

The IM:PACT Project (Inclusion Matters: Partnering for Authentic Change in Teaching)

Priority for Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results

for Children with Disabilities (CFDA 84.325)

Special Education Preservice Program Improvement Grants (CFDA 84.325T)

The IM:PACT Project is a major redesign effort that will transform the existing teaching preparation program at the State University of New York College at Cortland. The IM:PACT Project will deepen collaboration with public school partners, build on creative models at our institution and result in an increase in the number of our graduates who meet the highly qualified teacher (HQT) requirements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004), so that they will effectively serve students with high-incidence disabilities who are increasingly placed in inclusive classrooms.

We would like to express our gratitude to Dr. Kathleen Magiera, Dr. Rhea Simmons and Dr. Christine Givner from the University of the State University of New York at Fredonia, directors of the funded grant Project RAISE-UP (Redesigning and Improving Special Education - Undergraduate Program) for generously offering us their time and insight in order to help us develop this proposal.

NEED FOR PROJECT

Twenty-first century teachers and teacher educators face considerable challenges and pressures from an unprecedented national emphasis on teacher quality and effectiveness. The success or failure of nearly every facet of school improvement—effective curriculum, authentic assessment, successful inclusive placements, and equitable learning outcomes—depends on highly competent, dedicated teachers, and the programs that prepare them for service (Boe, Shin, and Cook, 2007; Brownell, Sindelar, Keily, & Danielson, 2010; Cochran-Smith, 2008; Darling-

Hammond, 2009; Spooner, Algozzine, Wood, & Hicks, 2010). In a troubled economic climate that affects the training of quality teachers and the support of quality schools, we are charged with—and committed to—fulfilling the vision of a world-class education for every child in America. “A world-class education is also a moral imperative – the key to securing a more equal, fair, and just society” (Obama, 2010, in U.S. Department of Education, p. 1).

Twenty-first century students face considerable challenges and pressures as well. Many children enter school with a lack of educational resources at home, and/or speak a language other than English. More and more students are required by inclusive placements to meet the rigorous standards of the general education academic curriculum, despite being labeled with various high-incidence disabilities, including learning disabilities, emotional/behavior disabilities, and mental retardation. General education teachers may not see themselves as knowledgeable in the strategies that support curriculum differentiation; and their special education teachers may find that they lack sufficient knowledge in core subject content (Brownell, Bishop & Gersten, 2009; Brownell, Sindelar, Keily & Danielson, 2010; Darling-Hammond, 2009; King-Sears, 2005; Washburn-Moses, 2008; Young, 2008).

There are significant gaps identified and supported by scientific research, including a gap between theory and practice, a gap between the demands on today’s teachers and their preparation and performance, and divergence in academic outcomes for students, with particular concern for students in high-needs schools.

The intention of the proposed project is to identify and contribute to resolving specific gaps and weaknesses in the infrastructure, services and opportunities associated with the State University of New York (SUNY) College at Cortland’s preservice teacher preparation programs to effectively prepare educators to teach students with high-incidence disabilities.

SUNY Cortland was founded in 1868 as a normal school and throughout the past century, has grown to offer 54 teacher preparation programs. Cortland graduates more teachers in New York State than any other public higher education institution and ranks tenth in the United States in the number of educators it prepares (National Center for Education Statistics, 2009). Cortland is located at the geographic center of New York State and is situated in the northernmost county of rural Appalachia. According to the US Census Bureau, 13.3 million residents of Appalachia are currently living in poverty, a number that continues to grow annually (US Census Bureau, 2008). According to New York State's School and District Report Card data (2008- 2009), over 25 regional public schools and/or school districts within a 50-mile radius from SUNY Cortland have been identified as "high-needs" districts, indicating that a large population of school-aged children come from low-income families. All of the high-needs schools in Cortland County currently serve as instrumental and influential learning environments for SUNY Cortland's teacher candidates as they complete their clinical field experiences ranging from initial observations to full-time student teaching in the districts' classrooms.

Currently, there are two programs at SUNY Cortland that offer teacher certification grades one through six: Childhood Education, which graduates approximately 250 candidates annually, and Inclusive Special Education, which graduates approximately 25. Both of these are single certification programs. Childhood Education majors are preparing to be classroom teachers in elementary schools, and Inclusive Special Education majors are preparing for special educator or inclusion specialist roles.

Although SUNY Cortland prepares many teacher candidates, there is an underlying infrastructure that limits their opportunity to become highly qualified to teach students with high-incidence disabilities. Blanton and Pugach (2007) offer a typology of teacher preparation models

that include both general education and special education components. Currently our program is what Blanton and Pugach would call a “discrete” model. There are two distinct tracks, housed in two departments, one for general educators and the other for special educators. While some collaboration across the two departments occurs, it only does so informally. Currently, Childhood Education majors are required to take only one introductory course related to the needs of students with disabilities. There is no identified pathway in SUNY Cortland’s curricular framework for teacher candidates to acquire additional knowledge, skills and dispositions related to teaching students with high-incidence disabilities. Research suggests that this one-course approach for general educators to learn about special education provides only cursory knowledge about teaching students with disabilities (Blanton & Pugach, 2007, McKenzie, 2009). In New York State, a teacher candidate who meets the criteria for dual certification in general and special education is considered highly qualified to teach both populations, yet SUNY Cortland’s existing infrastructure, course sequence and options for the Childhood Education teacher candidates offers no dual certification path. This creates a circumstance that research suggests is additionally problematic because 95% of general education teachers are required to teach students with disabilities or have done so in the past, with “an average case load of 3.5 students with disabilities” being assigned to learn in their classrooms each year (Pugach, 2005, p. 549; SPeNSE, 2000). This number is growing. “According to the 26th Annual Report to Congress on IDEA, roughly 96% of general education teachers had students with learning disabilities in their classrooms.” (Rock et al., 2008, p. 32).

The federally mandated No Child Left Behind legislation (NCLB, 2001) and the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004) have increased the emphasis on placing students with disabilities in the least restrictive

environment. NCLB and IDEA have also required annual public reporting of standardized exam scores to document content knowledge gains and gaps for students with and without disabilities. Since general educators are increasingly identified as classroom teachers for students with disabilities, they have become more accountable for the academic achievement of these students (Smith, Robb, West & Tyler, 2010). In light of the aforementioned statistics and recent legislative mandates, SUNY Cortland has an urgent need to improve the preparation of its general education teacher candidates for teaching students with disabilities.

Simultaneous to a need to enhance the general education teacher preparation curriculum, there is also a need to improve the preparation of SUNY Cortland's special education teacher candidates. Currently, SUNY Cortland's curricular framework for preparing special educators includes courses specific to understanding much about the multifaceted nature of teaching students with disabilities, but lacks content-specific pedagogy courses. This is problematic because The National Commission on Teaching and Learning (2000) suggests that teachers' knowledge and abilities are among the most influential factors in determining their students' outcomes and The Higher Education Opportunity Act has asserted that for special educators to be deemed highly qualified teachers (HQT), they must successfully complete coursework and training that deepens their content knowledge and instructional skills associated with each subject area, along with conceptual and pedagogical understandings of the connections between subjects (Holm & Horn, 2003; Smith, et al., 2010). While some teacher preparation programs address this concern by requiring teacher candidates in special education to have a major or a minor in a content area (Smith, et al., 2010), SUNY Cortland's current Inclusive Special Education program does not have such content requirements or options. Therefore, it is increasingly evident that to prepare highly qualified special educators, SUNY Cortland's special

education teacher certification program will benefit from curricular redesign to provide additional options for teacher candidates to strengthen their content-specific knowledge and skills and receive certification in general education.

Another area of concern with the preparation of general educators and special educators at SUNY Cortland is the lack of curricular focus on instructional collaboration. Prior research on special educators' roles suggests that they need to collaborate effectively and extensively with general educators when teaching students with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms (McKenzie, 2009). However, while nearly 95% of institutions of higher education (IHEs) include a course on collaboration for special education teacher candidates, research suggests little to no collaboration is required of teacher candidates during field practicum or student teaching experiences (McKenzie, 2009). SUNY Cortland's special education teacher preparation program is similar to the IHEs represented in these findings. Candidates have little opportunity to develop skills in collaborative instruction in the field. Therefore, it is evident that a programmatic change is necessary for teacher candidates to have the opportunity to learn, experience and practice authentic, meaningful collaborative skills in field contexts.

