

**Program Efficiency and Enhancement Review (PEER).
WNMU School of Education, Special Education Program**

1. What was the Special Education Program created to do in the first place?

The School of Education Special Education Program is an integral part of the School of Education. Candidates in the Special Education Program pursue bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, or Alternative Licensure - Special Education Certification. The program trains teachers for P-12 settings qualified and licensed to teach students with exceptionalities. Students who successfully complete program requirements are eligible for a teaching license from the State of New Mexico, Public Education Department (NMPED). In addition to meeting PED licensure requirements, the program meets state mandated Special Education Teacher competencies and required SOE outcomes.

The Special Education Program (Sped Program) was created for persons seeking Special Education Bachelor's and/or Master's teaching degrees, or Alternative Licensure in Special Education (ALP-SPED). For persons not licensed to teach, the ALP-SPED is a path toward Level 1 Sped licensure. As a condition of employment, NMPED issues a provisional teaching license (sometimes referred to as an Intern License) that requires ALP teacher candidates enroll and successfully complete an approved alternative licensure pathway. As candidates work full time as classroom teachers, they are also completing ALP coursework, taking and passing licensure exams, and applying for Level 1, unrestricted teaching licensure. Staffing a predictable rotation of Special Education courses is critical for degree and certificate candidates concurrently employed as classroom teachers.

2. What is the program doing now?

Currently, the Sped Program provides academic advisement, teaches contextual knowledge and foundations courses, gives teacher candidates opportunities to research and implement instructional and behavioral strategies for exceptional learners in classroom/school settings. Additionally, the program provides frameworks and skill building in order to establish strong home/school communication and professional relationships. The Sped Program prepares and supports pre-service and in-service teachers and in 15 school districts: Silver City, Cobre, Quemado, Reserve, Magdalena, Animas, Lordsburg, Hatch, Truth or Consequences, Deming, Socorro, Gallup McKinley, Zuni Pueblo, and the Navajo Nation and provides Sped candidates with a strong basis of knowledge, skills and abilities needed to navigate the complex field of teaching students with exceptionalities.

As special education teacher attrition continues to occur at alarming rates in rural and remote New Mexico schools, collaboration with school districts to fill teacher vacancies with trained, qualified Sped teachers becomes increasingly important. In response to the high demand for Sped professionals, as part of SOE's commitment to recruiting and retaining ALP candidates, faculty provide support such as classroom observations and individualized coaching. Additionally, in order to meet the state's 3-tiered licensure requirements, the SOE embeds its ALP courses in the Master of Arts in Teaching – Special Education (MAT-SPED) degree in order to provide teacher candidates with another choice for continuing their Sped training.

3. Should it be doing what it's doing now?

The Sped Program should be doing what it is doing to prepare Sped Professionals because New Mexico's Sped student population is growing. Our Sped population in P-12 is 13.7%, higher than national averages of 12.9% (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics State Profile, 2014, pp. 1-9). In order to adequately serve the growing number of students with exceptionalities, high quality Sped teacher preparation programs are needed to meet the current unmet demand for qualified, licensed Special Educators.

At this time, the Sped Program provides and should continue providing high quality undergraduate and graduate Sped programming that:

- Provides a strong theoretical foundation of exceptional learners
- Opportunities to apply coursework learning in the candidate's own classroom
- Consistently provides formalized instructional supports
- Establishes partnerships with school districts
- Provides coursework that emphasizes strategies to meet the unique needs of exceptional students from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds
- Ensures students will meet state licensing criteria
- Builds rapport with school districts and educational leaders

Finally, the School of Education should continue providing top quality Sped courses to teachers hired on provisional/intern licenses. For these candidates, the NMPED requires, as a condition of employment, that teachers hired on intern/provisional licenses must enroll and complete an approved pathway to unrestricted licensure. Our ALP program meets that requirement and helps ALP-SPED teachers get the training they need to effectively serve students with exceptionalities. In addition to meeting state licensure requirements, ALP-SPED courses are embedded in the Master of Arts in Teaching – Special Education (MAT-SPED) degree plan for those ALP candidates wish to continue their Sped training and complete a master's degree.

