The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative

Professional Development School Proposal

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Revised May 29, 2008

OUR PROJECT

The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative

OUR VISION

We envision a unified, student-centered system of education . . .

o Where learning and belonging happen together;

o Where *all* educators are prepared and committed to effectively educate *all* children;

o Where accountability is based upon a presumption of competence, and a universally designed curriculum that recognizes and supports individual strengths and needs;

o Where intellectual and economic resources are shared without label, penalty or prejudice; and

o Where collaboration and communication is fostered among all stakeholders: child, family, school, university, and community.

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative is to prepare teachers to effectively educate *all* children, by . . .

o Valuing and applying the reflective, collaborative knowledge and experiences of all stakeholders;

o Creating and supporting inclusive, collaborative teaching models, teaching practica, teacher preparation coursework and student teaching experiences, in partnership with the State University College at Cortland Teacher Preparation Programs and the Cortland Enlarged City School District (CECSD); and

o Producing, analyzing, and disseminating measurable outcomes for continued Professional Development and support for all stakeholders.

Note: Our Vision is grounded in the following key documents, as well as in our own knowledge and experience as scholar-practitioners.

Description of Initiative

Any PDS Model, by definition, creates opportunities for collaboration between various stakeholders in public school education. The proposed Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative (UTLI) expands such opportunities by focusing on multiple levels of collaboration throughout its design. As part of the overall partnership of the college and the school district, existing working relationships with be strengthened and new working relationships will be forged between:

- o SUNY Cortland and The Cortland Expanded City School District (CECSD)
- o Different departments within the SUNY Cortland School of Education
- o Childhood Education candidates and Inclusive Special Education candidates
- o General education faculty and special education faculty in the public schools
- o General education students and students who require additional support (including those identified as having special needs, those identified as gifted, and linguistically or culturally diverse students, and others)

Proposed Model

The basic organizational unit of the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative is a core team made up of faculty members from the CECSD and SUNY Cortland. Team members will be selected who have background in general education and special education. Organizing the initiative around small core teams allows maximum flexibility in developing the PDS over time. It allows the model to begin small, with handpicked team members who can put effort into working out the logistics and solving the problems that are an inevitable part of any endeavor as complex as a professional development school initiative. Growth can be dictated by experience and positive changes in both partner institutions will be meaningful.

Membership Matrix of a Core Team

	General Educators	Inclusive Special Educators
SUNY Cortland	Faculty member from Childhood Education Dept.	Faculty member from Foundations and Social Advocacy Dept.
Cortland City School District	Host teacher of a primary classroom (grades 1-3) Host teacher of an upper elementary classroom (grades 4-6)	Special education teacher(s) who support(s) students in the host teachers' rooms

Thus, one core team would include:

- o Two general education teachers (one primary level and one upper elementary level)
- o One or two special education teachers who work regularly with those general education teachers
- o A Childhood Education SUNY faculty member
- o An Inclusive Special Education SUNY faculty member

The SUNY faculty members could belong to more than one team. Ideally, one of them would assume supervision responsibilities for the student teachers. The composition of such

teams could shift from year to year, depending on students' needs, especially the distribution of students with IEPs. Each team could support four student teachers in a semester in one school building. Students would be paired for their student teaching semester: one general education student teacher with one inclusive special education student teacher. One pair would do the first half of their student teaching in the primary classroom and the second in the upper elementary classroom; the other pair would do the same two classrooms in the opposite order.

Student teachers would also cluster in teams. Each group of four students would be meeting in the same seminar and would form a mini-cohort for their student teaching semester. This is another unique and positive feature of the Unified Teaching and Learning Collaborative.

> The traditional arrangement is to assign one student teacher to one regular teacher. But teams of student teachers would be more apt to succeed in almost any kind of classroom…. Such an arrangement would benefit not only the student teachers and the youngsters, but also the cooperating teachers, who would have the added stimulation and exchange of ideas that a team of student teachers could provide (Schwartz, 1996).

One assumption in our model is that the SUNY supporting teachers would serve as the student teachers' supervisors, at least for the pilot stage. SUNY faculty members who are part of multiple teams might be offered a course release to make it possible for them to provide student teacher supervision.

Another function of the core teams would be the development of curriculum that more closely relates the childhood education and inclusive special education programs of study at SUNY Cortland. Team members would guest lecture for one another. SUNY faculty members might teach occasional model lessons in the city schools and CESCD teachers would also guest lecture some of the college course sessions. To facilitate such exchanges, teaching space would be found in participating CECSD school buildings and equipped with appropriate technology.

