DePaul University
Professional Education Unit

BOE REJOINDEER

Presented to the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education
and
The Illinois State Board of Education

February, 2004
To the Members of the Unit Accreditation Board:

The Professional Education Unit at DePaul University received the BOE report by e-mail from NCATE on January 13, 2004. Thank you for this opportunity to respond to the report. The Unit has prepared a rejoinder to one area cited by the BOE team as needing improvement:

Standard 2.

For the initial program assessments, clarity about the alignment of the professional and state standards with candidate learning goals is uneven.

Rationale: Program documents such as curriculum matrices, syllabi, and assessments refer regularly to institutional standards based on the conceptual framework. These curriculum documents and assessments document the broad, general connection of the themes and topics of the institutional standards to state and national professional standards but do not uniformly address the details contained in state and national standards. For example, documentation of attention to some of the Standards for All Illinois Teachers, with their focus on specific applications of technology and teaching reading across the content areas, is lacking.

The Professional Education Unit would like to point out a procedural concern and suggest that the visit schedule as requested by the team may not have provided them with sufficient time to study the documents related to the alignment of candidate learning goals to state and national standards. The visiting team began their interview schedule at 1 pm on Sunday and had left campus by 2:30 on Tuesday afternoon, indicating that the time on Tuesday was needed for beginning the report writing process. On Sunday afternoon the team interviewed part-time faculty, university supervisors, cooperating teachers, student teachers and interns between 1:00 and 3:00 and then attended a candidate “share-fare” from 3:30-4:30, leaving campus at 5:00. Thus, the team had two hours on Saturday afternoon (3:00-5:00) and three hours on Sunday morning (9:00-12:00) to review documents before the intensive interview schedule began.

The Unit believes that the program standards (candidate learning outcomes) are aligned with State and national standards across all programs. The following narrative and supporting appendices are arranged to provide the Unit Accreditation Board with more clarity about the consistency of alignment of each initial program’s learning outcomes with state and national standards.

Background

Illinois has developed a set of core standards for all candidates in initial programs that encompasses the Profession Teaching Standards, Technology Standards, and Language Arts Standards. The State also developed sets of content area standards for each teaching area.

With respect to the Content Area Standards, ISBE assembled panels of experts to study the alignment of IL Content Standards to the standards of the relevant NCATE SPAs. The findings
of these panels were not shared directly with institutions, but we were notified of the content areas that were found to be fully aligned, those that were aligned but contained a few items where the State standards exceeded those of the relevant SPA, and those for which there was no relevant SPA. These findings can be summarized here:

- **Fully aligned:**
  - Elementary Education
  - Secondary Education – Computer Science
  - Special Education

- **Aligned, but a few State items exceed the SPA standards**
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Physical Education
  - Secondary Education – English, Math, Science, Social Science

- **No relevant NCATE SPA**
  - Music Education
  - Secondary Education – Foreign Language, Visual Arts

Appendix A contains a chart (available in the evidence files) provided by the Illinois State Board that verifies these findings. For those programs where the Illinois Standards exceed the SPA standards, the chart also indicates the specific items in question. From this chart, it can be seen that the Content Area Standards for the State and those for the national SPAs are very well aligned with each other.

Illinois institutions must demonstrate alignment of curriculum and assessment with both core and content area standards. With respect to the Core Teaching, Language Arts, and Technology Standards, matrices demonstrating alignment of curriculum and assessment with these core standards across all initial teacher preparation programs had previously been submitted to ISBE and were provided to the team upon request during the visit.

With respect to the Content Area Standards, institutional alignment of curriculum and assessment is demonstrated through program reports. Illinois rules indicate that NCATE accredited institutions must submit program reports to the SPAs (with an addendum to the State covering those items where state standards exceed SPA standards) or to ISBE when no relevant SPA is an NCATE affiliate. Program reports for all initial teacher preparation programs, with ISBE addenda as needed, were available in the evidence room.

