

ST. CLOUD STATE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Teaching, Leading, Serving

Policy Handbook

2013-2014

Updated 5/12/14

Introduction

St. Cloud State University (SCSU) is a nationally recognized and accredited public institution with a number of undergraduate and graduate programs which are designed to provide interdisciplinary and applied educational experiences for students. SCSU is a member of many academic and professional associations, including American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Association of College for Teacher Education and Council of Graduate Schools. The University is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission and is a member of the North Central Association.

The School of Education offers teacher certification programs in Elementary Education (K-6), Special Education (K-12), Early Childhood Education (B-3), Early Childhood Special Education. In addition, the School offers a licensure program for Library Media Specialist and an endorsement program in Reading Literacy. Non licensure program offerings in the School include an undergraduate minor in Human Relations minor and an Instructional Technology certificate. At the Master's level, the School offers Master's degrees in Social Responsibility, Technology Integration, Curriculum & Instruction, and Special Education. The School offers doctoral programs in Educational Administration and Higher Education Administration. The School of Education is a member of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) and accredited by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and the Board of School Administrators.

Mission and Vision of the University

Mission: At St. Cloud State University our over-riding purpose is “to prepare our students for life, work and citizenship in the twenty-first century.”

Vision: Through active discovery, applied knowledge and creative interaction, we positively transform our students and the communities where they live and work.

Vision Defined: St. Cloud State University makes a positive, long-term impact on the lives of our students. We provide rigorous and relevant academic experiences with engaged, active learning opportunities in an intellectually vibrant, inclusive and diverse campus community. Our graduates are well-prepared to act as responsible global citizens and professionals who remain actively connected with our university.

Learning Commitments: With the University's vision of impacting the lives of its students for life, the strategic focus of the institution for accomplishing its broad goals are the following:

- Active and applied learning;
- Community engagement;
- Sustainability; and
- Global and cultural understanding

School of Education

Mission: The School of Education strives to create an environment where all participants are critical, creative thinkers, lifelong learners, and global citizens who advocate and work for justice and equality as they pursue their various roles.

Commitment to Civility & Collegiality: A climate and culture conducive to shared governance is critical to a department's ability to function effectively. This requires that faculty interact with one another in a manner that is cooperative, professional, collaborative, and mutually respectful. It means that differences of opinion be expressed in a way that is both civil and constructive. In short, it requires *collegiality*. This view is endorsed by The American Association of University Professor's (AAUP) Committee on Academic Freedom and Tenure: "Few, if any, responsible faculty members would deny that collegiality, in the sense of collaboration and constructive cooperation, identifies important aspects of a faculty member's overall performance" (statement adopted November 1999). Moreover, surveys show that faculty regard department collegiality as one of the most important factors in job satisfaction, and lack of collegiality can have a deleterious effect on student satisfaction and success.

As AAUP goes on to state "understood in this way, collegiality is not a distinct capacity to be assessed independently of the traditional triumvirate of teaching, scholarship, and service. It is, rather, a quality whose value is expressed in the successful execution of these three functions". Accordingly, collegiality is a component of faculty performance that is valued.

Goals:

1. Provide every student the highest quality education through a rigorous, challenging, and active learning experience in close working relations with faculty and staff that encourages intellectual engagement and personal growth.
2. Recruit, support, and foster the development of a diverse community of outstanding students, faculty and staff.
3. Enrich the collegiate experience by strengthening the integration between curricular, co-curricular and professional programs.
4. Cultivate relationships between the School and wider P-12 school community that support teacher preparation programs and serve the community.
5. Expand funding for school priorities and initiatives through public and private support, grants, and entrepreneurial activities.
6. Promote school effectiveness through ongoing assessment in every program and office.

