Program Conceptual Framework
Middle School Education, Grades 5-9
Initial Preparation Program
Fall 2006

The Middle School Education Program at the University of Kentucky prepares candidates to teach middle school in grades 5-9 throughout the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The conceptual framework for the Middle School Education Program integrates themes and components from the unit conceptual framework; the mission and vision of the institution, the unit, and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction; the standards of the National Middle School Association; and the Kentucky New Teacher Standards.

The conceptual framework that guides the program is aligned closely with the unit conceptual framework, which is reflected in the following abstract:

The conceptual framework for the professional education unit at the University of Kentucky (UK) is guided by the theme, *Research and Reflection for Learning and Leading*. This theme is aligned closely with both the institutional vision and mission of UK and the vision and mission of the professional education unit. The theme reflects and guides how we approach preparation of professional educators within the context of a research extensive, land grant university.

*Research* is a valued activity and tool within UK’s educator preparation programs. Faculty and candidates generate scientific research using a wide range of research methodologies and contribute to the professional literature. Programs use practitioner inquiry and data-based instructional models in applied settings to enhance student learning and professional development. Research findings from the entire field of education inform design of courses, selection of interventions, and features of professional education programs.

*Reflection* is a long-standing aspect of UK’s educator preparation programs and is, in our view, a hallmark of professional practice. Reflective assessment of performance, outcomes, and approaches to problems is a dynamic process appropriate for faculty, experienced educators, and candidates in initial stages of their careers. Candidates are expected to complete numerous reflective activities as they work to meet standards; the goal is to prepare educators who are capable of analysis and problem-solving that will result in improving educational practices and outcomes.

*Learning* is included as a component within our conceptual framework to underscore our commitment to the many facets of learning and to highlight the ways in which our programs conceptualize, promote, and accomplish learning. As a unit, we do not share a single theoretical view of learning. Faculty and candidates conceptualize learning using a wide range of perspectives including behavioral, constructivist, and social. We believe that our diversity of thought enriches and strengthens our unit. The reference to learning in our conceptual framework encompasses learning among all those who participate in our educator preparation programs and those who are affected by the educational efforts of our faculty and candidates.

*Leading* is an expectation that faculty hold for ourselves and an outcome that we promote among our candidates. As members of the educational community at Kentucky’s flagship university, we believe it is our obligation and privilege to provide leadership in educational policies and practices across levels and dimensions of universities, schools, and agencies. We believe that as leaders and followers work together to improve student learning among diverse student populations, we can obtain positive results that improve education in Kentucky and beyond.
The four elements of our conceptual framework are synergistic and mutually supportive of our work. Taken as a whole, research, reflection, learning, and leading provide a strong conceptual basis and functional framework for the preparation of educators at the University of Kentucky.

Institutional and Unit Vision, Mission, and Values

In conjunction with the unit conceptual framework, the vision and missions of the University of Kentucky, the professional education unit, and the Department of Curriculum and Instruction also guide the Middle School Education Program. These vision and mission statements are described as follows:

Vision of the Institution
The University of Kentucky will be one of the nation's 20 best public research universities, an institution recognized world-wide for excellence in teaching, research, and service and a catalyst for intellectual, social, cultural, and economic development.

Mission of the Institution
The University of Kentucky is a public, research-extensive, land grant university dedicated to improving people's lives through excellence in teaching, research, health care, cultural enrichment, and economic development.

The University of Kentucky:
- Facilitates learning, informed by scholarship and research.
- Expands knowledge through research, scholarship, and creative activity.
- Serves a global community by disseminating, sharing, and applying knowledge.

Values of the Institution
The values of the University guide its decisions and the behavior of its community. Its core values are:
- Integrity
- Academic excellence and academic freedom
- Mutual respect and human dignity
- Embracing diversity
- Personal and institutional responsibility and accountability
- Shared governance
- A sense of community
- Sensitivity to work-life concerns
- Civic responsibility
- Service to society

Vision of the Professional Education Unit
The College of Education at the University of Kentucky will become one of the nation's 20 best public professional education units with emphasis on research, reflection, learning, and leading in service to the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

Mission of the Professional Education Unit
The College of Education endeavors to expand the knowledge of teaching and learning processes across a broad educational spectrum. The college fosters a culture of reflective practice and inquiry within a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. As part of a research-extensive university, the college advances knowledge through research. As part of a land grant institution, the college prepares professionals for a variety of roles in
educational settings and community agencies and provides leadership in the improvement of the education, health, and well-being of citizens in the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world.

