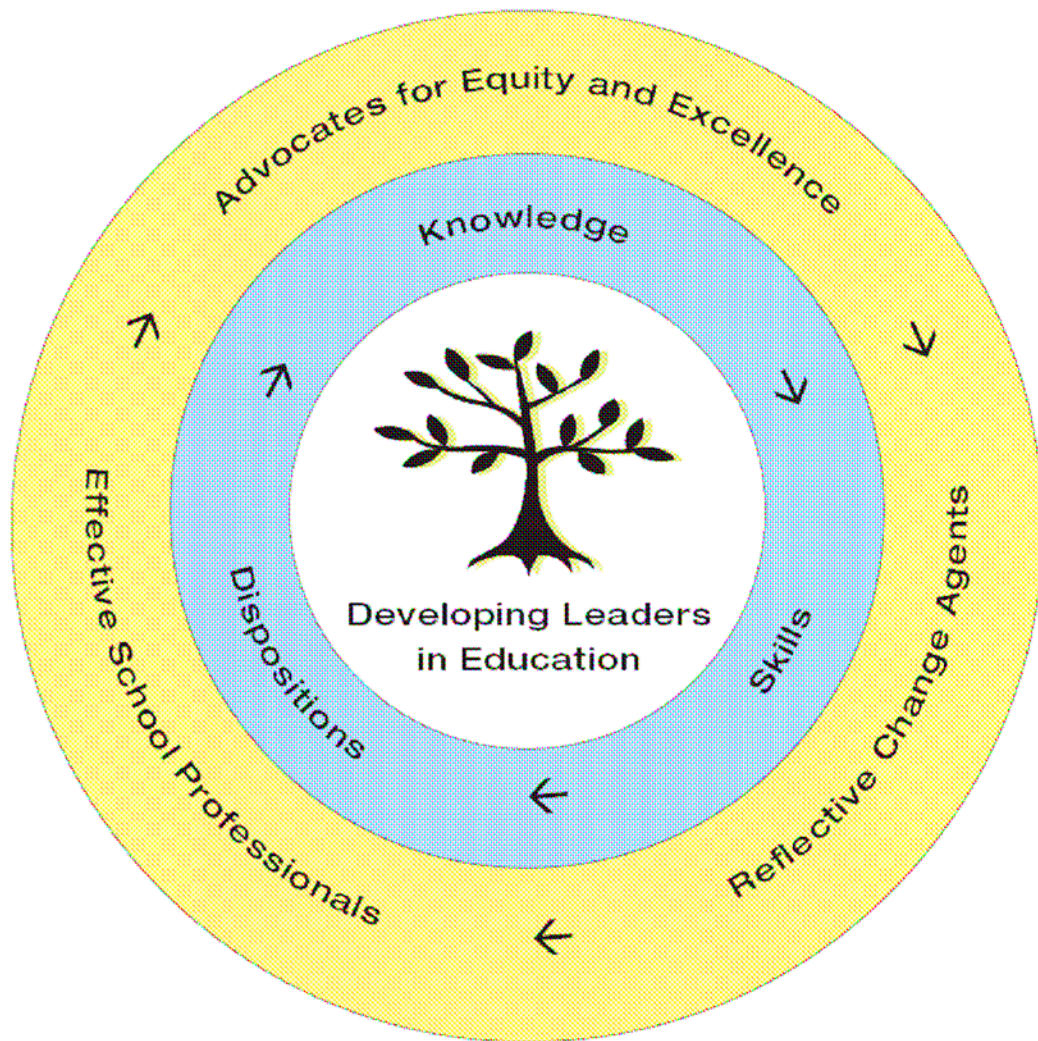


Exhibit 2.1

Conceptual Framework (wait 15 seconds for image to appear)



Park University School for Education

Leaders in Education:
Effective School Professionals, Reflective Change Agents,
Advocates for Equity and Excellence

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Conceptual Framework of the Park University School for Education

The conceptual framework is focused on “Developing Leaders in Education: Effective School Professionals, Reflective Change Agents, Advocates for Equity and Excellence.”

The School for Education’s model is built upon the idea that leaders in education develop over time, in an environment that nurtures that development. Just as a tree grows and flourishes in a supportive environment, so the developing leader in education grows, putting down progressively deeper roots, and increasing in strength and in influence with maturity. The concentric circles of the graphic symbolize the “rings” of a tree. The round shape of the rings symbolizes the holistic way that an educational leader grows. The elements that go into this growth process are not developed separately; rather, they develop together as a whole and eventually merge in a unique way for each educational leader. The first ring surrounding the core symbolizes the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions that an educator must develop over time in order to become a leader in education. The outer ring represents the roles the developing educational leader begins to take on as she or he matures as an educator: Effective School Professional, Reflective Change Agent, Advocate for Equity and Excellence for All Learners. These roles, when in evidence, represent the fulfillment of the School of Education’s mission as well as the attainment of the requisite Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions. Just as healthy trees continue to grow and flourish, graduates of the School for Education will continue to grow and develop throughout their professional lives.

PART I: MISSIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND UNIT

PARK UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of Park University, an entrepreneurial institution of learning, is to provide access to academic excellence, which will prepare learners to think critically, communicate effectively and engage in lifelong learning while serving a global community.

The School for Education's mission of developing leaders in education is very much in alignment with the mission of Park University. As leaders in education, our graduates will be effective school professionals, reflective change agents, and advocates for equity and excellence for all learners. To carry out these roles requires critical thinking, effective communication, and lifelong learning in the context of serving a global community, all of which are central to Park University's mission statements. These important components of academic excellence are reflected in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions expected of graduates of all programs within the School for Education.

The link to entrepreneurship is also present, if one does not limit the definition of entrepreneurship to the traditional business-oriented meaning. Educational leaders are entrepreneurs in the sense that they are continually seeking new ways to solve problems. Problem-solving is one of the skills included among our Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions, and is definitely part of the curricula in all education programs. In the current climate of mandates, high-stakes assessment, and changing curricula that sometimes threaten to take away the individual rights of learners and teachers, educator-advocates will need to be even more enterprising problem-solvers and decision-makers than ever before if they are to survive within the system and still continue to focus on meeting learners' needs.

Exhibit 2.1

The School for Education's commitment to and advocacy for equity and excellence for all learners meshes with Park University's commitment to serving a global community. Although that commitment certainly includes learners worldwide, an educational leader does not need to travel far to encounter the global community. American schools today are increasingly diverse, and school professionals will need to work to meet the needs of learners representing many countries, cultures, languages, and backgrounds. Advocacy for equity and excellence for all learners means learners from all backgrounds. In many ways, Park's diverse student body, which has students representing many different nations and cultures, mirrors the global culture that educational leaders will encounter in today's schools and in the schools of the future.

SCHOOL FOR EDUCATION MISSION STATEMENT

The School for Education at Park University, an institution committed to diversity and best practice, prepares educators to be effective school professionals, reflective change agents, and advocates for equity and excellence for all learners.

Park University's School for Education is committed to the preparation of candidates who can assume leadership roles in the field of education. As leaders in the field of education, our candidates will be effective school professionals, reflective change agents, and advocates for equity and excellence for all learners.

As effective school professionals, our candidates will know how they should teach, understand whom they are teaching, and possess the skills to teach effectively. They will be well prepared to establish supportive and enriching learning environments; they will know how to continually assess student learning.

Our candidates will be reflective change agents. They will engage in collaborative problem-solving and critical inquiry, work toward supporting all students in reaching their potential, and continually assess, change, and improve their practice for the purpose of helping all students reach their potential. Our candidates will be teacher-researchers who understand the importance of reflecting on their own teaching and learning.

Our candidates will be advocates for equity and excellence for all learners within the context of a democratic society. In Park's School for Education, equity is seen as the state, quality, or ideal of social justice and fairness. It begins with the recognition that there are individual and cultural achievements among all social groups and that these achievements benefit all students and educators. Equity and excellence must be pursued

Exhibit 2.1

concurrently to assure that all students are well served and that all are encouraged to perform at their highest levels.

PART II: VISIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY AND UNIT

PARK UNIVERSITY VISION STATEMENT

Park University will be a renowned international leader in providing innovative educational opportunities for learners within the global society.

Innovative educational opportunities will be required if all learners' needs are to be met in the 21st century. The School for Education, like Park University, is committed to staying current and welcoming innovation. The goal is to provide all learners with the best, most "state-of-the art" learning opportunities, based on the best of what is currently known in educational theory and practice. The current curricula for all programs were developed with the idea that educational leaders need to be prepared for the ever-changing developments within the field of education. It is not enough to acquire a repertoire of specific procedures; rather, to remain innovative in a changing world requires a mindset that welcomes but also questions changes as they arise, and advocates for learners when those changes are not in their best interests.

SCHOOL FOR EDUCATION VISION STATEMENT

The School for Education at Park University is to be known as a leader in the preparation of educators who will address the needs, challenges, and possibilities of the 21st century.

