

**Department of Middle and Secondary Education:  
Paul Weber Award Stage 1 Application**

**Section 1. MISE Department Profile**

The mission of the Department of Middle and Secondary Education (MISE) is to prepare Critical Thinkers, Problem Solvers, and Professional Leaders who affirm principles of social justice and equity, in order to positively influence in our communities and schools. As part of a research-based university, the department faculty advances knowledge through theoretical and applied research to support college and career readiness. We prepare teachers to be exemplary professional practitioners and scholars, strong in their content knowledge, as well as in effective research-informed teaching strategies. It is through the preparation of the strongest teachers that we seek to contribute to continually improve the quality of life for all in our metropolitan community, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, and the nation. MISE provides extensive course work and corresponding field experiences throughout the community to prepare candidates with the knowledge and competencies of research-based best practices. Every program, from initial preparation of teachers to our Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum and Instruction, seeks to prepare educators to advocate for all learners. The MISE program strives to develop educators who embrace reflective practices and promote, design and implement positive educational experiences that build on the strength and resiliency of all students and families.

**Section 2. Department activities that promote teaching and learning excellence**

Our standards-driven, researched-based Clinical Teacher Preparation Program promotes teaching and learning for excellence for students, faculty, and school-based educators. While multifaceted and complex, three pillars have defined our efforts to build what is now a state- and nationally- recognized model for the preparation and ongoing professional development of middle and secondary teachers: (1) **Collaborative efforts to improve teacher learning**, including the engagement of 10 A&S University departments in revising content courses for teachers, (2) **Commitment to clinical practice**, connected to and extending the Signature Partnership Initiative and (3) **Partnering with schools for Equity and Social Justice**, including the creation and expansion of endorsements and certificates for advanced teacher candidates. Each is briefly described in this section.

**Collaborative efforts to improve teacher learning.** National standards written by the Association of Middle Level Educators (AMLE, 2012), emerging research on the middle-level learner, and local data and feedback from principals indicated our Middle-level program needed to be revamped. Middle level teacher candidates must understand the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge to help young adolescents make connections among subject areas. Teachers are better able to develop and implement relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory curriculum when they are prepared to teach in *two* content areas. In the 2012-2013 academic year the faculty of the MISE department worked in collaboration with faculty from 10

departments in the College of Arts & Sciences to create program options for teacher candidates to seek certification in grades 5-9 in two content areas. School personnel in Jefferson County Public Schools (JCPS) and Ohio Valley Educational Cooperative (OVEC) provided input and feedback. This collaboration resulted in 11 combinations for dual content area certification for our teacher candidates. During the Academic years of 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 the Department worked on transition plans and collaborated with advisors in the Education Advising and Student Services Center to transition to the new two-area middle-level teacher preparation program.

Beyond the collaboration within the University, we have collaborated across Universities. Specifically, we have formed a strong relationship with the University of Kentucky Department of Curriculum and Instruction. This has resulted in enhancing programs at both institutions, for example, infusing live classroom feed from 6-12 classrooms into teacher education classrooms at both institutions. This collaboration has resulted in an emerging research agenda, as well as increased the visibility and respect for teacher preparation at the University of Louisville within the state and nationally.

**Commitment to clinical practice.** The NCATE (2010) Blue Ribbon Panel report calls for teacher preparation that is clinically-based and integrated with the practice and pedagogy of learning to teach. School-embedded teacher preparation provides the opportunity to guide candidates to the explicit connections between what they are learning in their coursework and what they are observing and experiencing in their field work (Darling-Hammond, 2006, 2010). When candidates have the opportunity to participate in a school setting beyond a prescribed number of observation hours, they are able to see the importance of creating learning communities in their classrooms that support and nurture the development of their students (Howell, 2013). The MISE department has worked to increase clinical experiences for our teacher candidate over the past five years. Across all teacher preparation programs, we increased the hours candidates spend in schools (prior to student teaching) from a range of 75 – 125 hours to *at least* 200 hours. Not only are teacher candidates in schools more, they have increased their responsibilities and contributions within the schools, for example completing a leadership project for the school in which they student teach. In the fall of 2013, MISE received funding to design and implement a formal, school-embedded, clinically-based teacher preparation program with Westport Middle School in Jefferson County Public Schools. Three-fourths of the faculty in MISE were engaged in this initiative, contributing in a way aligned with their expertise. Faculty efforts included school-embedded classes where teacher candidates get real-time experiences with students and teachers during the school day. Co-teaching with classroom teachers and engaging in regular activities with schools better prepares our students to be teachers in an urban context and enhance faculty teaching and learning while they are working in schools alongside teachers and teacher candidates. Professional development focused on mathematics, supporting diverse learners, reading in the content area, preparing Gifted/Talented students, and so on. This relationship has led to a significant increase in community engagement with the clinical site through a variety of programs impacting students, teacher candidates, teachers, administrators, and university faculty. This site, and our clinical

model has received national recognition and local media attention, as recently as a full page article in the Courier Journal in August 7, 2015.

Building on the middle level clinical model, the MISE department received a second grant to extend the clinically-based program at Seneca High School, a large suburban high school in JCPS. It builds on the previously established working collaboration among educators to offer a more authentic, comprehensive, and systemic approach to teacher preparation using a clinical model. It also builds on knowledge gained from CEHD's clinical model implementation at the elementary and middle school levels and in that respect represents further expansion, scale up, and sustainability of CEHD's clinical model more broadly. Further, to the extent that this project represents expansion of MISE's clinical model to include teacher educators of secondary education across all four core content areas, it demonstrates even further development on the continuum in that related strategies are becoming more integrated into the work of our department.

**Partnering with schools for Equity and Social Justice.** While the two pillars described so far are also focused on equity and social justice, the Department has pursued partnerships to work with practicing teachers to enhance their ability to support traditionally underserved populations. MISE formed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with JCPS to prepare teachers with English as a Second Language (ESL) Endorsement. Working with the JCPS Newcomers Academy, we now run a summer-intensive ESL Endorsement program that annually prepares 15 – 20 teachers. These teachers are then hired to work at the Newcomers Academy, or in other JCPS schools with high populations of English language learners. In addition, and in collaboration with A&S, MISE developed a Diversity certificate. JCPS fully-funded a cohort of teachers to pursue their Master's in our Department, resulting in new diversity-prepared leadership capacity in JCPS.

### **Section 3. Department Assessment of Learning and Continual Improvement**

The CEHD/MISE Continuous Assessment Record and Documentation System (CARDS) is used to monitor student learning from admissions, midpoint, and exit (CARDS 1, 2, 3 for teacher preparation and CARDS 4, 5, 6 for advanced programs). Each required course in every program has a signature assessment, a Hallmark Assessment Task (HAT), which was strategically created to address selected professional standards. This ensures that all standards for teachers are addressed in a strategic manner across the program. Progress is monitored through an E-data system, LiveText, and Digital Measures. This data is analyzed by program and reported annually on the university's Student Learner Outcome (SLO) report in which we focus on 10 Key Assessments that are critical to effective teaching. In addition, the data is used to monitor individual teacher candidates, providing additional support when needed through Intensive Assistance Plans. Exit requirements include performance based work samples, including effective unit design and implementation, leadership project in local schools, and a positive dispositions assessment.