



# **Southern Connecticut State University**

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**CCSAR – Center for Community  
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**SCSU Educator Preparation Program Evaluation**  
*Executive Summary*

## **Executive Summary-Educator Preparation Program Evaluation Academic Year 2004/2005**

### **Introduction**

Each year CCSAR conducts an evaluation of the SCSU Educator Preparation Program. This broad-based approach incorporates a variety of research and performance-based assessment instruments to assess and measure the overall quality and effectiveness of the SCSU educator preparation programs. In addition, this program evaluation helps to ensure that the School of Education (SOE) continues to meet the standards set forth by its accrediting bodies, e.g., NCATE, CSDE, etc.

CCSAR's 2004-2005 program evaluation included an analysis of: (1) principal responses to a survey designed to elicit principals' thoughts, opinions and perceptions of the quality and level of preparation of recent graduates; (2) cooperating teachers' survey responses regarding the quality and level of preparation of SCSU student teachers (fall 2004 & spring 2005);(3) current students' (undergraduate and graduate) responses regarding their thoughts and opinions of the quality of their educator preparation program; (4) students' survey responses pertaining to their field experience related to a specific course; (5) student CAT score data during the 2004-2005 academic year; (6) alumni responses from students who graduated two years earlier from a SCSU program; and (7) current doctoral students' perceptions and thoughts regarding the quality of the SCSU doctoral program.

### **Data Collection and Methodology**

#### ***Principal Study***

Two hundred thirty principals were invited to participate in this year's evaluation study. Principals were identified in these ways: (1) CCSAR's in-house database that contains the names and addresses of schools identified by recent alumni as places of employment, (2) an excel spreadsheet sent by the CSDE BEST program listing the names and addresses of the schools that employed SCSU graduates when they submitted their BEST portfolio in the spring of 2004, and (3) the SCSU Alumni office. Forty-three principals completed and returned a survey to CCSAR but only thirty-six surveys were evaluated because some surveys were received after the due date and others were incorrectly completed. These principals represented a diverse cross-section of Connecticut's population: preK – 12 and from urban, suburban and rural communities, and public, parochial and private schools.

The Principal Survey contained 21 items (on a 3-point scale) that reflected the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching (CCCT) attributes and indicators, and aligned with the ten INTASC standards.

#### ***Cooperating Teachers' Study***

Two hundred ninety Evaluation of Student Teaching Performance (ESTP) surveys were collected

and reviewed for this study. These surveys represented the evaluation of candidates who were student teaching in the fall 2004 from October 4, 2004 - December 17, 2004(n=135) and during the spring 2005 semester from March 28, 2005-May 20, 2005(n=155). This sample included candidates in their second eight- week student teaching placement and students in a ten-week student teaching placement. Candidates represented a variety of majors and programs and were seeking certification at the elementary, middle, secondary or K-12 (Art, Special Education, Physical Education, Library Science and School Health) levels. Two separate reports were prepared: *An Analysis of Student Teaching Evaluation Responses by Cooperating Teachers, Fall 2004* and *An Analysis of Student Teaching Evaluation Responses by Cooperating Teachers, Spring 2005*.

Part I of the ESTP survey asked for identifying information about the candidate, including their name, addresses, major, etc. and the second half of the survey contained 66 items scored on a 3-point scale, (plus N/A) divided into ten competency areas.

### ***CCSAR Student Survey Study***

Three hundred sixty-five student surveys were sent to candidates poised to graduate from a SCSU educator preparation program during the 2004-2005 academic year. This sample represented undergraduate and graduate students at the end of their teaching program seeking a recommendation for certification. The fall distribution 'required' candidates to complete a survey as a condition for receiving a recommendation for certification, but the spring distribution merely 'strongly recommended' candidates to complete and return the survey to the SOE. The Director of Student teaching identified and prepared the mailing labels for these 365 candidates. School of education candidates enrolled in programs that did not require student teaching, e.g., RSM, Educational Foundations, School Psychology, etc. were also invited to participate. Cover letter and student surveys were disseminated directly to the department chair and/or program coordinator for distribution and collection. A total of two hundred forty-three student surveys were completed and reviewed for this study

Part I of the CCSAR Student survey contained demographic statements and questions regarding gender, age, ethnicity, employment, etc. and asked candidates to identify their current area of study. Part II of the survey included 73 items (divided into ten subsections) scored on a 3-point scale. The last page consisted of four open-ended questions.