There are many challenges for educational leaders, and those challenges can be expected to increase as the 21st century unfolds. It is our vision that candidates of our programs will be equipped to meet these needs and challenges and to serve as leaders in making the changes necessary to empower every student. The importance of these challenges has been underscored in recent years by governmental mandates that attempt to insure that "no child is left behind" in education. Sometimes these mandates have

Exhibit 2.1

detracted from the empowerment of educators to make the best decisions regarding curriculum and instruction for all learners. This has created its own new challenge: educators need to be even more strongly grounded in a professional knowledge base than ever to survive, maintain professional integrity, and meet all learners' needs in today's schools. Mandates alone will not produce the desired results; it is committed, empowered educational leaders who will bring the nation toward the vision of "no child left behind."

The focus on serving all learners is a high priority in the School for Education. The overriding vision is that when all learners' needs are met, all learners can achieve their highest potential as thinking, literate, participating citizens and lifelong learners.

PART III: PURPOSES AND GOALS

A candidate who meets the five goals below provides evidence that he or she is developing as an effective school professional, a reflective change agent, and an advocate for equity and excellence for all learners. The goals below summarize the core Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions that are at the heart of the developmental process, and are rooted in the Core Beliefs that make up the knowledge base that drives our programs. These goals serve as a guideline for everything we do with our candidates as we work with them to nurture their development as professionals.

1. Candidates exhibit behavior that demonstrates respect for all individuals, advocacy for equity and excellence, and the belief that all can develop, learn, and make positive contributions to society.
2. Candidates possess the necessary content knowledge and professional knowledge to support and enhance student development and learning, including meeting student needs across physical, social, psychological, cultural, and intellectual

Exhibit 2.1

contexts, as demonstrated by varied, evidence-based strategies, including technology.

3. Candidates possess the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct and interpret appropriate assessments and to use the information from assessments to develop and adapt instruction that meets learners' needs and maintains their engagement.
4. Candidates exhibit behavior that demonstrates a belief that continuous inquiry and reflection can improve professional practice.
5. Candidates view and conduct themselves as professionals, providing leadership in their chosen field, and communicating effectively with students and stakeholders.

PART IV: CORE BELIEFS AND KNOWLEDGE BASES

CORE BELIEF #1:

School professionals are advocates for equity and excellence for all. Every person can learn, and the goal of education is to give every individual the best possible opportunities to reach his or her highest potential. (Goal 1)

The School for Education at Park University is committed to providing educational leaders who will work to make sure that all learners have the best possible opportunity to learn, succeed, and participate in our democratic society. When educational leaders with this commitment see that any individual is being prevented from having the best opportunity to learn, they must take on the role of advocates for equity and excellence for all learners, working to restore equity and excellence even if it means challenging powerful entities. Candidates who will work in today's diverse schools must be educated to be advocates who can build an educational system that can end oppression and promote justice for all individuals (Wallace, 2000).

We believe that all individuals can learn and thrive if they are provided with instruction that meets their needs in a supportive environment. Making sure this happens should be the first priority of an effective school professional. Providing the best opportunities to learn for all requires that educators must work diligently to discover, value, and maximize the strengths that all learners bring to the teaching-learning process. Luis Moll (Moll, et al, 1992) wrote about the "funds of knowledge" that all students, especially students from diverse cultures, bring with them to school. Moll and his colleagues sought to discover and use the strengths of each student's home culture as a bridge between the home and school and as a pathway to learning for students whose opportunities to learn often been limited by a "mismatch" between their cultures and the dominant culture of schooling. Researchers believe that cultural mismatch is a factor that

Exhibit 2.1

limits learning opportunities for many students of color, and contributes to the so-called “achievement gap” that persists in American schools (Delpit, 1995, 2003; Ogbu, 2003; Gibson & Ogbu, 1991). Candidates who will teach in America’s increasingly diverse schools need to be fully aware of the issues involved in providing culturally responsive teaching for all students, and need a repertoire of strategies to provide such instruction (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1992; Gay, 2002; Merryfield, 2000). Schools and school professionals need to serve their communities instead of creating barriers (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; McKnight, 1987).

Viewing learners in terms of strengths can also relate to how we view learners with diverse cognitive abilities and language skills. Learners may possess strengths in many areas; it is important to discover and value each learner’s unique ways of developing and learning. J. P. Comer (Comer et al, 1999; Comer, 2005) describes six developmental pathways along which children mature: physical, cognitive, psychological, language, social, and ethical. A learner may have strengths within any one of these areas. Ken Goodman (1982) writes about the need to discover and “revalue” learners’ strengths rather than constantly viewing learners through a deficit lens. A deficit view, which works to discover and “remediate” deficits, can often underestimate, underrepresent, and undervalue the knowledge and skills that learners actually possess. For example, a child whose dialect differs from the standard English dialect accepted in schools may unconsciously change the written text to fit her own dialect without changing the meaning. According to Goodman, this is a sign of linguistic strength and deep cognitive processing, but a deficit view would consider the child’s changes as “errors” and recommend reading remediation. The School of Education does not accept

Exhibit 2.1

the deficit view, and key learning experiences for candidates are structured around a philosophy that emphasizes learner strengths and stresses the dispositions of respect for others and willingness to do what is necessary to help learners learn.

Teaching to learners' strengths will not happen in classrooms where "one size fits all" instruction is the norm. Effective school professionals work to provide differentiated instruction that attends to all learners' needs and learning styles (Gardner, 1993). In differentiated classrooms (Tomlinson, 1999, 2003), teachers first discover where their students are, and begin there. They "call upon a range of instructional strategies, and become partners with their students to see that both what is learned and the learning environment are shaped to the learner (Tomlinson, 1999, p.2)." Researchers continue to build a growing knowledge base that identifies instructional strategies that have a high probability of enhancing achievement for all students (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Marzano, 2001). Candidates need the content and professional knowledge to build a repertoire of such strategies, as well as the instructional and problem-solving skills to implement and adapt instruction that meets all learners' needs.

Many current policies and their associated practices, regardless of their positive-sounding labels, seem to stress the deficit view rather than focusing on learners' strengths. Jonathan Kozol (1991) writes about the inequities that are manifested when standardized testing, scripted curricula, and the deficit lens become a way of life in schools. Kozol writes more recently that such practices do not allow equal learning opportunities for all, and proposes that many approaches stressed in today's mandates, rather than insuring that no learner is left behind, actually narrow opportunities for many learners, especially children of color in urban schools, stressing lower levels of learning

Exhibit 2.1

and limiting career choices and future incomes (Kozol, 2005). Other researchers have spoken out against policies and practices that stress the deficits and restrict or even damage learners and their potential to learn and succeed (Meier & Wood, 2000; Grant, 2005; Bennett et al, 2006; O'Connor & Fernandez). In today's political and social climate, if all learners are to have the chances that are their right, we need educational leaders who will monitor policies and practices for equity and justice, and who will take on the role of advocate when necessary.

To help all learners achieve to their highest potentials is the ultimate goal of education. In order to advocate for all learners, we must recognize the social nature of all learning, and we must take into account the multiple social contexts in learners' lives. These social contexts include family and home environments as well as school contexts. The social context always shapes and mediates learning. Building on learners' strengths requires that school professionals discover and celebrate the kinds of socially acquired knowledge, skills, and dispositions that learners bring to school rather than trying to shape learners to fit particular kinds of learning contexts that privilege some learners over others.

Vygotsky (1978) wrote that social interactions are at the center of all cognitive structures and thinking processes—that indeed, these interactions construct our thinking. In fact, Vygotsky maintained that all learning originates in social interactions and only becomes a part of an individual's cognitive makeup after it is co-constructed with others during shared activities. Vygotsky identified tools that a culture uses to support thinking and help people make sense of their world: language, signs, and symbols. The education of both a child and of a school professional is largely about social interactions that

Exhibit 2.1

transmit these cognitive tools. In a child's case, an example is learning to read. In a school professional's case, the transmission of important knowledge, skills, and dispositions is done socially. Just as with a child who learns to read, this transmission occurs in a combination of ways. Cognitive tools may be transmitted through explicit, direct teaching and scaffolding, as it might occur during learning activities in a course. Cognitive tools may also be transmitted implicitly, as learners observe role models and classroom norms.

At the classroom and school levels, it is important for school professionals to understand how and why a positive culture affects the motivation and behavior of children (Yukl, 2006). Nel Noddings (1992, 2003a, 2003b, 2006) writes powerfully about "communities of caring" where school professionals forge deep and respectful relationships with those they work with, recognizing that caring is at the heart of relationships. Luis Moll (1992) writes in a similar vein, stressing respect for community and culture, and connections between the home and the school as a bridge to learning.