The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative is an attempt to align the training of pre-service teachers to the shifting paradigm within the CECSD regarding unified education (that is, education of students with special needs that occurs within a general education environment as much as possible). We are committed to nurturing such change. We expect that our core teams will include people with great expertise, rich experiences with education, and deep commitment to children. But we also recognize that the models we are creating represent uncharted territory for many of our stakeholders. For this reason, we have chosen to "start small," to create the flexibility to adjust and improve the initiative, and allow it to grow in a way that supports rather than overwhelms stakeholders. We propose that our model be tested first as a pilot with one or two teams in one or two Cortland elementary schools with staff interested in the UTLI model. Because we cannot anticipate all the issues the first core teams are likely to encounter, we expect them do some problem-solving work that will improve the initiative before trying to expand it to more elementary schools. Such teams will offer a powerful and valuable learning opportunity to the elementary school teachers, pre-service teachers CECSD students, and SUNY faculty involved.

We anticipate the following phases and timetable for implementing the initiative:

Implementation Roadmap

<u>Phase 1</u>:   **Establishment of Pilot Core Team(s)**
- Each team consists of a primary teacher, an upper elementary teacher, the special educator(s) associated with their classrooms, one faculty member from C/EC and one faculty member from FSA
- One or two teams established for the first year; the same two SUNY faculty members would join both teams if there are two
- SUNY faculty members selected as a department decision in each department; CECSD team members chosen by administrators from among teachers who volunteer for the pilot

Anticipated Beginning Date of Phase 1: Fall 2008

<u>Phase 2</u>:   **Collaborative Curriculum Development**
- Core team members collaborate on developing goals, outcomes, activities for effective practicum and student teaching experiences
- Adapt FSA 210 and SPE 270 to allow for overlapping sections
- Create a new course or adapt existing courses to better address how to teach all students in inclusive classrooms, using a unified approach and focusing particularly on specific needs/goals established by CECSD teachers or other stakeholders.

Anticipated Beginning Date of Phase 2: Fall 2008

<u>Phase 3</u>:   **Inclusive Student Teaching Placements**
- 4 student teachers supported by each team: 2 childhood education candidates and two inclusive special education candidates
- Supervision provided by SUNY faculty core team members
- Student teachers part of the same seminar

Anticipated Beginning Date of Phase 3: Spring 2009

<u>Phase 4</u>:   **Inclusive Community-Wide Dialogues**
- Create community-based events that encourage participation and allow for input and feedback from families of CESCD students regarding the initiative
- Core teams incorporate feedback into ongoing development of curriculum and structure of practicum and student teaching experiences

Anticipated Beginning Date of Phase 4: Spring 2009

<u>Phase 5</u>:   **Expansion of Core Teams**
- Based on successes and experiences of pilot teams
- Rate of expansion based on administrative judgment and available resources to support teams; however, it is anticipated that there would be savings associated with overlapping functions (SUNY faculty involved in several teams, shared resources, etc.)

Anticipated Beginning Date of Phase 5: Fall 2009

From the kernel of one or two teams, we would plan to grow in two directions. One is simply to expand the number of teams over time. A feasible plan for growth would be to begin with two core teams in the fall of 2008 (planning for student teachers in spring of 2009), expand to three teams in the fall of 2009, and four in 2010. One mandate for the first core teams would be to share their successes in formal and informal ways with other faculty members of both institutions in order to increase interest and investment in the initiative.

The second direction of growth relates to the teacher preparation that occurs *before* the student teaching semester. An important opportunity would be for the teams, once they were up and running, to evolve curriculum based on collaboration between general and special educators ("Phase 2" of the implementation roadmap: "Collaborative Course Creation"). This phase should remain in place, but is complex in that it will require discussion in both the Childhood Education department and FSA about where such a course would fit into both programs. As well, we should consider existing curricula for areas of overlap. For example, FSA 210 and SPE 270 are courses with very similar content (introduction to inclusive education), but different audiences: The ISE students take FSA 210 and the Childhood Education students take SPE 270. An experiment with blending these courses is already planned to occur this fall. In the long term, such blending allows the notion of collaboration can be modeled and encouraged early for SUNY students from both programs. Our assumption is that the shape such interdepartmental collaboration will take should evolve over time. The following chart identifies possible points in where there could be some degree of overlap in the experiences of Childhood Education majors and Inclusive Special Education majors. Possible areas of overlap are highlighted. "Overlap" can mean as little as trading of guest lecturing or as much as combining courses.

