

**The State of Educator Preparation in Ohio:
A Call for Inclusive Models of Teacher Preparation**
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Executive Summary

In this white paper, we report on the findings from small-group discussions from one of the Ohio Deans Compact on Exceptional Children's (hereafter referred to as the Compact) 2017 quarterly meetings. The purpose of this discussion was to identify 1) challenges encountered by Ohio's institutions of higher education (IHEs) in developing inclusive educator preparation programs (EPPs), 2) promising practices for addressing these challenges, and 3) how these challenges might affect the Compact's efforts to support the development and implementation of inclusive EPPs. The discussion prompts included the following: What are the major challenges that EPPs in Ohio currently face?; What are some promising practices for addressing current challenges?; and How do current challenges impact efforts to develop and implement inclusive EPPs? We report the findings in a SWOT analysis format that includes Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.

Major strengths within IHEs in the preparation of their teacher or principal candidates (hereafter referred to as candidates) include their strategies for (a) balancing essential content across licensure areas, (b) diversifying the pool of candidates, and (c) building collective institutional capacity to support the implementation of new EPPs. Key findings included how inclusive EPPs are merging content and evaluations across the areas in which candidates receive licensure. Ohio IHEs are improving in their abilities to collaborate across areas of expertise to effectively develop and implement inclusive EPPs that offer dual licensure to candidates. In addition, as the need for an increasingly diverse pool of candidates becomes apparent through the demographic data of our nation and state's educational workforce, IHEs have engaged in multiple strategies to promote access to EPPs for underrepresented groups, including students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and those from families with a lower socioeconomic background.

The most notable challenges IHEs are facing include recruitment, limitations in faculty expertise, delivering inclusive preparation, supporting candidates, problematic university

structures, educational silos, and planning and coordination. Discussants reported a greater need for structural support within the IHE to implement stronger EPPs, such as flexibility in faculty workloads, stronger weighting of P-12 partnership activities for tenure and promotion, and stronger coordination efforts among faculty involved in implementing EPPs and the university staff who provide advising and supervising support to candidates. In addition, IHEs and P-12 school districts face the ongoing challenges of ensuring that faculty understand the contextual environment of the school community and educators sustain positive and inclusive perspectives regarding all students.

Opportunities outside the IHE that provide positive experiences that can improve the quality of IHE EPPs include engagement in the *Compact Incentive Grant Program*, state-level structures that promote collaboration and reduce fragmentation, access to high-quality resources, and the right clinical placements. These opportunities reflect the multiple and diverse opportunities that Ohio IHEs have access to outside of their institution that can collectively build the capacity of Ohio EPPs to effectively prepare candidates to meet the needs of all P-12 students.

Threats to the profession that come from outside the IHE included societal-, political-, and educational-related challenges or dangers that could affect the quality and/or implementation of inclusive EPPs throughout Ohio. Current views of education in our nation and resources available to support education reflect two of the ongoing threats to the quality of EPPs in Ohio.

In Ohio, the Compact provides some of the strongest and most coordinated supports for IHEs and the P-12 educational community to address the current weaknesses and threats in the educational system and build upon the strengths and opportunities to promote equitable learning opportunities for all students.