

## **Institution of Higher Education Early Childhood Faculty Task Force Position Statement on the Birth through Grade Three License in Kansas**

As professionals in the field of early childhood/early childhood special education and as teacher educators at Kansas institutions of higher education, we affirm and support the decision of the Kansas State Board of Education to create the unified birth through grade three license. Through the establishment of this license, Kansas will join the ranks of numerous states in redesigning early childhood/early childhood special education teacher preparation and be on the threshold of creating a promising new future for our youngest children, their families and teachers. This license will set in place new teacher education programs founded in empirical and pedagogical research and reflect best practices for teachers of young children. Through a strengthened knowledge base and enhanced professional practice, future teachers will be better able to facilitate the learning of all children, whether with or without disabilities.

In addition to the many opportunities it creates, we acknowledge that this sweeping change in preparation of early childhood teachers will be filled with challenges. These challenges include the utilization of personnel, limited financial resources, and sharing our inclusive, developmentally based philosophy of education. With the continuing support of the Kansas State Board of Education, we believe this critically important redesign of early education can be accomplished. In fact, faculty from a number of our colleges and universities are already moving forward with plans to address this new licensure. As members of the IHE-EC Task Force, we will continue to support all of our institutions of higher education in creating a transformed curriculum and developing an educational service delivery system for Kansas.

Further, as the new early childhood teacher education requirements and teaching standards are established, the Board's goals of helping all students meet or exceed academic standards; recruiting, preparing, supporting and retaining quality teachers; and redesigning Kansas schools and learning environments for a new century will be advanced. Through its visionary leadership, the State

Board of Education has set a new standard for education in Kansas and created an optimistic future for all children, families, and schools.

As faculty in public and private institutions of higher education, we are committed to meeting this future through active engagement and collaborative partnerships. The cornerstone of this effort will be the inter-institutional development and delivery of professional education experiences. This innovative collaboration will enable preservice teachers in Kansas to capitalize on the professional expertise of faculty across our Kansas colleges and universities. Furthermore, it will sustain the Board's vision of ensuring a more developmentally appropriate early education for all young children in Kansas.

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