Undergraduate Semester	Childhood	FSA
1		
2		FSA 101 (GE 10 - MLK)
3		FSA 210/211 (25 hours Parker) PSY 231 GE courses
4		FSA 280/281 (25 hours Parker) PSY 331 (MAT 102 - GE 1) (GE courses)
5	PreBlock LIT 371 PSY 231 (Foreign Lang. 102 level, counted for GE) (MAT 102, counted for GE) SPE 270	PSY 332 PSY 360 (GE courses)
6	Childhood Block I EDU 315 (GE12) PED 245 EDU 373 EDU 374 EDU 378 EDU 379 WI (50 hour practicum)	FSA 430 (BOCES) PSY 432 PSY 433 (Electives)

| 7 | Childhood Block II
HLH 265
FSA 400
LIT 372
EDU 480
EDU 479 PS   (50 hour practicum) | FSA Block (100 hours MLK)
LIT 310/311
FSA 400
FSA 410
FSA 420
FSA 436 |
| 8 | Student Teaching
EDU 490
EDU 491
EDU 492 | Student Teaching
FSA 490
FSA 491
FSA 492 |

We also plan to have some of those classes meet in CECSD space rather than on campus, for example a M/W/F class might have Wednesday meetings in a school building, to encourage more collaboration with CECSD teachers. Ideally the student teaching pairs will be selected from a cohort of students who will have some shared experiences of this kind.

Strengthening the SUNY Cortland/Cortland City School District Partnership

Faculty Exchanges: SUNY Classes Hosted at CECSD

The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative model supports faculty exchanges between SUNY Cortland and CECSD. The model would incorporate entire class placements (FSA 210-211 and FSA 280) within an elementary school. The SUNY professor would teach his/her class right at the prospective school. This allows faculty from CECSD to be present at the classes. The model would also support release time for CECSD faculty to present/teach at the SUNY campus.

Co-Teaching

The model encourages co-teaching through the placement of SUNY pre-service teachers. Our intent is to place pre-service teachers from SUNY with co-teaching teams at CECSD. For example, a special educator and general educator who currently co-teach would be assigned student teachers from SUNY during the same semester. This model allows for the new pre-service teachers to acclimate to a co-teaching environment and get hands-on collaborative experience from both the special educator and general educator. We envision this supporting a unified, student centered system of education where all educators are prepared and committed to effectively educating all children.

Secondly, the model encourages SUNY faculty and CECSD faculty to co-teach classes and/or seminars. Through the creation of a collaborative class and the extended practicum experiences within one school, this model creates and encourages a more inclusive environment for all involved.

Resource Sharing/Exchange

Resources are already being exchanged with the birth of the unified teaching and learning idea. We are collaboratively planning to increase the awareness and development of all involved.

CECSD faculty is learning about college class offerings, requirements for graduation, and NCATE standards. SUNY faculty is learning about the scheduling and concerns from the CECSD faculty. With continued support, these exchanges will only multiply in number. Our intent is also to build this program throughout the CECSD. SUNY and CECSD staff involved in the pilot may attend grade level and/or staff meetings to "talk up" the initiative, creating more support and involvement.

Sharing of technological equipment will also be encouraged, with the initiative supplying equipment to CESCD buildings to support classes and seminars for teacher candidates that will take place in those spaces.

CESCD Classes taught by SUNY Faculty, and SUNY Classes taught by CECSD Faculty

As mentioned above, the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative encourages faculty from both institutions to co-teach and collaborate to help support not only the SUNY students, but also the CECSD students. Our model will encourage the creation of a co-taught class between SUNY and CECSD as well as create a more "open door" policy for educators from both to share expertise, ideas, and resources.

SUNY Presence in CECSD Classrooms

The unified teaching and learning model proposes that core teams comprising faculty from SUNY Cortland and the CECSD work collaboratively to establish goals, learning outcomes, and activities for inclusive teaching pairs. The plan includes time for the team members to work throughout the year to make changes and/or improvements to the model.

Collaborative Research

At this juncture, SUNY and CECSD have already begun to share discussion and literature. From these we have gained ideas to help refine this proposal, and we are excited to continue to build on our relationship. CECSD classrooms and the nature of UTLI will provide research venues for SUNY Cortland faculty, who will in turn support action research aimed at improving educational practice in CECSD classrooms. The relationship between the two institutions cannot fail but to be strengthened through such research efforts.

Opportunities for Pre-service Teachers to Apply Theory Under Supervision of Faculty from Both Institutions

The unified teaching and learning model proposes that a "core team" of faculty members from both SUNY and CECSD work collaboratively to establish goals, learning outcomes, and activities for inclusive teaching pairs. There is time for core team along with the pre-service teachers assigned to CECSD to reflect on co-teaching and inclusive practices. Topics of reflection/discussion may include community building, creating and implementing goals, IEP development for identified students, and differentiating instruction. The opportunity for all team members to "supervise" will lead to better-prepared pre-service teachers and more effective instruction for the students from CECSD.

Specific Benefits of the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative

CECSD students

The needs of students are at the center of our initiative. Ultimately, all teaching is about the students. We are convinced that when teachers are prepared to respond to diverse needs, all students benefit. If a teacher has more tools to help a student who struggles to acquire basic concepts, s/he will also be a better teacher for students who learn such material at a typical rate. If a teacher has the skills to create a classroom where an unusually impulsive student feels safe and makes positive choices, that will benefit all the students, who are part of a safe, diverse and positive classroom community. Widening the repertoire of competencies and skills in teachers (both pre-service and in-service teachers) inevitably translates into wider repertoires of competencies and skills in their students.

