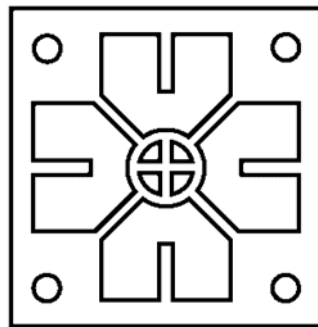


# CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Department of Education



Christian Brothers University

MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

## OUR VISION

The Department of Education at Christian Brothers University is a professional and collegial community of practice focused on the preparation of educators for contemporary schools, both public and private. We recognize that we are embedded within a unique university context that is both local and global in its character and mission, described as both Catholic and Lasallian.<sup>1</sup> We believe we are preparing high-quality teachers and administrators who are competent and effective in their teaching environments and who have developed, through their encounters and experiences with our community of practice, a heart-felt commitment to lead and serve in classrooms and schools and to exemplify a level of professionalism that calls attention to the goodness and strength of their preparation at Christian Brothers University. Specifically, it is our vision and intention that our community of practice as a professional education unit will prepare educators with qualities and proficiencies as:

1. servant-leaders
2. champions of learner potential
3. effective and reflective practitioners
4. builders of vibrant learning communities

These are the outcomes toward which our own professional practice as educators of educators is directed. They are also the four major themes that guide our unit's goals, purposes, philosophy, and knowledge-base.

It is our vision that our own collaboration with our professional community will be continually strengthened so that our candidates will be even more effectively prepared and so that our good qualities as a community of committed professional educators will be influential and supportive of strengthened and enhanced practice in both public and private schools. We recognize that we are embarked on new adventures with respect to the meaning and power of our work, particularly with respect to the dynamic interface among curriculum, instruction, assessment, and program enhancement. We affirm that, if we do this right, we will always be engaged productively in this work with our candidates, our alumni/ae, and our faculty colleagues in other academic areas and in P-12 schools. We envision that the future holds even more productive teaching and learning for us as a group of faculty in our professional education unit, for our candidates who are part of our community of practice, and especially for the children and young people who are the reason why we do all of this in the first place.

Above all, it is our vision that our candidates and that we ourselves will embody a commitment to mission for the greater good of the children and young people of our community, that we will exceed expectations and excel in all dimensions of our practice, and that the lives and learning of P-12 students and their school environments will be changed for the better because of the quality and proficiency of our candidates, whether they are teachers or school administrators. We aim for transformation of lives and schools and intend, at the least, to be assured that our candidates are enhancing the lives of learners and advancing the progress of schools and the human mission of education.

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<sup>1</sup> The Christian Brothers is a lay teaching order of the Catholic Church, founded in 17<sup>th</sup> century France by St. John Baptist De LaSalle, patron of teachers. The tradition of educational ministry referred to as "Lasallian" is derived from his name.

## OUR CONTEXT

As the professional education unit of Christian Brothers University, we are associated with a Catholic and Lasallian tradition in higher education and the Lasallian heritage in teacher education and school leadership. We are also located in urban Memphis, Tennessee and the Mississippi River Delta region known as the Mid-South, an area of the United States that is still constrained by the prevalence of poverty in a large part of the population, the legacy of slavery and racism, and low levels of literacy in both children, young people, and adults. Because our institution's tradition is Catholic, we draw deeply upon Judeo-Christian values such as concern for the lives of the poor and the aims of social justice. And because our heritage is Lasallian as well as Catholic, we are connected with a worldwide network of agencies, schools, colleges, and universities with a foundation in an educational mission to the poor. We embrace the mission of our university and its roots in the Lasallian tradition of the Christian Brothers.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Christian Brothers University embodies a tension between two core Lasallian values: a heritage of academic excellence in a private college and the desire to provide upward mobility for young people whose own resources are modest or lacking. A Catholic institution of higher education in a very non-Catholic part of the United States, it is a diverse institution both racially and religiously and continues to rank 5<sup>th</sup> for diversity in U.S. News and World Reports annual rating of Southern private colleges and universities. Our unit is also characterized by both racial and religious diversity, also true of student populations in nearly all schools where our candidates practice.

As a Lasallian institution of higher education, Christian Brothers University is situated in the Midwest District of the U.S./Toronto Conference of Christian Brothers, which is part of the global Lasallian family of schools, colleges, and other educative agencies that includes 80 countries of the world (40% of all countries), 1045 educational institutions, 906,000 students, and approximately 80,000 faculty and staff. About 2200 students are matriculated at Christian Brothers University. Worldwide, the Lasallian approach is open and inclusive, and Lasallian schools are racially and religiously diverse.

Our intention is that we will continue to align our mission as a unit with that of the university and its unique character as a Catholic and Lasallian institution of higher education. Because of this, we intend to remain sensitive to the broader educational needs of the increasingly diverse population of our city, Memphis, Tennessee, and its suburban and rural context in western Tennessee and the Mid-South region. Because of our Catholic and Lasallian heritage, we will think and act both locally and globally. As a fairly young but growing area of Christian Brothers University, we intend to be responsive to needs in local schools and in our broader community for educators with an ethic of care and who are committed to servant-leadership, who uphold the dignity of all persons, and whose zeal for effective practice leads them into lifelong learning and leading that advances the educational aims of our communities. As a community of practice, we also intend to contribute to the advancement of the Lasallian mission and heritage at Christian Brothers University and, when possible, further afield in the global Lasallian network of P-12 schools and higher education institutions.

## OUR LASALLIAN HERITAGE

Our university's mission statement refers to "tradition of the Christian Brothers," and our unit mission statement states that the Department of Education at Christian Brothers University is "committed to upholding the Lasallian tradition of teacher preparation." Our unit conceptual framework cannot be understood without reference to this tradition, the sources of which will be further elaborated in the section of this document that discusses the wisdom of practice and the knowledge-base from which we derive our conceptual framework. We introduce the Lasallian tradition here in summary form, ahead of our university and unit mission and goal statements because this is our heritage and a source from which we draw strength and vision for the unit's future and for the entire approach we take to our work.

The Lasallian heritage may be summarized in the following two lists, one concerning the dispositions of the educator and the other delineating the characteristics of practice of the educator and the school, as follows:

### **Area 1: The desirable personal qualities and dispositions of the educator**

An inner fire or passion, defined earlier as zeal, which expresses strong commitment to mission

A spirit of profound service to students and colleagues based on recognition of their inherent dignity and worth

A whole-person perspective on the nature of human beings, both students and colleagues

### **Area 2: The desirable characteristics of practice of the educator and the school**

Development and support of learners from a whole-person perspective

Advocacy of equity, access, and the creation of opportunity for learners

Active exercise of the option for the poor

Leadership in creating new types of learning environments

Nurturance of diverse learning communities that are in dialogue about diversity

Production and management of educational works of quality

Embodiment of a practical approach responsive to current needs and cultural norms

Organization of the school and the classroom in an effective way

Collaborative teaching and leading that creates a strong learning community in the school

Valuing of the spirit of association and partnership with one's colleagues and students

## UNIVERSITY MISSION STATEMENT

Christian Brothers University is a Catholic institution of higher education in the tradition of the Christian Brothers. It is a private, comprehensive university which emphasizes excellence in teaching and individualized attention to the whole person in a values-oriented, interfaith educational community. The University prepares students for professional careers and advanced study in the arts and sciences, engineering, business, and education, and for lives of moral responsibility and constructive community involvement.

## UNIVERSITY GOALS

In pursuit of its mission, Christian Brothers University aims specifically to:

- (1) Bring within the reach of all its students an opportunity for higher education founded on Judeo-Christian principles, and particularly, to develop persons who think, judge, and act according to the principles enunciated by enlightened ethical and religious beliefs;
- (2) Provide programs which teach and encourage students to be active, informed, interested, and concerned citizens with a global perspective and a strong sense of justice and responsibility;
- (3) Assist in the personal, spiritual, and academic development of students by fostering interaction and dialogue between students and faculty or staff members in the context of community service;
- (4) Maintain a commitment to the ideals of free inquiry, pursuit of truth, and respect for all people;
- (5) Acquaint students with basic knowledge in the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and mathematics essential to an understanding of self and of the world in which we live;
- (6) Cultivate the skills of inquiry, reasoning, and communication, which allow students to continue the process of intellectual growth;
- (7) Engage students in the intelligent use of information technology;
- (8) Assist students in choosing and preparing for careers through counseling, opportunities for internship, pre-professional programs and career placement;
- (9) Provide facilities, programs and services that will encourage students' academic, religious, social, moral, and cultural growth;
- (10) Sustain and promote the Catholic and Lasallian heritage of the University while welcoming persons from diverse religious faiths and social backgrounds and serving as a center of interfaith dialogue;
- (11) Contribute, as an urban institution of higher learning, a variety of services related to its facilities and personnel which will benefit the people and institutions of the community;
- (12) Encourage lifelong learning and the continuing spiritual and professional development of students, alumni, faculty, and staff.