Like the school children they work with, developing school professionals are also learners, and as such, they also deserve the best possible opportunities to develop to their highest potential. Social interactions shape the learning of teachers in the same way that they shape the learning of children. Through collaboration within social contexts, school professionals develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions they need to become effective. Collaboration is a central part of the development of a reflective change agent. Through interactions with peers, mentors, supervisors, families, and other stakeholders, school professionals gather information that helps them to improve what they do with and for learners. Collaboration is a central element in the process of advocating for equity

Exhibit 2.1

and excellence. Advocacy is not a process that happens when a single voice is raised. It is only when professionals together notice inequity and unite to form coalitions that advocacy is possible. A commitment to the common cause of helping all learners learn must be shared by many professionals working together.

Because communication, collaboration and caring are inherent in schooling and are vital to the process of effective decision-making (Marshall & Pepin, 2005), it is important that developing educational leaders develop the skills for interacting positively, productively, respectfully, and compassionately with all stakeholders, including children, families, fellow school professionals of all kinds, school support workers, members of the local community, and leaders (educational, political, and economic) at the local, state, national, and even international levels. Effective and caring communication and collaboration are reflected in the knowledge, skills, and dispositions we want our candidates to develop, and are stressed in all School of Education programs. We are all in this together. We learn from others, and they learn from us. Together we can solve problems and make both the educational system and our society better.

CORE BELIEF #2:

There is a definite knowledge base in education. All educators are grounded in content knowledge, educational theory, pedagogical knowledge, research and best practice, and professionalism. Educators are also connected to the professional communities and learned societies in education in general and in their chosen field, and are knowledgeable in the standards of those societies as well as of those of the state of Missouri. (Goal 2)

We believe that there is a definite knowledge base in education, one that is growing every day as theorists and researchers investigate “what works” in the teaching-learning process. Although the process of acquiring the educational knowledge base

Exhibit 2.1

must be a career-long journey, a candidate should be thoroughly launched on that journey as a result of successfully completing a program in the School for Education.

Boyer (1987) saw educators as both scholars and professionals. In his view, teaching is just as much an act of scholarship as the more traditional “scholarships” of discovery, integration, and application. If teaching is seen as scholarship, then it must possess a body of knowledge that can be built upon and disseminated, and that can be used by professionals to inform their practice. Darling-Hammond (2001) stresses the need for educators to develop content knowledge, but a type of content knowledge that goes beyond just knowing the facts, concepts, and principles within a field. Darling-Hammond calls for a deep and flexible type of content knowledge that helps an educator see connections across disciplines and between knowledge and life. This deep sort of knowledge forms a strong foundation for pedagogical content knowledge (Shulman, 1987, 2004). Deep pedagogical content knowledge empowers teachers to meet individual needs, helping them to better discover what learners already know and believe about a topic, and then helping learners “hook into” and engage productively with new ideas.

The pedagogical knowledge base is constantly growing, and there is always more to know. Researchers are constantly building theoretical and practical knowledge about the ways that individuals develop and learn. Researchers like John Dewey (1943, 1975), Jean Piaget (1964), Robert Bruner (1960), Lev Vygotsky (1978), B. F. Skinner (1953), Albert Bandura (1977) and Robert Gagne (Gagne et al, 1988), along with many others, laid the foundations with their seminal theories of learning and development. More recent theorists have built on these foundations with more developed theories of learning

Exhibit 2.1

(e.g., Sternberg, 1988; Gardner, 1993) and with instructional frameworks grounded in theory and research (e.g., Slavin, 1990; Marzano et al, 2001; Palincsar & Herrenkohl, 2002).

There are also growing bodies of knowledge within specialty areas in education. For example, there are a strong knowledge bases in fields such as early childhood education (e.g., Montessori, 1995; Clay, 1991, 1994; Calkins, 1994) and reading education (e.g., Guthrie & Alvermann, 1999; Pressley, 1998; Goodman, 1996), to name just two fields. Researchers have written extensively on topics such as classroom management (e.g., Canter & Canter, 1992) and the integration of new technologies and media in the classroom (e.g., Reinking et al, 1998). Whatever topic is of interest in education, there is sure to be an emerging, growing base of theory, research, and practice related to that topic. It is important for developing school professionals to become immersed in that knowledge base, discover how it can inform their practice, and perhaps contribute to it themselves.

As one pathway to immersion in the knowledge base, the School of Education stresses involvement with the many learned societies for the various areas of certification. Most of our faculty are members of these groups, and many belong to several. We inform our candidates about these scholarly communities, encourage them to join those that fit their chosen areas, and use their resources to design and teach our courses. Our program is especially influenced by the following learned societies, with which our certification programs are aligned:

Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI)
American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)
Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

Exhibit 2.1

Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC, representing AASA, ASCD, NAESP, and NASSP)

International Reading Association (IRA)

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

National Council for Social Studies (NCSS)

National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

National Council for Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM)

National Middle School Association (NMSA)

National Science Teachers Association (NSTA)

The professional community is also represented through the standards that are prescribed by individual states to inform and drive instruction and mandated assessments. These standards in most cases are adapted from the standards of the learned societies. In Missouri, there are Standards, Curriculum Frameworks, and Grade Level Expectations, and Subject-specific Competencies, from which the Missouri Assessment Program is derived. All candidates in the School for Education receive a strong orientation to these documents, and are required to align instruction and assessment with the outcomes within them.

CORE BELIEF #3:

Within the definite knowledge base in education, educators have the necessary knowledge and skills to conduct and interpret appropriate assessments and to use the information from assessments to develop and adapt instruction that meets learners' needs and maintains their engagement. Throughout the assessment process, educators uphold American Psychological Association guidelines related to ethics and confidentiality. Educators also know that assessment is both formative and summative. (Goal 3)

Assessment is a central tool of instruction. Without assessment, school professionals cannot know whether what they are doing is effective in terms of student learning. Assessment is also an important tool in the hands of a reflective change agent. Assessment informs and provides a basis for change, first in helping to point out areas where change is needed, next in determining what change strategies might be helpful, and

Exhibit 2.1

finally in evaluating the effects of those changes. Assessment that is used responsibly and ethically can be a tool that helps school professionals advocate for equity and excellence for all learners. Assessment can uncover cases of inequity, and can monitor whether all learners truly have opportunities to achieve excellence.

To conduct responsible and ethical assessment that meets all of these goals, school professionals need a wide repertoire of assessment tools of various types (Linn & Gronlund, 2000; Popham, 2002). All types of assessments must be used in order to paint a complete picture of learning. School professionals need a solid background in a variety of assessment tools: formal and informal/authentic, quantitative and qualitative, formative and summative. They need to know how to employ and interpret these assessment tools accurately and ethically. They need to know how to use the results of these tools to help learners achieve to their highest potentials, and to help teachers make the right decisions to help learners achieve.

In these days of mandated assessments and high-stakes testing, it is particularly important for school professionals to have a strong background in assessment, so that they can advocate for learners when assessments discriminate against learners or groups of learners. They need to know in depth how various assessment tools (both formal and informal) are constructed and used, and they need to be alert to instances where certain assessments privilege some learners and devalue others on the basis of socioeconomic status, ethnic membership, and/or language background (Sattler, 2001). An effective school professional needs to develop a critical stance toward assessment, and be ready to advocate for change when it is necessary, even when assessment policies and procedures are mandated by government. A skeptical, critical stance is imperative when the stakes

Exhibit 2.1

are high for learners. An informed, critical school professional is alert to the potential flaws in any assessment tool, and to the inequitable practice that can come from unsound assessment (Kim & Sunderman, 2005). Both undergraduate and graduate programs should provide school professionals with the deep knowledge, critical thinking skills, and the questioning dispositions that will help them ask the questions that need to be asked about assessment and to make certain that all assessment is equitable and promotes excellence for all learners.

One way that school professionals can help insure equity and excellence in assessment is to insist upon a variety of assessment tools that represent various assessment models. When policies draw heavily on one essentialist model of assessment, and when the results based on these one-sided models are used to evaluate student learning and teacher effectiveness, the potential for inequity is great (Imig & Imig, 2006). Test scores alone cannot give a complete picture of learners and learning; informal and authentic assessments are also needed. This is true for all learners, but especially so for learners who have typically struggled with standardized tests and who have typically been devalued and underestimated by them, including students who face learning challenges (Spinelli, 2002) and students whose culture and language differ from the dominant culture (Lanski et al, 2006).

It is important that assessment look at learners' strengths and not just highlight their deficits. Authentic assessments can often highlight strengths that are not assessed on standardized tests. Because authentic assessment often involves the direct assessment of learners' performance on a task (e.g., portfolios, exhibitions, projects, etc.) rather than counting correct answers, documentation of outcomes can be quite challenging, but the

Exhibit 2.1

richness of the data that is gathered makes the challenge worthwhile. While school professionals do need a strong background in quantitative, formal assessment so that they can raise informed questions about its reliability and validity and use such assessments wisely, they also need a strong background in qualitative, informal assessment so that they can represent those kinds of data in responsible and accountable ways. School professionals need to become proficient in the use of the various tools for documenting authentic assessment results clearly and responsibly (Mabry, 1999; Popham, 2002).