It is also essential that such curricular changes not stand alone. McKenzie (2009) argues that IHEs need to create a collaborative culture between general education and special education teacher preparation programs to well prepare future teachers for effective collaboration. As such, SUNY Cortland's discrete special and general education preparation programs have a need to increase meaningful collaboration among their faculty members to better prepare the teacher candidates that are served (Kluth & Straut, 2003; McKenzie, 2009).

Given SUNY Cortland's prominence in teacher preparation and the urgent call to improve the preparation of special educators, we believe that it is imperative that SUNY

Cortland assume a lead role in enhancing and redesigning curricular pathways to increase the number and caliber of highly qualified teachers for students with disabilities. This grant opportunity will serve as an impetus for SUNY Cortland to initiate a campus-wide systems-change effort to improve its courses, curriculum, field experiences and school partnerships, and better prepare all of its teacher candidates to become highly knowledgeable and competent teachers for students with disabilities.

QUALITY OF PROJECT SERVICES

IM:PACT Project personnel are enthusiastic about the opportunity to work closely with staff at the Department of Education on this cooperative agreement, because the Secretary's priorities are congruent with our own. The project is designed to address the priority of improving personnel preparation of highly qualified special education teachers in high-needs school districts. The IM:PACT Project will focus on students and schools where the need is greatest, create options that allow teacher candidates to earn dual certification, and educate both current and future teachers to work effectively in teams and apply evidence-based approaches. Furthermore, the IM:PACT Project Co-PIs are committed to collaborating with the **National Center to Improve Policy and Practice in Special Education Professional Development** (NCIPP) throughout the grant's duration. The NCIPP is the virtual clearinghouse for 325T webinars and will be a vital resource for the IM:PACT Project staff to access materials and engage in online discussions and forums with other 325T grant recipients. The NCIPP will serve as an essential resource for the IM:PACT Project's staff to plan and monitor its activities associated with NCIPP's five domains: (1) improvement on licensure (certification) standards, (2) improvement on organizational structure and instructional delivery, (3) improvement on curriculum and course content, (4) improvement on student support, and (5) program evaluation.

In alignment with the Secretary's goals for project services, the IM:PACT Project will provide equal access to special education teacher candidates from groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability. In addition, all project activities will reflect up-to-date research and effective practice.

The following four project objectives will ensure that we graduate teacher candidates who have the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions to employ evidence-based practice to successfully meet the needs of all students, especially those with high-incidence disabilities:

- (1) increase the pool of highly qualified teachers of students with high-incidence disabilities by developing dual certification options for teacher candidates;
- (2) improve the link between theory and practice through working collaboratively with three regional partner school districts (Syracuse City School District, Cortland Enlarged City School District, and Groton Central School District);
- (3) redesign our teacher preparation curriculum to include content related to teaching students with disabilities, reaching over 1,000 students by grant's end; and
- (4) broaden the impact of our project through widespread dissemination of our findings.

The IM:PACT Project will achieve these objectives through extensive collaboration on many levels. We will facilitate far-reaching connections among university departments, between SUNY Cortland and public schools, among general educators and special educators, among practicing teachers and teacher candidates, among teacher candidates in different disciplines, and among students in public schools. In every case, our collaboration will increase the inclusivity of our schools to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Objective One: Pathways to Dual Certification

The first objective of the IM:PACT Project has two parts: (1) creating a pathway for dual certification in *Teaching Students with Disabilities* to Childhood Education teacher candidates, which will increase the number of highly qualified teachers in the field for students with high-incidence disabilities; and (2) creating a pathway for dual certification in *Childhood Education to Inclusive Special Education* teacher candidates, which will improve the quality of their collaboration with general education colleagues in inclusive education classrooms. These additional opportunities for our students build on the strong programs we have in place in order to allow teacher candidates to become highly qualified to teach both general education and special education students in high-needs schools.

Currently, a SUNY Cortland graduate with initial certification in Childhood Education needs to take four additional 3-credit college courses to earn a second certification in Teaching Students with Disabilities (i.e., special education). In year one (See Management Plan), project staff will work with the New York State Office of Teaching Initiatives to ensure that the curricular changes that are instituted through the IM:PACT Project (see Objective Three) will embed targeted content into a revised course sequence in a strategic manner, so that fewer additional courses will be necessary to earn an additional certification. We will then design courses that will fill the remaining gap in order to allow teacher candidates to earn a second certification. The content of both revised and new courses will align with certification requirements for New York State, include a strong focus on the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), and build key skills, such as writing and implementing individual education plan (IEP) goals.

Course revision and development will involve input from multiple stakeholders at semiannual meetings that we will call “Inclusion Matters Summits.” New or revised courses will be piloted with a co-teaching model. This process is described in more detail under Objective Three below. In general, we plan to use summer sessions to offer the courses necessary for dual certification. This is the most feasible way to introduce such courses at SUNY Cortland, where summer enrollment is strong, and permanent faculty members are available and interested in teaching.

Using a similar process, project staff, in coordination with the New York State Office of Teaching Initiatives, will also develop a program sequence that offers a dual certification to our Inclusive Special Education majors. As content specific methods courses for the Childhood Education majors are redesigned to be inclusive in nature, we will develop a sequence of these inclusive methods courses in literacy, math, social studies and science appropriate for Inclusive Special Education majors who wish to earn a second certification in Childhood Education. As with additional courses necessary for Childhood Education majors who seek special education certification, sections of these content area methods courses will be offered in the summer to maximize existing faculty resources, thereby increasing the feasibility and sustainability of the changes.

Dually certified teachers are highly qualified to teach both general education students and students with high-incidence disabilities are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to assist children in meeting State academic achievement standards. They are equipped with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to assist children in meeting New York State learning standards.

Objective Two: Field Partnerships and Participation

The IM:PACT Project's second objective involves building on existing Professional Development School (PDS) models at SUNY Cortland in order to ensure that any changes we make to our teacher preparation programs are designed to meet the needs of local K-12 schools. Co-PIs Rombach and Smukler were chosen for the project because of their work on a PDS initiative called the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative (UTLI) that focuses on cross-departmental collaboration for the purpose of preparing teachers to work in inclusive classrooms. The UTLI is designed to promote collaboration at multiple levels, and has piloted an innovative student teaching model in which teacher candidates are placed as *pairs* (one Childhood Education major and one Inclusive Special Education major) with inclusive education teams in public schools for student teaching experiences that are designed to promote collaborative skills. The IM:PACT Project will allow this model to expand further.

One consistent finding from the UTLI was that student teachers viewed their partnerships with a peer as a source of support that made the student teaching experience feel much less threatening. Student teachers were mentored by one another, and by *both* cooperating teachers on the host team. The special education host teacher mentored the general education student and vice versa. This support system led to consistently successful student teaching experiences.

The IM:PACT Project includes deep partnerships with three school districts: Syracuse City School District, a large urban district; Cortland Enlarged City School District, a mid-sized district, and Groton Central School District, a small, rural district. All three have schools that are classified as high-needs, and there is a great diversity of needs within and among these three districts. The Syracuse City School District, in particular, deals daily with the problems associated with poverty and low-performing schools. Our partners will be involved in every

stage of the project. Such involvement ensures that theory and practice are closely tied. It also promotes growth and leadership in practicing teachers, thereby improving mentorship of our teacher candidates.

In order to build mentors for our teacher candidates, the IM:PACT Project will involve teachers from our three partner districts in a series of ongoing roundtable discussions on topics that they identify as important, related to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms (e.g., differentiated instruction, Response to Intervention, working with families, responding to complex behavior, etc.). Teachers from other nearby school districts, parents of students with disabilities, and other interested community members will also be welcomed at these events, which will be structured as opportunities to learn from one another, rather than as traditional professional development workshops. This is a model that co-PIs Rombach and Smukler have employed successfully for the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative (UTLI).