## **OUR UNIT MISSION STATEMENT**

An active learning community, committed to upholding the Lasallian tradition of teacher preparation, the Department of Education develops educators to lead and serve in classrooms and schools. We are committed to the lives and learning of children and young people, the betterment of schools, and the strengthening of communities.

## **OUR UNIT PURPOSE AND GOALS**

Our purpose as a professional education unit is to prepare educators as servant-leaders who will contribute strongly to high-quality educational practice in their schools and communities. As servant-leaders, our teacher and administrator candidates will also be champions of learner potential, effective and reflective practitioners, and builders of vibrant learning communities. The following are goals for our work in preparing candidates. These are further elaborated and restated as candidate proficiencies later in the document.

### **Theme/Core Concept: Servant-Leader**

1. We intend to prepare candidates who are servant-leaders and who express a high degree of inner calling and commitment to the human mission of education, who have a strong ethic of care and moral responsibility, and who embrace both the servant and leader dimensions of the profession.

2. We intend to prepare candidates who express profound respect for others and who honor the worth and dignity of children, young people, and colleagues, and whose attitude toward them is one of service.
3. We intend to prepare candidates who are also capable of the kinds of communication, social interaction, collaboration, and team-building skills that are characteristic of excellent leaders, who are models of exemplary practice, and who have a disposition toward the levels of initiative, sense of responsibility for mission-fulfillment, and concern for the welfare of the whole that are characteristic of excellent leaders.

**Theme/Core Concept: Champion of Individual Learner Potential**

1. We intend to prepare candidates who are champions of individual learner potential, who have a profound understanding of the human being as a whole person, who value the many kinds of human diversity, and who affirm the uniqueness and value of each individual human being regardless of race, culture, national origin, native language, socioeconomic status, religious belief (or lack thereof), disability, exceptionality, learning style, or mode of intelligence or temperament.
2. We intend to prepare candidates who are active in discovering the unique and diverse gifts and strengths in each child or young person, as well as in colleagues, and who are capable of developing school environments and classroom learning experiences that will bring the gifts and strengths of uniqueness and diversity into meaningful communal as well as individual expression.
3. We intend to prepare candidates who will advocate effectively for individual learners because they deeply believe in all learners' potentials, who will organize and manage their own areas of responsibility (whether the classroom or the school) for individual learner success and achievement, and who will work persistently to solve problems of learner underachievement in classrooms and schools.

**Theme/Core Concept: Effective and Reflective Practitioners**

1. We intend to prepare candidates who are effective and reflective practitioners, who embody in their practice as teachers or administrators exemplary practice that meets high professional standards, including those standards established and codified by state, national, and specialized organizations, and who are advocates for effective and reflective practice in their schools.
2. We intend that our candidates possess strong content knowledge, understand fully the areas of professional and pedagogical knowledge required for their teaching or administrative practice, and integrate and apply their knowledge effectively in action that results in high-impact student learning in K-12 schools.
3. We intend that our candidates are lifelong learners who inquire into and reflect on their own practice as teachers or administrators in the light of research, standards for excellence and high-impact learning for students, and ethical principles. We also intend that our candidates use the skills of inquiry and reflection to modify their practice and to continually challenge and adjust their conduct so as to bring greater benefit to students, colleagues, and the broader communities of practice in which they participate.

**Theme/Core Concept: Builders of Vibrant Learning Communities**

1. We intend that our candidates are capable of building vibrant learning communities in both classrooms and schools characterized by affirmation of the various types of human diversities, collaborative production of learning, and positive social interactions.
2. We intend that our candidates are positive and productive members of their communities of practice and that they foster norms of collaboration, shared decision-making, and ethically-based

practice toward students and colleagues, advocating these values for their role in building vibrant learning communities.

3. We intend that our candidates possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be effective in creating relationships and in taking on roles of servant-leadership in their communities of practice, whether as teachers or as administrators, including their relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and the broader community and its members.

Further, we intend integrity, in that we ourselves as a professional education unit of faculty and staff, together with our professional community, aspire to be what we ask our candidates to be:

1. servant-leaders
2. champions of learner potential
3. effective and reflective practitioners
4. builders of vibrant learning communities

### **LASALLIAN HERITAGE, UNIVERSITY MISSION, AND UNIT GOALS**

In developing our conceptual framework, we have come to realize and celebrate even more fully the substantial integration of the Lasallian mission and tradition into the University’s mission and goals and the alignment of our own unit mission and goals with these two important contexts. The following is an alignment chart showing the relationship.

<b>Lasallian heritage</b>	<b>University mission and goals</b>	<b>Unit themes and goals</b>
Person of the teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Zeal, inner fire, passion</li> <li>▪ Virtuous</li> <li>▪ Spirit of profound service to others</li> <li>▪ Called to teaching as an educational ministry</li> <li>▪ Called to serve the poor</li> <li>▪ Respect for the dignity and worth of others</li> <li>▪ Will to teach and lead</li> </ul>	Values-oriented environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Judeo-Christian principles</li> <li>▪ Aimed at lives of service</li> <li>▪ Moral responsibility</li> <li>▪ Ethical beliefs</li> <li>▪ Sense of justice and responsibility</li> <li>▪ Respect for all people</li> <li>▪ Leadership</li> </ul>	Servant-leaders: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Sense of calling and mission</li> <li>▪ Ethic of care and sense of responsibility for others</li> <li>▪ Profound respect for the dignity of others</li> <li>▪ Will to serve</li> <li>▪ Will to lead</li> </ul>
Practices of the teacher and school: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support for learners from a whole-person perspective</li> <li>▪ Engagement of the heart as well as the mind</li> <li>▪ Sensitive response to local cultural norms</li> <li>▪ Advocacy of equity and access</li> <li>▪ Creation of educational opportunity</li> <li>▪ Development of new types of schools</li> </ul>	Individualized attention to the whole person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personal, spiritual, academic, and intellectual development</li> <li>▪ Social, moral, and cultural growth</li> </ul>	Champions of individual learner potential: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Whole person view of the individual</li> <li>▪ Affirmation of all types of diversity</li> <li>▪ Develop unique gifts and strengths of individuals</li> <li>▪ Advocacy for individual learners</li> <li>▪ Creation of learning environments that are effective for individual learners</li> </ul>

<p>Practices of the teacher and school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish educational works of quality</li> <li>▪ Develop competence in practitioners</li> <li>▪ Organize school and classroom for maximum effectiveness</li> <li>▪ Practical pedagogy</li> <li>▪ Meditative and prayerful approach to the ministry of education</li> </ul>	<p>Excellence in teaching and resultant intellectual growth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Emphasis on fundamental fields of knowledge</li> <li>▪ Instruction in inquiry and reason and the pursuit of truth</li> <li>▪ Intelligent use of information technology</li> </ul>	<p>Effective and reflective practitioners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exemplary educational practice</li> <li>▪ Meets high professional standards</li> <li>▪ Strong content knowledge</li> <li>▪ Excellent pedagogical and professional knowledge and skills</li> <li>▪ Reflection on and inquiry into practice</li> </ul>
<p>Practices of the teacher and the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create diverse learning communities</li> <li>▪ Enable dialogue about diversity</li> <li>▪ Foster equitable relations among all members of the school community</li> <li>▪ “Brother” not “Master”</li> <li>▪ Associate/partner with colleagues and students</li> <li>▪ Work and live in the spirit of community; some live in community</li> </ul>	<p>Diverse interfaith community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Serve as center for interfaith dialogue</li> <li>▪ Welcome those from diverse social backgrounds</li> <li>▪ Bring benefit to people of the community</li> <li>▪ Emphasize constructive community involvement</li> <li>▪ Include staff in the overall vision of community</li> </ul>	<p>Builders of vibrant learning communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affirmation of different kinds of diversity</li> <li>▪ Collaboration skills and abilities</li> <li>▪ Shared production of learning</li> <li>▪ Positive social interaction and communication skills</li> <li>▪ Foster good relationships</li> <li>▪ Lead for community</li> <li>▪ Advocate values and practices that build the community of practice</li> </ul>

## OUR UNIT BELIEFS

### **Theme 1: Our beliefs about education as a profession in light of our hopes for the person of the teacher and what he/she will bring to the community of practice**

We believe that education is a profession, not merely an employment opportunity, and that this requires the educator to profess a deep commitment to human development and learning and to be a person who is shaped and driven by a sense of mission concerning the well-being of others, their life-chances, and the ongoing progress of the larger human community.

We also believe that education is a service profession, in that individuals and the greater human good are served by teachers and other educators, and that the spirit of service, which puts the good of others ahead of self-interest, must prevail in the attitudes of educators toward students, parents, colleagues, and the whole of the school community. We affirm that a profound sense of moral responsibility for the good of learners, for the good of the learning community, and for the larger human community, is a characteristic of service. We believe in an ethic of care.