4. If not, what should it be doing?

The WNMU Special Ed program should:

- Continue participating in community outreach programs to maintain a presence and name recognition within the community
- Continue participating in various recruiting events held during the academic year.
- Continue membership and participation in professional education organizations like the Navajo Nation Teacher Education Consortium.
- Continue meeting with the Navajo Nation scholarships office to review and discuss WNMU-SOE programs and possible scholarships for WNMU teacher candidates.
- Continue developing collaborative relationships with the Navajo Nation Department of Dine Education, Dine College, and local school districts.
- Continue working with Teach for America and Peace Corps to recruit teacher candidates.

- Continue providing opportunities for local school districts to partner with SOE to provide professional development workshops specifically designed to give teachers strategies for working with students with exceptionalities.
- Continue recruiting students to the field of Special Education in order to maintain a pool of qualified, licensed Special Education teachers.
- Continue recruiting undergraduate students to major in special education, recruit alternative licensure candidates to the field, and consider innovative ways to provide incentives to retain special education teachers.
- Explore the possibility of offering GATE (Gifted and Talented) endorsement courses with the ultimate goal of addressing disproportionately low numbers of Latino, African American, and Native American students in gifted programs.
- Continue providing support for students seeking Special Education Bachelor's and/or Master's degrees, and ALP-SPED teaching licensure.
- Continue encouraging and supporting Alternative Licensure Program candidates to complete a master's degree in Special Education.

5. How should it do what it should be doing?

In order to accomplish the items stated above, the Sped Program will:

- Continue participating in GMCS New Teacher Orientation to recruit ALP and MAT candidates.
- Continue meeting with the Navajo Nation scholarships office to implement financial assistance for the 3+2 Program.
- Continue developing WNMU's relationship with the Gallup McKinley Public Schools Licensure Office to receive direct referrals of prospective ALP teacher candidates as they are hired.
- Continue advising Sped students from all campuses online, face-to-face, via telephone and via Zoom.
- Continue meeting with Dine College and the Navajo Nation to complete implementation of the 3+2 Program.
- Consider seeking opportunities through federal and state grants to support recruitment of pre-service and retention of experienced Sped teachers.
- Consider exploring ways of providing incentives for schools using evidence based mentoring models that support pre-service and beginning Sped teachers.
- Consider developing professional development that trains current teachers about current trends, collaboration strategies between general education and special education teachers for inclusive classrooms, and legal considerations in the field of special education.
- Attend and participate in local, statewide, nationwide and international conferences, training, and grant writing workshops.

6. Degrees and certificates awarded Bachelor's Degrees, Master's Degrees and Alternative Licensure Program Certificates

Bachelor's Degrees 2014 – 2016

Year	Name	Degree Awarded	Campus
2014	Jonathan Gonzales	BS	Gallup
2015	Michaela Medina	BS	Silver City

Master's Degrees 2014-2016

Year	Name	Degree Awarded	Campus
2014	Stephen Fabiola	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2014	Richard Husdon	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2014	Tamara Lincoln	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2014	Joseph Ness	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2015	Dahlia Perez	MAT-SPED	Deming
2015	Maria Tabar	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2015	Sean Shiel	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2015	Donovan Yazzie	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2016	Nancy Adams	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2016	Christina Robinson	MAT-SPED	Gallup
2016	Jeanna Gutierrez	MAT-SPED	Silver City
2016	Flor Bustillos	MAT-SPED	Misc (Roswell)