Authentic and informal assessments need to be paired with test scores to provide a complete picture of student learning. By using multiple assessment types and data sources, school professionals can “triangulate” and develop a more balanced picture of learners. By triangulating, the school professional can discover specific patterns of learners’ strengths and needs. A test alone provides a number and represents a very small slice of learning in a very short period of time. Authentic assessments can extend and fill out that view, and can provide important insights into why a learner succeeded or struggled, and how best to plan for future learning. Authentic assessments are best when they are seamlessly interwoven with instruction (Smith, Smith, & De Lisi, 2001), so that the assessment grows out of instruction rather than being developed outside of instruction and driving it from outside, as can often happen with standardized assessments.

There is still much to be learned about assessment. Researchers are currently conducting investigations that critically evaluate various types of assessments. These studies have great promise for improving the quality of the ways educators measure and document student learning (for an example of an important recent study evaluating reading comprehension assessment tools, see Kame’enui et al., 2006). Teacher education

Exhibit 2.1

programs need to help their degree candidates stay abreast of current research in all areas of education, but they especially need to remain on top of any research concerning assessment, because the potential effects of assessment policies can be so great. School professionals at all levels need to be alert to unfolding developments in assessment so that they can use this information to insure that all learners' needs are met.

CORE BELIEF #4:

Educators are reflective change agents who are experts in collaborative problem-solving and critical inquiry. They are professionals who should regularly engage in high level thinking, and should promote and nurture those same high levels of thinking in the learners they serve. (Goal 4)

We believe that teaching is a profession. A professional is an individual who has a deep, lifelong commitment to service, and who takes ownership for the outcomes of schooling. A professional is responsible and accountable for making difficult decisions to make sure that those outcomes are the best that they can be. Professionals assess and monitor the outcomes of those decisions, and if they determine that the best interests of those being served are not being met, they take steps to change and rectify the situation. This kind of professional decision-making requires strong skills in collaborative problem-solving and critical inquiry. These are high levels of thinking that require a deep level of engagement.

High level thinking is required of professionals in today's complex educational environments (Shanker, 1985). It is also required of all citizens if they are to succeed in an increasingly complex world and if they are to fully realize all of their rights and fulfill all of their responsibilities as citizens in a democracy. Reflective thinking, especially when it drives critical inquiry that asks and answers important questions or results in viable solutions to real-life problems, represents one of the highest levels of thought.

Exhibit 2.1

Reflective thinking leads professionals to question and work to change systems of schooling, educational policies, and instructional practices when they create inequities that prevent some learners from receiving the opportunities that are their right (Lortie, 1975). It is this kind of deep thinking and questioning that is necessary if all learners' needs are to be met in the 21st century.

Donald Schon (1983) writes of educators as “reflective professionals” who continually examine their practice, reflect on its results, and reshape and improve that practice based upon reflection. This process is a continuous “reflection in action” that makes the difference between a person who functions as a professional decision-maker and a person who functions as a technician who can only follow procedures and protocols and is lost when discrepancies occur between those heuristics and the real-life context. School professionals need to be at the level of reflective professional, not at the level of technician, in order to flexibly adapt the various elements of the teaching-learning process and meet the needs of infinitely (and wonderfully!) varied children within the constantly changing contexts of schools.

Parker Palmer (1997) puts this kind of reflective, caring professional at the center of the teaching-learning process and at the center of any attempt at reform, if it is to succeed. Hurried, superficial, top-down attempts at reform cannot succeed unless reflective professionals, those who must actually make the day-to-day decisions that affect learners directly, are deeply involved in the process. For true reform and change to occur, collaborative relationships among all involved stakeholders must occur. Fullan (1991, 2007) recommends a focus on changing the culture of classrooms and schools and an emphasis on relationships and values, not just on structural changes that do not engage

Exhibit 2.1

the professionals who must enact them. Other educational leaders view creative, collaborative problem-solving, based on shared vision and critical inquiry, as central to any process of change or reform (Senge et al, 1994; Skrtic, 1991). Teachers are often described as “teacher-researchers” (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993) who engage in structured inquiry to seek creative, evidence-based solutions to problems in an effort to improve the teaching-learning process. In this way, school professionals can shape and even re-invent schooling rather than simply tacking on new components that change with every passing trend. If school professionals are to be a part of this process, however, they must develop the professional knowledge, skills, and dispositions they will need to be actively engaged, creative participants in the change process. Programs in the School for Education are designed to develop the professional knowledge, skills and dispositions that are characteristic of reflective change agents.

If high levels of thinking are good for school professionals, they are also good for the children they serve. We believe that a professional who is deeply engaged in reflection and inquiry will want to model this kind of thinking with school children and will want them to develop these same skills so that they can be active decision makers, critical inquirers, and thinking citizens who can develop and maintain a dynamic democracy.

Rosenblatt (1956, 1982, 1986) writes about this level of highly engaged thinking in relationship to reading. She stresses the need to “transact” meaningfully with text at a deep level, and to respond to text (“the aesthetic stance”), rather than only to read to find or check facts (“the efferent stance”). There is a difference between recall of information

Exhibit 2.1

about something and knowing something. It is a natural tendency to just want to concentrate on lower level facts and information, probably because those are easier to manage and assess than deep, engaged response. In many classrooms, learners never have opportunities to engage with the curriculum beyond the Comprehension level of Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy, and many current assessment tools never assess learning beyond that level. Learners come to equate knowing something with passing a test on it. Rosenblatt maintains that because of this focus on lower levels of thought, many learners learn to ignore and distrust their responses to texts, and to devalue their own curiosity and questions. One might also argue that learners who have been conditioned in this way from childhood will disengage from asking important questions about things that are going on in the nation and the world, and are at risk of becoming acquiescent, unquestioning adults rather than the thinking, participating citizens that are needed in a dynamic democracy.

We believe that the ultimate goal of the teaching-learning process is for each individual to become a fully independent learner with confidence in his or her ability to use what is learned for meaningful purposes, whether those purposes are to solve practical, day-to-day problems, or to envision and work toward a better future for the self, the community, the nation, and the world. Engagement and independence can be powerful things. John Guthrie (2004) found that when children spent time in engaged, independent reading, their reading achievement scores were higher than the scores of children who spent less time in such reading. This relationship actually "trumped" the much-touted socioeconomic status factor; low-income children who spend time in engaged reading scored better than more affluent children who did not. High level

Exhibit 2.1

thinking and engagement may be the key to changing long-established societal patterns that perpetuate inequity. Guthrie believes that increasing learner's engagement in learning is the key to important changes in schooling and in society, and proposes a model to achieve that end. Other researchers have also proposed models that stress student engagement and high level thinking (e.g., Slavin, 1990; Morrow, 1992; Raphael & Au, 2005, to name only a few).

In the School of Education, we push candidates to think at high levels, and we also want them to push the learners they work with to high levels of thinking. We believe that current trends leading to a focus on low-level, easily testable skills to the exclusion of deep, authentic, engaged learning are detrimental to our primary goal of achieving educational excellence and equity, and we are working to provide educational leaders who will work to turn these trends in a more productive direction.

CORE BELIEF #5:

Becoming a leader in education is a lifelong, developmental and social process that unfolds uniquely for each individual. Key to this process, leaders in education are scholars of teaching and learning, and, as such, are grounded in both best practice and current in evidence-based research in the field of education. In communicating effectively with students and stakeholders, educators use their competence in cross-cultural communication to communicate effectively with students and stakeholders. (Goal 5)

A school is not just a building; it is the people who teach, learn, and work together there, and the human relationships that result from those interactions, that make a school. Social processes and human relationships form the context within which each of the three roles of the developing educational leader--effective school professional, reflective change agent, and advocate for equity and excellence—is lived out. The knowledge,

Exhibit 2.1

skills, and dispositions developed in a candidate are brought to life by the contexts in which he or she lives and works.

An individual doesn't become an educational leader who is an effective school professional, a reflective change agent, and an advocate for equity and excellence for all learners overnight. The seeds of what a future leader might become may be present early, but the "growing" of a professional is an ongoing process. Just as children's cognitive development is an emergent process (Duckworth, 1987), so is the teacher's development as a professional. This process is an "emerging" that occurs in a way unique to each individual.

Just as we want candidates in the School for Education to focus on the individual needs of their students, so we recognize that at various times in a career, each developing school professional has unique needs. What an individual candidate needs depends upon the knowledge and experiences that he/she brings to the program. The work of Huberman (1989) on teachers' life cycles illustrates how the career paths of teachers emerge in highly diverse ways, based on the types of experiences teachers encounter at the beginning, middle, and end of a career. The developing teacher's path may not be taken in a linear fashion; development may proceed in a recursive way, with "spurts" and setbacks. A model that informs this belief is Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development". This "zone" is the learning space between a learner's ability to achieve without support and her/his ability to achieve with appropriate support, often called "scaffolding." The right scaffolding at the right time can help developing teachers progress to their highest level of ability. Teacher education should provide that scaffolding for developing teachers as well as model its use with younger students.