A major component of Objective Two is the redesign of practicum and student teaching experiences. As with professional development, the UTLI model will be applied during this redesign. Teacher candidates who are seeking special education certification will be paired with others who are not, and their public school experiences will be constructed in ways that require co-planning for the benefit of all students in the classroom. Inclusion Matters Summits in years four and five will focus on this aspect of redesign, and involve training of SUNY Cortland faculty in the application of the *Teacher Work Sample* as a methodology that is compatible with inclusive education models, and offers a means to collect, manage, and analyze data to improve teaching and learning for the purpose of increasing student academic achievement (Denner,

Salzman & Harris, 2002). Kathleen Beney, Director of the Field Placement Office, will work closely with the PI, the co-PIs and department placement personnel to fulfill this objective.

Objective Three: Curricular Enhancement

The IM:PACT Project's third objective is to infuse content related to the teaching of students with disabilities into the SUNY Cortland Childhood Education teacher preparation program. Achieving this objective will result in the creation of what Blanton and Pugach (2007) call an "integrated" model. This will require a carefully coordinated plan to overlap course curricula and field experiences between the Childhood Education and Inclusive Special Education programs. Inter-departmental collaboration is vital to such a transformation. Faculty collaboration will be formalized between the two programs to build a common vision and sequence of coursework. IM:PACT Project staff will work closely with New York State certification officers to ensure that the newly developed integrated program creates efficiencies that enable teacher candidates in either program to earn a second certification without undue burden. Whether or not Childhood Education majors opt for a second certification (see Objective One), they will be far better prepared to meet the needs of students with high-incidence disabilities whom they are likely to have as future students, since content related to the needs of students with disabilities will be infused throughout their program. Similarly, Inclusive Special Education majors will have a stronger understanding of general education curriculum and the skills necessary to teach students with disabilities so that they meet standards in every content area.

Blanton and Pugach (2007) write, "Adding a course, or even several courses, to a teacher education curriculum does little to address the larger teacher education reform imperative identified by a wide range of national studies and reports" (p. 12). Consistent with this insight,

the IM:PACT Project will engage in activities that we expect to result in a much deeper and more authentic revision of the curriculum. We plan to host two Inclusion Matters Summits per year to bring stakeholders together to develop a shared vision of how the two elementary programs can most effectively be integrated. A particular emphasis of the summits will be to infuse content that addresses the teaching of students with disabilities into existing coursework and begin a process of revising syllabi.

The process of course redesign will include work done at our semiannual Summits, and will be deepened through a process of college level co-teaching. Grant funds will be used to allow two instructors to co-design and co-teach each pilot course. One of the instructors will always be a faculty member from the department that houses the targeted course. The other might be drawn from another department, or might be one of our public school partners. Co-teaching is a promising, evidence-based practice increasingly used at the K-12 level for including a wide range of students in inclusive classrooms (Santamaria & Thousand, 2004; Friend, 2008). Co-teaching at the college level offers opportunities to model what we are teaching (Kluth & Straut, 2003; Briggs, 2007), and to reflect on intersections between general education and special education curriculum in an authentic way that will reinforce and further develop the work of redesign that begins during the Summits (Hudson-Ross & Graham, 2000). The two Co-PIs (Rombach and Smukler) have co-taught several professional development workshops, and Dr. Smukler has been piloting the use of a co-teaching process to develop new coursework with other faculty members. They find that the changes co-teaching offers are more meaningful and sustainable than other redesign alternatives.

Curricular revisions will employ a variety of external resources, including web-based training modules from the Research for Inclusive Settings (IRIS) Center at Vanderbilt

University. The “portability” of these high quality modules makes them useful for infusion into an existing course structure. Our colleagues at the Center on Human Policy, Law and Disability Studies at nearby Syracuse University also offer a variety of excellent materials related to inclusive education that we will employ. (See “Quality of Resources” section for a description of internal resources.)

Redesign of the Childhood Education coursework will commence in Year One and build on existing departmental strengths, as well as on areas of overlap between the Childhood Education and Inclusive Special Education programs. For example, the Inclusive Special Education program is housed in the Department of Foundations and Social Advocacy at SUNY Cortland, and faculty from this department make strong connections between issues of disability and those of social class, race, gender, etc., and frequently emphasize the unique needs of urban students or English language learners. The Inclusive Special Education program also includes a course and a practicum (FSA 280/281) that focus on the needs of families of students with disabilities. Our curricular redesign process will build on these foundations, as well as making strong use of areas of overlap between the programs whenever possible (see program outlines and syllabi in Appendix 6). For example, the focus for revised methods courses (EDU 373, EDU 374, EDU 378, EDU 379, EDU 479 and EDU 480) will be to incorporate differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2004) and universal design for learning (UDL), a scientifically validated approach that addresses the increasingly diverse student needs that teachers confront, including needs related to disability, poverty, or English language barriers (Rose & Meyer, 2002; Edyburn, 2010). UDL is effective because it provides multiple and varied means for students to acquire information, express what they learn, and become engaged in the learning process. The strengths and needs of all students are considered from the outset of a planning process, rather than

adapting (“retro-fitting”) instruction designed more narrowly. Much as environments are made accessible by architectural improvements, UDL makes instruction accessible to all students. As well as threading content related to UDL through content area methods courses, the IM:PACT Project will support faculty to model universal design in their own instruction, and require teacher candidates to apply UDL principles in their field placement work.

Other evidence-based best practices will be infused into existing coursework through our redesign process. For example, the use of positive behavior supports (Cheney et al., 2010) and social skills support (Tashie et al., 2006) appropriate for students with high-incidence disabilities will be incorporated into a course titled The Social and Academic Curriculum (EDU 378) as well as a focus on the needs of families of students with disabilities. The classroom technology component of existing coursework will be revised to include appropriate assistive technologies for students with high-incidence disabilities, such as using software that supports reading comprehension in universally designed lessons. As courses are revised, project staff and departmental faculty will evaluate them to assure that they are meeting Objective Three and integrating essential content and skills so that both academic programs meet the program standards of their respective disciplines. At the end of each project year all revised syllabi will be sent to the Department of Education.

Objective Four: Dissemination of Project Findings

Our fourth objective is to disseminate findings to other teacher preparation programs. SUNY Cortland offers a total of 54 teacher education programs at the undergraduate and graduate level across three schools (School of Education, School of Arts and Sciences and School of Professional Studies). We are keenly aware of the need for SUNY Cortland’s many adolescence education programs to better prepare their teacher candidates as well to meet the

needs of students with high-incidence disabilities. The IM:PACT Project offers a model that could be adapted by other teacher preparation programs on our campus or on other campuses.

Furthermore, there are other projects in our region and in New York State from which we can learn and make connections. Two of these are Schools of Promise, a partnership between Syracuse University and local school districts focused on inclusive education, and an OSEP supported initiative in New York State called “Supporting Successful Strategies to Achieve Improved Results” (The S³TAIR Project). Both are projects that identify promising and successful models in the public schools that support the inclusion of students with disabilities, and work with them to share effective evidence-based approaches more widely. IM:PACT Project staff will visit models identified by these programs, identify potential partners for further collaboration, and incorporate successful strategies and approaches as we redesign our teacher preparation programs.

IM:PACT Project staff will share our process and knowledge gains by presenting at regional and national conferences, and through publication of our own work related to the project.

QUALITY OF PROJECT PERSONNEL

The State University of New York has a strong commitment to the employment of members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age or disability. Our affirmative action policy reads, in part: “In filling any opening ... the candidate shall be selected who is best qualified to perform the duties of the position in accordance with the Affirmative Action guidelines. The search for candidates should be extensive and should recognize that certain groups may be disadvantaged because they historically have not been represented in particular professional fields. The College has a special

obligation to take Affirmative Action to seek out candidates for employment from such disadvantaged groups.”