Teacher Education Unit

At SCSU, teacher preparation is a university-wide endeavor and responsibility. To this end the School of Education is in a collaborative partnership with the College of Liberal Arts; School of

Public Affairs; College of Science and Engineering; School of Health and Human Services; and the School of Continuing Studies, especially in the delivery of secondary certification programs in the University. All teacher education programs are approved by the Board of Teaching (BOT) for the purpose of preparing students for a specific teacher licensure field in Minnesota.

Through the authority of the University President and Provost, the Dean of the School of Education is designated as the university representative and has the primary responsibility for overseeing and delivering teacher preparation programs in the University.

Unit faculty: The teacher education professional unit faculty refers to the faculty members in the School of Education and the various schools and colleges of the Arts and Sciences who have instructional responsibilities for courses that contribute to the preparation of candidates for teaching licensure programs at SCSU. These faculty are responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining program continuity of the licensure programs in the University.

Teacher Education General Statement

In light of SCSU's mission of preparing students for life, work and citizenship, the School of Education strives to create a learning environment that fosters creativity, critical thinking, problem solving skills and global citizenship. To accomplish these ends in an atmosphere of civility, justice and equality; all departments within the School shall establish departmental policies and operational procedures that are visionary and transparent.

To develop a department and/or program policies and procedures, the following existing documents should be used to inform policy choices and decisions.

1. IFO/MnSCU Master Agreement <http://ifo.org/contract-benefits/contract/view-by-article-11-13/>
2. MnSCU system policy <http://www.mnscu.edu/board/policy/index.html>
3. SCSU Student Code of Conduct
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/studenthandbook/code/default.asp>
4. SCSU administrative and operations policy www.stcloudstate.edu/businessservices
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/policies/categories/default.asp>
5. Locally agreed upon Art. 22 and 25 review calendar
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/provost/files/documents/PDPPDRPromotionTenure201320142.pdf>
6. Budgeting <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/finadmin/budget/default.aspx>
7. Academic Policy <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/provost/faculty-resources.aspx>
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/provost/student-resources.aspx>

8. Curriculum <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/provost/documents.aspx>
9. Hiring and personnel decisions <http://www.stcloudstate.edu/affirmativeaction/>
10. University operations, the daily course schedule and academic calendars
<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/provost/academics.aspx>

These documents should not be regarded as all inclusive. Documents from other sources such as licensure program approval mandates and accreditation standard requirements should also be considered as legitimate and viable sources of information for a responsive decision making process.

Conceptual Framework: Educating for a New Era

Institutional/Unit Commitment to:

- **Excellence in Teaching-** The St. Cloud State University teacher education program is committed to preparing teachers who understand the importance of pursuing excellence by developing the knowledge and skills to become effective teachers and continuing to develop their knowledge and skills throughout their careers. This commitment is reflected in faculty who model excellence in their own teaching, reflect on their work and aspire towards continuous improvement.
- **Access and Opportunity-** The SCSU teacher education program has a strong history and commitment to providing access to students from different (socioeconomic, student with disabilities and cultural) backgrounds and giving students the support that they need to succeed in our program. As a state university, we offer affordable programs and provide financial assistance to help our students to pay for their programs.
- **Active and Applied Learning-** The SCSU teacher education program is committed to providing students with clinical experiences that allow them to practice the skills they are learning. Faculty members engage students in a variety of projects inside and outside the classroom to learn in an active and real manner.
- **Community Engagement-** SCSU as an institution of higher education is committed to involve students in the community to learn with and from community members, programs and professionals. The teacher education unit reflects this commitment through strong and active partnerships with P-12 schools.
- **Accountability that Improves Teaching-** SCSU teacher education program is committed to working with students to study and implement meaningful accountability measures and processes that are connected with assessing learning and improving teaching by better understanding student learning and being able to individualize approaches to learning to match student needs, level of understanding and style of learning.

- **Global and Cultural Understanding-** SCSU is committed to cultivating a multicultural and engaged campus that prepares students and faculty to embrace living, learning and working in a diverse global community.