**Values of the Professional Education Unit**

In addition to embracing the values of the university, faculty in the College of Education prepared a statement of core values—attitudes, behaviors, and commitments—that demonstrate our shared vision of becoming a nationally recognized college of education:

- Service to the diverse needs and aspirations of candidates and faculty
- Adherence to professional and state standards for education professions
- Participation in generating and evaluating educational initiatives and policies
- Generation and application of scientific and practitioner research
- Professional reflection to ensure continuous growth and improvement
- Encouragement of lifetime learning and wellness
- Leadership for educative growth.

**Mission of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction**

The mission of the Department of Curriculum and Instruction is to 1) design, develop, and implement programs that will improve the quality of elementary, middle, and secondary education and provide educational leaders; 2) prepare teachers and provide continuing professional development; 3) conduct and disseminate research; and 4) provide services in a variety of educational and professional settings.

**Middle School Teacher Education Program Philosophy, Commitments, and Dispositions**

The Middle School Teacher Education Program (Middle School TEP) supports the unit’s focus on research, reflection, student learning, and leadership. The program emphasizes the development of professionally trained specialists in teaching early adolescents. As such, the program models team teaching and collaborative learning and emphasizes active learning experiences as well as real-world connections. Throughout the program, candidates participate in inquiry-based research projects that allow them the opportunity to reflect critically on their beliefs about teaching and learning at the middle level. Candidates are urged to gather data continuously and to use this data in planning effective instruction. They are required to provide questions for reflection when writing lessons and to provide reflective summaries of lessons they have delivered to middle school students. Middle School TEP candidates are provided time and resources to revise and improve curricular materials they develop within the program and to engage in the systematic assessment of their own progress through the program’s curriculum. These activities will prepare them to engage in the continuous self-assessment required of all practicing middle school professionals. The National Middle School Association’s (NMSA) performance-based standards for initial middle level teacher preparation underlie the program’s expectations for middle school candidates. The program is also guided by the Kentucky New Teacher Standards.

**Professional Commitments and Dispositions (Unit Functional Skills and Dispositions)**

The combined program faculties of the UK educator preparation unit have established five Functional Skills and Dispositions that underlie all UK educator preparation programs. These skills and dispositions have also been adopted and endorsed by the Program Faculty for the Middle School Teacher Education Program. The required skills and dispositions are as follows:

Functional Skill and Disposition 1: Candidates communicate appropriately and effectively.

- Communicates orally in formal presentations
- Communicates with individuals in small groups in informal settings
- Uses nonverbal communication skills
- Communicates in writing (reports, essays, letters, memos, emails)
Functional Skill and Disposition 2: Candidates demonstrate constructive attitudes.

- Demonstrates knowledge and command of socio-cultural variables in education
- Demonstrates constructive attitudes toward children, youth, parents, and the community
- Demonstrates awareness and acceptance of diversity in educational settings

Functional Skill and Disposition 3: Candidates demonstrate ability to conceptualize key subject matter ideas and relationships.

- Correctly states key subject matter ideas
- Explains key subject matter ideas
- Tailors key subject matter ideas to diverse populations
- Addresses misconceptions in key subject matter ideas
- Identifies real life examples to enhance student learning

Functional Skill and Disposition 4: Candidates interact appropriately and effectively with diverse groups of colleagues, administrators, students, and parents in educational settings.

- Demonstrates acceptable educator behavior in diverse educational settings
- Demonstrates adaptability in reflecting on self in relation to diverse groups
- Plans, teaches, and assesses in a culturally responsive manner

Functional Skill and Disposition 5: Candidates demonstrate a commitment to professional ethics and behavior.

- Demonstrates understanding of the Kentucky School Personnel Code of Ethics
- Complies with all legal requirements required of educators in a knowledgeable and timely manner
- Demonstrates understanding of ethical issues related to the middle school certification area

Knowledge Base of the Middle School Teacher Education Program

Consensus exists not only about the importance of specialized professional preparation for middle level teachers, but also regarding the essential elements that should be included in such programs (Cooney, 2000; Jackson & Davis, 2000; McEwin, Dickinson, & Smith 2003, 2004; National Forum to Accelerate Middle Grades Reform, 2002). These elements, as presented below, are representative of those most frequently identified as needed and essential for the successful professional preparation of prospective and practicing middle level teachers. These elements are based on current trends in the field, best practice of middle level teacher preparation, and the field's growing knowledge/research base as reflected in the National Middle School Association Middle Level Teacher Preparation Standards (National Middle School Association, 2001).