The initiative will include mechanisms for gathering both qualitative and quantitative data on its effectiveness. Such data need to be collected over time and analyzed thoughtfully to account for variations in populations within the student body. We anticipate that the effects of our initiative on students' academic and social skills will be both positive and measurable over time. Studies of inclusive education models consistently demonstrate academic benefits for students with special learning needs, while data regarding academic scores of non-disabled students in inclusive education models either show benefits or flat scores, depending on the studies, but never losses on scores. Regarding social or emotional effects of inclusive schooling, the picture is similar, but reversed: non-disabled students are consistently described as benefiting, while students with special education labels usually are (see, for example, Odom, 2001).

Pre-service teachers

The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative offers Pre-service teachers from two SUNY Cortland programs a unique and invaluable opportunity to learn about collaboration between general and special educators. Both program's teachers are learning more meaningfully how to be inclusive educators within a unified system. The students will see models of how their professors and teachers in the CECSD work together across disciplines in order to meet the needs of all students. They have an opportunity to work with partners from another discipline through some of their coursework, practicum experiences and student teaching in order to develop the communication and problem solving skills that strengthen collaboration. These students will graduate from SUNY Cortland with invaluable professional skills and experience.

Moreover, reflective teaching is especially well supported by the structure of the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative, whose small core teams comprise members with related, but different perspectives. Pre-service teachers already are asked frequently to reflect on their field experiences. However, now they are also given the opportunity to observe firsthand and close up the way that experienced educators reflect on students' needs and abilities, as well as their own

practice as teachers. In this way, new teachers have explicit support in the process of becoming reflective practitioners.

CECSD faculty

The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative dovetails with a unified approach to supporting students with IEPs that has been adopted by the CECSD. Many teachers throughout the district may support the idea of a unified approach in theory, but feel unprepared to respond to the needs of some of the students with special needs that are now spending so much of the day in their general education classrooms. Differentiating instruction for a wider range of students may feel burdensome to some teachers, when they are also feeling pressure regarding their students' achievement on standardized tests.

Our initiative helps working teachers continue to grow and build repertoire of effective ways to include a wider range of students, because they will be working with different SUNY faculty members. The core teams will bring a variety of kinds of proficiency to the table, including expertise regarding foundations of education, pedagogy, child development, the needs and strengths of different populations of students, the teaching of thinking skills, day-to-day experience with students, and problem solving approaches. In situations where teachers feel they need help to support a particular student, many more eyes and hands will be available to generate positive solutions.

General education and special education teachers have much to offer one another. General education teachers tend to have depth of experience regarding the curriculum and the needs of a group as a whole. Special educators tend to have a greater focus on individualizing instruction for students who need extra support in one area or another. A deep understanding of their colleagues' role and contributions makes either a better teacher. The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative fosters such understandings across different disciplines.

SUNY Cortland faculty

All teachers benefit from collaboration. Faculty members from both the Childhood Department and the Inclusive Special Education program already have experience collaborating in the development and implementation of Block semesters for their students, as well as various existing initiatives with public schools related to practicum and student teaching placements. The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative will formalize such relationships and create a structure for ongoing collaboration that will enrich the teaching for SUNY Cortland faculty in the School of Education.

Professional Development school models have been prevalent since the 1990s, and both inclusive education and the school reform movement have also been important forces in education for more than twenty years. Despite this, there is surprisingly little research regarding the interface of inclusive education practices and professional development schools. This suggests that the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative will offer excellent opportunities for faculty research that can be well integrated with teaching in the teacher preparation program and action research on the part of CECSD teachers. Gathering qualitative and quantitative data will

be built into the initiative from the outset. This will not only allow for meaningful, data-driven adjustments to the initiative over time. It will also provide data that can be easily incorporated into research. SUNY faculty members can put more energy into the initiative, because it will support rather than pulling them away from a research agenda.

Governance of the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative

Core team members would be chosen from a pool of faculty members who show interest in the initiative. CECSD administrators and the Dean of the SUNY Cortland School of Education should make final decisions regarding who will be UTLI core team members.

Once established, each core team will delineate members' responsibilities, communication procedures, and approaches to problem solving for itself. Core teams are accountable to the PDS liaison. Students will apply for the opportunity to do their student teaching within the UTLI model by writing an essay explaining why they are interested in the experience. Selection of students will be by a committee made up of core team members and be based on students' essays and faculty recommendations.

Relevant Literature (see also "references" section at the end of this document)

The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative grows out of a belief that part of our role as teachers relates to issues of social justice in the classroom, where *all* students learn and belong. In order to identify a common ground of pertinent literature, we examined literature that we felt would be accessible for different stakeholders and would address four categories: 1) definition of "inclusive" or "unified" education; 2) need for and benefits of such education, 3) significances of collaboration between general and special educators in PDS school context, and 4) existing PDS models of inclusive education.