Transforming Candidates and Supporting Faculty as Co-Learners to be:

- **Knowledgeable and Skilled Educators-**The basic knowledge base and skills for teachers are identified in the 2011 InTASC standards and refer to four areas: 1) Understanding the learner and learning environments; 2) Content knowledge-that is specific to each licensure area; 3) Instructional Practice-that involves understanding instructional strategies, planning for instruction and assessment; and 4) Professional Responsibility- A commitment to ongoing professional development and ethical practice and collaboration with others.
- **Caring and Ethical Professionals-** The understanding of the importance of building caring relationships with learners and colleagues as a basis for promoting individual and group learning. Ethical practice refers to an awareness of the ethical dimensions of teaching diverse learners and the nature of educational professionalism in the 21st Century.
- **Collaborative Leaders-** This role acknowledges that teaching is no longer a solitary activity within the walls of a classroom but depends upon working in a collaborative manner with other educators, other professionals, families and community members and the responsibility to be advocates for individual learners and the education system.
- **Reflective Practitioners-** Reflective practice involves the ability to assess educational practice by reviewing assessment data, understanding self as an educator/ learner and making adjustments to be more skilled and effective as an educator. Being a reflective practitioner requires a life-long commitment to learning and continuous improvement.
- **Creative, Flexible Problem Solvers-**Teachers need the ability to work with students in creative ways to maximize student learning and display the flexibility to be effective with learners from diverse backgrounds with differing abilities, learning styles and interests. They also need to be creative in engaging parent and family members in learning about a learner's background, interests and needs.
- **Advocates for Equity and Justice in Education-**The current context for education in the US reflects gaps in opportunities, inequity of resources for students in poverty and bias based on race, gender, sexual orientation and SES. Educators have to advocate for all students including individual students and groups of students who may face social injustices in our society.
- **Innovative Users of Technology-**The role of technology in education continues to evolve and educators should be seeking innovative ways to use technology to engage learners and enhance the learning environment, assess individual learning and communicate with families.

Leading P-12 Students to:

- **Display Inquiry and Enthusiasm for Learning-** Learners need support for their innate curiosity to be understood and stimulated by activities in their educational settings. Educators model this enthusiasm for learning in their approach to education. They continue their own professional development and embrace new information, new ways of thinking and new ways of learning.
- **Thrive on Diversity-** Learners growing up in the 21st Century should embrace new opportunities to interact in a global environment where physical boundaries will no longer constrain their exposure to different ways of thinking and living. Educators model cultural sensitivity and global awareness reinforcing the importance of diverse ideas, cultures and values.
- **Construct Knowledge and Originate Ideas-** Learners will need to move beyond learning the current “facts” to being able to put knowledge together in new and creative ways. Educators model creative presentation and engagement with knowledge, using a variety of modalities including artistic, kinesthetic, technological and traditional.
- **Demonstrate Understanding through Authentic Assessment-** Learners need to demonstrate not just their memorization of facts or concepts but show how this understanding is applied in real-life situations. Educators construct and utilize authentic assessment to ascertain learners’ mastery of skills and understanding.
- **Meet Well-Defined Standards-**Learners must demonstrate mastery of a core set of subjects that will continue to evolve with our understanding of what is most important. Educators continue to review and refine their understanding of current standards and develop relevant learning experiences.
- **Cooperate and Collaborate with Others in Multiple Contexts-** Learners and workers in the 21st Century will collaborate on projects that may stretch across different disciplines and cultures. Learning how to communicate and work as a member of a team on complex real-world issues is a necessary new mind-set and set of skills. Educators model collaboration in their interactions with colleagues, learners, families and community.
- **Demonstrate Technology Literacy-**Learners are able to use digital tools for research, problem solving, and decision-making in an information rich environment. They understand and practice the ethical use of technology in communicating and collaborating with others. Educators model innovative and ethical use of technology with learners and colleagues.

SOE Profile

Dean’s Office: The School of Education Dean’s Office provides leadership for the activities of the School.