We also believe that education is a leadership profession, in that the disposition to lead, to guide, to be an agent of change, to envision hopeful possibilities, whether individual learners or whole

communities of them, is vital to the success and continuing unfoldment of the higher mission of education.

Therefore, educators must be servant-leaders.

## **Theme 2: Our beliefs about learners and schools in light of our hopes for individual learners and their development**

We believe in the dignity and worth of each individual human being and in the potential inherent in each person for a productive, meaningful, and worthwhile life, regardless of the limitations of social or economic background or disabilities and exceptionalities. We believe that each person is the bearer of gifts and capacities that can be realized and brought forward into expression and productive community contribution through the guidance and support of professional educators who are servant-leaders, who hold a persistent belief in student potential.

We believe that, above all, schools are places where learners should develop their potential and discover these unique gifts and abilities. Schools should be places where the individual potentials of learners are unearthed and embraced, where their diverse strengths, talents, interests, and abilities are discovered in the midst of productive and challenging work.

We believe that schools are also increasingly diverse social and cultural environments that are inhabited by learners of widely varying abilities, that educators must align themselves with the goal of advancing the learning of each child, and that they must be prepared to teach and shape classrooms and schools that are culturally responsive, developmentally appropriate, and highly inclusive. Schools should be places where diversities are affirmed and celebrated and where the values and practices of civil and civic dialogue among diverse persons are encouraged and fostered.

We also believe learners, in order to be successful in contemporary society, must have solid encounters with meaningful, rigorous academic content, both breadth and depth, and that the tension between the needs, interests, and abilities of learners and the requirements of subject matter must be mediated by the educator. We care about learner success and the advance of learner life-chances, so we believe that the teacher must have a strong background in content knowledge as defined by educational standards and yet be able to adapt this content knowledge to diverse students and learning environments.

Therefore, educators must be champions of individual learner potential.

## **Theme 3: Our beliefs about schools and learning in light of our hopes for high-quality schools and teachers and their impact on learners**

We believe that our society and our schools need highly effective and completely competent teachers and leaders in order to maximize learner potential. We believe that schools will prosper when they are staffed by persons who share their passion about creating and managing highly productive learning environments. We believe that learners will prosper when they encounter educators who possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions and whose purpose is to create high impact for student learning. Schools cannot afford complacent, ineffective educators who lack energy, enthusiasm, and the will to solve problems that inhibit the advance of human learning in individuals, in the school environment, and in the larger communities that surround schools.

We believe in and honor the wisdom of educational practice that has been distilled and disseminated in the professional standards that now guide the preparation and assessment of teachers and administrators. We believe that these standards capture many of the areas of skill, knowledge, and disposition that orient educators in the preparation stage to the ideals and hopes of our society and of our profession for what can be accomplished through schools and in the lives of learners. We accept and embrace these standards, seeking ways to make them our own and to translate them into the effective work of our community of candidates.

We also believe in and honor the work of the larger professional community of educators at all levels who have distilled serious conversation and examination about subject matter in all fields into the content standards that now guide curriculum, instruction, and assessment in P-12 classrooms. We believe that educators must be conversant in content knowledge and fully able to adapt this effectively and meaningfully to diverse learners and circumstances.

We believe that educators must integrate curriculum, instruction, and assessment in ways that result in powerful, high-impact learning that enhances the development of individual potential and that classrooms and entire schools must be positive environments conducive to learning for all learners. We affirm that contemporary instructional technologies as well as research-based literature about educational theory and practice play a positive role in developing powerful and effective learning, and we prepare our candidates toward these ends.

However, we also believe that none of this happens without continuous, high quality reflection on a principled basis on the part of the practitioner, who regularly and habitually examines his or her actions in light of the distilled wisdom of highly effective practice, high standards for ethical conduct for the good of learners and other members of the school and broader communities, and an approach that embodies the norms of inquiry.

Therefore, educators must be effective and reflective practitioners.

#### **Theme 4: Our beliefs about schools and learning in light of our hopes for communities of practice and for the communities that surround schools**

We believe that schools are community institutions that are vital not only to the long-term health and vitality of contemporary democratic society but also to the expressed hopes and prophetic visions found within the Judaeo-Christian tradition for the coming of a more just and equitable society that might be described as the kingdom of God.

We believe that schools as communities are intended to be safe and hospitable places of relationship and positive interaction characterized by profound care and concern for the well-being of others, where parents and other caregivers, school partners, and broader members of the school's own professional community are welcomed, included, and engaged in ways that advance the potential of learners.

We believe that classrooms should be learning communities that are vibrant, alive, and meaningful to all participants, where learning is productively and cooperatively constructed with the leadership and facilitative support of exceptionally well-prepared teachers. And we believe that one of the most critical roles of the administrator is the creation of a school environment where this kind of

learning is possible, advocated, and supported, and where the work of teachers and learners is, through skillful management and leadership, protected and advanced to the fullest extent possible.

We believe that schools are and should be learning communities for learners but also for the adults that guide and lead the work of learning. We believe in that professional development for educators requires a learning community enabled by norms of collaboration and reflection in order to maximize the development of both individual potential and communal goals.

We believe that we must prepare our candidates to be skillful and effective participants in the communities of practice that they will inhabit—classrooms, schools, and their surrounding environments—and that we must enable and facilitate their communication, social interaction, collaboration, reflection, and leadership skills.

We believe that, as a professional education unit, we should be a continuously evolving and always improving community of practice in the fields of teacher and administrator preparation. We also believe that our broader community of practice includes many others—faculty in the arts and sciences, teachers and administrators in P-12 public and private schools, the Christian Brothers and Lasallian networks of educators with which we are profoundly connected. We are committed to involving and including these members of our community of practice in our work through meaningful encounters and workable structures of affiliation and engagement.

Therefore, educators must be builders of vibrant learning communities.

## **OUR SOURCES**

In this section, we discuss and describe the sources to which we refer in shaping vision, mission, goals, and beliefs for our unit. These sources are derived from both the wisdom of practice—and we have specific reference to the Lasallian heritage in this sense—and from the knowledge-base of the contemporary literature in our fields. This section is organized into several subsections: our Lasallian heritage; perspectives on educator preparation in the era of school reform; a review of our important sources about leadership for both teachers and school administrators, including servant-leadership and ethical and moral leadership; a review of our sources about individual learner potential; a review of our sources about effective and reflective practice; and a review of our sources about the development of learning communities and communities of practice.

### **Our Lasallian Heritage**

The conceptual framework for the unit cannot be understood without reference to the broader story of the Christian Brothers or to the narrative of development of the entire scope of the Lasallian mission in education. The core ideas related to the disposition of the teacher and to the quality of practice in Lasallian schools have already been presented in summary form as part of the introduction of our conceptual framework, but this is derived from a wisdom of practice: the story of the founder of the Christian Brothers, St. John Baptist De LaSalle, patron of teachers, and of the early years of the lay Catholic teaching order, the Institute of the Christian Schools. This narrative describes the evolution of schools and of teacher training in a response to the needs of the poor. The story is the heart and root of the Lasallian heritage with which Christian Brothers University and the Department of Education are affiliated (Salm, 2003).

## **The Beginning of the Story**

The educational needs of the poor were largely neglected in 17<sup>th</sup> century France. The university system, of which De LaSalle was a beneficiary, served the elite. Parish charity schools at the elementary level that were to be provided by pastors of churches were usually poorly run, with very little discipline and typically incompetent teachers. Such schools were often closed for long periods on the least excuse. The only other form of elementary education for the lower classes was offered by independent teachers who ran what were called “little schools” usually in their own homes, also of inconsistent quality.

The initial efforts of De LaSalle and the first teachers who associated with him were in the parish schools of Rheims. De LaSalle focused on the development of the teachers themselves, initially taking them into his own home to live in community. In those days, schoolteachers who were not a part of the university system had no social or professional status, no standards to meet, and little motivation to stay with teaching any longer than necessary. De LaSalle was deeply concerned with how uncultured and uneducated these teachers of the poor were and with the low quality of the “little schools” and the parish schools (Salm, 1996).

The mission of the Institute of the Christian Schools (its formal name) is described in the original Rule of the Institute by De LaSalle:

The need for this Institute is very great, because artisans and the poor, being usually very little educated, and occupied all day in gaining a livelihood for themselves and their families, cannot give their children the instruction they need, much less a suitable Christian education. It was to procure this advantage for the children of artisans and the poor that the Christian schools were established (quoted by Salm, 1996).

