

## Overview of Workshop

### **Attendance Roster**

Marilyn Bellert	NIU Outreach
Penny Billman	NIU Outreach
Susan Bowers	Early Childhood Education
Paulette Bowman	NIU Outreach
Rebecca Butler	Library Information Specialist Type 10
Susan Callahan	CLAS English
Alan Clemens	LEPF
Vicki Collins	COE
Mayra Daniel	Department of Literacy Education/ Bilingual Component
Nancy Debrates-Densch	LEPF
Laura Edwards	Administrative Intern, Leland CSD 1
Judith Hackett	Superintendent, NSSEO
Kim Hoffer	AHCD
Charles Johns	Principal, Rolling Meadows High School
Nancy LaCursia	Nursing & Health Education
Lara Luetkehans	Technology Specialist Type 10 Certification
Christine Malecki	CLAS Psychology
Kathryn Maley	History/Social Sciences Teacher Certification Program
Bette Montgomery	HHS/FCSE
Sherrill Morris	AHCD
Jenny Parker	Physical Education Teacher Cert
Judy Pokorny	English/Teacher Certification
Shirley Richmond	HHS
Diana Robinson	NIU, RDI, Assistant Director
Michelle Shinn	Elementary Principal, Cherokee Elementary
Kim Siemers	K-8 Principal, Leland CSD 1
Sharon Smaldino	COE
Debbie Smith-Shank	Art Education Program, VPA
Sammy Vavroch	LEPF
Promod Vohra	Engineering
Lemuel Watson	COE
Corrine Wickens	Department of Literacy Education/ Reading Component

## **Topic for the Meeting**

- Are we preparing the right kind of teachers for the challenges, programs, populations, and practices required of them today?
- Are we preparing teachers able to facilitate learning for all students?
- Do our students learn to incorporate pedagogy in ways that are meaningful for students?

Workshop sponsored by NIU P-20 Strategic Planning and facilitated by Diana Robinson

## **Agenda**

- I. A Look at the Data on Supply and Demand
- II. Commentary on Supply and Demand Data by Practitioners
- III. Small Group Work
- IV. Moving Forward/Next Steps

## **Presentation 1: Supply and Demand for Educators**

[Research on Supply and Demand](#) (*Penny Billman*)

See Presentation for supply and demand statistics

### *Comments and discussion:*

- Assessment and other skill sets transcend all specialties
- More communication across disciplines needed at NIU
- Why not focus on teaching students English rather than on bilingual programs that may make it more difficult for students to learn English later?
- Difficult to bridge theory and practice; should teach educators how to fill the gap between the two
- Practice needs to spring from theory
- Important to be knowledgeable in content areas, but “big picture” skills are also needed
- Difficult to change curriculum to meet skill needs

### *Recommendations:*

- Tightening initial screening process and raise expectations for all students entering the program
- Prepare them for their job search
- Explicitly teach how to function in a mentoring relationship
- Encourage them to apply for jobs in alternative educational settings (urban, rural, and small schools)

## **Presentation 2: The Employer’s Perspective**

[NIU panel presentation](#)

[RTI in Illinois](#)

*(Judy Hackett, Superintendent of the NSSEO)*

- RTI: Illinois ahead of the game: has created a specific definition in order to create a common language and reduce misunderstandings
- 3-tiered model with lines blurred and problem solving model imbedded; encourages continual/fluid process
- Administrators need to know how to analyze data and evaluate programs
- There needs to be a link between all the pieces (e.g., curriculum review, technology, etc.) within RTI
- Essential components of RTI planning:
  - Understanding and consensus as to design of intervention
  - Infrastructure to support data analysis and teamwork
  - Implementation
- Keep in mind typical interview questions for educators (e.g., What are the main themes of RTI?; Describe the basic problem solving process?; What is the difference between formative and summative assessments, etc.)

**Presentation 3: Pre-Service Preparation Articulation**

[Pre-Service Articulation](#)

*(Charles Johns, Principal of Rolling Meadows High School)*

*Knowledge and Skills Needed:*

- Understanding and familiarity of ACT College Readiness Standards
- Formative assessment/summative assessment knowledge
- Ability and desire to work in Professional Learning Teams
- Knowledge of problem-solving methods
- Knowledge of and ability to implement positive classroom management skills (Sprick or Glasser)
- Demonstrated leadership skills
- Expertise in subject area
- Recognition that they may need to teach skills that are not in their content area (e.g., a science teacher being asked to teach reading skills)
- Methodological approach to improvement
- Ability to differentiate instruction
- Ability to work as a team
- Ability to work with *all* students
- Desire assist with extra-curricular activities (e.g., serve as an athletic team coach)
- Strong work ethic
- Commitment to continuous education/improvement
- Strong communication skills
- Willingness to see students as individuals with specific needs

**Presentation 4: Working in a Rural Setting**  
**Preparing Educators for Teaching in Rural Settings**  
(Kim S. and Laura E., Guidance Counselors)