Child and Family Studies: The mission of the Child and Family Studies department (CFS) is to provide high quality programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels that are designed to educate individuals for professional roles working with young children, parents and families in a variety of public and private settings.

Educational Leadership and Higher Education: The Department of Educational Leadership & Higher Education is dedicated to offering current and prospective students the opportunity to develop, advance and apply learning in leadership roles as a PK-12 administrator (building or district) or as a college or university administrator.

Human Relations and Multicultural Education: The Department of Human Relations & Multicultural Education (HURL) provides education in self-awareness and skills essential for living and working in a democratic, environmentally sustainable, and socially just society. The department addresses issues of oppression and social justice related to race, gender, age, class, religion, disability, physical appearance, sexual orientation and nationality/culture. HURL is an interdisciplinary applied field committed to addressing questions of equity, self-determination, resource allocation and quality of life facing people around the world.

Information Media: The Information Media department (IM), through the School of Education, offers three distinct graduate program tracks leading to a Master of Science, three graduate certificate programs, an undergraduate certificate program, and coursework leading to Minnesota licensure as a Library Media Specialist. These programs prepare students for careers as Technology Integration Specialists, K-12 Library Media Specialists, Instructional Designers, Technology Coordinators, E-Learning Designers, and Online Instructors.

Special Education: The Department of Special Education (SPED) is dedicated to the preparation of educators who establish effective teaching and learning environments for individuals with disabilities in state, national, and global communities

Teacher Development: The Department of Teacher Development offers an Elementary Education major leading to licensure for grades K-6, and the professional licensure component for students seeking a Secondary Education subject area teaching certification in grades 5-12 (Communication Arts & Literature, Math, Social Studies, Sciences, or Technology Education), and for students seeking teaching certification in Art, ESL, Music, Physical Education, or World Languages for grades K-12. The Department also offers a Master's degree program in Curriculum and Instruction. Our Statement of Philosophy commits us to principles that guide a democratic community and emphasizes critical thinking, problem solving, and the importance of students becoming active participants in their own professional development.

Confucius Institute: The Confucius Institute within the School of Education seeks build bridges with K-16 education programs and China and promote Chinese language and culture within the state of MN. Events and seminars on doing business in China will also be offered in partnership with the Minnesota Trade Office. Scholarships are available for SCSU students to study in China and for faculty and administrators across disciplines to complete research, attend conferences, and travel to China to learn how to integrate an understanding of China into courses and programs.

Curriculum and Technology Center and Instructional Technology Discovery Lab: The Vera W. Russell Curriculum and Technology Center (CTC) provides print and non-print (technology and web-based) resources designed to support the academic programs within SCSU's School of Education.

Office of Clinical Experiences: The Office of Clinical Experiences is a function of the Dean's Office in the School of Education. The mission of the Office of Clinical Experiences (OCE) is to secure quality field

experience and student teaching placements for teacher candidates in the School of Education and across the SCSU campus, in preparation for their roles as future educators.

The School of Education, at St. Cloud State University, prepares teacher candidates in 23 licensure areas. The Office of Clinical Experiences is specifically responsible for providing approximately 850 teacher candidates per semester with over 1,000 field and student teaching placements, in partnership with area school districts. Liaisons from the major program areas meet on a regular basis with OCE staff to ensure that program and student needs are being met.

Student Relations/Services Office: The Student Relations/Services Office is a function of the Dean's Office in the School of Education. The Student Relations/Services Office provides support for prospective and current students in the School of Education to encourage student success, retention, and degree completion.

MTLE Center: The Minnesota Teacher Licensure Exam (MTLE) Center is a resource center designed to support teacher candidates at SCSU in the successful completion of their licensure exams. Services offered include success coaching and planning sessions, registration and accommodation request assistance, fee waivers, workshops, and free study materials.