Essential Middle Level Program Elements

The program elements below are unique to middle level teacher preparation. Additional elements that are essential to all quality teacher preparation programs (e.g., diversity, technology) will be addressed later in this document. While the elements include a variety of traditional foci (e.g., curriculum, instruction), they are set within a context of current and future concerns as well as the developmental realities of young adolescents, their schools, and their teachers.

Program Element 1: Young Adolescent Development

Successful middle level teachers, at their most fundamental level, must be experts in the development and needs of young adolescents. Prospective middle level teachers attain this expertise through formal study of young adolescent development and opportunities to work directly with young adolescent students while applying this knowledge in middle level field experiences. The UK Middle School Teacher Education Program (MSTEP) is committed to developing a more comprehensive understanding of the age group in preservice teachers as they analyze the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to young adolescent development. The resulting comprehensive understanding of the developmental stage of early adolescence provides a substantial
basis on which middle level teachers can create curriculum, utilize effective teaching strategies, and use assessment wisely and effectively.

Teacher candidates study and observe all aspects of young adolescent development and integrate the knowledge gained into a usable whole by working in authentic situations with young adolescents. Middle level candidates are helped to know how developmental realities play themselves out against a context of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, family, and community.

Program Element 2: Middle Level Philosophy and Organization
Just as young adolescents are different from young children and older adolescents, middle level schools and programs are different from their counterparts at the elementary and high school levels. These differences frame the philosophical foundations of middle level education and the organizational structure that grows from and supports this philosophy. A comprehensive study of middle level philosophy and organization is a primary element of this middle level teacher preparation program. This study is anchored within a context that supports and extends young adolescent development by teaching introductory courses (EDC 329 and EDC 330) within a diverse middle school setting.

Study of middle level philosophy and organization includes: (a) the origins and development of junior high schools and middle schools, (b) effective middle level school organizational features and practices, (c) middle level philosophy, (d) middle level trends and issues, and (e) other information that helps all teachers of young adolescents better understand the rationale for and context of middle level schooling (Jackson & Davis, 2000; McEwin, Dickinson, & Smith, 2003, 2004).

The MSTEP includes the formal study of these essential elements, as well as provides candidates with opportunities to work in middle schools that effectively implement the middle level philosophy and support it with distinct developmentally-responsive middle school organizational structures. The National Middle School Association's policy document, This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents (2003), underlies much of the MSTEP.

Working in effective middle schools affords prospective middle level teachers with valuable opportunities to experience school organizations that utilize: (a) teams, (b) advisories, (c) exploratories, (d) interest/mini courses, (e) intramurals, (f) flexible block schedules, (g) flexible grouping, and, (h) interdisciplinary and integrative curriculum.

Program Element 3: Middle Level Curriculum
The Middle School Program works to ensure that middle level preservice candidates possess a comprehensive understanding of middle level curriculum. NMSA recognizes this element of middle level programs as a high priority in successful middle level teacher preparation programs. The program emphasizes middle level curriculum that is discipline specific, integrative, and interdisciplinary (National Middle School Association, 2003).

Middle level candidates learn about middle level curriculum through both formal study of curriculum and opportunities to work directly with the curriculum in middle level field settings. Emphasis areas in this study of middle level curriculum include: (a) studying of past and present theorists of middle level curriculum; (b) learning about different curriculum designs, formats, and propositions; and (c) examining a wide variety of curriculum documents at various levels—national, state, district, school, team, and classroom. Study of middle level curriculum includes field experiences that provide on-site opportunities for developing curriculum both as individuals and as members of interdisciplinary teams (EDC 329 and EDC 341).