Exhibit 2.1

How does this scaffolding look? Scaffolding involves the providing of experiences that will help future leaders in education develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions of an effective school professional, a reflective change agent, and an advocate for equity and excellence. Such scaffolding may occur in many forms. A balance between direct, explicit instruction (Good, 1983; Rosenshine, 1986; Sharan & Sharan, 1992) and guided discovery approaches (Bruner, 1997, 1960) may be seen in Park University's professional courses at all levels. There is a stress on modeling, guided practice, independent practice and the reflective use of heuristics and frameworks as well as activities that call upon students to analyze, reflect, create, and evaluate. Bloom's Taxonomy (Bloom, 1956) is an important model here, as candidates are guided from lower levels of understanding (Knowledge, Comprehension) to higher ones (Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation). The affective domain (Krathwohl et al., 1964; Noddings, 1992) as well as metacognitive skills (Eisner, 1991) are important, as candidates gradually develop a sense of who they are as professionals, and as their philosophies of teaching and learning emerge and individuate.

Research on the ways school professionals deal with uncertainty (Floden & Clark, 1988; Lange & Burroughs-Lange, 1994) suggests that the kinds of scaffolding they receive at various points in their development, and especially early in their careers, can make a difference. With the right kinds of scaffolding, school professionals learn to deal with uncertainty in constructive ways, including reflection, collaboration, and inquiry. Other kinds of scaffolding can lead school professionals to respond to uncertainty in less constructive ways, including the unreflective embracing of prescriptive models and heuristics, habitually blaming others or the situation while failing to take responsibility

Exhibit 2.1

for problem-solving, or avoiding any situation that may be uncertain or risky.

Ultimately, what can result is a desire to cling to the safety and certainty of the “status quo” at the expense of questioning, reflection, and inquiry (Zeichner & Liston, 1996, 1987). As Pace (1992) puts it: “Change, after all, requires learning” (p. 475).

Huberman’s (1989) research on the life cycles of teachers bears this out; he documents cases where teachers have closed out the innovation process and “withdrawn” from educational reforms as their careers progressed. Professionals who are capable of higher-order thinking, reflection, and risk-taking will be more likely to avoid such withdrawal; as lifelong learners, they will be less likely to withdraw in the face of inevitable frustrations. They will have the tools they need to develop continuously as effective school professionals throughout their careers.

PART V: CANDIDATE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, AND DISPOSITIONS

Introduction

The development of the School for Education’s Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions was the product of several years of faculty collaboration and research. These outcome statements were influenced by the “knowledge, dispositions, and performances” outcomes specified in the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC) standards (1992), and they were developed to be congruent with MoSTEP Standard 1, which is closely tied to the INTASC standards. In addition, the Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions were influenced by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), which specified “what teachers should know and be able to do. The attached congruence chart specifies linkages of each Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Exhibit 2.1

outcome with the conceptual framework's goals, with MoSTEP/INTASC standards, and with NBPTS standards.

Recently, the development of the five Dispositions categories has been strongly influenced by the work of the members of the American Association of Teacher Educators (AACTE) Task Force on Teacher Education as a Moral Community (TEAMC), including the writings of Mary Diez (2006a, 2006b) of Alverno College, Erskine Dottin (2006) of Florida International University, and Hugh Sockett (2006) of George Mason University. The work on Dispositions also drew on Parker Palmer's (1997) writing on teachers' inner lives and on definitions of teaching and supervision that go beyond content knowledge and pedagogical technique (Kohn, 2000; Ritchhardt, 2002; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 2002; Stiggins, 2002).

A strong emphasis on Dispositions may be seen throughout the School for Education's framework, and not just in the outcome statements explicitly labeled "Dispositions." There is a strong thread throughout the conceptual framework that emphasizes ethical principles, a respect for learners and what they bring to the teaching-learning process, a focus on learning as a top priority, and a responsibility to advocate for learners. This is in keeping with our view the learning occurs developmentally in a caring environment that nurtures the development of the whole individual (Noddings, 2003a, 2003b).

Overview of the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions

Knowledge, skills, and dispositions often are written about as discrete, separate categories, probably because of the linear nature of the language we must necessarily use

Exhibit 2.1

to describe them. That is not really the case. Knowledge, skills and dispositions actually represent interlocking, continuous levels of development that build upon each other.

At the core is knowledge; knowledge is subsumed by skills, and skills are subsumed by dispositions. Knowledge is what one knows, but it is not enough on its own. Skills are the application of what one knows, but even these are not sufficient; they must be “lived out” in the context of who each teacher is as a person and as a professional. Dispositions are what one is, and how one lives; they represent the unique integration that makes each teacher what he or she is. The development of dispositions is the “outer sphere” of the three, and represents the ultimate manifestation of a teacher’s development in the real world of teaching.

Our view of the specific knowledge, skills, and dispositions we would like to see in developing school professionals is outlined below. The reader may notice that a number of relationships can be seen across various subcategories of knowledge, skills, and dispositions. This is natural, and illustrates the continuous relationship across these three developmental levels. For example, Professional Knowledge is necessary for the development of Instructional Skills, but a disposition that displays a Willingness to Do What is Necessary to Help Learners Learn is the embodiment of knowledge and skills and transcends them. Many other relationships across the three interlocking levels (knowledge, skills, and dispositions) could be described.

Below, each of the three developmental levels is described, then divided into subcategories. Each subcategory is then defined, and descriptors are provided. Each descriptor is linked to relevant MoSTEP standards whenever possible, and is tied to the related goals from the list of seven goals for the School for Education. Finally, some

Exhibit 2.1

examples for each subcategory are provided. The examples are not intended to be exhaustive; rather, they are provided to clarify the meaning of each subcategory and to provide a more concrete illustration of the kinds of everyday thinking that school professionals at various levels of development might engage in.

Within each program in the School for Education, the Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions outlined below have been linked to specific courses. These linkages are specified within the documents entitled “Proficiencies and Standard Alignment (Knowledge, Skills, and Dispositions)” attached to each Program Report.

KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge refers to the basic foundation that all educators must have in order to develop as professionals. While knowledge alone is never sufficient, it is necessary as a starting point. Knowledge must be integrated and applied when an educator develops skills and dispositions, and so must first be mastered. There are two key characteristics of this knowledge: 1) Mastery of knowledge means functioning at high cognitive levels. Mere rote knowledge, or “parroting” what is believed to be expected, is not mastery. The learner must be fully engaged and “own” the knowledge at a full level of understanding, so that it may be integrated and used in authentic situations. 2) Knowledge is acquired continuously, in a developmental process that progresses throughout life and is never “finished.” Although a school professional can never know everything there is to know in the areas delineated below, she or he can and should continuously enrich and deepen these areas of knowledge.

Here, Knowledge is divided into three categories:

Exhibit 2.1

1. Content Knowledge:

What a school professional knows about the subject matter that is taught. No amount of Professional Knowledge will enable an educator to effectively teach if she/he does not know the important concepts of the field her/himself; a knowledge of the content of instruction is also essential for school professionals who are not traditional “classroom teachers” so that they can make sound curricular decisions that affect learners.

2. Professional Knowledge:

What a school professional knows about the work of teaching, that is, making Content Knowledge accessible and engaging for all learners, and preparing, implementing, and assessing instruction to that end. Without this ability, no amount of Content Knowledge is sufficient.

3. Ethical Knowledge: What a school professional knows about the dilemmas and issues that make the process of teaching and learning and the educational enterprise problematic and complex; it is knowledge of ethical principles that helps an educator apply Content Knowledge and Professional Knowledge in sound, just, and caring ways. Ethical principles breathe life and humanity into the other two kinds of Knowledge. Ethical knowledge helps an educator account for why decisions based on Content Knowledge and Professional Knowledge, no matter how sound that knowledge might be, do not always achieve desired outcomes.

Below, each of these three types of Knowledge is further operationalized and linked to MoSTEP Standards, and some examples are given.

Exhibit 2.1

1. Content Knowledge:

What a school professional knows about the subject matter that he or she will teach.

A school professional who has mastered Content Knowledge:

- A. Builds a level of content knowledge that enables her/him to support and extend students' learning at high levels of thinking. (MoSTEP Standards 1.1, 1.2.1, 1.2.5; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- B. Makes connections within and across disciplines, designing learning experiences that reflect those connections. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.5; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- C. Knows what the tools for gathering, analyzing, and representing knowledge and information are for the disciplines to be taught, and how those tools are used. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.1, Goal 2; Core Belief 2)

Some examples of Content Knowledge:

“My students and I need to know the important concepts and themes of this material, not just lists of facts and information.”

“My students and I need to be able to ask important questions about what we hear and read; we should not accept written and spoken messages without question.”

“All subject areas are linked; I will look for ways to show students these links.”

Exhibit 2.1

“My students and I need to understand the tools by which knowledge is gathered and represented in this field, because these tools affect how we construct what is ‘true’.”

2. Professional Knowledge:

What a school professional knows about the work of teaching.