Teacher Preparation Initiative: The Teacher Preparation Initiative (TPI) is a 10-year initiative involving 14 higher education institutions across ND, SD, and MN. TPI will maximize teacher effectiveness and increase student achievement by transforming and strengthening teacher education through collaborative partnerships between SCSU and P-12 school districts.

SOE Standing Committees

Purpose: The purposes of the School of Education Standing Committees are to assist the School of Education in its deliverance of rigorous professional program offerings and to provide the administrative leadership with faculty input in an atmosphere of shared governance to achieve an effective and efficient administration of the School. The current School of Education Standing Committees include the following:

1. Deans Advisory Council
2. Global Education Committee
3. Space and Technology Committee
4. Assessment/Accreditation Committee
5. Curriculum Committee
6. Graduate Committee
7. Student Advisory Committee
8. OCE Liaisons Committee/School Partnership & External Relations Committee
9. Teacher Education Advisory Council
10. Executive Teacher Education Council

Committee Make-up: The standing committees of the School of Education shall be comprised of a faculty member from each Department, Administrative staff and students as described in Sections of

each committee's responsibilities, except with the Dean's Advisory committee which is comprised of Department chairs and administrative directors/coordinators in the school. In addition:

1. Faculty and staff serve two-year terms;
2. Student representatives serve one-year terms;
3. Committees serve from the opening day of Fall semester until the next opening day;
4. Departments will elect committee membership for standing committees;
5. Member's terms shall be staggered so that each year about one-half of them end;
6. It is recommended that no one serve three consecutive terms on the same committee, except in unique situations;
7. Election to Department Personnel Committee will take place at the departmental level and by means determined by each department;
8. All non-academic recommendations of committees shall go from the committee to the departments and then to the Dean;
9. Committee assignments should be finalized at the first meeting in the Fall semester, after all full-time faculty have been appointed for the year.

General Standing Committee Duties:

1. Elect one person as chair, and vice chair if determined required for the committee, from among the members of the Committee;
2. Name an appropriate number of student members;
3. Establish and publish times and places of regular committee meetings for the semester;
4. Disseminate an agenda for each meeting to the committee members and make the agenda available to the membership of the School of Education in advance of the meeting, excepting the Personnel Committee when it is meeting on confidential matters regarding retention, tenure, and promotion;
5. Keep minutes of committee business and discussion and make them available in an accessible and on-demand format;
6. Deal with other matters related to the charge of the committee as requested by the Dean of the School of Education;
7. Coordinate the mentoring of new faculty and adjuncts in topics relevant to the committee's charge in collaboration with the Dean of the School of Education;

8. File an Annual Report covering action concerning the charge to the committee and other committee business conducted during the year; including recommendations to the future members of the committee about any unfinished business.

Departmental Related Policies

Under Article 20 department faculty shall establish at least annually, using a democratic process, departmental policies and procedures. These policies and procedures at a minimum shall address the making of recommendations regarding teaching and other work schedules, personnel actions, budgetary matters, teaching assignments, the department curriculum, classroom and equivalent duty schedules, procedures for addressing student complaints and grade appeals at the departmental level.

Guidelines:

1. Departments/Programs should identify a parliamentary authority for purposes of assuring that a democratic process is used in making departmental recommendations.
2. Within five weeks of the opening of each academic year starting in 2013-14 the department should review, modify, and approve the department's policies and procedures consistent with the requirement that these policies and procedures be established annually.
3. The department's or program's procedure for creating recommendations provide for a timely submission of these recommendations to the immediate supervisor and allows for a timely opportunity for individual faculty members to exercise their right to make independent recommendations on any matter covered by Article 20 (the opportunity and faculty member's right must be preserved).
4. Recommendations should provide a rationale and the results of the vote on the recommendation.
5. All policies and procedures must be reviewed within ten business days of receipt by the immediate supervisor and should be on file with the supervisor and available to all department members (departmental recommendations must be reviewed and approved by the department).
6. Departments and Administrative units with multiple programs should use a subcommittee structure consistent with tentative agreement Article 20 language.
7. Recommendations should emerge at the program level and go to the supervisor. Departments may develop procedures to review and comment on program recommendations.