In the process of establishing the Institute, De LaSalle created a new type of elementary school system for the education of the poor, a new set of standards that would transform teaching school into a profession and a vocation, and a new community of consecrated lay teachers recognized as a distinct order within the Catholic Church. But this was not all. During his lifetime, De LaSalle and the early group of Christian Brothers also adopted the principle of “response to needs” that became characteristic of the Institute generally in establishing training schools for lay teachers and in other pioneering educational initiatives: technical training institutes, programs offered on Sundays for what we today would call nontraditional adult students, special education programs, and education programs for young delinquents. In time, De LaSalle and the Brothers responded to the needs of those who were not poor as well, establishing a boarding school for the children of merchant families.

A prolific writer, De LaSalle influenced generations of Christian Brothers and other educators through his highly prescriptive methods for establishing a well-organized and effective learning environment. The Conduct of the Christian Schools (De LaSalle, trans. 1996) is a classic work in the history of Western education. Among his innovations were teaching in the vernacular French and including detailed lessons on conduct and manners (The Rules of Christian Decorum and Civility, De LaSalle, trans. 1990) so that students could find useful employment in society. In keeping with the originating impulse of the Institute, the schools were to be free, gratuitous, with “neither money nor presents . . . offered by the pupils or their parents.” The commitment of the

Brothers was to “teach, together, by association,” and to live in community as witnesses to the Gospel.

De LaSalle envisioned teaching as a Christian ministry, which is presented most thoroughly in his meditations written in his later years as spiritual guidance for the developing communities of Christian Brothers. He offered the ideal of a new kind of teacher-student relationship based on love and mutual respect. Teachers were invited to see themselves as called by God to touch and win the hearts of their students, to be like older brothers to them, and to act as their guardian angels, and, especially, to regard the children as the children of God. The new image of the teacher was to be “brother” rather than “master.” The ideal promulgated by De LaSalle was that teachers would put themselves within reach of their students and speak to children and young people on their own level, expressing sympathy with the vulnerabilities of the young and concern for the mental, physical, social, moral, and spiritual development for each student.

### **The Story of the Mission**

Together with their evangelizing role in the worldwide spread of Christianity, the quality and effectiveness of the schools established by the Christian Brothers contributed to their success. The missionary expansion of the Institute included the classic sense of going into foreign lands to establish Christian society, with the first schools often offered to government employees. In short order, the schools included Jewish, Moslem, Hindu, and Buddhist students, initiating the tradition of religious diversity and tolerance that has been characteristic of Lasallian schools. By the middle of the 1800s, the Brothers had eschewed the “conversion” model of evangelization and had instead established an ideal of noninterference with prevailing religious practices, advocating the goal of the school as a moral community for all, regardless of religious tradition. As a result, De LaSalle’s creative vision has survived for over 300 years, on all continents, and among all adherents of the world’s great religions.

Yet in due time, there would be challenges to both the principle of gratuity and to De LaSalle’s vision of the schools as focused on a mutual respect and regard between teacher and student. In the first 100 years, these challenges were actively addressed by Brother Agathon, Fifth Superior General of the Institute, in his development of The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher (Agathon, 1785/2000) based on a list left by De LaSalle, and also his Circular Letter of 1786 (Agathon, 1786/2000) questioning the practice of end-of-year public contests and examinations in the schools as favoring the more gifted and prosperous students to the detriment of the others. Brother Agathon also defended the Institute ably during the French Revolution’s challenge to the pre-eminence and dominating power of the Church as well as the royal family and the nobility. He called attention to the gratuitous character of the schools established by the Institute of the Christian Brothers and underlined the service to the nation from the Institute’s teacher preparation, at that point approximately 100 new teachers a year sent to diverse parts of France (Salm, 2003).

As the Christian Brothers spread into countries such as the United States where state funding of schools or other economic circumstances did not permit the principle of gratuity to be upheld, schools established by the Institute sometimes acquired the characteristics of elite preparatory schools yet always made room for the less advantaged student. Nonetheless, in the era of the Second Vatican Council, the Institute engaged in considerable soul-searching, which in 1967 resulted in The Declaration: The Brother of the Christian Schools in the World Today and in what has been described as a return to the poor. In the United States, for example, the most recent phenomenon is a movement to create small inner city middle schools (the San Miguel model) which focus on

creating opportunities for high school and collegiate academic success for the poor. These and other recent initiatives speak of the continuing vitality of the Lasallian mission and vision.

Increasingly, the Lasallian movement speaks of shared mission because the work of teaching and administration is shared with lay men and women who are not consecrated to religious life as the Brothers are and who take no permanent vows. Worldwide, the Brothers themselves (who may be identified by the letters “FSC” after their name, initials for “Fratres Scholarum Christianium,” Latin for Brothers of the Christian Schools) now compose only 7% of the total staff of Lasallian schools. Lasallian schools may be elementary, secondary, or tertiary (collegiate, university, or other forms of post-secondary education, including technical, vocational, and teacher training institutes). There are also literacy and community support programs, as well as a continuation of the tradition of education for young offenders.

Despite the variety of institutional types across the globe, there are unifying characteristics in all Lasallian schools: educational works of quality, exercise of the preferential option for the poor even in more prosperous settings, and the ideal of the school as a learning community engaged in the search for values across diverse cultural and religious traditions. The Lasallian teacher is mission-driven and purposeful as well as professional. He or she is also a faithful advocate for the wholeness and dignity of all persons—students, staff, and colleagues—and contributes to a strong experience of community in the school. Lasallian associates and Christian Brothers may also live in community as a further expression of the originating spirit of the tradition: to “teach together, by association.”

### **The Preparation of Educators in the Era of School Reform**

Training and preparation of a unique nature has been found to be vital to the further advance of the mission of education. Figures such as St. John Baptist De LaSalle in our own tradition at CBU as well as catalysts for the improvement and advance of American public education like Horace Mann have emphasized the importance of professional preparation and high standards for entrance into the teaching profession. In our own time, entry standards for teacher education and licensing have been raised, partly through the efforts of major commissions like the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium, led by figures like M. Jean Miller, Linda Darling-Hammond, and Mary Diez, giving us the model INTASC standards and other model standards, such as those published by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards and the Minnesota Board of Teaching. Arguing that the American economy is no longer primarily oriented to manufacturing but is rather knowledge-based and service-oriented, Darling-Hammond, Wise, and Klein (1999) make the case for these raised standards in A License to Teach. It is clear that a stronger, standards-based approach to the preparation of professional educators makes sense in light of the calls for school reform that have been growing steadily louder since A Nation at Risk in 1983 and the other reform reports that followed, including several from that era such as the Holmes report that addressed the preparation of teachers specifically.

One of the major concerns that emerged over the decade of the 1990s has been the issue of aligning teacher education and professional education with visions for contemporary reform of K-12 schools (Lampert and Ball, 1999). Important voices, such as those of Goodlad (1994) and colleagues, have pointed out that a simultaneous renewal of K-12 schools and of educator preparation programs is essential to the success of both efforts.

Critiques of professional preparation of educators have abounded (Clifford and Guthrie, 1988; Goodlad, 1990, 1994), along with numerous ideas for improvement of these programs (Kennedy, 1999; Darling-Hammond, Berry, Haselkorn, and Fidler, 1999; Thompson and Zeuli, 1999). Simultaneously, the movements to reform and improve schools and to strengthen student learning and achievement have continued, yet not without contested visions and alternate approaches advocated in both policy and practice (Ohanian, 1999; Meier, 2003, 2004). Hopes for school reforms based on authentic assessments and high-quality student work (Elmore, 1990; Schlecty, 1990, 1997; Glickman, 1998; McDonald, 1996) have, to some extent, been eclipsed by the high-stakes testing environment in schools that has accompanied “No Child Left Behind,” the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. As we prepare teachers and administrators, our unit is aware of these contested and varying visions of the nation’s educational future, and we desire that our own approach acknowledge the necessity for both advocacy and practical adaptation.

### **The Professionalization of Teaching**

Historically, the ascendancy of school administrators and the additional requirements for advanced professional training for them has almost assured these educators a fully professional status (Callahan, 1962). However, teaching has continued to struggle with its semi-professional status. Numerous works have addressed hopes for a fully professional status for teaching (Devaney and Sykes, 1988; Darling-Hammond, 1988; Soder, 1990). As has been the case with the enactment of reform in teacher education, a variety of proposals have been made and embodied in order to address the issues, including the need for a stronger professional culture in schools (Cooper, 1988; Barth, 1988) and the possibility of organizing schools around teacher as well as student learning (Little, 1999). The professional development school model that has so many potential advantages for both pre-service preparation and in-service teachers has come out of such critical conversations and has been strongly recommended by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education as a vital route to the fuller professionalization of the teaching force as well as to the enhancement of teacher preparation. In our environment, particularly our urban public and private schools, where entry into teaching has often come ahead of professional licensure and where employment-related issues and the need to staff classrooms full of urban students have often trumped professional considerations, we honor the importance of these debates and seek to play our own part in advocacy for a fully professional culture in local and regional schools, for strong partnerships with schools that move in the direction of the professional development school model, for limited alternative entry into teaching, and for strong and vibrant preparation programs that call for the professionalization of teaching and make it more possible.