**Alignment of Unit Initial Program Standards with State and National Standards**

When the Professional Education Unit developed its program standards, the strategy was to develop a set of standards for each program that merged three sets of standards: (1) institutional (conceptual framework) standards, (2) State core and content standards, and (3) SPA standards. Attention was given to the alignment of Unit program standards with relevant NBPTS standards as well. However, because we were cognizant of the Illinois rule that we must submit program reports to the SPAs, we generally organized our standards according to categories relevant to SPA standards, adding where needed ISBE standards that exceeded the SPA requirements,
particularly in the areas of technology and language arts, but also in areas that were unique to a specific content area. UAB members may review the ISBE standards at their website.  
http://www.isbe.net/profprep/FormInfo.htm

Each set of the Unit’s initial program standards contains elements that address competencies in the ISBE core standards:

- Content Knowledge
- Human Development and Learning
- Diverse Students
- Planning
- Learning Environment
- Instructional Delivery
- Communication
- Assessment
- Collaboration
- Reflection and Professional Growth
- Professional Conduct
- Technology
- Language Arts

In some cases the DePaul standards are named or labeled differently. For example, one ISBE standard is entitled Human Development and Learning, whereas the equivalent DePaul Early Childhood standard is entitled “Promoting Child Development and Learning,” the equivalent Elementary standard is entitled “Development, Learning, and Motivation,” and the equivalent Physical Education standard is entitled “Growth and Development,” but the essential content of each of these deals with understanding and applying knowledge of human development and student learning to education. The key elements of each of the ISBE standards listed above were incorporated into each set of DePaul’s initial program standards, so that the ISBE standards are applied consistently across all initial teacher preparation programs. Similarly, for each program, the key elements of the relevant SPA and NBPTS content area standards (or ISBE content area standards if there is no corresponding NCATE SPA) were incorporated as well.

Corresponding assessment instruments to measure candidate performance were designed by merging institutional, state, and national standards. Rubrics that are used to evaluate candidate performance during coursework were developed for each program standard by reviewing the language of the ISBE core and content standards as well as the relevant SPA standards and distilling them into a rubric that captured key elements. During student teaching two rating forms are used to evaluate candidate performance in order to be able to accommodate both ISBE and SPA standards. One form specifically addresses each of the ISBE core teaching, technology, and language arts standards and is used to assess all candidates, so that the ISBE standards are evaluated consistently across all programs. The other form reflects the content area standards of each individual SPA and thus has multiple versions that vary by program.

In NCATE Standard 2, the BOE report indicates that “for the initial program assessments, clarity about the alignment of the professional and state standards with candidate learning goals is uneven.” In order to clarify the consistency with which DePaul program standards are aligned with State and national standards, please see Appendices B through G.
Each appendix contains:

- An explanatory chart for each program to help UAB readers interpret the documents and understand how Unit program standards are aligned with state and national standards.
- Program standards
- A rubric for each program standard, used to assess candidate performance during coursework
- Two rating forms used to assess candidate performance during student teaching

The standards, rubrics, and rating forms for all initial programs were provided in the evidence room. The version of the standards with detailed indicators for each standard was available on the SOE website.

**ISBE Technology Standards**

Because the BOE report made specific mention of the ISBE standards for Technology and Language Arts, additional explanation and documentation is provided here.

ISBE has developed eight Technology Standards that range from knowledge and facility with a variety of technological hardware and applications to skill in using technology in instruction and for personal professional use. The Unit requires for all candidates in initial programs that Technology Standards 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, and approximately half of Standard 7 be met through either passing a course (ISP 120) or passing the exam for the course prior to full admission to the Unit. Since the majority of the standards are met prior to full admission to the Unit, the Unit faculty developed two technology standards with accompanying rubrics that would be used to assess candidate performance in the remaining standards during coursework. These standards and rubrics address Standards 3, 4, parts of Standard 7, and a few items from the other standards not covered prior to full admission to the Unit by the ISP 120 course. The two Unit technology standards and rubrics deal with the aspects of the ISBE technology standards related to the instructional and personal/professional applications of technology.