### ***Field Placement Study***

Seven hundred sixty-nine Clinical Field Experiences Student Surveys (CFESS) were completed and reviewed as part of the 2004-2005 program evaluation. The Fieldwork surveys were distributed and collected by professors during class time from twenty-two different courses with a required field placement element. The survey responses also represented candidates at different points in the program: gate 1, gate 2, and gate 3. Two separate reports were prepared: the fall 2004 report represented candidates' responses (n=326) from nine different courses and the spring 2005 report represented candidates' responses (n=443) from thirteen different courses.

The field experience committee developed the Field Experience survey to learn more about the quality of the field experiences at SCSU and to make improvements. Survey revisions were made during the 2004-2005 academic year: survey I (fall 2004) contained demographic items and fifteen items (5-point scale) regarding the candidate's fieldwork experience and survey II (spring 2005) was expanded to include thirty-four items (5-point scale) regarding a candidate's fieldwork experience.

### ***Alumni Survey Study***

The SCSU Office of Alumni Affairs (n=534) and the CSDE BEST (n=250) Portfolio program identified the names and addresses of recent graduates (year=2003) from a SCSU educator preparation program. The first mailing was sent to the homes of five hundred thirty-four alumni who graduated in 2003, but generated a poor response rate. As a result, a second mailing was implemented. This second mailing was sent to the place of employment of each of the two hundred and fifty SCSU graduates when they submitted their BEST Portfolio during the spring of 2005. The names and work addresses of these alumni came directly from the state. The combined mailings produced one hundred six completed alumni surveys for analyses.

The Alumni Survey consisted of demographic items and 73 items (3-point scale) regarding the quality and level of preparation received by SCSU alumni. The last page included four open-ended questions.

### ***CAT Test Score Report***

Data from three different test reports were collected and analyzed as part of this program evaluation: December 2004, April 2005, and July 2005. One hundred forty-six CAT test scores were contained in these three reports: eighty-eight CAT scores from tests takers who had take all four modules and who had complete scoring data, and fifty-eight CAT scores from test takers who had not take all four modules. The eighty-eight test scores were then reviewed to calculate a pass/fail rate for those candidates identified as first-time test takers: n=67.

The CAT serves as a performance-based measure of a student's knowledge and understanding of the Connecticut School Leadership Standards and as one indicator of the quality of the preparation program. The test consists of four modules. Instructional Analysis: an elementary and a secondary level and School Improvement: an elementary and a secondary level.

### ***Doctoral Study***

All candidates enrolled in the SCSU Ed.D. program were identified for inclusion. Thirty-five completed surveys were collected and reviewed for this study: Seven surveys from candidates in cohort I (2006 anticipated graduation date), 18 surveys from candidates in cohort II (2007 anticipated graduation date) and 10 surveys from candidates in cohort III (2008 anticipated graduation date). The majority of the respondents (n=18) were from the second cohort.

The Doctoral Program survey contained three sections: Part I -demographic items, Part II- 49 survey items (five-point scale, with N/A/ as a choice), and Part III- eight open-ended questions.

## Summary of Findings

### *A. Self-Reported Instruments: Current Student Surveys, Alumni Surveys, Doctoral Program Surveys, Fieldwork Surveys*

Current candidate responses (n=365) regarding the quality and level of preparation received from SCSU were positive. The mean score range on the ten INTASC standards was **2.17- 2.46** and **72/73** survey items earned a mean score of 2.00 or higher (3-point scale). The INTASC standard with the highest mean (**M=2.46**) was *Knowledge of Subject Matter* and the INTASC standard with lowest mean score (**M=2.17**) was *Partnerships with School and Community*. Two survey items were tied with the highest mean score (**M=2.56**): *D7- Ability to formulate meaningful questions about the subject matter* and *D6- Understanding of the purpose and value of the materials I will teach*. The survey item with the lowest mean score (**M=1.79**) was item H9- *Conducting effective parent /teacher conferences*. This was also the only item that earned a mean score of less than 2.00. Items related to parents and community resources and helping students set their own learning objectives and activities all received a minimum of a 2.00, but were nonetheless the 'lowest' scoring items for this sample (**M<2.17**).