IM:PACT Project personnel are committed to educational inclusion, and that translates into a wider commitment to involve participants who are diverse in many ways. This is consistent with the affirmative action policies of our institution, and will be considered during any hiring process related to the project. Key personnel listed below include a principal investigator who has a physical disability, two parents of people with disabilities, and faculty members who have had years of prior experience educating students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Principal Investigator. Associate Professor John Cottone has been a faculty member at SUNY Cortland since 1985. He has been a change leader throughout his tenure and has been instrumental in managing program development and improvement across the campus. In 2000, as Chair of the Department of Physical Education—one of the largest and most prestigious programs in the United States—he successfully brokered consensus among his colleagues to lead the School of Professional Studies to separate Physical Education into two complementary departments. This reconfiguration effectively recognized the distinctive disciplinary features of Physical Education and Exercise and Sports Studies. This structural refinement more clearly defined the identities of the two sub-disciplines and heightened SUNY Cortland’s ability to attain and maintain its leadership status throughout the state and nation. In 2005, he spearheaded a similar effort to increase student learning and professional excellence by overseeing the division of the Department of Exercise Science and Sports Studies into two departments, Kinesiology and Sport Management. In 2008, he was appointed Interim Dean in the School of Professional Studies that houses these three departments and three others.. In 2009 during a

reorganizational transition Dr. Cottone was asked and accepted the role to also serve as Interim Dean in the School of Education. Dr. Cottone's experiences with leading programmatic change at SUNY Cortland will be instrumental in guiding IM:PACT Project personnel to successfully implement activities and ultimately reach desired objectives.

Co-Principal Investigator. Dr. David Smukler is an Assistant Professor in the Foundations and Social Advocacy Department at the State University of New York College at Cortland. He received his Ph.D. in Special Education and a CAS in Disability Studies from Syracuse University. Dr. Smukler teaches courses in Inclusive Special Education at the undergraduate and graduate level with a focus on inclusive education pedagogy, universal design for learning, collaboration, complex behavior, and the needs of students with autism. Before pursuing his Ph.D., Dr. Smukler worked in inclusive education classrooms for thirteen years. All of his inclusive education experience was within team teaching situations, either as a co-teacher, the lead teacher on a team, or an administrative support teacher. Consequently he brings to the project a depth of experience with regard to collaborative teaching models. Dr. Smukler has been involved with many creative inclusive education initiatives. He was instrumental in the development of a collaboration between the Jowonio School in Syracuse (a model inclusive education program) and the Syracuse University Early Education and Child Care Center (a high quality early childhood program), so that young children with disabilities who needed a day care model could be included effectively. He also directed the OnCampus program, a collaboration between Syracuse University and the Syracuse City School District that included students with disabilities aged 18-21 on a college campus, within academic courses and social situations. More recently, Dr. Smukler has been active in the development of Professional Development School initiatives, and he is, along with Dr. Kim Rombach, a Co-director of the Unified Teaching and

Learning Initiative (UTLI), a PDS model described in this proposal. Dr. Smukler has published and presented in regional and national forums on topics including the experience of families of students with disabilities, autism, inclusive education, and collaboration and teaming. As the parent of three children with widely divergent learning needs, including a son with autism, Dr. Smukler has a deep commitment to inclusive education, and the preparation of creative and effective teachers of students with disabilities.

Co-Principal Investigator. Dr. Kimberly Rombach is an Assistant Professor in the Childhood/Early Childhood Education Department at the State University of New York College at Cortland. She has fifteen years experience teaching in inclusive elementary public school classrooms. Dr. Rombach received her Ph.D. in Teaching and Curriculum with a specialization in Inclusive Elementary Education from Syracuse University. She currently teaches courses at the undergraduate and graduate level focused on effective planning, instruction and assessment, social and academic curricula, educational technology, and social studies methods. Dr. Rombach was the 2010 recipient of SUNY Cortland's campus-wide Excellence in Teaching Award. Her expertise in pedagogy will facilitate the curricular and instructional change that will result from the IM:PACT Project. Dr. Rombach is, along with Dr. David Smukler a Co-director of the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative (UTLI), a Professional Development School model that partners SUNY Cortland with regional public schools, Dr. Rombach's prior experiences with this collaborative model will help to ensure the IM:PACT Project's success. Dr. Rombach is an appointed co-liaison for New York's Mid-state Regional Taskforce on Quality Inclusive Schooling and is a Co-PI for a grant awarded by the New York Higher Education Support Center for Systems-change. In this capacity, her role is to promote the use of effective inclusive education practices in public schools and to assist higher education institutions to better prepare

teacher candidates to teach in inclusive contexts. Dr. Rombach's role with the Taskforce will serve as a gateway for IM:PACT Project staff to connect to a strong network of New York State colleges, universities, and state and local agencies committed to preparing teacher candidates to teach effectively in inclusive classrooms. Dr. Rombach has served as co-chair for an annual regional conference about inclusive education for teacher candidates, practicing teachers, administrators and interested community members. Dr. Rombach has published and presented work on inclusive education regionally, nationally and internationally. Dr. Rombach was a recent recipient of SUNY Cortland's campus-wide Excellence in Research, Scholarship and Outreach Award. Her service and scholarship in the area of inclusive education will help the IM:PACT Project reach its desired objectives.

Field Placement Coordinator. Kathleen M. Beney serves as the Director of Field Placement at SUNY Cortland. In her role, she establishes and sustains partnerships with schools, supervises field placement coordinators and staff, provides support for field supervisors, and ensures compliance with regulatory mandates. Ms. Beney is committed to providing diverse opportunities in a variety of settings in order to optimize teacher candidate learning, while meeting and exceeding programmatic, professional, and New York State standards and mandates. Her focus is on ensuring that teacher candidates have field experiences that allow them to become effective teachers for all students, with ample opportunities for placements in high-need schools, and working with students who have high-incidence disabilities and those who are English language learners. In order to support the best possible preparation for the IM:PACT Project's teacher candidates, she will lead the efforts in collaboration with school district partners to identify and create meaningful learning opportunities for early field experiences and student teaching placements. Ms. Beney currently serves on the executive

steering committee for the Cortland Professional Development School Initiative, is very involved with the Regional Professional Development School Initiative, is the chairperson of the SUNY Cortland Field Experience Advisory Council and is an active member of the campus-wide Teacher Education Council. Ms. Beney's active service to SUNY Cortland and regional public schools will provide the IM:PACT Project with the connections needed to implement planned field experiences without delay.

Curriculum Development Coordinator. Dr. Judy K. C. Bentley is an Assistant Professor in the Foundations and Social Advocacy Department at the State University of New York College at Cortland. She teaches courses in Inclusive Special Education, Alternative and Augmentative Communication, and Applied Research at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Dr. Bentley is the Founding Editor-in-Chief of *Social Advocacy and Systems Change*, a peer-reviewed social justice journal. She has published and presented her work on Symbolic Inclusion nationally and internationally. Dr. Bentley received her Ph.D. in Education/School Improvement in 2005 from Texas State University, where she studied with Dr. Carl Glickman, President of the Institute for Schools, Education, and Democracy. She serves as President-Elect of the Central New York Peace Studies Consortium, and is a member of the Board of Directors of Access to Independence of Cortland County, Inc., an Independent Living Center.

Curriculum Development Coordinator. Susan Stratton received her Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico in the area of Educational Leadership. During her doctoral program she worked as an external evaluator for Federal Bilingual Programs throughout New Mexico with school districts serving high concentrations of English Language Learners. In this capacity she was an invited reader and evaluator of federal grants in Washington, D.C. Her prior expertise in the area of federal grant preparation and evaluation will help to facilitate the IM:PACT Project

reaching its identified objectives. Dr. Stratton's area of specialization at SUNY Cortland has been with mentoring teacher candidates as they learn about and apply action research initiatives during their student teaching placements. She has a publication forthcoming in Excelsior that analyzed ten years of teacher candidates' understandings and applications of action research. Most recently, Dr. Stratton's scholarly service has been to promote ways that teacher candidates and public school personnel can incorporate evidence-based inclusive education practices in meaningful ways. As a Co-Liaison for the Mid-state Regional Taskforce on Quality Inclusive Schooling with Dr. Rombach, Dr. Stratton has served as co-chair for annual Summer Symposia in the Mid-State Region and worked to develop school district and higher education partnerships focusing on inclusive education. Dr. Stratton is an appointed evaluator for New York's IDEA Personnel Development Grant (SPDIG), Supporting Successful Strategies to Achieve Improved Results (S³TAIR), which is a NYS grant awarded by the United States Office of Special Education Programs to improve the outcomes for students with disabilities. Dr. Stratton's experiences with visiting and evaluating schools for the S³TAIR Project will provide the necessary insight for achieving the IM:PACT Project objectives. Dr. Stratton serves as a curriculum leader in the Department of Childhood/Early Childhood Education and in that role she will be instrumental for the IM:PACT Project's success with curricular revision and approval.