Faculty Related Policies:

1. At the beginning of the academic year and during department policy deliberations, Departments shall list the names of faculty members who are eligible to vote on departmental matters and affairs during that academic year.
2. Faculty teaching duties shall be determined democratically and predicated on faculty expertise/qualifications, program needs, and the needs of current and potential students in the programs, without regards to the seniority or rank of members in the department.
3. Departments with multiple discipline specific programs can delegate tasks to sub-committees of faculty members by program. This delegation would not mean the department would be absolved of the responsibility to take action on the sub committee's work and would not remove a faculty member's right to make his or her own recommendations. In order to be objective and consistent in application of Article 20, it is important that program based sub committees initiate the recommendations to be made.
4. The establishment of departmental goals and objectives shall be accomplished through a democratic process annually or as frequently as deemed appropriate by the department. In addition, each program (identified by the department as such) may establish program-specific goals, objectives, policies, procedures and schedules.
5. Departments shall establish hiring/appointment policy and procedures that include hiring goals which are consistent with the goals of the School, University, and the BOT program approval standards.
6. Departmental on-line teaching policies shall be consistent with the on line policies established by the School. Please see the appendix for the guideline.
7. Faculty professional development plans shall include listings of departmental goals as distinguished from the faculty member's personal professional goals. Professional development reports shall include student opinions of the faculty member's teaching effectiveness.
8. Departments shall establish policy and procedure setting department meeting dates and attendance expectations.

Faculty Mentoring:

The School of Education's Faculty Mentor Program is designed to provide each new faculty member with the kind of personalized support and guidance they need to fulfill their professional potential. The senior faculty members who serve as mentors respond directly to the needs and interests of the new faculty with whom they are paired. Mentors are available not only to answer specific questions, but, more fully,

to introduce new faculty members to the college community, to acclimate new faculty members to the values of the institution, and to assist new faculty members in the process of envisioning and advancing toward the next stages of their professional development.

Mentoring relationships provide the new faculty member with an experienced person of whom to ask questions about the procedures and policies of the School of Education in an informal and confidential setting. These might include questions about the process and content of portfolios for renewal and continuing appointment, the constitution and function of various committees, advice about publication, service, advisement, curriculum, and other such matters.

All full-time faculty are paired with a faculty mentor until tenure is achieved at the college. The formal mentoring relationship extends through continuing appointment. Mentor faculty are requested from each department at the beginning of the new academic year. This is a volunteer position responsibility.

The most rewarding mentoring relationships evolve when the two faculty members openly communicate their individual needs and expectations to each other, then work together to set goals for the year. Mentoring pairs are encouraged to attend faculty development programs designed specifically for their benefit and social functions.

Student Candidates Related Policies

The School of Education utilizes University policy when dealing with student complaints, grade appeals, late withdrawals and academic petitions. However, policies dealing with admission standards and fair processes due to candidates in the teacher education programs such as admission into student teaching are handled at the School/Unit level. The Unit has its own Appeals Committee that reviews candidate petitions and forwards recommendations to the Dean of the School of Education.

In adherence to the Board of Teaching (BOT) regulations, the School of Education shall follow the following State guidelines:

1. The Unit recruits, admits, and retains candidates who demonstrate potential for professional success in schools;
2. The Unit utilizes multiple criteria and assessments are used to identify candidates for admission who have potential to become successful teachers'
3. Programs have clearly stated and applied assessment procedures for the admission of transfer, nontraditional, and post baccalaureate candidates into undergraduate and graduate teacher preparation programs;
4. The Unit actively recruits and has plans, policies, and practices for admission and retention of a diverse candidates population; and

5. Programs assess and if appropriate, gives credit to candidates for knowledge and skills acquired through prior academic preparation and teaching experiences that meet licensure requirements. (BOT State candidate qualification standard).