Program Element 4: Subject Matter Knowledge
It is crucial that middle level teachers have a thorough knowledge of the subject areas they teach. The undergraduate Middle School Teacher Education Program requires candidates to prepare in two academic areas,
for example mathematics and science. Having content knowledge in two subject areas provides a solid academic foundation for effective middle level teaching and promotes an understanding of the connections and interrelationships among subject areas taught at the middle level. The rationale for study in two teaching fields includes: (a) teachers that teach on teams are knowledgeable in two disciplines, making the desired integration of subject areas more likely and effective and (b) teachers are licensed to teach in two content areas which provides flexibility in employment whether or not the teachers teach on teams (McEwin, Dickinson, & Smith, 2003, 2004).

Subject matter knowledge preparation for middle level teachers is broad and integrative. MSTEP candidates should have a thorough academic underpinning of content, content pedagogy, and the connections and interrelationships among the subject matter fields (disciplines) and other areas of knowledge. Content knowledge in broad teaching fields more accurately reflects the nature of middle level curriculum (e.g., science rather than just biology or physics).

Teacher candidates operationalize their learning by working in interdisciplinary teams (EDC 329, 341, 330). However, it is essential that prospective middle level teachers also demonstrate their abilities to teach in their own disciplines as individual subjects as well as create and teach interdisciplinary and integrative lessons and units that incorporate their knowledge of broad fields.

**Program Element 5: Middle Level Planning, Teaching, and Assessment**
The MSTEP works to ensure that prospective middle level teachers learn to plan, teach, and assess student work effectively, based on content knowledge and a comprehensive understanding of young adolescent development. Major emphasis is placed on learning a wide variety of teaching strategies and demonstration of the ability to apply these strategies effectively in middle level classroom settings (EDC 343).

There is a strong emphasis on short and long-term planning techniques that middle level teachers employ in daily lessons, interdisciplinary units, and in other teaching contexts. Emphasis is placed on constructing and employing assessment techniques ranging from traditional testing to authentic assessments, portfolios, exhibitions, and open-ended problems. Teacher candidates are prepared to analyze student assessment data to inform subsequent planning, teaching, and assessment (EDC 330 and 343). The role and effective use of technology as a form of planning, instruction, and assessment is also emphasized.

**Program Element 6: Middle Level Field Experiences**
The MSTEP places a high priority on providing and requiring early and continuing middle level field experiences for its candidates. The priority given these middle level clinical experiences reflects the views of practicing teachers about the essential components of professional preparation programs (Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001).

Middle level field experiences provide a context for learning about young adolescents, their schools, and the most effective ways to teach young adolescents. These field experiences provide prospective middle level teachers contact with diverse learners, expand and enrich their developmental knowledge, help them better understand the purposes and organization of middle level schools and programs, and provide them with many opportunities to learn to be more effective teachers.

Middle level field experiences provide a developmental sequence for teacher candidates, which follows a pattern of increasing complexity and involvement, culminating in an extended field experience which requires them to function as site-based teachers responsible for groups of young adolescents. An additional valuable aspect of middle level fieldwork is that these experiences allow multiple mentors, coaches, and teachers to work with prospective middle level teachers while reflecting and evaluating on their professional development.
Performance Standards for the Middle School Teacher Education Program

The Middle School Education Program is aligned with the performance standards of the National Middle School Association (NMSA), the Kentucky New Teacher Standards, the Unit Functional Skills and Dispositions, and the Unit Technology Standards. Candidates must demonstrate proficiency with the following NMSA knowledge, dispositional, and performance standards for middle school teachers at the initial level:

**Standard 1. Young Adolescent Development**

Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to young adolescent development, and they provide opportunities that support student development and learning.

**Knowledge**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Understand the major concepts, principles, and theories of young adolescent development – intellectual, physical, social, emotional, and moral.
2. Understand the range of individual differences of all young adolescents and the implications of these differences for teaching and learning.
3. Know a variety of teaching/learning strategies that take into consideration and capitalize upon the developmental characteristics of all young adolescents.
4. Understand the implications of young adolescent development for school organization and components of successful middle level programs and schools.
5. Understand issues of young adolescent health and sexuality.
6. Understand the interrelationships among the characteristics and needs of all young adolescents.
7. Understand that the development of all young adolescents occurs in the context of classrooms, families, peer groups, communities and society.
8. Are knowledgeable about how the media portrays young adolescents and comprehend the implications of these portraits.