A school professional who has mastered Professional Knowledge:

- A. Describes current theories of development and learning and explains how these theories are reflected in teaching practice in actual, diverse educational settings. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.2, 1.2.3; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- B. Builds a repertoire of instructional options in various content areas. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.5; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- C. Builds a repertoire of assessment options, both formal and informal, in various content areas. (MoSTEP standard 1.2.8; Goal 3; Core Belief 3)
- D. Knows some of the many ways that technology can be used to enhance teaching and learning. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.7, 1.2.11; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- E. Understands the nature and value of standards (professional, national, state, local) and their role in planning, implementing, and assessing instruction. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.4, 1.2.8; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- F. Identifies the diverse populations (including but not limited to: ethnic/racial, language, socioeconomic, ability, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age level) found in schools today and discusses the issues involved in providing appropriate instruction for students belonging to various groups. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.3; Goal 1, 2; Core Belief 1, 2)

Exhibit 2.1

G. Creates coherent short-term and long-term plans that link outcome statements with instruction and assessment. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.4, 1.2.5; Goal 2, 3; Core Belief 2, 3)

Some examples of Professional Knowledge:

“Current research/theory tells us _____ about working with this population; here are some strategies that have been shown to work well with students like this.”

“Here is how I can help my students use computers to enhance this unit of instruction.”

“These are the national and state standards for the field(s) and age level(s) I will teach. I understand how they were created and how they shape the curriculum.”

“Here are some alternative ways that I can teach _____ graders about _____.”

“I know what some good tools for assessing _____ are. I know how to either find good assessment tools or create them myself.”

“My own beliefs about teaching and learning can be characterized by _____; these beliefs are supported by the theories of _____. Because of this you will see/hear _____ in my classroom.”

Exhibit 2.1

“Although planning should be flexible, it is very important. I know how to plan on both a short-term and a long-term basis. I have a good idea where I am going with instruction for each day/week/grading period/year.”

3. Ethical Knowledge:

What a school professional knows about the dilemmas and issues that make the teaching-learning process problematic and complex.

A school professional who has mastered Ethical Knowledge:

- A. Critically examines ethical principles involved in teaching and learning, and understands how ethical principles are applied in actual educational settings. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- B. Understands the basic ethical issues involved with assessment, including issues related to selection, administration, interpretation, use, and communication of data. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.4, 1.2.8, 1.2.9; Goal 3; Core Belief 3)
- C. Recognizes the value of multiple stakeholders (families, children, teachers, community, colleagues, etc.) as resources and collaborators in the educational process. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)

Exhibit 2.1

- D. Understands the principles that underlie a democratic society and uses those principles to guide the development of children as citizen actors. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.6; Goal 1; Core Belief 1)
- E. Understands that theoretical orientations underlie all educational practice, seeks to discern the theoretical orientations behind any instructional strategy, instructional materials, or assessment tool, and realizes that there is a range of well-supported theoretical orientations within the educational community. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.2, 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- F. Realizes that instructional decisions are inherently political, that there is no such thing as “neutrality” in education, and that issues of power and resources are inevitably a factor at all levels (classroom, school, district, state, and federal) of the decision-making process. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.8, 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 1; Core Belief 1)

Some examples of Ethical Knowledge:

“In everything I do and say, my first concern should be to help my students and not to cause them to be harmed in any way.”

“Assessment tools can be used in both constructive and destructive ways, so I must be very careful how I choose and use them, and what I do with the data.”

Exhibit 2.1

“It is important that everyone who is invested in the process of teaching and learning is kept informed about everything related to that process as much as possible. I am accountable to students, families, and the community as well as to other educators in my school.”

“I need to ask myself: Is this decision the best one that could have been made for learners in this situation?”

“I must ask myself: Why does one person/entity have more power than another? What responsibilities do those with power have?”

“I need to think about my rights and responsibilities as a citizen and to help my students think about this, too.”

SKILLS

The development of skills involves the integration of knowledge into a coherent “performance” of a task. Just knowing something is not enough; a professional needs to know how to put what is known into action, to “make it work” in actual educational settings and with real children and colleagues. It means being able to do the basic tasks required, but it also means being able to do these tasks thoughtfully, flexibly, and creatively so that they meet the instructional needs of the “real-life” learners the school professional sees face-to-face on a daily basis.

Here, Skills are divided into three categories:

- 1. Instructional Skills:** The basic tasks of teaching. These include planning, implementing, and assessing instruction. These skills need to be learned so well that they become automatic, leaving the teacher’s mental space free “in-flight” to concentrate on individual needs and responses, and to reflect and problem-solve.
- 2. Problem-solving Skills:** Thinking deliberately and in-depth about teaching and learning; the ability to deal constructively with the difficulties, choices, and dilemmas inherent in the teaching-learning process. The teaching-learning process involves human beings and uncertain contexts, and problem-solving skills are needed to find ways to ensure that optimal learning occurs for particular learners and in particular settings.
- 3. Communication Skills:** The ability to use language in its various forms to work constructively with others. Teaching and learning, and the entire process of educating, are social endeavors. Communicating well is essential to the process.

Exhibit 2.1

Below, each of the three types of skills is further operationalized, and some examples are given.

1. Instructional Skills:

The basic tasks of teaching.

A school professional with Instructional Skills:

- A. Creates vibrant, engaging, supportive learning environments. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.5, 1.2.6; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- B. Designs and implements varied learning activities and environments in order to meet a variety of needs and strengths, balancing and adapting approaches to incorporate the best elements of diverse strategy choices. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.5; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- C. Provides appropriate scaffolding that enables students to continually build upon strengths and perform at their highest potential learning levels. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- D. Models desired learning outcomes for learners, and provides opportunities for enough practice and feedback to insure that all learners successfully meet those outcomes. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.4, 1.2.5, 1.2.8; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- E. Designs and implements appropriate learning experiences that account for diversity in ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, gender, prior

Exhibit 2.1

knowledge, prior experience, and level of ability or disability. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.3, 1.2.4; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)

F. Develops competence with various types of current and emerging technology, integrating technology into teaching and learning experiences. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.7, 1.2.11; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)

G. Applies varied assessment strategies (formal and informal) appropriately and ethically, and uses the information from these assessments to plan appropriate learning experiences and to evaluate the effectiveness of instruction. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.8; Goal 3; Core Belief 3)

Some examples of Instructional Skills:

“My students need to be actively engaged with learning in my classroom; if an activity does not engage students in learning, it is not a good choice, and I will seek another alternative.”

“After looking at several strategy choices, I think _____ will work better than _____ with the group of students I am teaching because _____.”

“These students are going to need a little extra help because _____. I will provide that help by _____.”

Exhibit 2.1

“Today I showed the students my own thinking as I worked through the process of _____.”

“Here is a place in this unit where my students would benefit from using the Internet.”

“This text from the popular culture (e.g., movie, song, periodical article) ties in with the topic we are studying and will help my students connect with the topic.”

“Based on how my students did on this assessment, I will make the following instructional changes: _____.”

2. Problem-Solving Skills:

Thinking deliberately and in-depth about teaching and learning; the ability to deal constructively with the difficulties, choices, and dilemmas inherent in the teaching-learning process.

A teacher with Problem-Solving Skills:

- A. Recognizes and accepts the uncertainty and risk-taking inherent in the educational process, and develops positive ways of dealing with that uncertainty, including inquiry, collaboration and reflection. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)
- B. Recognizes when instruction is not effectively meeting learners’ needs, and revises, adapts, or replaces that instruction with more effective alternatives when necessary. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.4, 1.2.8; Goal 1, 2;

Exhibit 2.1

Core Belief 1, 2)

- C. Critically evaluates various instructional and assessment approaches and the specific practices within those approaches. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.4, 1.2.8, 1.2.9; Goal 2, 3, 4; Core Belief 2, 3, 4)
- D. Continuously gathers, analyzes, and evaluates information from many types of sources at many levels, from developing learning materials and experiences in the classroom to professional decision-making in broader contexts. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.8, 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)
- E. Devises constructive plans of action based on reflection. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)

Some examples of Problem-Solving Skills:

“My classroom can be an unpredictable place, but I have the skills to ‘roll with the punches’ and do what it takes to make sure my students have the best possible opportunity to learn, no matter what happens.”

“Things did not go well in my classroom today. I must think about why that occurred and what I can do to improve the situation.”

“My colleagues and I are not satisfied with our students’ responses to _____ . We will each research some alternative ways, try them in our classrooms, and share the results with each other.”

Exhibit 2.1

“Each group is different, and each year is different, so what has worked before will not necessarily always work.”

“I need to try this out. It may not work, at least not the first time, but I can’t stick with the ‘same old thing’ just because it is familiar.”

“At the end of each school day/unit of study/grading period, I stop and ‘take stock’ of things and contemplate what I want to continue doing and what needs to be changed.”

“Any time a new program or approach is introduced, I research it and try to look at its strengths and weaknesses. If I see too many weaknesses, I speak up and discuss those with other educators.”