Definition of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education settings are often defined using the language of the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) as educating students with particular disabilities in the "least restrictive environment" (U.S. Department of Education). "This commitment extends to educating students in the schools they would typically attend if they did not have a disability (Cooper & Sayeski, 2003, p. 6)." While most authors who are committed to inclusive educators agree that the language "least restrictive environment" was an important first step, some now reject it to the extent that it implies a continuum of services that also includes *more* restrictive options (Brown et al., 1989; Nisbet, 2004). What is generally agreed is that an inclusive or "unified" school is one where all students belong, are accepted, and have opportunities both to offer support to and to receive it from other members of the community, while having individual educational needs met (Biklen, 1992; Sapon-Shevin, 2000/2001; Stainback & Stainback, 1990). Inclusive education also means a commitment to bringing support services to students rather than students coming to services (Cooper & Sayeski, 2003). The notion of unified (or inclusive)

education suggests participation of students across many categories of difference (e.g., race, ethnicity, social class, gender, etc.) and not just students whose abilities vary widely.

Needs for and Benefits of Inclusive Education

Research shows that school changes must address the needs of all students, not just those with disabilities, and that "school improvement" replaces references to inclusion (Jung, 2007; Kraayenoord, 2003; Mclesky & Waldron, 2002;). Such research findings call for teachers and administrators to rethink and restructure their programs in both special and general education to improve the education of all students (Kraayennoord, 2003). These studies identify the need to prepare general education teachers to become competent to respond to the needs of special education students. Thus there is a call from general education teachers for professional development in various areas (Kraayenoord, 2003; Voltz, 2001). Sapon-Shevin (date)

Potential benefits to be gained from including students with disabilities into general education settings include: a) special education students remain with their peers and are more likely to be integrated into the daily activities of schools; b) general education students gain from their associations with students with disabilities as they learn more about social, cognitive, and emotional differences of others, they also learn more about themselves; c) general education teachers benefit from working with and learning instructional techniques from special educators and related service personnel; and d) special educators benefit from gaining access to general education curriculum and working in contexts that offer a range of positive interactions for students with disabilities (Jung, 2007; Lewis & Doorlag, 1999).

Significances of Collaboration between General and Special Educators in PDS School Context

Collaboration between general and special educators enables teachers to take all of the teaching responsibilities for all the students assigned to a classroom (Gately & Gately, 2001). Honigsfeld and Dove (2008) defined such collaboration as a traditional collaborative partnership between a general teacher and a service provider, who, in this context, refers to a specialist, a remedial math teacher, a reading specialist, and a teacher of gifted and talented, and more recently, the English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher. Their study highlights the significances of such a collaboration as an effective support for inclusive practices to accommodate the needs of all students, both students with and without disabilities, and as a model to help all students meet the national, state, and local standards.

Inclusive education approaches suggest that students of widely varying abilities can be successful in age appropriate classrooms if teachers are supported by an inclusive school culture, employ a universal design for learning approach (Hitchcock, C., & Stahl, S.), and adapt or "differentiate" instruction as required by students' strengths and needs (Udvari-Solner, 1996; Janney & Snell, 2004). The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative promises a philosophical change, signaling that the general education teacher at the pre-service level must have extensive opportunities to develop adequate knowledge, teaching skills, and positive attitudes to work with students with various abilities and disabilities. Similar reform efforts showed that pre-service teachers in general and special education demonstrated positive changes in their beliefs and behaviors. Such changes include a reduced fear of human differences accompanied by increased

comfort and awareness, growth in social cognition, improvement in self-concept of non-disabled students, development of personal principles and ability to assume an advocacy role towards their peers and friends with disabilities, and warm and caring friendships (Vaidya & Zaslavsky, 2000).

Existing PDS Models of Inclusive Education

Many colleges and schools of education have implemented the Professional development school (PDS) models as part of reform efforts to improve pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development programs (Voltz, 2001; Peters, 1999). Our proposed model shares many similar features with Purdue University's PDS model, which has been established and developed since 1996 (PDS Professional Development Schools, 2008).

First, we resonate with the three interlocking themes of the Purdue PDS model: quality, diversity, and collaboration. This model allows its members to recognize the value of diversity in individuals' cultures, instructional styles, and unique needs as life-long learners. Within this model, the quality of instructional practices and reform efforts is also recognized as essential in effectively meeting diverse needs. Through collaboration among all participants, the PDS model provides opportunities for educators from the university and school sites to learn from each other and share professional expertise and best practices.

Second, we share the beliefs of the Purdue PDS model that university educators directly support educational reform in the schools to which the teacher candidates are assigned and provide feedback to support reform occurring at any PDS site. This Purdue model makes promotion of the beliefs and best practices of the school sites its priority and encourages university and classroom educators to collaboratively develop pre-service programs.