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT PLAN

The management plan for the IM:PACT Project includes three major components: the logic model for the project that demonstrates how the resources will be applied in order to achieve the project's objectives, the timeline for completing project activities and strategies for

day-to-project management, and a list of responsibilities and time commitments of project personnel. Each component is described below.

Logic Model

The IM:PACT Project's planned services will be managed using the US Department of Education's Office of Special Education Program's Technical Assistance and Dissemination (TA&D) logic model. As identified in the IM:PACT Project's logic model (see Appendix 1) three domains will be measured: input, outputs (identified services and participation) and outcomes (short-term and long-term). TA&D's logic model provides a way to visually represent and monitor the IM:PACT Project's objectives and associated outcomes, and will be used by the Advisory Board, college faculty and staff, school teachers and teacher candidates. The evaluation component of the project will also be closely based on the logic model (see *Quality of Evaluation*). IM:PACT Project personnel have worked with Hezel Associates, an external review team that will collaborate with the project, to refine the logic model. The tables below describe the inputs, outputs and outcomes related to each of the four program objectives.

Objective One: Pathways to Dual Certification. To increase the pool of highly qualified teachers by enhancing the certification options available to teacher candidates in our programs:

- (a) creating a curricular pathway for general education teacher candidates to earn dual certification, thereby becoming highly qualified teachers of students high-incidence disabilities; and
- (b) creating a curricular pathway for special education teacher candidates to obtain an additional certification in general education, in order to improve the quality of their subject-specific content knowledge and collaborative skills necessary when teaching

students with high-incidence disabilities in inclusive classrooms (See *Quality of Project Services*).

Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary for project staff time • Honoria for faculty time
Outputs (activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain NYSED approval for curricular changes leading to dual certification
Outputs (participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College faculty and staff • NYSED Certification Officer
Outcomes (short-term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More SUNY Cortland preservice teachers will graduate being highly qualified to teach students with disabilities
Outcomes (long-term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of HQT employed for students with high-incidence disabilities

Objective Two: Field Partnerships and Participation. To work collaboratively with public school partners to ensure that each aspect of our teacher preparation program is grounded in the meaningful context of real world, high-needs schools by:

- (a) providing roundtable professional development activities for inservice teachers to learn about evidence-based practices for improving knowledge gains for students with high-incidence disabilities;
- (b) pairing general education and special education students during their practicum placements;
- (c) pairing general education and special education students during their student teaching placements; and

(d) implementing the Teacher Work Sample requirement into student teaching placements to evaluate student teachers' impact on school students' knowledge gains (See *Quality of the Project Services*).

Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary for project staff time • Funds for professional development materials (journal subscriptions, folders with professional resources) • Honoria for external consultants • Facility space for Inclusion Matters Summits/Leadership Team Meetings
Outputs (activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion Matters Summits/Teacher Leadership Meetings, Roundtables • Paired practicum placements • Paired student teaching placements • Teacher Work Sample Implemented
Outputs (participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College faculty and staff • Advisory Team • Project Field Facilitator(s) • Public school administrators, teachers and support staff • Parent advocate • Teacher candidate representative • Interested community members
Outcomes (short-term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign field experience evaluations using CEC standards • Teacher candidates practice collaborating with each other when planning for and teaching students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher candidates graduate with increased knowledge, skills and

(long-term)	<p>dispositions necessary for effective collaboration in inclusive classrooms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased inservice teachers’ knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for effective collaboration in inclusive classrooms
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Objective Three: Curricular Enhancement. To infuse inclusive education content throughout the curriculum of our teacher preparation programs. This content will enhance knowledge, skills and dispositions of teacher candidates. This will enable them to employ evidence-based practices to successfully meet the needs of the full range of students that they will encounter, including students with high-incidence disabilities by:

- (a) providing opportunities for faculty to engage in professional development activities (Leadership Team meetings/Summits) to infuse knowledge, skills and dispositions about teaching students with disabilities (high-incidence disabilities) throughout their coursework, evidenced by changes in course syllabi;
- (b) providing opportunities for faculty to co-teach courses to meaningfully implement new content into enhanced course curricula;
- (c) creating and implementing a Teacher Work Sample (Denner et al., 2002) to track teacher candidates’ impact on public school students’ knowledge gains; and
- (d) submitting revised course curricula/syllabi to the College Curriculum Review Team (CCRC) and NYSED for approval (See *Quality of Project Services*).

Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary for project staff time • Honoraria for external consultant • In-kind remuneration for Inclusion Matters Summit participants • Funds for professional development materials (including journal subscriptions and folders with professional development materials)
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<p>Outputs (activities)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion Matters Summits/Teacher Leadership Meetings (summer and winter) • Co-teaching college courses
<p>Outputs (participants)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College faculty and staff • Inservice teachers and administrators • Parent advocate • Teacher candidate representative • Advisory group
<p>Outcomes (short-term)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved communication and collaboration between FSA and CECE department faculty and staff • Improved faculty and staff knowledge, skills and disposition regarding teaching students with disabilities • Enhance general education and special education course curricula and syllabi to embed special education content and skills and general education content and skills in accordance with IDEA, CEC, ACEI and NYS teacher certification requirements. • Create and implement a Teacher Work Sample assignment to facilitate teacher candidates' knowledge gains about monitoring all students' progress, including students with high-incidence disabilities • Submit enhanced and revised course syllabi to NYSED for program revision approval.
<p>Outcomes (long-term)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of HQT of students with disabilities graduated from SUNY Cortland

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased number of HQT of students with disabilities employed • Improved outcomes for students with disabilities
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Objective Four: Dissemination of Project Findings. To share what we learn by careful evaluation of the project’s activities, and dissemination of information and perspectives gained, in order to increase the potential impact of our project and the evidence base for effective teacher education practice by:

- (a) Sharing the IM:PACT Project’s professional development activities with faculty representatives from SUNY Cortland’s School of Arts and Sciences and School of Professional Studies;
- (b) Providing opportunities for faculty across campus to engage in Leadership Team meetings/Inclusion Matters Summits for curricular enhancement to better prepare teacher candidates for teaching students with high-incidence disabilities;
- (c) Providing initial collaborative meetings to begin the process of curricular changes that would lead to adolescence education teacher candidates to have the option of dual certification to become highly qualified to teach students with high-incidence disabilities (See *Quality of Project Services*).

Inputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salary for project staff time • Honoraria for external consultant • In-kind remuneration for Inclusion Matters Summit participants • Funds for professional development materials (including journal subscriptions and folders with professional development materials)
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusion Matters Summits/Teacher Leadership Meetings (summer and

(activities)	<p>winter)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations at local, regional and national conferences • Curricular enhancements for Arts and Sciences disciplines leading to syllabi revision to infuse the knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach students with high-incidence disabilities • Curricular enhancements for Professional Studies disciplines leading to syllabi revision to infuse the knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach students with high-incidence disabilities • Collect data for each Project IM:PACT service (including pre and post data collection) and process
Outputs (participants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College faculty and staff • External evaluator • Inservice faculty and staff
Outcomes (short-term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More SUNY Cortland teacher candidates will graduate with more knowledge about how to teach students with disabilities, especially high-incidence disabilities • Disseminate (present) the IM:PACT Project model, process and outcomes at local (college), regional, state and national conferences • Prepare and submit manuscripts for potential publishing, including information about the IM:PACT Project model, process and outcomes
Outcomes (long-term)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established teacher preparation culture that embeds content, knowledge, skills and dispositions to teach students with disabilities into all SUNY Cortland’s teacher preparation programs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating momentum for all of SUNY Cortland’s teacher preparation programs to include pathways for teacher candidates to obtain dual teacher certification and become highly qualified to teach students with high-incidence disabilities • Creating momentum for faculty at other institutions to become inspired by our project to begin to prepare their own teacher candidates to create evidence-based curricular changes to their existing teacher preparation programs to become certified to teach students with high-incidence disabilities
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Time Line

In the first year of the IM:PACT Project, personnel will obtain funding, hire a Project Manager and two graduate assistants, establish an Advisory Team and hold an initial Advisory Team meeting, establish formative and summative program assessments, and establish regular meeting times for personnel to plan project activities. Public school liaisons will be identified and involved in the planning.