3. Communication Skills:

The ability to use language and other symbol systems to work constructively with others.

A school professional with Communication Skills:

- A. Demonstrates skill in verbal (both spoken and written), and nonverbal communication as well as in the use of various media and tools to enhance communication. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.7, 1.2.11; Goal 2, 5; Core Belief 2, 5)
- B. Values and builds positive and appropriate personal relationships with children, families, colleagues, administrators, and the public. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.10; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)

Exhibit 2.1

- C. Communicates and collaborates in a clear, accurate, ethical, appropriate and productive manner with students, teachers, other school personnel, families, and others within the community. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.8, 1.2.10; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)

Some examples of Communication Skills:

“When I speak, I make sure that people can hear and understand me without difficulty.”

“When I prepare any materials for distribution, they are clearly and correctly written, and are formatted in a way that will enhance the communication of the ideas in them.”

“I pay attention to my body language and the messages it may send to others.”

“I seek feedback from others in order to discover and rectify communication problems that I may not even be aware of.”

“I know how to operate the media tools available to me in my classroom, and I use them whenever I think they will enhance communication.”

“I will monitor my words and actions so that I do not do anything to disrupt communication or my good relationships with others.”

Exhibit 2.1

“I will go the extra mile to contact students’ families and keep them informed and involved; I know how to constructively communicate successes as well as problems.”

DISPOSITIONS

Dispositions are those characteristics and attributes that are prerequisite for effective learning and teaching. Dispositions involve “values, commitments, and professional ethics that influence behaviors toward students, families, colleagues, and communities and affect students’ learning, motivation, and development as well as the educator’s own professional growth (NCATE Glossary of Terms at <http://www.ncate.org/search/glossary.htm>).” In short, while knowledge is what an educator knows, and skills are what an educator can do, dispositions are what an educator is, and how an educator lives as a school professional. Dispositions are beliefs put into action.

Although dispositions are, by nature, inherent, they can be developed and fostered throughout a teacher’s career through experienced guidance supported by accountability both to oneself and to others. In this way, teaching dispositions become both the means and ends to ensure effectiveness of beginning teachers and continuation of a lifelong commitment to personal and professional excellence. A teacher’s dispositions determine how he/she will uniquely construct an identity as an educator. School professionals may possess similar knowledge and skills, but each professional will develop her/his dispositions in a highly individual way.

Five basic disposition categories are proposed:

Exhibit 2.1

1. Respect for Others: This is the most basic disposition in an effective school professional. It involves respect for learners as well as for other adults, including colleagues, staff members, supervisors, families, and other stakeholders. A fundamental respect for other human beings should be a defining characteristic of a school professional, and should be clearly reflected in everything a she or he does and says, and in every interaction within the professional environment. Respect must be genuine and truly felt by individuals to make a difference. A lack of genuine respect is very quickly perceived by others; it may not matter at all what a school professional knows and can do if those she/he is working with do not feel respected. An educator's respect for others, or lack thereof, may be the strongest teaching tool that he or she possesses.

2. Willingness to Do What is Necessary to Help Learners Learn: Learning comes first. It is important for each person to learn to her or his highest potential. An effective school professional must do what it takes to put learning first and to see to it that everyone in her/his care is learning as much and as well as possible. These beliefs must be clearly reflected in a school professional's words and behaviors at every stage of the teaching-learning process.

3. Willingness to Maintain Engagement: An effective school professional must be willing and able to remain engaged in the face of challenges that may threaten the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process or even the professional's self-concept as an educator. An engaged educator does not give up, make excuses, or place blame in the face of such challenges, but rather, focuses on what can be done and endeavors to do it. An engaged educator takes ownership and responsibility for teaching and learning. This sort of focus involves self-discipline and the ability to constantly refocus in the face of

Exhibit 2.1

the myriad challenges, uncertainties, and interruptions that are a natural part of the teaching-learning process.

4. Self-Reflection Toward Continual Development: Reflection involves deliberate, sustained thinking about one's own practice and learners' development, and the planning of strategies to facilitate growth. There is always more to learn about teaching and learning, no matter how long an educator has been working in schools. A school professional who realizes this is continually monitoring her/his practice and continually looking for opportunities to learn more: from colleagues, from professional meetings and publications, from continuing education, but most of all, from students.

5. Values and Acts Upon Belief in Education Leadership: A true educational leader views himself or herself as a servant of learning, and thus leads by serving education as a whole in all its aspects, from individual needs to the power of learning upon a democratic society. Master teachers see themselves as models representing the profession of education and conduct themselves accordingly. This includes advocating for the most effective educational approaches and methods, as well as continual inquiry into the most effective pedagogical practice. This means that they recognize and believe in the efficacy of continual professional renewal in their chosen field. Educational leadership embodies the art and science of teaching—art in the sense that master teachers consciously envision the ideal and deliberately use their knowledge and skills to creatively realize that ideal; science in the sense that master teachers consciously see the practical demands of the world and deliberately use their knowledge and skills in a methodical way to meet those demands. Educational leaders need not be nationally recognized educators; they are most

Exhibit 2.1

often those classroom teachers who learners, parents, other teachers, and administrators look to when a challenge or impasse has occurred.

Below, the five Disposition types are operationalized, and some examples are given.

1. Respect for Others:

Respect for learners as well as for other adults, including colleagues, staff members, supervisors, families, and other stakeholders.

A school professional with Respect for Others:

- A. Displays an empathic, service-oriented approach to teaching, learners, and involved adults. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.7, 1.2.10; Goal 1; Core Belief 1)
- B. Recognizes, accepts, and complies with professional norms and procedures for appropriate dress, hygiene, speech, and behavior at school sites. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.10; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)
- C. Uses professional language and voice to describe events and individuals, and avoids labeling, stereotyping, and blaming language; displays integrity and trustworthiness in withholding/sharing information. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.3, 1.2.7, 1.2.9; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)
- D. Balances personal and academic needs and responsibilities so they do not conflict or interfere with others' needs, and allows the common goal to take precedence over personal desires or needs when working with others. (Goal 1, 5; Core Belief 5)

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- E. Listens, responds, and communicates in ways that validate, clarify, and facilitate trust in the speaker. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.7; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)

Some examples of Respect for Others:

“If I were in his or her place, what would I feel/do/say?”

“I agree/disagree because _____. What I hear you saying is _____. Here’s the way I see the situation, and here are some other ways to look at it. Looking at this from the opposite point of view/another angle . . . to be fair to the idea . . . “ (Attempt to eliminate “you” messages)

“I am not always right, nor do I need to be the expert on everything. I am here to serve the higher purposes of education. I find fulfillment in what I can do for others, not what they can do for me. I will put aside my personal comfort in the moment to achieve a larger goal.”

“I’ll have to wait to take this class or make other arrangements at my job/child care/special event so I can fully attend and participate. . . if I have no choice but to be absent, I will contact the instructor about it and make plans to make up any work I miss in a timely fashion.”

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“I refuse to talk about my students, my colleagues, or my supervisors in a way that blames, belittles or makes light of them, regardless of what they have done. If colleagues engage in such talk, I will try to model more positive talk.”

“Considering where I am and who is nearby, it isn’t fitting for me to talk about _____ . I will wait for a more suitable time and place.”

“I am aware of my attitudes and beliefs about _____. I will work at knowing when they interfere with my interactions with others so I can get past my personal disagreement to better understand and do the most facilitative thing.”

“My usual style of dress shows my midriff/tattoo/undergarments, so I will find clothing that is more appropriate for the classroom.”

“I will pay attention to what is being said instead of getting ready to say what I want to say.”

“I will build respectful professional relationships with everyone who works in this building, even if I do not like them personally, and even if they do not always show the same respect for me.”

2. Willingness to Do What is Necessary to Help Learners Learn:

Doing what it takes to put learning first and to see to it that everyone in her/his care is learning as much and as well as possible.

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A school professional with this willingness:

- A. Recognizes that the main purpose and top priority of education is to promote student learning. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.2, 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.5; Goal 1; Core Belief 1)
- B. Is flexible in selecting and using approaches and activities, making plans so that each and every learner, regardless of gender, culture, race, or ability, can perform at the highest individual level possible. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.3, 1.2.4; Goal 1, 2; Core Belief 1, 2)
- C. Values intrinsic motivation and promotes learners' self-efficacy and active engagement in learning. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.5, 1.2.6; Goal 1; Core Belief 1)
- D. Uses the resources at hand in an organized and creative manner to maximize learning. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.7, 1.2.11; Goal 2; Core Belief 2)
- E. Continuously seeks evidence of student learning, using a variety of assessment tools to support and inform instructional decisions. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.4, 1.2.8; Goal 3; Core Belief 3)
- F. Values and promotes a positive, effective classroom environment, and implements classroom rules and procedures that maximize learning and maintain students' physical and emotional health and safety. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.5, 1.2.6, 1.2.7; Goal 3; Core Belief 3)

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Some examples of Willingness to Do What is Necessary to Help Learners Learn:

“I will be a successful teacher when a student leaves my classroom with more knowledge and ability than when she or he entered it. It is so amazing to watch my students succeed at something that they could not do before, or to watch ‘the light come on’ when they discover something new.”