Third, the Purdue model presents a variety of activities for all PDS participants and entails three equally balanced functions of the model: 1) extended field placements for teacher candidates, (2) leadership opportunities for classroom teachers, and (3) professional development support provided by university faculty. These three components are the key elements in any teacher education programs and meet the teacher education standards.

Fourth, the Purdue model clearly states the roles and responsibilities of all PDS participants – including university instructors, host teachers from school sites, school principal(s), and teacher candidates. Such clear statements of each player's role and responsibilities assure the quality and continuation of the PDS model.

Last, the success of the Purdue PDS model affirms that both schools and universities benefit from such a partnership. Such benefits motivate all participants to invest time and resources to keep improving the model.

Overview of NCATE/PDS Standards Addressed

NCATE Standard	*How Standard is Addressed by UTLI*

I. LEARNING COMMUNITY
    ▪ Supports multiple learners
    ▪ Work and practice are inquiry-based and focused on learning
    ▪ Common vision of teaching/learning, based in research & practitioner knowledge
    ▪ Instrument of change
    ▪ Extended learning community
	▪ Faculty exchanges (SUNY Cortland classes hosted at CECSD; co-teaching of SUNY courses by faculty from SUNY/CECSD)
	▪ Vision/Mission shared by all stakeholders
	▪ Co-teaching model places student teacher general/special education teams with CECSD co-teaching host teams
	▪ Collaborative research and dissemination of findings
	▪ Extension of the UTLI to additional PDS partner schools, after pilot program and assessment of pilot program

II. ACCOUNTABILITY & QUALITY ASSURANCE
    ▪ Develop professional accountability
    ▪ Assure public accountability
    ▪ Set PDS participation criteria
    ▪ Develop assets, collect information, use results
	▪ Inquiry-based, reflective practice connected to Vision/Mission
	▪ Ongoing data collection and analysis, formal and informal
	▪ Dissemination of our learning and practice via written and verbal resource sharing and exchange, professional conferences, and publication
	▪ PDS partners are accredited; a formal selection process for the initial project participants will be established, applied, and revised based upon formative reflection and development
	▪ Collaborative research and dissemination of findings

III. COLLABORATION	
- Engage in joint work - Invite engagement and critique from broader education and policy communities - Set standards for participation and learning outcomes together - Involve families - Design roles and structures to enhance collaboration and develop parity - Systematically recognize and celebrate joint work and contributions of each partner	- Co-teaching models for SUNY Cortland/CECSD educators and student teacher placements - Collaborative research and dissemination of findings - Stakeholders established Vision/Mission, planned project, and will implement the project together - Undergraduate Family Practicum (FSA 280) inclusive special education majors from SUNY Cortland work with families whose children are enrolled in CECSD - Planning, structures, expectations, resources, rewards and responsibilities are clearly defined and equitably shared among all stakeholders, with an emphasis on *inclusive, collaborative* co-teaching and learning - Informal and formal celebration and recognition will involve all participants: P-12, teacher candidates, CECSD and SUNY Cortland educators
IV. DIVERSITY AND EQUITY	
- Ensure equitable opportunities to learn - Evaluate policies and practices to support equitable learning outcomes - Recruit and support diverse participants	- Co-teaching model for student teaching pairs general and special education teachers and student teacher teams in inclusive classrooms - Collaborative research and dissemination of findings - Diversity is inherent in the student population and faculty of SUNY Cortland and CECSD

V. STRUCTURES, RESOURCES, & ROLES	
- Establish governance and support structures - Ensure progress towards goals - Create PDS roles - Resources are garnered and allocated to support PDS work - Use effective communication	- Stakeholders for initial project include general and special educators and administrators - The PDS partnership and UTLI are "woven into the fabric" of our Vision/Mission, and the core values and culture of SUNY Cortland and CECSD - UTLI is committed to formal and informal, formative and summative assessment, and to collaborative and applied research - UTLI creates collaborative teaching and learning partnerships, which move beyond traditional, parallel general and special education practices - Intellectual and economic resources will be continually garnered and allocated, beginning with this grant application, and continuing with anticipated external funding, as the Initiative expands, and as formal outcomes and practices are communicated - PDS partners receive and exchange information, and plans, on a formally and informally scheduled basis, and are linked to the broader school district and university communities through PDS leadership by key administrators