During **Spring 2011**, along with ongoing planning, IM:PACT Project personnel will establish a liaison with NYSED certification officers to work with us regarding NYS certification requirements to be highly qualified to teach students with disabilities.

In **Summer 2011** IM:PACT Project personnel will implement the first of the Inclusion Matters Summits, as described in *Quality of Project Services*. These will then recur on a semiannual basis (one each January and one each summer) throughout the life of the grant. The first Inclusion Matters Summits will focus on curricular redesign. Summits in years four and five will focus on the redesign of field experiences and the potential of broadening the project to

other teacher programs on our campus.

In **Fall 2011** the first IM:PACT Roundtables will begin and focus on gathering perspectives from public school partners. The professional development roundtables will continue to be implemented each fall throughout the life of the grant, and their content will change according to the needs of participants. Faculty will also begin the initial co-teaching of newly designed courses. This process will continue until the program revision is complete, which we anticipate will be a two-year process. After each new course is co-taught it is re-evaluated, final revisions made, and then the course becomes part of the improved sequence.

In **Spring 2012** the curriculum review process begins at the department level. In **Fall 2012** it moves to the College Curriculum Review Committee, and in **Spring 2013** to the New York State Department of Education Special Education Curriculum Review process.

From **Fall 2013** through the end of the grant, IM:PACT Project personnel will focus on redesigning and expanding field experiences to develop meaningful collaboration skills between general education and special education teachers and teacher candidates. Activities will also focus increasingly on dissemination. IM:PACT Project personnel will work with other programs on our campus or elsewhere that wish to replicate the approach.

Many of the elements introduced above are intended to be ongoing once they are rolled out. Planning and Advisory Team meetings, Inclusion Matters Summits, Roundtables, and collaborative field placement models will each be sustained by project staff once introduced. Co-teaching and curricular enhancement are not ongoing in quite the same way. However, as courses in each program are revised to infuse content related to the teaching of students with high-incidence disabilities, those activities can be made available more widely to other programs interested in the process. Throughout the life of the grant, Project IM:PACT personnel will also

participate in meetings and teleconferences related to the 325T grant, collect and analyze formative and summative data, and develop opportunities to disseminate findings.

Roles and Responsibilities

Principal Investigator (PI), John Cottone will contribute 10% of his time throughout the life of the project. His key role is providing support and enabling administrative and structural changes for curricular design and development, along with changes affecting relationships with school partners and within the institutions affecting field placements. Dr. Cottone will also play an active role in developing statewide consortia efforts with NYSED and the SUNY Comprehensive Colleges Deans of Education, of which there are 13. His position reports directly to the Provost, serves as a member of the President's Cabinet, Provost's Cabinet and the Academic Affairs Council that meets monthly with all administrative unit heads within the division of Academic Affairs. As such, communications about the project and problem solving can be readily addressed and effectively communicated.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) Dr. David Smukler will contribute 20% of his time during the academic year throughout the life of the project. His primary role is to serve as the lead faculty member of his department for communicating and enhancing curricular changes that fulfill project objectives. He will also co-lead the curricular development meetings with Co-PI Rombach and share in the overall supervision of the project coordinator. Dr. Smukler will serve as the primary liaison with each of the school district representatives and parents participating in the curricular changes and redesign of field placement activities. As a Co-PI, Dr. Smukler will participate in all 325T teleconferences and work with Co-PI Rombach and grant collaborators in designing the inservice teachers' Professional Development Roundtable events. As the project unfolds, Dr. Smukler will also conduct classroom observations during field placements to assess

the effectiveness of paired practica and student teaching placements. Dr. Smukler will also assure inclusion of the evidence-based practices available on IRIS and participate in all 325T webinars. He will work closely with Co-PI Rombach and Hezel Associates in analyzing, disseminating and presenting findings about revisions to the programs to local schools, NYSED, U.S. Department of Education, and appropriate conferences.

Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI), Dr. Kimberly Rombach will contribute 20% of her time throughout the life of the project. She will oversee all administrative grant activities, including grant budgeting, evaluation activities and writing of grant reports. Dr. Rombach will support, facilitate and supervise the work of the full-time project manager; serve as co-chair (with Dr. Smukler) of the Advisory Team meetings, facilitate in the development of the Leadership Team Summer Meetings (Inclusion Matters Summits) for curricular enhancement, and inservice teachers' Professional Development Roundtable events. Dr. Rombach will also participate in all 325T teleconferences. Dr. Rombach will conduct classroom observations during field placements to assess the effectiveness of paired practica and student teaching placements. Dr. Rombach will maintain relationships with college faculty and staff, public school faculty and staff, and interested community members. Dr. Rombach will oversee ongoing data collection, analyze results, and disseminate and present findings to local schools and colleges and to local, regional and national conferences. Dr. Rombach will serve as the liaison with Hezel Associates for all evaluation initiatives. Dr. Rombach will also serve as the liaison with NYSED certification personnel to represent the IM:PACT Project's curricular enhancements and revisions of SUNY Cortland teacher preparation programs to ensure that teacher candidates have met NYS certification requirements to be highly qualified to teach students with disabilities.

Project Field Facilitator Ms. Kathleen Beney will contribute 10% of her time during the academic year and assist with the summer Leadership Team meetings. She will serve as the liaison between SUNY Cortland and regional school districts to develop partnerships for paired practica placements. Ms. Beney will serve as the liaison to the field coordinators within each of the departments.

Curriculum Development Coordinator Dr. Judy Bentley will contribute 10% of her time during the academic year and be responsible for planning the summer and winter curriculum development summits. She will play a significant role in setting up co-teaching pairs comprised of SUNY faculty working across departments or with public school partners. She will be responsible for providing curricular enhancement reports to the PIs and to the Advisory Team.

Curriculum Development Coordinator Dr. Susan Stratton will contribute 10% of her time during the academic year and be responsible for planning the summer and winter curriculum development summits. She will play a significant role in setting up co-teaching pairs comprised of SUNY faculty working across departments or with public school partners. She will be responsible for providing curricular enhancement reports to the PIs and to the Advisory Team.

The Project Coordinator (TBD) will be a three quarter (75%), 12-month position for the calendar year. The position involves office management, taking and disseminating all meeting minutes, completing project reports, processing invoices and purchase requisitions, arranging summer Leadership Team meetings and roundtable professional development activities, maintaining listserv and a project website and maintaining program files. The project manager will serve as the liaison between the IM:PACT Project's professional development initiatives (Roundtables) and regional Teacher Centers. The project manager will also support the dissemination and presentation of results of the IM:PACT Project to local schools, college

community, local, regional and national professional conferences and support the evaluation efforts of Hezel and Associates.

Two graduate assistants to be hired will assist the Co-PIs, Project Coordinator and Curriculum Development Coordinators with their work.

ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES

The IM:PACT Project will require assembling resources of various kinds and from multiple sources. It will require commitment at the institutional level from SUNY Cortland, as well as from specific faculty members from the departments involved, and existing organizations and structures on campus and in the community. The following sections describe resources on our campus and in our region, some of which offer unique opportunities to a program like the IM:PACT Project. For additional information clarifying resource requests and allocations, please see the budget justification section of this proposal.

Adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, and supplies from SUNY Cortland

The State University of New York (SUNY) is the largest and most comprehensive state university system in the United States with 64 campuses statewide, with 13 comprehensive colleges including SUNY Cortland. SUNY Cortland has 54 active approved programs leading to New York State Teacher Certifications and educates over 4,000 teacher education students each year. It is the largest preparer of teachers in New York State and on the East Coast. SUNY Cortland is ranked tenth largest for preparing teachers in the United States and is accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE). Historically, SUNY Cortland has had a commitment to excellence regarding the teachers it graduates. SUNY Cortland prepares teachers who have a strong foundation of liberal arts and sciences with theory,

pedagogy and application in teaching, and its teacher candidates have a 99% pass rate on all required New York State teacher certification exams (SUNY Cortland NCATE Institutional Report, 2004).

The IM:PACT Project has the full support of SUNY Cortland President Erik Bitterbaum; Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Mark Prus; Interim Dean of the Schools of Education and Professional Studies, John Cottone; and Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, Bruce Mattingly. The IM:PACT Project will be housed in the School of Education at SUNY Cortland and the enjoys enthusiastic support from faculty and chairs of both of the participating departments within the School of Education: Childhood/Early Childhood Education and Foundations and Social Advocacy.

All School of Education departments are housed close to one another in an education complex that includes a new education wing and a newly renovated wing. Faculty members each have an office equipped with computers with any major software package that they require as well as Internet access, use of departmental resources including meeting space, photocopying and fax machines, equipment for videotaping and projection, and the capable support of departmental secretaries. Several other offices on the SUNY Cortland campus will support the IM:PACT Project as well with their services or expertise. The **Field Placement Office** oversees field experiences and student teaching placements. Some student teachers are placed in high-needs urban schools in New York City through the **SUNY Urban Teacher Education Center (SUTEC)**. Kimberly Rombach, one of the IM:PACT Project's PIs, has been the co-liaison of the **Mid-State Regional Taskforce for Quality Inclusive Schooling**, part of the **New York Higher Education Support Center for Systems-Change**, an initiative of the New York State Education Department that supports improved quality of teacher preparation programs and professional

development related to inclusive education. **Cortland's Urban Recruitment of Educators** (C.U.R.E.) brings students interested in teaching in urban contexts to our campus and provides financial stipends, academic courses in multicultural and urban education, and mentoring. C.U.R.E. has an 85% retention rate, and most of its graduates work in high-needs urban schools. SUNY Cortland also is home to **Inclusion U**, a full-day training in disability awareness and accessibility issues developed by our Recreation Department, which has a website with assessments of recreation facilities statewide. The **Institute for Disability Studies** supports research related to all aspects of disability, including inclusive education. Two student-run clubs, the **Education Club** and the **Inclusive Education Club** will also actively support this project; indeed, creating overlap of their activities is completely within the spirit of the IM:PACT Project.

In addition to administrative support at the highest levels, a variety of other supports for the IM:PACT Project exist at SUNY Cortland. The **Office of Student Disability Services** ensures that students identified with disabilities receive appropriate access to university services and programs. The **Career Services Office** is available to all SUNY Cortland students, and has been particularly active with teacher candidates with regard to questions about certification. The **Academic Support and Achievement Program** (ASAP) is available for all students at SUNY Cortland and promotes retention of our teacher candidates by providing writing and study support. The **Memorial Library** offers extensive print and other resources including electronic access to journals and databases, and to the interlibrary loan system, supports classroom activities with electronic reserves, and offers assistance in using library resources.

Other university-wide resources available to faculty include but are not limited to audio/visual and smart classroom equipment; an Information Technology unit which supports

electronic communications, Internet access and the on-line, interactive eLearning educational management system; a Media Center; storage room for books, program files and supplies; janitorial services; utilities, insurance, payroll, purchasing, and university car/van usage.

The IM:PACT Project will depend upon ongoing relationships with regional community partners. These include superintendents in local school districts, directors of special education, and school principals, as well as administrators and staff from local community colleges (Tompkins Cortland Community College and Onondaga Community College) and the Onondaga - Cortland - Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services (OCM BOCES) serving our region. SUNY Cortland is involved in various professional development initiatives that have fostered relationships with numerous school districts in the region. Among these are the **Cortland Professional Development School (PDS)**, a regional Professional Development School, and the SUNY Cortland Teacher/Leader Quality Partnership Program. One of the four models that make up the Cortland PDS is the **Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative (UTLI)**, whose innovative collaborative student teaching model is the inspiration for further developing such opportunities in Goal Two of the IM:PACT Project. Three school districts have been identified as key partners: Cortland, Groton, and the city of Syracuse.

The IM:PACT Project will be locally administered through the Research and Sponsored Programs Office, which serves as the campus liaison for the project fiscal agent, the Research Foundation of State University of New York. The Research Foundation is a non-profit corporation established to provide fiscal authority and structure for the application and administration of grants in accordance with State University of New York policies. The Research Foundation has its own board of directors, audit control required by federal agencies, personnel services and legal counsel.

Adequacy of Budget

The budget for the IM:PACT Project is adequate to support the successful accomplishment of its goals. The budget offers support for the principal investigators, support for a project staff person, and training for faculty in order to integrate the special and general education teacher preparation programs in meaningful ways. Adequate attention is paid to project details, the timely accomplishment of project activities, and the project evaluation.

Costs in relation to potential benefits and numbers served

The two departments involved in the IM:PACT Project graduate approximately 300 licensed teachers per year. Whether or not a teacher candidate opts for a second certification, the program modifications made possible by the IM:PACT Project will still affect the practice of all of these graduates for years to come. Developing dual certification options will also further increase the number of highly qualified teachers of students with high-incidence disabilities. By the project's end we will have created a structure that will allow us to graduate at least 50 students per year with dual certification. Currently there is no shortage of classroom teachers in New York State, but there is a shortage of those who are highly qualified to teach students with disabilities. Informally, we are very aware that principals in our region would far prefer to hire new teachers with dual certification. Given the average length of a teacher's career and the number of students each teacher affects, the costs of the project are extremely reasonable if they result in highly qualified teachers who have the skills to teach a wide range of students effectively in the least restrictive environment.

Potential for continued support of the project after Federal funding ends

The intent of the IM:PACT Project is to redesign and integrate special and general education teacher preparation programs at SUNY Cortland. The project will be fully

implemented after the funding period has elapsed. After the initial funding period, the university will periodically assess the program and revise as necessary. SUNY Cortland and the School of Education are fully committed to maintaining the integrated options that the IM:PACT Project will create after federal funding ends.

QUALITY OF PROJECT EVALUATION

Hezel Associates (Syracuse, NY) will guide a comprehensive, independent evaluation of the IM:PACT Project, in order to provide an external perspective on the work and ensure objectivity of reporting. Hezel Associates researchers will work with the project team members to support collection, analysis, and reporting of data to serve two distinct types of evaluation:

- **Process Evaluation** – Examining the degree to which proposed activities are completed with quality, in a timely fashion, and with anticipated levels of participation (sometimes referred to as *Implementation Evaluation*)
- **Outcome Evaluation** – Measuring the realization of both short-term and long-term outcomes (sometimes referred to as *Impact Evaluation*)

Hezel Associates researchers are committed to a *collaborative evaluation* process, maintaining appropriate separation while maximizing the utility of research findings to the project staff and funders (O’Sullivan & D’Agostino, 2002). They also fully understand the importance of working with SUNY Cortland to support reporting of evaluation results to OSEP, in both annual performance reports (APR) and a final performance report.

