

State Improvement Grant – Early Childhood Supplement Abstract

The Kansas State Department of Education has achieved a number of noteworthy accomplishments supported through the Kansas State Improvement Grant (SIG). A majority of these achievements and successes have been focused professional development and teacher training programs. Specifically, Goal 3 of the SIG, focusing on Early Childhood, has produced an important and productive collaborative working relationship with the faculty of Kansas colleges and universities. Additionally, at this same time a number of forces have converged that create the opportunity for further systems change in early childhood teacher training programs. The forces that have merged are diverse but clearly focus the need on quality preservice and inservice training for teachers of our youngest children. These forces include: 1) the State Board of Education's goals and vision for the future, 2) a number of initiatives in early childhood, and 3) teacher licensure redesign in the state of Kansas.

In response to these factors, through the activities/strategies and input/resources of the proposed SIG supplement, system change in teacher training can be accomplished at three levels. These three levels are: a) at the course level through the unification of regular and special education content into new courses, b) at the college/university level through curriculum redesign which will prepare students to meet the new teaching standards and support collaboration between early childhood teacher trainers and early elementary education teacher trainers, and c) at the state level through a distance education consortium to allow students to access courses at any and all participating colleges or universities .

These funds will support the IHE Early Childhood Task Force work, course and curricular redesign at the college/university level, and development of a comprehensive and collaborative inter-university distance education program.