Projected Budget and External Funding Plan

The Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative (UTLI)					
PDS Model: August 2008 - July 2009 (with 4 year projection)					
	Yr. 1	**Yr. 2**	**Yr. 3**	**Yr. 4**	**Total**
Core Team Stipends					
Cortland City School District Faculty	8288	8620	25692	35856	78456
1st yr.: 4 gen. ed. tchrs/4 special ed. tchrs.					
$20.72 per hour for 5 hours/month x 10 months					
2nd yr.: 4 gen. ed. tchrs/4 special ed. tchrs.					
$21.55 per hour for 5 hours/month x 10 months					
3rd yr.: 4 gen. ed. tchrs/4 special ed. tchrs.					
$22.41 per hour for 5 hours/month x 10 months					
4th yr.: continue professional dev./ no stipends					
$22.41 per hour for 5 hours/month x 10 months					
SUNY Cortland Faculty - *ONLY PAID DURING EXTERNAL FUNDING PERIOD*					
1st yr.: 1 CEC faculty/1 FSA faculty	0	0	0	0	0
2nd yr.: 1 CEC faculty/1 FSA faculty					
3rd yr.: 2 CEC faculty/2 FSA faculty					
4th yr.: 2 CED faculty/2 FSA faculty					
Materials and Supplies					
Funds for community events (publication, paper supplies)	500	500	500	500	2000
Clerical materials for grant activity (printing, publication)	500	200	200	200	1100
"Smart computer cart" for CECSD	4880	0	2440	2440	9760
Computer, projector, Elmo, and VCR/DVD capability					
1st yr.: 2 school with cart (2 purchases)					
Dell Inspiron 1721-P81 Notebook PC - $900 @ Staples.com					
Epson PowerLite LCD Projector - $750 @ Staples.com					
Elmo Doc. Camera 110XG - $650 @ Protechprojection.com					
Sony SLV-D380P DVD/VCR (w. cables) - $115 @ Amazon.com					
Logitech X 140 2.0 speakers - $25 @ Amazon.com					
2nd yr.: 0 purchases					
3rd yr.: 3 schools with cart (1 purchase)					
4th yr.: 4 schools with cart (1 purchase)					
Research Support					
Graduate Research Assistant	2500	2500	2500	2500	10000
10 hours/week/academic yr.					
Conference Attendance/Presentation	1000	2000	2000	2000	7000
Travel, registration, presentation preparation					
Total	**17668**	**13820**	**33332**	**43496**	**108316**

After our project is well underway, we will begin applying for external funding. We have targeted a grant titled "Combined Priority for Personnel Preparation," one of the awards possible under the *Personnel Development to Improve Services and Results for Children with Disabilities initiative*. The grant is made possible through the United States Department of Education Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. The grant's purpose is to improve the quality, and increase the number of personnel who are fully credentialed to serve children with disabilities and supports projects such as ours that work to better prepare inservice and preservice teachers to educate students with disabilities. This grant initiative stresses preservice teachers' training and practice opportunities. As our proposed PDS model outlines, we seek to do so in a comprehensive way by integrating preservice and inservice teachers' training and practice in their classrooms. The targeted grant award is for $175,000/year, not to exceed $500,000/5 years. The co-PIs on the grant will be Kimberly Rombach and David Smukler, one professor from Foundations and Social Advocacy and one professor from Childhood/Early Childhood Education.

Our grant's funding and planned activity timeline is as follows:

Fiscal Year	Funding Source	Planned Activity
2008-09	Local PDS funding	Pilot initiative; begin data collection for external funding
2009-10	Local PDS funding	Refine data collection; analyze data; report findings and prepare findings for external funding
2010-11	Local PDS funding	Formally apply for external grant
2011-12	Local PDS funding	Take action steps to begin PDS expansion to large-scale initiative (K-12)
2012-13 through 2016-17	External grant	Expand PDS initiative to large-scale district implementation (K-12)

Our PDS Budget requests approximately $18,000.00 for the first year, increasing as the size of the project increases to a total of ~$108,000.00. Please refer to our estimated budget with a 4-year projection.

The following items are included in our proposed project's budget:

- Support for collaborative meeting time (approximately one hour / week during the semester for each team member)
- Stipend for CSCED teachers (to begin: $20.72 per hour for 4 hours/month; this is designed to be the same rate teachers are presently offered for other sorts of extra after-school activity)
- Funding a graduate assistant (10 hours/week to begin); this would be an especially good opportunity for a graduate student with teaching experience

- o Funds for community events to support families' participation (part of "Phase 4" of implementation roadmap)
- o Funding for "smart carts," with computer, projector, Elmo, and VCR/DVD capability; these would be located in CECSD schools to support teaching related to the initiative that will occur there
- o Funds to support conference presentations about our model (e.g., AERA)
- o Clerical support (badges, sign-in, photocopying, publicity, etc.)

Evaluation Plan

The effectiveness of the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative will be assessed in five areas: the preparedness of teacher candidates in both the Childhood Education and ISE programs to teach diverse groups of learners, the effectiveness of instruction from host teachers in CECSD schools and from faculty members of SUNY Cortland, the effectiveness of team collaboration process, the satisfaction with our initiative by various stakeholders (e.g., FSA & C/EC faculty, CECSD faculty, families) and the impact on children's learning in CECSD schools. We will use both formative and summative assessment procedures through quantitative and qualitative assessment methods.