Alumni responses (n=106) were less positive but still good. For example, the mean score range on the ten INTASC standards was **1.90-2.15** and **50/73** items earned a mean score of 2.00 or higher (3-point scale). The INTASC standard with the highest mean score (**M=2.15**) was also - *Knowledge of Subject Matter* and the INTASC standard with the lowest mean score (**M=1.90**) was *Reflection and Professional Development*. The survey item with the highest mean score (**M=2.29**) was the same as current students, *D7- Ability to formulate meaningful questions about the subject matter* and the lowest scoring item (**M=1.64**) was also the same as current candidates, item H-9- *Conducting effective parent/teacher conferences*. Eleven items received a mean score of less than 1.90 (2=met). These items focused on issues related to (1) parent/teacher interactions, (2) using community resources, (3) working with and identifying the needs of exceptional students and students deficient in the basic skills, (4) using technology in teaching, and (5) disciplining students fairly and consistently.

Responses to the open-ended questions for both the alumni and student survey yielded these comments for areas in need of improvement: (1) classroom management (current and alumni); (2) hands-on, practical experience (current and alumni); (3) special education training (current and alumni); (4) teaching diverse populations (current and alumni); (5) parent/ teacher interaction and communication (current and alumni); (6) the selection of cooperating teachers

and lesson planning ; (7) communication between students and professors; and (8) a survey for students who do not student teach. Alumni cited these additional needs: how to teach reading and writing to students, more training in the use of technology in education and better preparation in BEST Portfolio requirements.

### ***Clinical Field Experience Study***

*Fall 2004 Report (n=326)*

A review of the calculated ‘overall’ survey mean scores earned at Gate 1(**M=4.12**), Gate 2(**M=4.14**) and Gate 3(**M=3.90**) (5-point scale) suggests that candidates in the fall 2004 had positive perceptions of their field experience. In particular, candidates identified the following areas as most favorable: item #7-*Field site faculty members model expected behavior for me (M=4.98, gate 1)*; item #6- *The SCSU faculty person who teaches the university course connected to my field experience models expected behavior for me (M=4.82, gate2)*; and item #12- *Interactions with students in my field experience classrooms provide opportunities for me to develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions related to becoming a good teacher (M=4.53, gate3)*.

An area where candidates perceptions were not as favorable involved responses related to activities ‘outside’ the classroom, e.g., back to school nights, teacher in-services, parent/teacher conferences, etc. In fact, item #2- *I participated in programs at my field placement site* received the lowest overall survey mean score for all courses and at every single gate. Other areas where student perceptions were not as favorable included item #1- *SCSU faculty and the school faculty at my field placement share open lines of communication (gate 1)* and item #11- *I use information technology in my field experiences (gates 1,2,&3)*. These two items earned a mean score of less than 3.5

Candidates’ responses at each gate by course were also compared. At gate 1, candidates in EXS 291 had a different perception of their field experience as compared to candidates enrolled in other courses: candidates in EXS 291 had a statistically lower overall mean score as compared to the overall mean score of candidates in different courses at gate 1. Additionally, EXS 495 appeared to have a lower mean score than candidates in other course at gate 3 but small sample sizes precluded any statistical analyses.

A frequency distribution to calculate diversity of field placement sites indicated that the majority of candidates (at every gate) conducted their field placement in schools located in ERG I (urban schools primarily).

### ***Clinical Field Experience Study***

*Spring 2005Report (n=443)*

A review of the calculated ‘overall’ survey mean scores earned at Gate 1 (**M=3.87**), Gate 2

(**M=3.88**) and Gate 3 (**M=3.88**) (5-point scale) suggests that candidates in the spring 2005 had positive perceptions of their field experiences. In particular, candidates identified the following areas as most favorable: B3- *I feel that I am doing a good job at representing SCSU at my field site* and B4- *I feel that I am connecting with at least some of the students at my field site*.

