it this spring.

As part of the assessment process we found from our Alumni Survey, that they would value more time in the field as part of the program. This prompted the division to review the required hours of practicum time that is required in our four early classes that students take in their freshman and sophomore year. Currently we require 10 hours of practicum which are based in the course syllabus activities. We are currently considering a requirement that students spend 25 hours, instead of the 10 hours, volunteering their time at a school, head start or other environment where they can work with children. The concept is based on the premise that they could log this time at home, as well as in the schools surrounding Fort Kent. The discussions of the division concerning this topic have been based around the idea that students need more directed experience in real classrooms before they reach the education major in their junior year. The guidelines, protocols, mission statement and

purpose of this effort are currently being built and will be in place before students begin field experiences, in the fall of 2014.

As we have learned from our conversations with stakeholders a common set of expectations helps in creating an environment where these course components work together. The survey of students in lab classes from spring 2013 on the effectiveness of the lab/field components indicated that more work is needed to be done to help the stakeholders see and feel the connections between the different aspects of the program.

V. Future Initiatives

- Inviting the state expert on the Math Common Core to visit the campus in the spring 2014
- Reviewing course syllabi to make sure they are appropriately aligned with the common core standards and the learning results, as well as offering students related assignments and experiences for their professional portfolios.
- Reviewing all student teaching materials, including assessment protocols, to ensure they align with current standards and expectations.
- Rewriting of the conceptual framework.
- Preparation for the self-study for March 2015.

VI. Appendices

- A. Survey Data
- B. Student Artifacts and Rationales
- C. Fall 2013 Edu 454 Reading and Writing Across the Secondary Curriculum course syllabus
- D. Faculty Protocols, Guidelines and Expectations for Field Experience Host/Mentor Teachers, General Rules and Responsibilities for Lab Experiences and Serving as Clinical Lab Faculty at UMFK
- E. Student Teaching Application
- F. Student Teaching Practicum Handbook
- G. Follow-up surveys
- H. Sample syllabus and lab course materials
- I. Workshop Materials
- J. Other Supporting Documents

Note: For appendices please see attached PDF file: UMFK Appendices and support documents 11-26-13