**Dispositions**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Are positive and enthusiastic about all young adolescents.
2. Respect and appreciate the range of individual developmental differences of all young adolescents.
3. Hold high, realistic expectations for the learning and behavior of all young adolescents.
4. Believe that all young adolescents can learn and accept responsibility to help them do so.
5. Are enthusiastic about being positive role models, coaches, and mentors for all young adolescents.
6. Believe that diversity among all young adolescents is an asset.
7. Believe that their role includes helping all young adolescents develop to their full potential.

**Performances**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Establish close, mutually respectful relationships with all young adolescents that support their intellectual, ethical, and social growth.
2. Create learning opportunities that reflect an understanding of the development of all young adolescent learners.
3. Create positive, productive learning environments where developmental differences are respected and supported, and individual potential is encouraged.
4. Make decisions about curriculum and resources that reflect an understanding of young adolescent development.
5. Use developmentally responsive instructional strategies.
6. Use multiple assessments that are developmentally appropriate for young adolescent learners.
7. Engage young adolescents in activities related to their interpersonal, community, and societal responsibilities.
8. Create and maintain supportive learning environments that promote the healthy development of all young adolescents.
9. Deal effectively with societal changes, including the portrait of young adolescents in the media, which impact the healthy development of young adolescents.
10. Respond positively to the diversity found in young adolescents and use that diversity in planning and implementing curriculum and instruction.

**Standard 2. Middle Level Philosophy and School Organization**

Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, and research underlying the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools, and they work successfully within these organizational components.

**Knowledge**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Understand the philosophical foundations of developmentally responsive middle level programs and schools.
2. Are knowledgeable about historical and contemporary models of schooling for young adolescents and the advantages and disadvantages of these models.
3. Understand the rationale and characteristic components of developmentally responsive middle level schools.
4. Know best practices for the education of young adolescents in a variety of school organizational settings (e.g., K-8, 5-8, 7-12 organizational plans).
5. Understand the team process as a structure for school improvement and student learning.
6. Understand that flexible scheduling provides the context for teachers to meet the needs of all young adolescents.

**Dispositions**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Believe in the philosophical foundations that support developmentally responsive and socially equitable programs for all young adolescents.
2. Are committed to the application of middle level philosophical foundations in their practice.
3. Are supportive of organizational components that maximize student learning.
4. Are committed to developmentally responsive and socially equitable teaching, learning, and schooling in a variety of organizational settings.

**Performances**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Apply their knowledge of the philosophical foundations of middle level education when making decisions about curriculum and instruction.
2. Work successfully within developmentally responsive structures to maximize student learning.
3. Articulate and apply their knowledge of the philosophical foundations of middle level education in their classrooms, schools, and communities.
4. Implement developmentally responsive practices and components that reflect the philosophical foundations of middle level education.
Standard 3. Middle Level Curriculum and Assessment

Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, standards, and research related to middle level curriculum and assessment, and they use this knowledge in their practice.

Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Understand that middle level curriculum should be relevant, challenging, integrative, and exploratory.
2. Understand the interdisciplinary nature of knowledge and how to make connections among subject areas when planning curriculum.
3. Possess a depth and breadth of content knowledge.
4. Are knowledgeable about local, state, and national middle level curriculum standards and of ways to assess the student knowledge reflected in those standards.
5. Are fluent in the integration of technology in curriculum planning.
6. Know how to incorporate all young adolescents’ ideas, interests, and experiences into curriculum.
7. Understand multiple assessment strategies that effectively measure student mastery of the curriculum.
8. Understand the integrated role that technology plays in a variety of student assessment measures.
9. Understand their roles in the total school curriculum (e.g., advisory program, co-curricular activities and other programs).
10. Know how to assess and select curriculum materials that are academically challenging and personally motivating for young adolescents.
11. Understand the key concepts within the critical knowledge base and know how to design assessments that targets them.
12. Understand how to develop, implement, and assess advisory and other student advocacy programs that attend to the social and emotional needs of young adolescents (e.g. mentoring, conflict resolution).

Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Value the need for being knowledgeable and current in curriculum areas taught.
2. View all areas of knowledge and skills as important.
3. Value the importance of ongoing curriculum assessment and revision.
4. Realize the importance of connecting curriculum and assessment to the needs, interests, and experiences of all young adolescents.
5. Are committed to implementing an integrated curriculum that accommodates and supports the learning of all young adolescents.

Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Successfully implement the curriculum for which they are responsible in ways that help all young adolescents learn.
2. Use current knowledge and standards from multiple subject areas in planning, integrating, and implementing curriculum.
3. Incorporate the ideas, interests, and experiences of all young adolescents in curriculum.
4. Develop and teach an integrated curriculum.
5. Teach curriculum in ways that encourage all young adolescents to observe, question, and interpret knowledge and ideas from diverse perspectives.
6. Provide all young adolescents with multiple opportunities to learn in integrated ways.
7. Participate in varied professional roles within the total school curriculum (e.g., advisory program, co-curricular activities).
8. Use multiple assessment strategies that effectively measure student mastery of the curriculum.
9. Incorporates technology in planning, integrating, implementing and assessing curriculum and student learning.
10. Articulate curriculum to various stakeholder groups.

**Standard 4. Middle Level Teaching Fields**

*Middle level teacher candidates understand and use the central concepts, tools of inquiry, standards, and structures of content in their chosen teaching fields, and they create meaningful learning experiences that develop all young adolescents’ competence in subject matter and skills.*

**Knowledge**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Possess a depth and breadth of knowledge in two content areas which are broad, multidisciplinary, and encompass the major areas within those fields (e.g., science, not just biology; social science, not just history).
2. Know how to use content knowledge to make interdisciplinary connections.
3. Are knowledgeable about teaching and assessment strategies that are especially effective in their teaching fields.
4. Understand how to integrate state-of-the-art technologies and literacy skills into their teaching fields.

**Dispositions**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Value the importance of staying current in their teaching fields.
2. Are committed to the importance of integrating content.
3. Are committed to using content specific teaching and assessment strategies.
4. Value the integration of state-of-the-art technologies and literacy skills in all teaching fields.

**Performances**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Use their depth and breadth of content knowledge in ways that maximize student learning.
2. Use effective content specific teaching and assessment strategies.
3. Engage all young adolescents in content that incorporates their ideas, interests, and experiences.
4. Teach in ways that help all young adolescents understand the integrated nature of knowledge.
5. Integrate state-of-the-art technologies and literacy skills into teaching content to all young adolescents.
6. Engage in activities designed to extend knowledge in their teaching fields.

**Standard 5. Middle Level Instruction and Assessment**
Middle level teacher candidates understand and use the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to effective instruction and assessment, and they employ a variety of strategies for a developmentally appropriate climate to meet the varying abilities and learning styles of all young adolescents.

Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Understand the principles of instruction and the research base that supports them.
2. Know a wide variety of teaching, learning, and assessment strategies, and when to implement them.
3. Know that teaching higher order thinking skills is an integral part of instruction and assessment.
4. Know how to select and develop formal, informal, and performance assessments based on their relative advantages and limitations.
5. Understand ways to teach the basic concepts and skills of inquiry and communication.
6. Know how to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching strategies.
7. Understand how to motivate all young adolescents and facilitate their learning through the use of a wide variety of developmentally responsive materials and resources (e.g., technological resources, manipulative materials).
8. Know effective, developmentally responsive classroom management techniques.
9. Understand the multiple roles of assessment in the instructional process (e.g. monitoring learning, evaluating student progress, and modifying teaching strategies).

Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Value the need for a repertoire of teaching/learning strategies that are appropriate for teaching all young adolescents.
2. Value the need for providing and maintaining environments that maximize student learning.
3. Believe that instructional planning is important and must be developmentally responsive.
4. Value opportunities to plan instruction collaboratively with teammates and other colleagues.
5. Value the importance of on-going and varied assessment strategies.
6. Realize the importance of basing instruction on assessment results.
7. Appreciate the importance of teaching strategies that are current and supported by research and successful practice.
8. Are committed to using assessment to identify student strengths and enhance student growth rather than deny student access to learning.

Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Use a variety of teaching/learning strategies and resources that motivate young adolescents to learn.
2. Create learning experiences that encourage exploration and problem solving so all young adolescents can be actively engaged in learning.
3. Plan effective instruction individually and with colleagues.
4. Provide all young adolescents with opportunities to engage in independent and collaborative inquiry.
5. Participate in professional development activities that increase their knowledge of effective teaching/learning strategies.
6. Establish equitable, caring, and productive learning environments for all young adolescents.
7. Employ fair, effective, developmentally responsive classroom management techniques.
8. Implement a variety of developmentally responsive assessment measures (e.g. portfolios, authentic assessments, student self-evaluation).
9. Maintain useful records and create an effective plan for evaluation of student work and achievement.
10. Communicate assessment information knowledgeably and responsibly to students, families, educators, community members, and other appropriate audiences.