An area where candidates' perceptions were not as favorable involved responses related to activities 'outside' the classroom, e.g., back-to-school nights, teacher in-services, school wide meetings, parent/teacher conferences, etc. This perception was found to be true at each of the gates. For example, item B2- *I do not have the opportunity to participate in school wide meetings/events outside of my regularly scheduled time at my field site* received the lowest item mean score at each gate, and item B20- *People at my field site encourage me to attend school wide meetings/events outside of my regularly scheduled time* had the lowest mean score for many candidates at gates 1 and 3.

A frequency distribution to calculate diversity of field placement sites indicated that 43% of candidates (across all three gates) conducted their field placement in schools located in ERG I (urban schools primarily)

### ***Doctoral Study*** (n=35)

Doctoral student responses were evaluated by cohort: cohort I (n=7, expected year of graduation 2006), cohort II (n=18, expected year of graduation 2007) and cohort III (n=10, expected year of graduation 2008). Candidates were asked to respond to 49 survey items using a five-point scale, with a sixth option provided: N/A. The N/A option was introduced for candidates who have yet to take the required course to reply to an item, e.g., candidates in cohort III.

Cohort I candidates (n=7) were able to provide a response to all survey items. In fact, the mean score response on **41/49** items was a 4.00 or higher. This suggests that respondent in cohort I agreed or strongly agreed with the majority of the items. Candidates in cohort I felt most positive about these two items (**M=5.00**): B9- *Identifying impediments impacting an organizations' ability to change* and B10-*the role of school leader as a catalyst for changing an organization*. The two survey items that scored less than **M=3.00** were B39- *Knowing the rights and role of unions in an educational organization* and the B40-*ability to apply sound fiscal management practices*.

Cohort II candidates (n=18) were not able to respond to every survey item: a response of N/A was selected at least once by this group on **20/49** items. This suggests that candidates were not able to reply to the items, as they had not taken the required course. For candidates who did select a scaled response **23/49** items earned a mean score of 4.00 or higher; **23/49** items earned a mean score between 3.00-3.99; and **3/49** items earned a mean score of less than 3.00 The highest mean score for an individual survey item was **M=4.61** and was received on three different items: B10-*The role of school leader as a catalyst for changing an organization*; B24-*Facilitating individual interviews, focus groups and/or surveys as part of a research study*; and

*B29- Examining my personal beliefs and professional commitments to valuing diversity, dignity, and democracy.* The three items that received a mean score of less than 3.00 were items related to the practical aspect of running an organization: personnel issues, the rights and roles of unions, and fiscal management.

Cohort III candidates (n=10) selected a response of N/A (at least once) on 43 of the 49 items. This suggests that candidates were not at a point in the program (had not taken the required course) to confidently reply to the majority of the items. As a result, many items had a very limited number of candidates responding, e.g., one, two, or three people. For those items that did receive a response, **14/49** survey items had a mean score of 4.00 or higher; **19/49** items received a mean score between 3.00-3.99; and **16/49** items received a mean score of less than 3.00. The single item with the highest mean score (**M=4.33**) was item B34-: *Defining the internal and external political systems impacting local school settings* (n=3) and the item with the lowest mean score B19- *Evaluating Data Using SPSS* (n=3, 7 others gave it N/A).

Candidates provided additional comments at the end of the survey regarding the quality and nature of the program. Positive comments include the outstanding faculty, the program format (cohort model) and the opportunity to grow both personally and professionally. Comments for improving the program included more exposure and experience in these areas: (1) personnel issues /matters, e.g., unions, hiring, salaries, etc., (2) how to manage the fiscal responsibilities of running an organization, e.g., developing a budget, accounting procedures, etc. (3) maintaining a safe work/school environment, and (4) more assistance and direction with the dissertation process and requirements. Additional areas included a need for improved communication between students and the administration, and the limited selection of program courses.

### ***B. Performance-based Assessment Instruments: Cooperating Teachers' Evaluation of Student Teachers, CAT Test Scores, and Principal Survey.***

#### ***CAT Score Report*** (n=67)

The pass rate for the 67 first-time test takers for the time period ascribed was 87%. The module with the highest mean score for this period was Module 2-Secondary Instructional Analysis, (**M=2.43**) and the module with the lowest mean score for this period was Module I (**M=1.88**)-Elementary Instructional Analysis.