Evaluation Capacity and Staffing

Hezel Associates is a custom research, evaluation and strategic consulting firm specializing in education. Since 1987, Hezel Associates has embraced its mission to serve clients with *intelligence, experience and insight that enables them to succeed in creating, managing and*

improving education initiatives. The firm has ushered projects through the stages of conceptualization, implementation and assessment. They have served as the external evaluators for K-12 school districts/local education agencies, higher education institutions, public broadcasting organizations, publishers, as well as the US Department of Education (ED) and 15 state departments of education. Hezel Associates draw upon a variety of scientifically appropriate methods and frequently conduct mixed-method studies. The Hezel team regularly integrates primary and secondary source data from literature reviews, tests, reports, documents, classroom artifacts, interviews, site visits and surveys. They are skilled at organizing and managing complex databases that pull together data from across disparate sources. They use these data to triangulate information and identify internal and external factors that contribute to and impede progress and improvement. With regard to data analysis, Hezel studies involve the use of inferential statistics including Hierarchical Linear Modeling, multiple and linear regression, ANOVAs, *t*-tests, correlation analysis, and descriptive statistics, including measures of central tendency and dispersion. They also employ a variety of qualitative approaches including ethnography, grounded theory, and case studies based on preordinate conceptual frameworks. Their work frequently requires disaggregation of information at multiple levels, such as by student groups, teacher demographics and school characteristics.

The Hezel team is well-versed and fully trained in mixed-method approaches. Their research efforts are supported by both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods including: focus groups (in-person and virtual), in-depth interviews (in-person and virtual), surveys (online, telephone and paper/pencil data collection), site visits and observations.

Hezel Associates has more than 20 years of experience providing research and evaluation of a wide range of education innovations. The external evaluation of the IM:PACT Project will

be managed by Kirk Knestis, Ph.D., the Hezel team's Director of Research and Evaluation. Dr. Knestis holds a terminal degree in Education Policy and Evaluation and has substantial professional experience as a researcher, university administrator and instructor, classroom teacher, and business owner. It is Hezel Associates' practice to assign a Project Leader to support day-to-day data collection, analysis and reporting. Named to this position for the IM:PACT evaluation study is Research Associate Seth Ovadia, Ph.D. Dr. Ovadia is a recent addition to the Hezel team, who earned his PhD in sociology from the University of Maryland and was previously a faculty member at Bowdoin College (ME) and Towson University (MD). Along with his academic responsibilities, Dr. Ovadia has managed multiple research projects on a variety of issues, ranging from urban segregation to the effects of religious beliefs on attitudes and behaviors. Vitae for these staff members are included in Appendix 3.

Evaluation Research Design

Hezel Associates proposes a comprehensive *theory-based evaluation* approach, to serve the above evaluation goals and support both federal reporting and periodic assessments of progress—or *summative* and *formative* evaluation (Bickman, 1987; Chen, 1990). To this end, the Hezel team has supported the IM:PACT designers as they developed a *logic model* based on the inputs, outputs, and outcomes described for the project (McLaughlin & Jordan, 1999). This model (Appendix 1) describes the *theory of action* by which resources (inputs) are expected to ultimately translate to improved outcomes for students with disabilities. The elements and linkages illustrated in the model provide a conceptual framework to guide data collection and analysis, and serve as the basis for design of future quasi-experimental studies examining the efficacy of the redesigned SUNY Cortland teacher preparation program (Christie & Alkin, 2003; Renger & Titcomb, 2002; Rogers, Hacsı, Petrosino & Huebner, 2000; Turnbull, 2002).

Four questions aligned with the IM:PACT logic model will guide the process and outcome evaluations:

1. With what quality and fidelity do IM:PACT Project staff deliver project **activities** to teacher candidates, public school partners, and SUNY Cortland faculty members?
2. To what extent does **participation** by members in these three stakeholder groups meet expectations of the IM:PACT Project staff?
3. To what extent does the project achieve **short-term outcomes** for SUNY Cortland teacher candidates, in terms of knowledge, skills, and dispositions required to provide evidence-based instruction to students with high-incidence disabilities?
4. To what extent does the project achieve desired **long-term outcomes**, including SUNY Cortland graduates' ability to improve academic outcomes for their students with disabilities?

Data Collection and Analysis

A variety of data collection approaches will be employed to answer these questions, as described in the data table in Appendix 2. This *Evaluation Data Table* details one or more **indicator** associated with each element in the logic model, **methods and measures** necessary to collect data to assess them, the partner responsible for collecting and analyzing those data, the **formative** and **summative** reporting uses to which evaluation data will be applied, and broad indications of the timelines for those uses. While IM:PACT Project staff will have substantial responsibility for data collection, Hezel Associates researchers will focus on several key data sources to gain a true external perspective of mission-critical processes and outcomes:

- **Quality of Project Activities** – A *Participant Reaction Questionnaire* tailored to project activities and priorities will assess the quality of delivery of inclusive summit and community roundtables.
- **Teacher Candidate Dispositions** – A *Teacher Candidate Questionnaire* will assess changes in dispositions over time, among students in SUNY Cortland’s revised program.
- **Long-term Outcome Data** – With the cooperation of project partners, Hezel Associates researchers will establish processes to analyze graduate records, placement data from the SUNY Cortland Office of Career Services, aggregate school IEP records, and extant K-12 student data (e.g., New York Regents’ exams).

To assess processes and outcomes for annual and final reporting to OSEP, the Hezel team will analyze data from all sources considering preordinate conceptual frameworks (e.g., those embedded in existing instruments or standards established by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)). As might be appropriate to each of the four evaluation research questions and multiple data sources, analysis will include both descriptive methods and inferential tests to ascertain the significance of differences (e.g., paired *t*-tests for pre-to-post comparisons) and ascribe outcomes to project activities. Findings will be reported in narrative and graphical form.

Testing of the Redesigned Teacher Preparation Program

Because it is not feasible to randomly assign teacher candidates to the redesigned teacher preparation program—or K-12 students to SUNY Cortland graduates’ classrooms—the Hezel team will gauge preliminary efficacy of the new model using quasi-experimental methods. This approach requires the researchers to identify appropriate opportunities for comparison, particular to the outcome of interest. In many instances, it will be sufficient to use inferential statistics to

compare pre- and post-measures over time, controlling for group membership *post hoc* during analysis. However, for long-term outcomes, it will be necessary to establish systematic processes to allow comparisons over time, which may be applied even beyond the five years of the work proposed herein. Hezel Associates will work with IM:PACT Project staff and three partner districts (Cortland Enlarged City School District, Syracuse City School District and Groton Central School District) to develop and pilot matched-group comparison studies, to ascertain whether academic outcomes for students of SUNY Cortland graduates differ significantly from those of students in classrooms taught by other new teachers. In order to maximize data collection reliability, these studies will use established measures, including but not limited to *Teacher Work Samples* of student products during student teaching placements and extant student data such as promotion and graduation rates.

The Hezel team will establish processes to track graduates of the transformed teacher preparation program, including the assignment of persistent unique identifiers using a web-based enrollment system. They will also leverage web-based social media tools (e.g., Facebook) from the outset of the evaluation, to establish connections with teacher candidates that are likely to persist beyond graduation. Demographic variables such as gender, age, and professional experience will also be included in analyses as these data will be collected in the first application of the web-based Teacher Candidate Questionnaire.

While participants' environments will be manipulated to ascertain the effect of the revised teacher education program, such manipulations will take place only in established educational settings involving normal practices. Further, while survey procedures will be used to collect evaluation data, all questionnaires will be completed anonymously. Finally, where evaluation activities require access to participants' personal information (e.g., teacher candidate

placement records), such data will be “anonymized” by SUNY Cortland and cooperating school/district staff who work with it in the normal course of their responsibilities, prior to transfer to investigators. No minor students will be surveyed or interviewed for the proposed project.

Reporting

Findings from ongoing data collection and analysis completed by the Hezel team will be reported to the IM:PACT Project team in the form of **formative data summaries** and **formal annual reports**. In addition, project staff will provide to the external evaluators summaries of data that they are responsible for collecting in the course of teacher preparation activities (e.g., scores from project assessment rubrics embedded in coursework). Data summaries will serve as periodic assessments of project progress, and will help validate and inform ongoing programmatic changes and activity implementation. The external evaluators will tailor the content and timing of their annual reports to SUNY Cortland to support the project’s obligation to comply with federal reporting requirements. All written evaluation reports, and the procedures informing them, will adhere to professional guidelines for evaluators (American Evaluation Association, 2004; Sanders, 1994).