## **Leadership: Our Sources**

### **Teacher Leadership**

In close harmony with the call for the professionalization of teaching, the idea of teacher leadership has become more prevalent (Brubacher and Simon, 1993; Walling, 1994; Moller and Katzenmeyer, 1996). Preparation of teachers for active roles in building the leadership capacity of schools is no longer a foreign concept and has been advocated fairly widely through the more popular and accessible education literature (Lambert, 1998; Lieberman and Miller, 2003; Gabriel, 2005; Danielson, 2006). Our own initial conceptual framework for teachers at CBU was focused on the idea of teacher leadership and promulgated the motto that the CBU initial and advanced program was “for teachers who lead.” We retain that concept in the current iteration of our framework as

part of our foundation but have modified it to reflect the dimension of service more fully and to represent the depth of our ethical concerns about the mission of education that come from our Lasallian heritage.

### **Servant-Leadership**

The evolution of our conceptual framework includes a history of having originally adopted the core concept of servant-leadership for our administrator preparation program added several years after initial and advanced programs for teachers. We had already adopted teacher leadership as our conceptual framework for teachers. Our rationale at the time concerned our experience as a small unit focused on teachers. Over the years, the Department's faculty had heard a fair number of teacher complaints about school leadership as former or current CBU students entered school systems and began their teaching careers. Further, much of the current literature aimed at the preparation and formation of educational administrators tacitly admitted significant problems in school leaders that teachers might occasionally notice—especially hierarchical, authoritarian models and styles that excluded teachers from leadership roles and from making a contribution to whole-school renewal in anything but a highly subordinated role with a clearly inferior status. Thus, the Department chose for its administrative preparation program a conceptual theme that embodied the spirit of service to teachers and to the educative mission of schools and that was consistent with our advocacy of teacher leadership and the full professionalization of teaching. But in the past year, revisiting and revising our conceptual framework, we desired to shape a unifying framework for all programs and chose to adopt the concept of servant leadership for the unit as a whole as one of four themes.

The concept of servant-leadership is not foreign to fields that study organizational theory and behavior and has appeared in educational leadership literature as well. One origin of the concept of servant-leadership—a source very important to our university as a Christian and Catholic institution of higher education—can be found in the Gospels of the New Testament, where Jesus states to the disciples that "he who is greatest among you must be the servant of all." In other words, the one who is a designated leader has the responsibility of service not only to the whole mission but also to the person of each one who is part of the mission.

The legacy of Robert K. Greenleaf (1977, 1996) remains the major source of the servant-leadership concept. Initially writing for non-educationally-oriented organizational studies, Greenleaf developed his theory of servant-leadership while an AT&T executive and subsequently lectured at MIT, Harvard Business School, Dartmouth College, and the University of Virginia. His Center for Applied Ethics has become the Robert K. Greenleaf Center, located in Indianapolis. Before his death in 1990, he had authored numerous books, essays, and papers and had influenced many other writings.

In a key essay, Greenleaf (1977) discussed the idea of the servant-leader as servant first, where an individual begins with "the natural feeling that one wants to serve." Then, as Greenleaf puts it, this conscious choice of service in a certain environment brings one "to aspire to lead." This person, who begins with the idea of service is different from the one who begins with the idea of leadership, because of the latter's need to serve a drive for power or the idea of acquiring material possessions. In Greenleaf's words:

The difference (between servant-first and leader-first) manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are

being served. The best test, and difficult to administer is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society; will they benefit, or, at least not be further deprived? (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 14)

Applying these ideas to the school setting, then, the servant-leader's first care is to ensure that the needs of children and youth for a good education and opportunities for development in a safe and secure and caring environment are being met while simultaneously ensuring that teachers and other personnel also grow as persons. The tests that Greenleaf proposes translate fairly easily into the school setting: Are students learning and growing? Are they becoming good and able human beings? Are teachers and other personnel learning and growing? Are they becoming wiser, freer, more autonomous, and more oriented to serving the mission? Overall, is the effect on the least privileged (both students and staff) in the school beneficial? These tests for servant-leadership lead naturally in the direction of the major concepts, issues, and standards that are discussed and debated relative to the fate and future of schools in contemporary society and to the role of the educational leader in the renewal, redesign, and reform of contemporary schools. Ideas such as schools as learning communities, collaboration and team-building for the adults who teach and lead in the school, problem-based school development, and the school as a moral community are easily associated with the servant-leadership concept.

### **Leadership for the School Administrator**

The connection between Greenleaf's original concept and school administration literature is particularly well-developed as an underlying and occasionally obvious theme in the work of Thomas Sergiovanni (1994, 1995, 2000), who has written extensively on educational leadership and the principalship. Sergiovanni cites the Gospel verse in which Jesus asserts the primacy of service to others in a leader (Matthew 20:25) and presents the term "ministry" as well:

Servant leadership describes well what it means to be a principal. Principals are responsible for "ministering" to the needs of the schools they serve. The needs are defined by the shared values and purposes of the school's covenant. They minister by furnishing help and being of service to parents, teachers, and students. They minister by providing leadership in a way that encourages others to be leaders in their own right. They minister by highlighting and protecting the values of the school. The principal as minister is one who is devoted to a cause, mission, or set of ideas and accepts the duty and obligation to serve this cause. (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 320)

### **Ethical and Moral Leadership**

The mission of teaching and of education cannot be understated or emphasized, and yet the moral and ethical dimensions of education are not always fully addressed in the calls for professionalization of teaching (Soder, 1990; Bull, 1990), in the literature of teacher leadership, or in the broader body of literature concerning leadership and administration. We consider this occasional oversight something that we wish not to repeat in our own conceptual framework and thus have chosen to adopt a stronger moral and ethical stance in this latest iteration of our shared vision. Aligning ourselves with those who consider moral and ethical perspectives as central to the mission of education and to the profession itself (Goodlad, 1990; Fenstermacher, 1990; Feinberg, 1990; Strike, 1990; Norlander-Case, Reagan, and Case, 1999), we have strengthened this dimension not only of

our conceptual framework but also the curriculum, instruction, and assessment in our preparation programs. We want our students to understand that there are important ethical considerations to take into account not only in how educational resources are distributed but also in choice of educational outcomes and in decisions related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment (Norlander-Case, Reagan, and Case, 1999; Strike, 1990; Sockett, 1990; Clark, 1990). We refer not only to Catholic social teaching with respect to its concerns for a just distribution of social goods such as education and to our Lasallian heritage of efforts to create and sustain fully gratuitous schools for the poor, but also to current ethicists and philosophers of education such as Nel Noddings (1992, 1995) and influential historical figures such as John Dewey with his focus on the public school as a democratic and community institution (1916) serving the greater ends of social progress.

### **Individual Learning and Potential: Our Sources**

#### **Dignity and Worth of Human Persons**

With respect to the dignity and worth of human persons, Catholic social teaching, particularly from Vatican II's many documents, stands out as a key source for us. The word dignity itself means worth or value (Pilarczyk, 1997). When we speak of this principle, we mean that every human being has a unique worth or value that nobody can take away and that everybody is called to respect. It also means that each of us has a right to receive respect from others and an obligation to give respect to others simply because we are what God has made us to be (Pilarczyk, 1997).

Further, human worth does not depend on achievement. From the standpoint of Catholic social teaching, it is not the case that we each must prove our worth and then we have a right to be respected. Human worth above all does not depend on usefulness; society does not have the right to away with those who seem to contribute nothing to the common good. The dignity of the human person does not depend on wealth or on social standing or even on whether our behavior is appropriate. The dignity of the human person precedes any worthy action of our own (Pilarczyk, 1997). This is significant for us in terms of the inclusive aims of education in the current era. From the standpoint of the Catholic tradition as well as values that come from the secular philosophers of education, legal precedents, and current policies, no person should be denied access to a human education designed to help them achieve their maximum potential. No one is to be left out or left behind.

#### **Exceptionality and Inclusion**

Therefore, our sources include policies and practices that advocate strongly for the possibilities of successful and inclusive classrooms and schools, where learners with quite different abilities and disabilities learn to respect one another and are facilitated in their development. For us, it is not only the law but also a hopeful possibility based on our affirmation of the dignity and worth of individual human beings.

#### **Developmental Appropriateness**

Given this as an ethical perspective on the dignity and worth of individual human beings, then the literature of human potential and human development naturally comes into play in our knowledge-base. We honor and teach the work of psychological theorists from various schools of thought and ensure that teacher candidates encounter sufficiently diverse models of educational psychology, from Bruner (1960) to Skinner (1968), and that candidates can identify and critique educational practices that are derived solely from one or the other school of thought. While we have not adopted one

approach and could be described as theoretically eclectic or balanced as a group of faculty, with interests as varied as brain-based approaches (Given, 2002; Jensen, 2001; Sprenger, 1999) and social and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995), we do believe in developmentally appropriate instruction and are deeply concerned that candidates understand the central importance of the constructive development theorists (Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1978; Kegan, 1982).