Unit appeals Committee representation: The following departments or programs shall be represented on the programs Committee:

1. Chair of the Department of Teacher Development, or designee
2. Chair of the Department of Special Education, or designee
3. Chair of the Department of Child & Family Studies, or designee
4. A Co-Chair representative of TEAC
5. The Director (or representative) of Clinical Experience Office
6. Candidate's Content Area Advisor
7. Student Relations Coordinator
8. Administrative Director (ex-officio member)

Remedial Programs for Licensing Tests: Effective September 1, 2010, Minnesota Teacher Licensure Examinations (MTLE) replaced the Praxis series of examinations as the means by which the MN Board of Teaching makes licensing decisions. Teacher licensure is comprised of three distinct types of examinations:

- Basic Skills tests in Reading, Writing and Mathematics
- Pedagogy in the level of candidate licensure (Birth-Grade 3, K-6 or 5-12)
- Content area examinations – required for all candidates

With the change from Praxis to MTLE, the Minnesota Board of Teaching purposefully “raised the bar” placing the cut-scores for passing the Basic Skills exams (Reading, Writing and Math) at a sophomore in college level. This change resulted in dramatic changes in teacher licensure passing rates throughout the state, as reported by Title II. Frankly, the change caused a significant decline in passing rates.

SoE Initiatives to Increase Student Success:

1. We conducted a data analytics study which revealed that teacher candidates with an ACT –C score of 21 or better have the best chance to pass the new Basic Skills tests. A similar study conducted by one of the private institutions has confirmed the results of our study. We use this information to advise prospective candidates as they begin to explore education as a career as well as in our introduction to education classes. These findings have been disseminated to academic advisors through the Teacher Education Advisory Council, and have been discussed at the Executive Teacher Education Council and the Dean's Advisory Committee.
2. A study of Basic Skills requirements at our sister institutions revealed that many of them now require passing prior to admission to teacher education. St. Cloud State University has implemented a similar policy, and is now requiring candidates to score 220 or higher to be admitted to teacher education (passing=240), and to pass the exams prior to student teaching.

3. MTLE Basic Skills preparation workshops have been offered each semester for the past two academic years to assist students with their preparation. All candidates in the pipeline who have failed one of the Basic Skills exams receives an invitation to attend a workshop. We continue to collect data on these workshops to determine their effectiveness. It is particularly difficult for our candidates to know how to prepare or review for these exams, as they receive no feedback from Pearson on their performance or on areas of strength and weakness. Together with other institutions of teacher preparation, we continue to press for this to change and advocate for feedback for our candidates.
4. The MTLE Center was staffed by graduate assistants and graduate practicum students during the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 academic years. These graduate students provided one-on-one support and guidance to students who have struggled with Basic Skills testing.
5. Program coordinators, chairs, advisors and Deans have been receiving regular communications regarding the specific candidates in their pipeline who have not yet passed the Basic Skills exams and will be unable to student teach as a result of the newly implemented standards. They have been asked to assist in counseling students and helping them develop appropriate plans of action based on their initial scores and/or ACT scores.
6. We have purchased access codes for students to enhanced study guides available online through Pearson. These materials are only available for purchase on a per student basis, and are a financial burden for many students. Providing access to the appropriate study materials is essential to success.
7. We have developed an orientation workshop that is required for all candidates in the introduction to education courses. This orientation session provides information regarding unit expectations, licensure exam standards and transition points.
8. We are investigating feasibility of adding for-credit courses designed to help students learn and review test content and test-taking strategies.
9. During fall 2013, we implemented a support group for students struggling to pass the Basic Skills exams. This group meets to discuss shared experiences and frustrations regarding the tests. They develop and discuss ideas to help each other approach retesting with less anxiety. We continue to collect data to determine the effectiveness of this support strategy.