Appendix H provides the following:

- The “checkpoint” chart that indicates that candidates in all initial programs must pass ISP 120 or the course exam prior to full admission to the Unit.
- The matrix submitted previously to ISBE that indicates how ISP 120 addresses standards 1, 2, 5, 6, half of 7, and 8.
- The two Unit program standards and accompanying rubrics that focus on the knowledge and skills related to ISBE Core Technology Standards 3, 4, and half of 7.
- An explanatory chart to clarify for the UAB members how the items in ISBE Core Technology Standards 3, 4, and parts of 7 map onto the two rubrics used to assess candidate performance

The “checkpoint” chart, the standards, and the rubrics were available to the team in the evidence room; the version of the standards with detailed indicators for each standard was available on the SOE website. The matrix showing how ISP 120 addresses ISBE technology standards 1, 2, 5, 6,
part of 7, and 8 was provided along with all matrices related to the ISBE Core Standards upon request during the visit.

UAB members are referred to the documents in Appendices B through G to see that the two technology standards and rubrics are part of every program’s standards.

**ISBE Language Arts Standards**

As mentioned earlier, in some cases the “labels” or “titles” of the Unit program standards differ somewhat from the State and national standards. In the case of the ISBE Language Arts Standards, Unit faculty selected a different title because many of the initial program standards already had another standard titled “Language Arts.” The initial programs each contain a standard entitled “Literacy;” this label was chosen because, the term “literacy” is now understood in the profession to encompass listening, speaking, reading, and writing, which closely matches the intent of the ISBE Core Language Arts standards, namely that every teacher, regardless of teaching area, is a teacher of literacy broadly defined.

Appendix I contains the following:

- The Unit program standard titled “Literacy” and its accompanying rubric.
- An explanatory chart to clarify for the UAB members how the items in the ISBE Core Language Arts Standards 1, 2, and 3 map onto the Unit’s Literacy rubric used to assess candidate performance.

Program standards and rubrics were available to the team in the evidence room; the version of the standards with detailed indicators for each standard was available on the SOE website.

The Literacy standard appears consistently in every set of initial program standards. UAB members are referred to Appendices B through G to see this consistency.

Readers should also note that a fair amount of redundancy has been built into the ISBE standards. (UAB members may review the ISBE standards at their website. [http://www.isbe.net/profprep/FormInfo.htm](http://www.isbe.net/profprep/FormInfo.htm).) Many of the key ideas in ISBE Core Language Arts standards are also addressed in the Core Teaching Standards, particularly in the Communication standard, and in the Content Area Language Arts standards. For example, in the ISBE Core Communication Standard 7 the competent teacher is expected to “model accurate, effective communication,” while in the Core Language Arts Standard 2 the competent teacher is expected to “model the rules of English…” and to “write and speak on a well organized and coherent manner.” Similarly, in the Communication standard teachers are expected to “practice effective listening,” while in the Core Language Arts standards they are expected to “listen well.”

The explanatory chart in Appendix I illustrates how all the ISBE Core Language Arts standards and indicators are mapped onto the Unit’s Literacy rubric. However, because of the redundancy described above, the ISBE Core Language Arts standards are also addressed and supplemented by the Unit’s program standard and rubric entitled “Communication” and, for some programs,
“Language Arts.” UAB members will see in Appendices B through G that at least one other standard in each program (Communication or Language Arts) and sometimes both appear in each set of standards, thereby supplementing the Literacy standard in addressing the ISBE Core Language Arts standards. UAB readers may review in Appendices B through G the Unit’s supplementary Communication and Language Arts standards and rubrics.

Summary

The Unit believes that this rejoinder provides ample clarification that the DePaul Professional Education Unit standards are aligned with State and national standards. The Unit hopes that this narrative and the accompanying appendices addresses the concerns expressed in the BOE report and provide sufficient clarity about the alignment of the Unit’s program standards (candidate learning outcomes) to State and national standards, as well as the consistency of that alignment across programs.