Alternative Licensure – SPED - 2014-2016

Year	Name	Certificate Awarded	Campus
2014	Flor Bustillos	CERT-SPED	Misc (Roswell)
2014	Kaliya Okuri	CERT-SPED	Gallup
2014	Christina Robinson	CERT-SPED	Gallup
2014	Renee Tolino	CERT-SPED	Gallup
2014	Rose Wyaco	CERT-SPED	Gallup
2015	Nancy Adams	CERT-SPED	Gallup
2015	Ethan Seidschlag	CERT-SPED	Gallup
2015	Davia Palenschat	CERT-SPED	Gallup
2015	Laura Cahill	CERT_SPED	Silver City
2015	Dahlia Perez	CERT-SPED	Deming
2015	April Edwards	CERT-SPED	Deming
2015	Ona Hethcox	CERT-SPED	Deming
2015	Karen Mosier	CERT-SPED	Deming
2015	Paula Senter	CERT-SPED	Deming
2016	Holley Berkley	CERT-SPED	Deming
2016	Angelique Mesa	CERT-SPED	Deming
2016	Jeff Gama-Lobo	CERT-SPED	Gallup

7. Enrollment and Student Credit Hour Production

Undergraduate Course	Dates	No. of Students Enrolled	Student Credit Hour Production
SPED 408 – Intro to Exceptional children	January 2014 – August 2016	93	279
SPED 428 Curriculum and Methods in Sped	January 2014 – December 2016	11	33
SPED 451 – Behavior Management in Sped	August 2014 – December 2016	2	6
SPED 454 – Eval and Assessment	July 2014 – May 2016	2	6
SPED 455 – Family, Community & Culture	January 2014 – May 2016	6	18
SPED 469 – Nature & Needs of Persons w/ Intellectual Disability	January 2015 – May 2016	6	18
SPED 470 – Nature & needs of Persons with Learning Disabilities	January 2014 – May 2016	10	30
SPED 470 - Nature & Needs of Persons with EBD	January 2014 – May 2016	4	12

Graduate Course	Dates	No. of Students Enrolled	Student Credit Hour Production
SPED 508 – Intro to Exceptional children	January 2014 – August 2016	49	147
SPED 528 Curriculum and Methods in Sped	January 2014 – December 2016	17	51
SPED 551 – Behavior Management in Sped	August 2014 – December 2016	14	42
SPED 554 – Eval and Assessment	July 2014 – May 2016	15	45
SPED 555 – Family, Community & Culture	January 2014 – May 2016	23	69
SPED 569 – Nature & Needs of Persons w/ Intellectual Disability	January 2015 – May 2016	22	66
SPED 570 – Nature & needs of Persons with Learning Disabilities	January 2014 – May 2016	33	99
SPED 570 - Nature & Needs EBD	January 2014 – May 2016	15	45

8. Strategies for Achieving Greater Efficiency

Continue changing the culture of the Sped Program by integrating learning activities and work products that closely approximate fieldwork done in the classroom/school setting by Sped Professionals.

In order to accomplish this goal and prepare teacher candidates for the ‘real world’, the program will continue to

- use case studies and actual classroom scenarios to provide learning activities that teach candidates how to stay adaptable and flexible since each student with an exceptionality requires his/her own individualized academic and behavior plan,
- provide opportunities for teacher candidates to practice designing and implementing research and evidence based instructional interventions and behavior management strategies in their classrooms, and
- provide a strong theoretical foundation so Sped teacher candidates develop technical knowledge and expertise and feel confident collaborating with parents/guardians, administrators, General Ed teachers, behavioral health providers, etc., in drafting and implementing asset-based, results oriented, legal documents such as Individualized Education Plans, Functional Behavioral Assessments, Behavior Intervention Plans, Behavior Contracts, etc.

9. Future Opportunities and Challenges

Recruitment and Retention Opportunity – Acknowledge and propose solutions to address the heavy burden of student loan debt on teachers with low very low starting salaries and develop a department wide 3+2 Program for all students wishing to pursue accelerated bachelor’s and master’s Sped degrees and stress to those candidates that under this program, they can become Level III teachers and reach their maximum earning potential within 6 years of entering the field.