

Inter-Institutional Planning

ECHO is collaborating to

- Increase access of Kansans to teacher preparation courses and programs leading to early childhood unified licensure.
- Manage the transition from preparing teachers for the early childhood education certificate to preparing them for the early childhood unified license.
- Capitalize on the collective strengths of Kansas' early childhood teacher educators.

The ECHO Consortium is successfully engaging faculty in inter-institutional academic work. To sustain this work, the consortium will also need to engage academic administrators. K-State has been awarded a FIPSE grant to support the development of inter-institutional distance education collaborations. ECHO is one of the collaborations being supported by the project.

This collaboration raises some complex issues for the participating universities and offers some interesting possibilities for the State:

1. A curriculum that spans multiple departmental configurations at the partner universities.

The faculty participants in ECHO are developing courses and curricula that span multiple departmental configurations: Early Childhood Education, Special Education, and Elementary Education. This raises issues of

- appropriate administrative oversight,
- fit of the new early childhood licensure with existing licensure programs,
- management of scarce resources to support current and new programs.

2. The administrative issues related to sharing courses required for degree completion/licensure.

The faculty participants in ECHO are developing shared courses that meet the competencies set by the Kansas Board of Education for Early Childhood Unified Licensure. The utilization of shared courses raises a number of administrative issues that faculty members cannot solve. These issues include:

- management of faculty workloads,
- providing student access to shared courses,
- utilization of courses taught by non-institutional faculty to meet institutional degree/licensure requirements.

3. Capitalizing on the Board of Regent's interest in inter-institutional collaboration.

If ECHO can establish a sustainable inter-institutional collaboration in support of Early Childhood Unified Licensure, it is likely that the Board will seek to capitalize on the work of ECHO as a model for other inter-institutional collaborative work.

Next Step to build a sustainable Early Childhood Inter-Institutional Alliance

We recommend a planning meeting for ECHO faculty and appropriate College and Departmental Administrators.

We request that the Deans of Education identify 1-3 representatives to work with the ECHO faculty leaders, the KU SIG project staff, and the KSU FIPSE staff to clarify the issues, develop a meeting agenda, and finalize arrangements.