**Standard 6. Family and Community Involvement**

Middle level teacher candidates understand the major concepts, principles, theories, and research related to working collaboratively with family and community members, and they use that knowledge to maximize the learning of all young adolescents.

**Knowledge**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Understand the variety of family structures.
2. Understand how prior learning, differing experiences, and family and cultural backgrounds influence young adolescent learning.
3. Understand the challenges that families may encounter in contemporary society and are knowledgeable about support services and other resources that are available to assist them.
4. Know how to communicate effectively with family and community members.
5. Understand that middle level schools are organizations within a larger community context.
6. Understand the relationships between schools and community organizations.
7. Know about the resources available within communities that can support students, teachers, and schools.
8. Understand the importance of following school district policies and protocol regarding interagency partnerships and collaboratives.
9. Understand the roles of family and community members in improving the education of all young adolescents.

**Dispositions**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Respect all young adolescents and their families.
2. Realize the importance of privacy and confidentiality of information when working with family members.
3. Value the variety of resources available in communities.
4. Are committed to helping family members become aware of how and where to receive assistance when needed.
5. Value and appreciate all young adolescents regardless of family circumstances, community environment, health, and/or economic conditions.
6. Value the enrichment of learning that comes from the diverse backgrounds, values, skills, talents and interests of all young adolescents and their families.
7. Realize and value the importance of communicating effectively with family and community members.
8. Accept the responsibility of working with family and community members to increase student welfare and learning.

**Performances**

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Establish respectful and productive relationships with family and community members that maximize student learning and well being.
2. Act as advocates for all young adolescents in the school and in the larger community.
3. Connect instruction to the diverse community experiences of all young adolescents.
4. Identify and use community resources to foster student learning.
5. Participate in activities designed to enhance educational experiences that transcend the school campus.
6. Encourage all young adolescents to participate in community activities and services that contribute to their welfare and learning (e.g., service-learning, health services, after-school programs).
7. Demonstrate the ability to participate in parent conferences.

Standard 7. Middle Level Professional Roles

Middle level teacher candidates understand the complexity of teaching young adolescents, and they engage in practices and behaviors that develop their competence as professionals.

Knowledge

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Understand their evolving role as middle level education professionals.
2. Understand the importance of their influence on all young adolescents.
3. Are knowledgeable about their responsibility for upholding high professional standards.
4. Understand the interrelationships and interdependencies among various professionals that serve young adolescents (e.g., school counselors, social service workers, home-school coordinators).
5. Know advisory/advocate theories, skills, and curriculum.
6. Understand teaming/collaborative theories and processes.
7. Understand their service responsibilities to school reform and the greater community.
8. Understand the need for continual reflection on young adolescent development, the instructional process, and professional relationships.
9. Know the skills of research/data-based decision-making.
10. Are fluent in the integration of a range of technologies (e.g., film, computers) in their professional roles with curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Dispositions

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Value learning as a life-long process.
2. Perceive themselves as members of the larger learning community.
3. Believe that their professional responsibilities extend beyond the classroom and school (e.g., advisory committees, parent-teacher organizations).
4. Believe in maintaining high standards of ethical behavior and professional competence.
5. Are committed to helping all young adolescents become thoughtful, ethical, democratic citizens.
6. Are committed to refining classroom and school practices that address the needs of all young adolescents based on research, successful practice, and experience.
7. Value collegiality as an integral part of their professional practice.

Performances

Middle level teacher candidates:
1. Model positive attitudes and appropriate behaviors for all young adolescents.
2. Serve as advisors, advocates, and mentors for all young adolescents.
3. Work successfully as members of interdisciplinary teams and as part of the total school environment.
4. Engage in and support ongoing professional practices for self and colleagues (e.g., attend professional development activities and conferences, participate in professional organizations).
5. Read professional literature, consult with colleagues, maintain currency with a range of technologies, and seek resources to enhance their professional competence.

Kentucky New Teacher Standards

Candidates in the initial preparation programs in Middle School Education are also expected to demonstrate proficiency on the Kentucky New Teacher Standards, which include the following:

Standard 1: Designs and plans instruction
The teacher designs/plans instruction and learning climates that develop student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge.