#### ***Principal Study*** (n=36)

A mean score responses of 2.00 or greater (3-point scale) on all 21 of the survey items suggests that principals feel that the SCSU educator preparation program is preparing candidates to meet and/or exceed the Connecticut Common Core of Teaching standards as outlined on the survey. The item with the highest mean score was #16- *Generally speaking, the educators prepared at SCSU conduct themselves as professionals in accordance with the code of Professional*

*Responsibility for Teachers (M= 2.69)* and the lowest scoring item was #20- *Generally speaking the educators prepared at SCSU serve as a leader in the school community (M=2.03)*. In general, principals tended to award the higher mean scores on items related to teachers attitudes and integrity, and the lower mean scores on the items related to leadership and service as defined by the SOE's conceptual framework 'S.A.I.L.S.'

Areas in need of improvement as noted by principals included: classroom management, working in an urban setting, additional BEST training, a better understanding of state and national requirements and standards, implementation of knowledge learned in the classroom, and differentiating instruction.

### **Cooperating Teacher Findings (n=290)**

A range in mean score from **2.58 – 2.82** (3-point scale) on the ten INTASC standards/competency areas suggests that cooperating teachers view the preparation of SCSU candidates in a positive fashion. The competency area with the highest mean score (**M=2.82**) was the area entitled *Knowledge of Subject Matter* and the competency area with the lowest mean score (**M=2.58**) was the area entitled *Partnerships with school and community*. The positive range in individual item mean scores further supports this view of the quality of the preparation and candidates' abilities to address the ten competency areas. The item with the lowest mean score was item 4.4 -*Engages students in selecting their own learning objectives and activities (M=2.48)* and the item with the highest mean score was item 5.8 – *Demonstrates ethical behavior (M=2.91)*. Cooperating teachers also commented positively on candidates' knowledge of the subject matter, the quality of the lesson plans, the personal attributes of the candidates, the ability to establish student rapport, and adapting instruction for diverse learners.

Areas in need of improvement as expressed by the cooperating teachers included the following: classroom management, lesson delivery, instructional techniques, and more time in self-reflection.

### **Conclusions**

The results from this evaluation provide evidence that the SCSU educator preparation programs are effectively preparing educators to become successful educators. In addition, students appear to be satisfied with the nature and quality of the program and are able to demonstrate their ability to meet competency standards established by the CSDE and INTASC.

Areas in need of improvement are listed above but suggestions for enhancing the SCSU educator preparation programs are listed on the next page.

## Recommendations

1. Offer candidates a more practical, hands-on program. This would provide opportunities for candidates to practice teaching and subsequently develop the competency and confidence needed in areas noted as in need of improvement: classroom management skills, providing simpler, more direct lessons, using alternate ways to deliver instruction, opportunities to work with and to teach special education children, and working in diverse schools.
2. Encourage candidates to partake in the ‘true’ life of a teacher at every point in their field placement (if possible) but definitely during student teaching. For example, participate in back-to-school nights, observe (and possibly conduct) a parent/teacher conference.
3. Add courses and/or enhance current courses by addressing these subjects/topics:
  - ◆ teaching reading and writing to students
  - ◆ incorporating and integrating technology in the classroom
  - ◆ preparing for the BEST portfolio
  - ◆ communicating and interacting effectively with parents in support of their child’s education
  - ◆ running an organization: a ‘practical approach’- personnel issues, unions, budgeting, creating and maintaining a safe building, etc.
  - ◆ effectively managing a classroom
  - ◆ the role and importance of self-reflection in teaching
  - ◆ engaging students in selecting their own learning objectives and activities
  - ◆ what is an effective leader and the opportunity see one in practice
  - ◆ more classes in special education
  - ◆ course work in differentiated instruction
  - ◆ community resources; what are they and how to do I use them to improve instruction
4. Improve communication between faculty, candidates and the administration. Options include using the internet and ensuring the consistency of the message regardless of the mode of distribution, e.g., paper, electronically, etc.
5. Better preparation and exposure to the requirements of the CAT in Instructional Analysis-Elementary Level.
6. Provide more courses for selection.
7. Revise the CCSAR student survey for candidates who do not student teach.