“How can _____ be done better? What else is needed for the learner to understand/perform more successfully?”

“The majority of my time is focused on my students, and how we work with each other to learn, not on the clock or the calendar.”

“Before I make a decision/continue with instruction, I will gather more evidence from more than one type of assessment over a certain period of time.”

“I want each person in this class to feel the joy of learning and using what he or she learns; therefore, I will use and adjust strategies and activities that address learning styles and differences. Teaching and learning is not a one-size-fits-all matter. I take care not to use a ‘cookie cutter’ approach to teaching.”

“I want to help each and every person in this class to find ways to ask questions and solve problems.”

Exhibit 2.1

“I will post classroom rules that are written in a positive fashion and have rehearsals of routine procedures so that every learner can feel secure in learning and knowing how to be in my classroom.”

3. Willingness to Maintain Engagement:

An effective school professional must be willing and able to remain engaged in the face of challenges that may threaten the effectiveness of the teaching-learning process or even the professional’s self-concept as an educator.

A school professional who is willing to maintain engagement:

- A. Recognizes and accepts the pressures and challenges in education, understands how they impact professional and personal life, and develops self-sustaining means to rise above them and find joy and satisfaction in teaching and learning. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)
- B. Views challenges as opportunities rather than inconveniences, crises, or damaging setbacks. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)
- C. Demonstrates self-control in the form of predictably poised and appropriate responses to constructive feedback, opposing points of view, and challenging behavior. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.7; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)
- D. Demonstrates patience, confidence, perseverance, resilience, and resourcefulness despite fear, failure, resistance, or unexpected behavior and situations. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)

Exhibit 2.1

- E. Engages in honest and realistic analysis of attitudes, successes, and failures. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4,5; Core Belief 4, 5)
- F. Believes in her/his ability to arrive at an effective solution to a puzzling and/or upsetting problem. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)
- G. Displays the ability to continually adapt a plan of action, even “in-flight,” if it is not achieving the desired results, handling any changes in plan in a positive and poised manner. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.4, 1.2.6, 1.2.8, 1.2.9; Goal 4, 5; Core Belief 4, 5)

Some examples of Willingness to Maintain Engagement:

“Teaching is so overwhelming with all its complexities and the amount of effort required. I will ask for help from a mentor or colleague so that I do not burn out or lose my enthusiasm for teaching or learning.”

“The thing I wanted so much to be successful just did not work! I will allow myself some time to get over being upset, then I will analyze what happened and see what I can learn from this experience. I won’t give up/let this stop me from finding a way to do what needs to be done for both the learner(s) and myself.”

“This could be happening because _____, and some appropriate, effective responses would be _____.”

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“There really are no ‘normal’ days in the classroom, so I have to be ready to improvise and still meet my goals. I actually enjoy this kind of challenge. Even though teaching can be uncertain, it is never boring!”

“I am going to look back on each day for something positive that happened so I do not become fixated on negative things.”

“This situation is really puzzling, and I’m beginning to feel frustrated. I won’t give up, but I can see I’m getting stressed, and it’s time to take care of myself so I can think clearly and eventually solve the problem. I’ll take a break and do something I enjoy, or spend time with people I like, and a little while later I’ll take a fresh look and see what can be done. Maybe I’ll ask _____ to come observe and see what she/he thinks.”

“When I have a question about something, I actively seek answers. I am resourceful at seeking out information and I do not wait for others to tell me what to do or how to do it.”

“There are solutions and explanations that I can find and use, though it may take time and experience.”

“I care more about overcoming difficulties and being a good teacher than I care about my feelings over a particular person or situation.”

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“I will actively seek out the input of others (colleagues, students, supervisors, instructors) on my work. When they give me constructive comments, even if I have not solicited them, I will consider those comments thoughtfully, and will not give in to hurt or defensive feelings. I recognize that it is my instructor’s/supervisor’s job to help me learn, and that constructive comments are intended for that purpose.”

4. Self Reflection Toward Continual Development:

Deliberate, sustained thinking about one’s own practice and professional development, and the planning of strategies to facilitate professional growth.

A Self-Reflective school professional:

- A. Displays a commitment to enhancing and extending previous knowledge, metacognitive and teaching skills, and understandings. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)
- B. Is more interested in the pursuit of professional learning and excellence than in maintaining a personal comfort zone to avoid risk and failure. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)
- C. Reflects on her/his own development over the lifespan as a learner and a teacher, and connects patterns in that history to her/his own current beliefs and practices. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)
- D. Engages in continuous “kidwatching,” viewing students as the most important source of information and professional learning. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.3, 1.2.8, 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)

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- E. Accesses the resources of professional organizations (e.g., journals, conferences, web sites, etc.). (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4,5; Core Belief 4,5)
- F. Develops a healthy skepticism, initiating conversations and raising grounded questions about instructional trends and practices. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)

Some examples of Self Reflection Toward Continual Development:

“I never want to get ‘in a rut’ as a teacher. Being too comfortable is dangerous, and what worked at one point may not always work. I’ll make sure I try something new at least every year.”

“I need to know why I do what I do in the classroom. I am a professional decision-maker, not a technician who implements the ideas of others.”

“This was successful/unsuccessful. I want to know why and how to use that knowledge to make the next time more successful/better.”

“Why does _____ keep happening? I need another pair of eyes and ears to help me see what it is that I am doing, so that I don’t end up blaming the kids.”

“The _____ sounded like something my learners need and I want to do. Knowing me, it’s going to be uncomfortable and hard for me. I might fail at it, but that’s

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okay. It can be a learning experience for all of us if there is a learning discussion about it.”

“This experience in my school years/personal life/professional life has shaped my beliefs and practices about teaching _____.”

“The best source of information is the kids. If I keep my eyes, ears, mind, and heart open, they will show me what they need.”

“Even though this expert says this strategy is effective, I’m not sure it would work with my students. I intend to look more closely at it, maybe look at other research, and even experiment with it, before I accept it as effective.”

5. Values and Acts Upon Belief in Educational Leadership:

A true educational leader views himself or herself as a servant of learning, and thus leads by serving education in all its aspects, from individual needs to the power of learning upon a democratic society.

A school professional who values and acts upon belief in educational leadership:

- A. Considers him/herself a lifelong professional educator and model of learning rather than as an employee. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)

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- B. Demonstrates an ongoing commitment to enhancing and extending the professional knowledge base. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9; Goal 4,5; Core Belief 4,5)
- C. Initiates discussions and collaborations with peers, mentors, and others to learn more about effective teaching and to effect needed change.
(MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 4,5; Core Belief 4, 5)
- D. Recognizes and values the impact that cultural, ethnic, developmental, and individual differences have upon learning and teaching, celebrating the strengths of individuals rather than viewing them through a “deficit” lens.
(MoSTEP Standards 1.2.3, 1.2.4, 1.2.7, 1.2.10; Goal 1; Core Belief 1)
- E. Recognizes and accepts complexities of power, gender, class, sexual orientation, and privilege in American society, and embraces education as a means of promoting each individual’s personal and professional mobility in a democratic society. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.3, 1.2.4; Goal 1; Core Belief 1)
- F. Desires to know about, understand, discern, and use valid pedagogical theories and effective practices, and continuously seeks to stay current with trends and issues in education. (MoSTEP Standards 1.2.1, 1.2.9; Goal 4; Core Belief 4)
- G. Affiliates with professional organizations and participates actively in professional communities. (MoSTEP Standard 1.2.9, 1.2.10; Goal 5; Core Belief 5)

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Some Examples of Values and Acts Upon Belief in Educational Leadership:

“It is important to me to regularly take stock of my own learning; I set aside a certain amount of time to keep up with what’s new in education and to consider how to use what I learn.”

“I realize that, as a teacher, I am a model of conscientious, responsible citizenship and of lifelong learning.”

“Professional organizations in education are valuable sources of ideas and learning. I am active in several organizations and learn a lot from reading their publications and attending regional and national conferences.”

“Several of my colleagues and I are interested in learning more about _____, so we plan to _____.”

“Just because the government has mandated/approved this program doesn’t mean it’s good for our students. My colleagues and I will look for ways to adapt or supplement it, but if it doesn’t meet the needs of our students, we will do some research and work to make others, including policymakers, aware of the problem.”

“I see myself joined with other educators across the country as we work to serve the needs of all learners in an increasingly diverse society.”

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“Being different is not being wrong, and there is no such thing as ‘one size fits all.’

Rather than trying to make every learner the same, it is important to celebrate differences and to look for and build on each learner’s strengths.”

“It is a privilege to be a teacher. Part of my passion for teaching comes from my deep respect for the influence I have each day on learners’ lives, as well as the difference I can make in their future happiness and success.”

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Exhibit 2.1

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