MENTOR TEACHER NEWSLETTER
February 2005

Mid-Term Conferences
Field instructors will be scheduling mid-term conferences for the period between February 14th and February 28th. Instead of the assessment grid, field instructors and mentor teachers should each bring a first draft of the Exit Performance Description to this conference. In this way, each will have a head start in preparing this final report. You will also be communicating clearly to the intern the areas where improvement is expected before the end of lead teaching. Please refer to the following section of this newsletter and to pages 28-29 of the MSU Handbook for additional information on Exit Performance Descriptions.

At the mid-term conference, interns should bring drafts of materials that they are thinking of including in their portfolios, such as philosophy statements, examples of teaching materials, and student work. Interns can use these entries to reflect on their learning to teach, and to discuss what additional work needs to be done on the portfolios. This is also a good chance to talk with interns both about how they want to present themselves as teachers and about what improvements they need to make to honestly claim that their presentations are accurate.

Exit Performance Descriptions
Exit Performance Descriptions (EPDs) are the final intern evaluations, written in narrative form, that reflect interns’ progress in learning to teach. The opening paragraph should describe the school and the intern’s teaching assignment, followed by paragraphs on each of the four program standards (see page 18 in the MSU Handbook). This format can vary, as long as each program standard is addressed. Interns use the final form of this document as an important piece of their job searches. In fact, teachers and principals consistently report that the mentors’ EPDs are the most important single piece of evidence that they look at in evaluating candidates for teaching positions.

As you prepare a draft of the EPD for the midterm conference, consider the following:

- Although we like to say positive things about our interns, the EPD is an evaluation, not a letter of recommendation. There are a variety of ways of being tactful but remaining truthful in describing problem areas.

- Think of the EPD as a narrative about the intern's progress.

- Try to make this rough draft an accurate description of where the intern is now and a text about substantive issues in the intern's teaching. The text is still open to negotiation and change depending on future developments.

- Look at examples of EPDs and discuss what qualities of writing make them effective descriptions. Note, for example, the importance of concrete examples from the intern's practice.

- Think about providing openings at the conference to say "I want to say this," but I need to see it first.
It’s a good idea for field instructors and mentors to exchange and discuss EPD drafts before the midterm conference. This way, you can work to resolve possible differences in perceptions about interns. However, if differences persist, the EPDs of the field instructor and mentor can be substantively different.

**EPD Materials**
EPD materials include a worksheet, how words that you may use in writing an EPD are commonly perceived, and samples of EPDs written about outstanding interns and less effective interns across subject matter areas. These materials will be available through field instructors. In addition, samples of EPD materials are available on the Team 4 website, which is located at:

//ed-web2.educ.msu.edu/team4

Attendance at the Spring Mentor Meetings will clarify this task and provide assistance in understanding how to write EPDs.

**Dates for Spring Mentor Meetings**

**Detroit area, all subject matters:**

   Tuesday, February 8, 9:00-11:30
   
   Birmingham Seaholm High School

**Lansing and Grand Rapids areas:**

Science: Tuesday, March 1, 8:30-11:30

   Dwight Rich Middle School Social Room

Social Studies: Tuesday, March 1, 8:30-11:00

   Haslett Administration Building

English: Thursday, February 24, 8:30-11:00

   Everett High School

Mathematics: Wednesday, February 23, 11:30-2:30

   Dwight Rich Middle School

Foreign Language: TBA
Important Spring Dates
Certification Meeting for Interns: January 28, 12:30-2:00, Erickson Kiva

Window for Lead Teaching: 10 weeks between January 24-April 1

Window for Mid-Term Conferences: February 14-28
    Construct draft EPD as assessment tool instead of assessment grid

Interns’ Spring Break: Mid-March through Early April
    Interns follow the spring break schedule of their school placements. INTERNS DO NOT FOLLOW MSU’S SPRING BREAK SCHEDULE.

Window for Final Spring Conferences: April 1-April 15

Last Day in School for Interns: April 28

Convocation: April 29, 2005, 4:00-6:00, Eli Broad College of Business
    Time for Celebration, Intern Presentations, Ceremony, Certificates of Completion