*Key Differences:*

- High need to be familiar with differentiation techniques due to lack of special education resources
- Cooperatives with other districts
- Must be flexible and creative to meet student needs
- A lot of first-generation college-bound students; must explicitly teach process of applying to higher education institutions
- Strong identities within each specific class; if a student is unique, it may be very difficult for him or her to find a suitable niche

*Similar Needs:*

- Knowledge and skills in differentiated instruction; willingness to break from content area
- Ability to teach reading in any subject area at any level
- RTI familiarity
- Ability to use data (e.g., SWIS)
- Willingness to make personal connections with students and families
- Understanding of PBIS
- Willing and able to wear many hats/fill many roles

**Presentation 4**

(Michelle Shinn, Lake Forest Principal)

*Educator Needs:*

- Create system based on student needs; educators need to be able to adapt to changing times
- Regardless of title, all educators must have common goal of helping students learn common skills (e.g., reading)
- Turn away from “independent contractor syndrome;” teamwork is essential
- Use empirically-valid methods
- Differentiation (working knowledge of identifying what all students need to know, then mapping out specific paths for students to succeed, if needed)

*Challenges:*

- Resources; trying to maintain salaries that are competitive with those of private practice settings (for psychologists, speech-language pathologists, etc.)
- Move from student-centered focus to classwide or schoolwide focus, similar to a triadic consultation model

**Other points raised in Discussions among Presenter**

- University professors must model what employers will be expecting for students
- Frustrating to have to spend so much time on professional development immediately upon hire; educators who are already familiar with RTI and PBIS much more competitive in the hiring process

### **Compiled Results of Breakout Sessions**

#### ***Characteristics of the Ideal Teacher Candidate:***

- is a collaborative team player, but also knows how to work independently
- has working knowledge of research-based reading instruction
- knows how to negotiate with people who have opinions that differ from their own
- is able to advocate for self and students
- is equally adept at teaching both content and skills
- recognizes the cultural capital that students bring to classrooms
- is aware of recent initiatives, such as RTI, and knows *how to use it in their classroom*
- knows how to function on cross-disciplinary teams
- has a working knowledge of positive behavioral supports
- is a data-driven problem-solver and reflector and knows how to grow and change
- *enjoys* his or her role as a teacher
- has a working knowledge of and is able to implement evidence-based practices
- possesses leadership skills
- is flexible
- understands the mission/vision of his or her school
- is culturally sensitive and aware
- able to support all kinds of literacy (media, pictures, art, visual)

#### ***Current NIU Students vs. the Ideal Teacher Candidate:***

- Difficulty integrating content areas/skill sets (such as reading instruction and classroom management)
- Few chances to engage in advocacy
- Little opportunity to practice classroom management; needs to improve these skills
- Problems with schools refusing practicum teachers that are unable to teach for a whole year
- NIU students obtain longer student teaching experiences than some other Illinois institutions
- Community leadership opportunities lacking
- Participation in professional organizations is not required
- NIU sometimes not in close contact with schools in the community
- Cohesion needed regarding the purposes of assessment
- NIU students *expected* to develop reflection skills (Dispositions program)

***Strengths of NIU Graduates:***

- 16 weeks of student teaching (only 10 required by state of Illinois)
- “Dispositions” component of curriculum: teaches students important components of professionalism
- Importance of reflection stressed across colleges of education with teacher preparation programs
- Encouragement of continued professional development
- Asked to go beyond ISBE standards for student teaching and portfolio development
- NIU programs provide cutting-edge knowledge and skills (e.g., critical science/problem solving model of home economics)
- Combination of rural, urban, and suburban student backgrounds; also diversity of SES
- Technology savvy
- Programs offer in-depth, well-supervised clinical experiences prior to field experiences
- Encourages passion for chosen content areas

***How can NIU graduates be better prepared?***

- Enhance use of diversity in classroom
- More collaborative relationships- especially with partner districts/teachers
- Screening of cooperating teachers? (pros and cons)
- More constructive feedback for practicum student teachers *onsite*; many schools think that feedback will come from university professors
- Provide pre-service mentoring opportunities for students
- Increased involvement in RTI process at student teaching placement
- Stronger focus on data analysis skills, as well as assessment
- Required ELL course/courses
- Modeling by faculty of what schools are expecting of graduates
- Increased collaboration across departments
- Explicit teaching of interviewing skills

**Closing:**

- The current state of education has several implications for training new educators. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss what’s happening and what is going to be done to support and prepare students.
- Programming and structural changes may be made on existing data.
- Continued professional development
- More research forthcoming

**Next Steps:**

1. Compile today's "best thinking" and circulate to attendees for updating and revision
2. Send information to deans of the colleges of education before being posting it to the project website
3. Develop a specific plan and conduct a gap analysis
4. Disseminated supply and demand survey data
5. Examine implications for clinical experience, program curricula, new teachers, and the nature of the relationship between higher education and the schools