Oklahoma’s Preparation Program
Partnerships
Bridging the Gap between the State Department of Education, Local Education Agencies and Institutions of Higher Education
Support from the Personnel Improvement Center

- We began our project in the fall of 2012.
- We held two formal meetings in December to discuss recruitment and retention data, and to develop action plans to move Oklahoma forward in finding solutions to the crisis level shortage of special education teachers.
- January 2013 emerged two work groups; one focused on recruitment and retention, and the other focused on preparation program partnerships between the Oklahoma State Department of Education (OSDE), Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and Institutes of Higher Education (IHE).
Preparation Program Partnerships
Workgroup:

- This workgroup meets the first Wednesday of the month via the PIC Adobe Connect.
- These monthly meetings will continue through September 2013.
- The intention is that this workgroup will continue on in the future without the support of PIC by holding quarterly meetings with members of the consortium to continue planning activities accordingly.
Monthly Meetings with the PIC, Workgroup Facilitators and OSDE:

- A monthly meeting with the PIC is held every second week of the month.
- The purpose of these meetings are for the SDE representative and facilitators of the two workgroups to report out progress on the action plans.
- The outcomes of these monthly meetings are to plan next steps.
Wiggio: Electronic Community of Practice

- Wiggio facilitates communication among our workgroup.
- Wiggio folder is utilized for sharing documents with the group.
- Wiggio calendar is utilized to post all activities with the PIC such as Webinars, as well as activities specific to each work group.
The Development of an OSDE, LEA and IHE Consortium

- Based on data from the Commission on Teacher Preparation and a survey of paraprofessionals, a contact list of college deans, OSDE staff and LEAs from both urban and rural districts has been compiled.
- A March meeting among IHE was held to discuss the creation of a consortium and current data from the Commission on Teacher Preparation.
- Seven of the eight IHE invited which represented three of five regions in Oklahoma, participated in this meeting.
Title II Report, 2010-11
Number of teachers prepared for special education:

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A Survey for Paraprofessionals: Are you Interested in Becoming a Special Education Teacher?

- A 22 question survey was created for paraprofessionals utilizing Survey Monkey.
- A link was created and all superintendents, special education directors and principals were sent a formal email asking for their cooperation with disseminating the survey link to paraprofessionals within their district.
- 601 responses were collected.
Out of 601 Responses, Only 224 Respondents answered “what district are you currently employed by?”

- Approximately 40 of 520 districts responded to the survey.
- Four out of five regions were represented in the survey.
- The majority of surveys came from districts in central and northeastern Oklahoma.
- Of the 40 districts that responded, many were small or rural districts.
Expertise or Experience in Specific Disability Category:

- Approximately 50% of the 601 respondents reported they had a expertise or experience in a specific disability.
- Of the 50% of respondents, autism, visual impairment and deaf or hard of hearing were the most common disabilities reported.
College Experience:

- 45.8% of respondents reported having some college credits or a two-year degree.
- 53.9% of respondents reported being interested in becoming certified, but only 24.3% were planning to attend an IHE in the near future.
- 39% of respondents reported interest in pursuing a mild/moderate certification.
Interested in Becoming a Certified Special Education Teacher?

- 53.9% of survey respondents reported “yes” to this question.
- However, 75.7% of respondents reported “no” when asked if they were planning to apply to a Special Education Certification Program at an IHE.
Common Barriers:

- Time - most respondents are working full-time jobs.
- Money - due to other financial obligations, most respondents reported having no extra money to pay for tuition.
- Family - many respondents reported having children and family obligations.
- Age - several respondents reported being “too old” to go back to school.
- Access - several respondents reported having limited access to an IHE.
Additional Support:

- 29.2% of respondents reported they are in need of additional support with computer literacy, application process, university entrance exams, and transcript evaluation.
- 22.6% of respondents reported they need more information and support regarding financial aid.
- 58.5% of respondents reported they are interested in an on-line certification program.
Oklahoma SDE/LEA/IHE Partnership Meeting:

- On May 21, 2013, a partnership Web meeting will be held.
- The purpose of this meeting is to share information, plan activities, and form subgroups.
- The outcome of this meeting is to formalize partnerships between IHEs and LEAs.
Next Steps:

- Present the results of the paraprofessional survey at our SDE/LEA/IHE Partnership meeting on May 21, 2013.
- Identify high needs districts and develop IHE partnerships.
- Discuss possible options and activities to assist with the development of new pathways for paraprofessionals to earn special education teacher certification.
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