1. Preparedness of teacher candidates for unified classrooms

In order to measure the preparedness of teacher candidates as inclusive educators, we will focus on the critical teacher quality for the effective inclusive education such as teacher candidates' attitudes toward inclusion of children with disabilities, their self-efficacy and their inclusive classroom practices. Through our inclusive student teaching process, participating teacher candidates from Childhood/Early Childhood Education (C/EC) program and teacher candidates from Foundations and Social Advocacy (FSA) program will be expected to have more willingness to teach all children in their classrooms and will be familiar with best practices in inclusive education. Some examples of inclusive practices include curricular adaptations, Universal Design for Learning, using peer supports, and using assistive technology.

    a. **Summative assessment plan**: We will use quantitative assessment methods to measure the teacher candidates' changes in their attitudes toward inclusion and in their self-efficacy as teachers. Both variables will assessed on a likert-scaled based on their self-report on survey instruments. For their learning in instructional practices for inclusive education, teacher candidates' knowledge in Universal Design for Learning and Curricular Adaptations for students with and without disabilities will be measured through planning tasks based on hypothetical classroom descriptions including students with specific special needs.
    Timeline for this assessment: Teacher candidates will be assessed regarding these three variables at the beginning of the student teaching semester and at the end of student teaching semester.

b. **Formative assessment plan**: Two forms of formative assessment will be used. Those are the weekly reflection papers from teacher candidates and host teachers and the semi-structured interview. Teacher candidates and host teachers will be required to write weekly reflection papers about their learning. These reflection papers will be stored on WebCT and will be analyzed qualitatively by supervisors who are faculty members of either the C/EC or FSA department. This ongoing assessment process will provide opportunities to monitor teacher candidates' progress and will provide opportunities for Cortland faculty members to participate in the problem solving process.
Semi-structured interview will be used to monitor teacher candidates' progress in their inclusive philosophy, attitudes toward inclusion, self-efficacy, and their progress in inclusive practices.

Timeline for this assessment: Throughout the student teaching semester, the reflection papers will be reviewed weekly through WebCT and the feedback from faculty supervisors of SUNY Cortland will be shared. Faculty supervisors of SUNY Cortland will conduct semi-structured interview with teacher candidates three times during student teaching semester.

2. Effectiveness of inclusive practices of CECSD and SUNY Cortland faculty members

The same measurement tools that will be used for teacher candidates will be used to assess the quality of inclusive practices of faculty members from CECSD and SUNY Cortland. Through the process of "the Unified Teaching and Learning Initiative" model, participating teachers from CECSD as well as SUNY faculty members would gain more positive attitudes toward inclusion and toward students with disabilities in their classrooms and use more inclusive instructional practices.

As educators, both faculty members' attitudes toward students with disabilities, self-efficacy, and their inclusive practices will be assessed throughout the process.

3. Team Collaboration

Since collaborative and positive team process is as crucial as each team member's individual teacher quality for successful inclusive education for all children, we will also monitor the effectiveness of team process for collaborative student teaching teams. Each team is comprised of four teacher candidates from C/EC and FSA programs, collaborating teachers, and faculty members of C/EC and FSA programs.

Formative assessment plan: Guided reflection questions will be provided for the required weekly reflection for teacher candidates and host teachers. Reflection on team effectiveness will be analyzed qualitatively in terms of shared goals, responsibilities and effectiveness in decision making.

>**Timeline for this assessment**: Throughout the student teaching semester, weekly reflection from teacher candidates and host teachers will be collected through WebCT and will be analyzed by SUNY faculty.

4. *Children's learning outcome*

   a. **Summative assessment on children's academic performanc**e: quantitative test results on quantitative results on tests used to measure academic progress (including state standardized tests) will be collected and monitored by CECSD.

   b. **Formative assessment on children's academic performance**: Throughout the student teaching semester, children's learning will be assessed through curriculum-based assessment.

   c. **Formative assessment on children's social gains in inclusive classroom**: informal assessment will be develop and used by teacher candidates and host teachers to observe children's interactions in classroom. SUNY faculty will conduct interview with children and observation on children's social interactions in classroom.

   d. **Timelines for these assessments**: Children test results will be monitored over time to track long-term effects of inclusive education by CECSD. For both formative assessments, on-going assessment will be used throughout the semester.

5. *Satisfaction by stakeholders*

Summative assessment will be used to track satisfaction with our initiative by various stakeholders (FSA & C/EC faculty, CECSD faculty, families of CECSD students). Through the ongoing conversations in team meetings and community-based events that we planned in the Phase 4: Inclusive Community-Wide Dialogues, we will incorporate various stakeholders' input and feedback into our development of curriculum and structure of practicum and student teaching experiences.

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