Standard 2: Creates and maintains learning climates
The teacher creates a learning climate that supports the development of student abilities to use communication skills, apply core contents, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge.

Standard 3: Implements and manages instruction
The teacher introduces/implements/manages instruction that develops student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge.

Standard 4: Assesses and communicates learning results
The teacher assesses learning and communicates results to students and others with respect to student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge.

Standard 5: Reflects and evaluates teaching and learning
The teacher reflects on and evaluates specific teaching/learning situations and/or programs.

Standard 6: Collaborates with colleagues, parents, and others
The teacher collaborates with colleagues, parents, and other agencies to design, implement, and support learning programs that develop student abilities to use communication skills, apply core concepts, become self-sufficient individuals, become responsible team members, think and solve problems, and integrate knowledge.

Standard 7: Engages in professional development
The teacher evaluates his/her overall performance with respect to modeling and teaching Kentucky’s learning goals, refines the skills and processes necessary, and implements a professional development plan.

Standard 8: Knowledge of content
The teacher demonstrates a current and sufficient academic knowledge of certified content areas to develop student knowledge and performance in those areas.

Standard 9: Demonstrates implementation of technology
The teacher uses technology to support instruction; access and manipulate data; enhance professional growth and productivity; communicate and collaborate with colleagues, parents, and the community; and conduct research.
Unit Technology Standards

In addition to the National Middle School Association Standards, the Kentucky New Teacher Standards, and the Unit Functional Skills and Dispositions, candidates must also demonstrate proficiency in the area of instructional technology. Candidates are assessed at program admission, mid-point, and exit on the following Unit Technology Standards:

Standard 1: Candidates integrate media and technology into instruction.
Standard 2: Candidates utilize multiple technology applications to support student learning.
Standard 3: Candidates select appropriate technology to enhance instruction.
Standard 4: Candidates integrate student use of technology into instruction.
Standard 5: Candidates address special learning needs through technology.
Standard 6: Candidates promote ethical and legal use of technology disciplines.

Commitment to Diversity

The Middle School Teacher Education Program Faculty is committed to:

- Making diversity central to policies, decisions, and practices
- Evaluating progress toward diversity in the program
- Disseminating results widely
- Using these results to strengthen diversity for the Commonwealth

Improving the educational experiences for young adolescents begins by understanding the physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and cultural diversity of these students. It is important that our candidates understand each aspect of diversity and commit to value that diversity as they plan and implement lessons, engage in reflective practices, conduct research in their own classrooms and participate in leadership activities. By valuing diversity, middle level educators are committed to providing equitable educational experiences for all children in an effort to empower and enable them to become lifelong learners.

Commitment to Addressing the Achievement Gap/Reading and Literacy

One issue inherent in the achievement gap is the decline of literacy rates among young adolescents. The MSTEP is committed to preparing middle level teachers who are knowledgeable about the language arts core content standards and how these standards can be incorporated into their specific subject area. All candidates, regardless of their subject area concentrations, must complete two reading and language arts course (EDC 329 and EDC 330) that are designed to familiarize candidates with the language arts core content standards (EDC 329) and to prepare candidates to teach reading and writing in their content areas (EDC 330). Additionally, the program equips candidates with the ability to recognize struggling adolescent readers as well as provide strategies that could be used to support these struggling readers regardless of the content area. Developing stronger young adolescent readers will help improve literacy rates in middle schools in the Commonwealth.

Commitment to Technology

The MSTEP is committed to utilizing technology as a professional tool to enhance teaching and learning at the middle level. The program is guided by the Unit Technology Standards and the EPSB New Teacher Standards as they relate to technology. Candidates are required to use technology for the majority of their courses throughout the university and for all of their courses in the MSTEP program. Candidates use technology for class assignments, lesson plan design and preparation, class presentations, record and grade keeping, and data analysis. Candidates are required to successfully complete course work that focuses on using technology, such as the required course, EDC 317—Introduction to Instructional Media. Candidates are required to communicate via electronic mail, use list serves, access the Internet and electronic databases, and use electronic literature for research projects. Candidates develop and maintain a digital portfolio that is continuously updated throughout
the MSTEP. Candidates are required to complete various technology projects (i.e., digital text sets, technology resource demonstrations, digital movies). All MSTEP courses are taught in classrooms that are equipped with smart room technology.
References