### **Diversity and Demographics**

We are also deeply aware of the changing demographics in our own region, the Mid-South, as well as the enduring problems caused by generations of slavery, Jim Crow and segregation, and the effort to rectify historic inequities for African-Americans by putting an end to segregated public schools. Our broader professional community and our candidates are all part of the ongoing narrative in this Southern drama that is enacted in ways unique to our region. Yet our context for racial and ethnic diversity is changing. As a city, Memphis is now home to an ever-enlarging Latino population and increased numbers of Asians. As a city with a low cost of living, Memphis is also a designated urban area choice for refugees from civil wars and conflicts in regions as diverse as the Sudan and the Balkans.

### **Culturally Responsive Teaching**

In a diverse environment such as ours, culturally responsive teaching (Garcia, 2002; Gay, 2000) takes on additional meaning and mandates that our curriculum be adequately focused not only on describing and recognizing diversity but also on effective teaching and development of the whole learning environment. We want to ensure that diversity is regarded affirmatively rather than as an unwelcome burden (Nieto, 1996). As is the case with our views of exceptionality and inclusion, we are hopeful that our candidates will lead successfully diverse classrooms and schools, where learning experiences include positive social interactions among learners and colleagues with varied backgrounds. In terms of our approach to this, Martin (1995), Cochran-Smith (1997), Grant (1997), Futtrell and Witty (1997), and Hilliard (1997) have given us models and paradigms that describe the importance of culturally responsive teaching and the significance of our responsibility in preparing educators.

### **Differing Gifts and Abilities**

Our unit is reasonably rich in practitioners who are well-versed in learning and temperament styles (Myers, 1976, 1980; Canfield, 1986; Dunn and Dunn, 1978; Kolb, 1976 etc; Claxton and Murrell, 1987; Mamchur, 1996) as well as in the concept of strengths (Buckingham and Clifton, 2001). We have also taught Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983, 1993; Armstrong, 1994; Silver, Strong, and Perini, 2000) and have developed candidates' abilities to integrate this theory into classroom practice.

### **Differentiated Instruction**

In this sense, differentiated instruction for us means teaching and leading in a fully inclusive, developmentally and culturally responsive way that is sensitive to differences in temperament, learning style, and dominant mode of intelligence. We appreciate the practical help and support that has come to us from varied sources how we may more effectively model and disseminate adequate and positive response to the needs of all learners, including strategies for successful differentiation in light of student variance (Tomlinson, 1999) and efforts to integrate teaching for understanding and differentiation (Tomlinson and McTighe, 2006).

## **Effective and Reflective Practice: Our Sources**

We remain profoundly concerned with effective as well as reflective practice for our teacher and administrator candidates, especially since we wish to embody that Lasallian hallmark of practicality and sensitivity to the local environment. In that sense, we have recognized that, despite the views and values of some of our faculty that might tend in the direction of a fully constructivist approach to teaching and learning (Zemelman, Daniels, Hyde, 2005), our environment--driven as it is by the heavy emphasis high-stakes testing of No Child Left Behind and by increasingly specific content and curriculum guides--pushes us in the direction of research-based teaching practices such as those recommended by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001) and Marzano (2004), which emphasize explicit instruction to strengthen background knowledge, especially academic vocabulary. Our unit includes proponents of E. D. Hirsch (1996)'s concerns with sufficient breadth and the idea of an extensive core curriculum, and we tend to discourage our candidates, especially in their early careers, from out-and-out fights against what is required of them, particularly in our local public schools. Instead, we aim for their advocacy and influence toward better practice in the schools, which includes not letting the high-stakes testing environment completely shape their own teaching and instructional leadership.

As a unit, we advocate the necessity of approaches to teaching for understanding (Wiske, 1998; Wiggins and McTighe, 2005) and a strong emphasis on educative performance assessment (Wiggins, 1998) despite the high-stakes testing environment. We believe that our teacher and administrator candidates should not surrender high-quality curriculum standards and teaching toward important ends, nor the kind of high-quality assessments that support this kind of learning. Yet we have moved toward balanced literacy and scientifically-based reading approaches and away from whole language because we are concerned with reducing the numbers of low-performing readers. There are too many in our area, and we cannot afford to play favorites with theories that seem not to work where the background knowledge of learners is too impoverished.

### **Teacher Effectiveness**

We expect teacher candidates to be fully competent in the effective use and integration of varied strategies and to have a complete repertoire of teaching strategies from which to choose in support of the achievement and development of individual learners. We include and demonstrate a variety of approaches in our own teaching, and we seek to model and exemplify as well as to talk about instructional effectiveness and variation. Candidates experience direct instruction, cooperative learning, problem-based learning, case studies, inquiry models, and other approaches.

We also expect teacher candidates to develop a full range of strategies for classroom management and to be effective and well-organized in creating strongly positive learning environments. We use the infamous Harry Wong (Wong and Wong, 2001) as well as many other sources (Cummings, 2000; Kohn, 1996; Levin and Nolan, 2004; Marzano, Marzano, and Pickering, 2003) to ensure that teacher candidates become highly competent in organizing and managing their classrooms.

### **School Administrator Effectiveness**

We also expect school administrator candidates to develop their abilities as strategic planners and shapers of vision and a common school culture (Bolman and Deal, 2002, 2003; Lambert et al, 1995), instructional leaders, and effective managers of the entire school environment (everything from staff personnel programs to finances, school safety and security, and public relations). In our locale,

challenged as it is by student underachievement, we also expect school administrators to be well-prepared to participate in the big push to increase performance scores on the variety of high-stakes tests (Schmoker, 1999, 2001, 2006; Reeves, 2006). Yet we also expect our candidates to be profoundly concerned with student learning that lasts, not only with improving test scores (Darling-Hammond, 1997). Candidates encounter case studies on authentic assessment and transformation of school cultures through vigorous efforts to preserve powerful learning in the high-stakes testing environment (Darling-Hammond, Ancess, and Falk, 1995).

### **Reflective Practice**

All candidates are constantly asked to engage in high-quality reflection about practice—their own as well as what they observe. They are introduced to this idea early in our initial teaching licensure programs and maintain reflective journals, using specific prompts and observational tools in many cases, so that they truly learn from experience (Zeichner and Liston, 1987). The core of wisdom about this approach to reflective practice comes from the pioneering work of Donald Schon and Chris Argyris (1983, 1987, 1987), which has been popularized and anthologized by Peter Senge and colleagues (2000) in Schools That Learn.

### **Inquiry and Research**

Initial teacher candidates learn about teacher research and teacher inquiry as well as teacher work sample methodology through their first classes. They learn to write simple proposals and then carry out a teacher work sample project during the student teaching semester. All candidates are given guided instruction on skillful use of the knowledge-base in education and are expected to access the knowledge-base appropriately for a wide variety of assignments and assessments, particularly through mastery of advanced searching via thesaurus descriptors in the ERIC database. Advanced candidates engage scholarship in the sense of research papers, proposals, and full projects.

All candidates encounter teacher work sample methodology (Girod, 2002) as a means of inquiry into practice, and initial as well as advanced candidates engage some, if not all stages, of action research and/or teacher inquiry in relation to either classroom or school-based problems. Sources that are important to us include not only the more traditional quantitative and qualitative approaches to educational research and program evaluation but also those authors who are advocates for teacher inquiry and action research as important expressions of the goals of reflective practice (Cochran-Smith and Lytle, 1993; Hubbard and Power, 2004; Burnaford, Fischer, and Hobson, 2001; Mills, 2003; Sagor, 2000).

### **Vibrant Learning Communities: Our Sources**

Literature about learning communities holds a special place for us because of our Lasallian heritage, because of the tradition that we “teach together, by association” and because of the renewal of vision for schools as communities that has been developing as Lasallian association for mission takes hold among Brothers and lay partners. It is also the direction of practice that we advocate for ourselves and for public and private schools.

Speaking from the progressive tradition of concern for the fate and future of our public schools, Dewey asserted:

A society which makes provisions for participation...of all its members...is democratic. Such a society must have a type of education which gives individuals a personal interest in social relationships and controls, and the habits of mind which secure social changes without introducing disorder. (Democracy and Education, 1916, p. 99).

Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves (1991) discuss the importance of collaboration linked with norms and the opportunities for continuous improvement and career-long learning. When teacher improvement is seen as collective rather than individual, teachers are more likely to trust and value advice and expertise. The authors present research suggesting that a more collaborative environment reduces teachers' uncertainties and their sense of powerlessness and increases their sense of efficacy. We want to prepare our candidates to help shape such environments in their schools.

Thomas J. Sergiovanni (1994, 2000) discusses the importance of building a learning community by reorganizing our educational values, beliefs, and practices, rather than just using the word "community" in our mission statements. He argues for an understanding of a community as a collection of individuals who are bonded together by natural will and who are bound to a set of shared ideas and ideals. This bonding and binding is tight enough to transform them from a collection of "I's" into a collective "we." As a "we," members are part of a tightly knit web of meaningful relationships sharing common sustaining sentiments and traditions. We wish both to be a "we" as a professional community of practice and also to foster in our candidates the desire to build learning communities in their classrooms and schools.

To foster learning communities means that we reflect on learning as a function of community. According to Lave and Wenger (1991), learning is "a function of activity, context and culture in which it occurs." To the extent that learning is situated in abstraction, they assert, it becomes problematic or severely impeded. An effective learning environment should provide authentic learning materials that deal with real-life problems, and it should support both collaboration and lively interaction with people as well as objects in the environment.

Thus the actual realization of learning emerges within the communities of practice that are an integral part of our daily lives. Some communities of practice are named and focus on shared concerns or issues, but few of them have membership cards. If we consider our own lives from a community of practice perspective, however, we can readily envision a good picture of the communities of practice to which we currently belong, those to which we belonged in the past, those to which we would like to belong in the future. In addition, we also have a rather clear idea of who belongs to our communities of practice and why, and we can probably distinguish between a few communities of practice of which we are core members and a number of others in which we have a more peripheral kind of membership (Wenger, 1998).

What is shared by a community of practice, what makes it a community, is its practice. The concept of practice intimates doing, but not just doing in and of itself. It is doing in a historical and social context that gives structure and meaning to what we do. Wenger (1998) maintains that in order for practice to generate coherence within a community, the essential characteristics of mutual engagement, shared repertoire, and joint enterprise must be present.

Among other dimensions that are characteristic, Lave and Wenger (1991) define communities of practice as scaffolding for newcomers to become part of a community or profession. This is very

important to educator development and to our responsibilities as educators of educators. Newcomers start as peripheral members and gradually learn, through apprenticing (Rogoff, 1995, 1998), to participate as full members of the community. Wenger (1998) proposes the framework of the communities-of-practice perspective based on the following premises:

- 1) We are social beings. Far from being trivially true, this fact is a central aspect of learning.
- 2) Knowledge is a matter of competence with respect to valued enterprises – such as singing in tune, discovering scientific facts, fixing machines, writing poetry, being convivial, growing up as a boy or a girl, and so forth.
- 3) Knowing is a matter of participating in the pursuit of such enterprises, that is, of active engagement in the world.
- 4) Meaning – our ability to experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful – is ultimately what learning is to produce.

Thus, through our professional education programs and with our candidates and professional community, we seek to create a meaningful learning experience of community in our unit, for ourselves, our school partners, and, ultimately, in schools where our candidates will practice as teachers and administrators.

## **UNIT STANDARDS: CANDIDATE PROFICIENCIES**

### **Theme/Core Concept: Servant-Leader**

1. Candidates conceptualize ethical responsibility in relation to their professional responsibilities.
2. Candidates conceptualize the dimensions and skills of leadership and professionalism critical to the profession of education.
3. Candidates express a high degree of inner calling and commitment to the human mission of education and to the goals of access, equity, and opportunity.
4. Candidates possess a strong ethic of care and moral responsibility and represent concern for the welfare of others above self-concern and self-interest.
5. Candidates take initiative and manifest a sense of responsibility for mission-fulfillment.
6. Candidates exemplify profound respect for others, honor the worth and dignity of children, young people, and colleagues, and possess attitudes of service toward others.
7. Candidates demonstrate communication, social interaction, collaboration, and team-building skills characteristic of excellent leaders.

### **Theme/Core Concept: Champion of Individual Learner Potential**

1. Candidates understand and appreciate the wholeness of human beings and can apply theories of human development and learning to learners with widely varied abilities and motivations.
2. Candidates understand and affirm the many kinds of human diversity (race, culture, national origin, native language, socioeconomic status, belief, disability, exceptionality, learning style, or mode of intelligence or temperament).
3. Candidates discover and evoke the unique and diverse gifts and strengths in each child or young person as well as in colleagues.
4. Candidates develop school environments and classroom learning experiences that bring the gifts and strengths of uniqueness and diversity into meaningful communal and individual expression.

5. Candidates conceptualize, organize, and manage learning environments (whether the classroom or the school) that will result in individual learner achievement and the actualization of learner potential.
6. Candidates advocate effectively for individual learners and deeply believe in all learners' potentials.
7. Candidates work persistently to solve problems of learner underachievement in classrooms and schools.

**Theme/Core Concept: Effective and Reflective Practitioner**

1. Candidates meet professional standards established and codified by state, national, and specialized organizations.
2. Candidates possess strong content knowledge in their teaching and administrative fields.
3. Candidates understand fully and can integrate in action areas of professional and pedagogical knowledge required for their teaching or administrative practice.

**Teacher Candidates**

- a. Teacher candidates conceptualize, plan, and deliver curriculum, instruction, and assessment as a coordinated and integrated process intended to develop learner understanding and enhance learner achievement.
- b. Teacher candidates conceptualize, plan, and manage learning environments to maximize achievement and the development of learner potential.
- c. Teacher candidates engage, energize, and encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and development and to optimize their opportunities for achievement and success.
- d. Teacher candidates integrate technology effectively in curriculum, instruction, and assessment and to enhance the learning environment for all students.

**Administrative Candidates**

- a. Administrative candidates lead teachers in the conceptualization, planning, and delivery of curriculum, instruction, and assessment as a coordinated and integrated process intended to develop learner understanding and enhance learner achievement.
- b. Administrative candidates conceptualize, plan, and manage the whole school and its varied functions as learning environments that maximize achievement and the development of learner potential.
- c. Administrative candidates engage, energize, and encourage teachers and other colleagues in high quality professional development and optimize their opportunities for achievement and success.
- d. Administrative candidates use technology and lead their schools in the effective integration of both administrative and instructional technology..
4. Candidates integrate and apply their professional knowledge effectively in action that results in high-impact student learning in K-12 schools.
5. Candidates value lifelong learning and ongoing professional development.
6. Candidates inquire into and reflect on their own practice as teachers or administrators in the light of research, standards for excellence and high-impact learning for students, and ethical principles.
7. Candidates use the skills of inquiry and reflection to modify their practice and to continually challenge and adjust their conduct so as to bring greater benefit to students, colleagues, and the broader communities of practice in which they participate.

**Theme/Core Concept: Builders of Vibrant Learning Communities**

1. Candidates conceptualize learning communities and communities of practice as the norm for schools and classrooms.

2. Candidates build on the strengths and gifts of various types of human diversity in establishing learning communities.
3. Candidates engage in and lead the collaborative production of learning and the creation of positive learning environments at both classroom and school levels.
4. Candidates demonstrate positive and constructive social interactions and relationships with students, parents, peers, colleagues, administrators, and community members.
5. Candidates foster norms of collaboration, shared decision-making, and ethically-based relations with students, parents, colleagues, and other members of communities of practice.
6. Candidates advocate collaboration, shared decision-making, and ethically-based relations toward members of the learning communities for their critical role in building vibrant learning communities.
7. Candidates take on roles of servant-leadership in their communities of practice and contribute to the building of vibrant learning communities.

## **CANDIDATE OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

Over the past year, our system for assessing candidate outcomes has entered a new phase. We had already transcribed milestones and transition points in all of our programs using one-credit modules with specific requirements to create and monitor transitions and entry to and exit from phases in our programs. We had already implemented portfolios for assessing performance for initial teaching and administrator candidates based on professional (INTASC and ISLLC, respectively) and state standards but came to realize that our conceptual framework was not well-integrated into these assessments nor developed adequately to support the process of integration and alignment. The work of the past year has brought change and refinement not only to our conceptual framework and candidate proficiencies but also to our curriculum and assessment maps for both initial and advanced programs.

After a cycle of curriculum reflection and renewal based on renewal and refinement of our conceptual framework and its reorganization into four major themes, we are currently implementing new course and program assessments across all levels of our programs. Some of the new focus areas for assessments include: (1) use of more authentic simulations and tasks, including social interaction and collaboration as well as planning tasks, so that candidates have better –designed encounters with successive approximations of real-world classroom and school problems; (2) stronger scholarship and inquiry processes and projects at all levels; (3) better developed prompts for high-quality reflections and self-assessments; (4) stronger assessments of ethically-based choices and decisions; and (5) more highly developed leadership challenges and supports as part of program expectations. In the fuller elaboration of our curriculum and assessment maps, we have designated certain assignments and assessments for their evidence of proficiency with respect to our four themes.

We have also amplified the use of our transcribed one-credit program transition points for formative feedback to candidates on their performance on designated portfolio items and overall (using the structure of portfolio conferences with faculty, members of our professional community from our school partnerships and alumni/ae base and peers), as well as for implementation of useful policies, such as passing the Praxis II content knowledge test during the first transition point in the initial licensure program, documenting the completion of early field experience requirements, or

requiring the submission of designated artifacts to an electronic portfolio system--policies for these transcribed transition points that have been with us in previous years.

Our candidate assessment system also includes a Program Standing and Compliance Committee that reviews candidate performance problems of any type—dispositions, quality of work, grades, field experiences, Praxis II or other issues. The monitoring system for candidate performance includes faculty review of performances at transition points and a data management system for the results of Praxis II tests, grades, and the results of other performances.

**Initial Teaching Licensure Candidates: Points of Assessment and Evaluation**

<b>Transition/ Milestone Point</b>	<b>Evidence and Work Samples</b>	<b>Candidate Proficiencies</b>
<b>Entrance into program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Admissions test (ACT, PPST, GRE, or MAT as options for undergrads or post-bacs) passed</li> <li>▪ Grade point average: 2.5 minimum for general education and for courses related to the teaching field</li> <li>▪ Written philosophy of teaching</li> <li>▪ Spontaneous writing sample on teacher-leadership</li> <li>▪ Recommendations</li> <li>▪ Interview and scoring rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> </ul>
<b>Milestone I</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Praxis II content knowledge test</li> <li>▪ Portfolio artifacts</li> <li>▪ Journal entries</li> <li>▪ Field experience reports and reflections</li> <li>▪ Reflective and scholarly papers on teacher and servant leadership, diversity, exceptionality, schooling and society</li> <li>▪ Instructional strategies artifacts and analyses</li> <li>▪ Classroom management plans and projects</li> <li>▪ Unit and lesson plans and tasks modified for particular learners</li> <li>▪ Video tape of microteaching</li> <li>▪ Curriculum resource projects</li> <li>▪ Case studies of learners</li> <li>▪ Teacher inquiry proposal</li> <li>▪ Collaboration simulation with peers evaluated by faculty for social interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>
<b>Milestone II</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Praxis II PLT test</li> <li>▪ Field experience reports and reflections</li> <li>▪ Assessment by others of field experience conduct thus far</li> <li>▪ Application for student teaching</li> <li>▪ Portfolio artifacts</li> <li>▪ Journal entries</li> <li>▪ Reflective and scholarly papers on curriculum, instruction, and assessment topics in pedagogical content areas</li> <li>▪ Classroom management plans and projects related to teaching areas</li> <li>▪ Unit and lesson plans and tasks modified for particular learners and particular learning communities</li> <li>▪ Assessment tools and projects adapted to particular learning challenges and situations</li> <li>▪ Content knowledge project presented to arts and sciences and education faculty and peers</li> <li>▪ Videotape of social interaction/collaboration with peers evaluated by faculty</li> <li>▪ Full portfolio conference and formative feedback with faculty,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>

	alumni/ae, other members of professional community, and peers	
<b>Clinical Practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Clinical practice reports and reflections</li> <li>▪ Assessments by others of clinical practice</li> <li>▪ Unit and lesson plans and assessments developed and taught to real students</li> <li>▪ Teacher work sample from one student teaching setting</li> <li>▪ Classroom management and organization with real students</li> <li>▪ Submission of artifacts from clinical practice to portfolio</li> <li>▪ Exit interviews with supervising faculty, cooperating teachers, and other members of professional community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>
<b>Licensure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Completion of Praxis II tests</li> <li>▪ Final portfolio review</li> <li>▪ Recommendation for licensure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>

### M.Ed. Program/Advanced Teacher Candidates: Points of Assessment and Evaluation

<b>Transition/ Milestone Point</b>	<b>Evidence and Work Samples</b>	<b>Candidate Proficiencies</b>
<b>Entrance into program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Admissions test (GRE or MAT) if not licensed, having passed Praxis II tests if licensed</li> <li>▪ Grade point average: 2.5 minimum undergrad, 3.0 graduate study</li> <li>▪ Written philosophy of teaching</li> <li>▪ Spontaneous writing sample on teacher-leadership</li> <li>▪ Recommendations</li> <li>▪ Interview and scoring rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> </ul>
<b>Midpoint</b>	Portfolio artifacts as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-assessments and reflections on practice</li> <li>▪ Professional development plan</li> <li>▪ Revision of philosophy of education</li> <li>▪ Ethnographic interviews</li> <li>▪ Team policy research project</li> <li>▪ Scholarly paper</li> <li>▪ Teacher work sample</li> <li>▪ UbD unit plan with assessments and lesson plans</li> <li>▪ Teacher inquiry proposal</li> <li>▪ Community leadership project plan</li> </ul> Collaboration simulation with peers evaluated by faculty for social interaction, videotaped	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	Portfolio artifacts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-assessments and reflections on practice</li> <li>▪ Revisions to professional development plan</li> <li>▪ Further revision and elaboration of philosophy of education</li> <li>▪ Capstone research project, action research/teacher inquiry</li> <li>▪ Further reflection on and modifications of teacher work sample</li> <li>▪ Report on community leadership and service project</li> <li>▪ Report on school leadership and collaboration project</li> <li>▪ Videotape of social interaction/collaboration with peers evaluated by faculty</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Full portfolio conference and formative feedback with faculty, alumni/ae, other members of professional community, and peers</li> <li>▪ Sharing of capstone research in poster session at a program-sponsored teacher leadership conference</li> <li>▪ Workshop or session presentation at the program-sponsored teacher leadership conference</li> </ul>	
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**Advanced Administrative Candidates: Points of Assessment and Evaluation**

<b>Transition/ Milestone Point</b>	<b>Evidence and Work Samples</b>	<b>Candidate Proficiencies</b>
<b>Entrance into program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Teaching licensure; 2-3 years teaching minimum</li> <li>▪ Grade point average: 2.5 minimum undergrad, 3.0 graduate study</li> <li>▪ Written philosophy of leadership</li> <li>▪ Spontaneous writing sample on servant-leadership</li> <li>▪ Recommendations</li> <li>▪ Interview and scoring rubric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> </ul>
<b>Midpoint</b>	<p>Portfolio artifacts as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reflection on servant-leadership with revision of philosophy of leadership</li> <li>▪ Self-assessments using ISLLC standards</li> <li>▪ Scholarly paper on leadership and organizational theories</li> <li>▪ Education and leadership platforms</li> <li>▪ Strategic planning with elements of school marketing, public relations, and community development</li> <li>▪ Action research plan for school improvement</li> <li>▪ Use of TN Framework for Evaluation and Professional Growth in self-analysis and peer analysis of teaching practice</li> <li>▪ Reviews and reports on peer evaluations of M.Ed. and initial teaching licensure candidates' teacher work samples</li> <li>▪ Professional development growth plan</li> </ul> <p>Portfolio review and mentoring conference with faculty and principals Collaboration and interpersonal simulations with peers evaluated by faculty for social interaction and communication, videotaped</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<p>Portfolio artifacts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Self-assessments and reflections on practice</li> <li>▪ Report on professional development leadership project</li> <li>▪ Revisions to person professional development plan</li> <li>▪ Further revision and elaboration of philosophy of leadership</li> <li>▪ Results of action research project for school improvement</li> <li>▪ Comprehensive school improvement plan</li> <li>▪ Budgets and financial plans</li> <li>▪ Crisis management plan</li> <li>▪ School law paper and presentations to initial teaching licensure candidates in program-sponsored conference event</li> <li>▪ Report on legal liability issues from school study and walk-through</li> </ul> <p>Videotape of social interaction/collaboration with peers evaluated by faculty Concluding portfolio and poster presentation with faculty, alumni/ae, principals, school-based mentors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Servant-leader</li> <li>▪ Champion of individual learner potential</li> <li>▪ Effective and reflective practitioner</li> <li>▪ Builder of vibrant learning communities</li> </ul>

We are also refining our approach to ensuring the reliability and validity of our assessments. First, we are coordinating and aligning the process that connects our revised candidate proficiencies and standards with elements in specific assignments. This process is refining our criteria for success in both course and program assessments and driving the development and implementation of higher

quality assessment tools and rubrics. We are also endeavoring to triangulate candidate performance data for the sake of more balanced judgment, i.e., that we examine at least two and preferably three or more types of assessment items, i.e., more than one piece of scholarly writing, more than one unit or lesson plan, and more than one instance of collaboration and teamwork skills. We are also gradually identifying benchmarks and exemplars of particular levels of performance for particular assessments and using these to anchor judgments. Where possible, we are involving two or more faculty, peers, or other members of our professional community in important judgments of quality. Where we can't work together because of time constraints, leaving one faculty member responsible for an assessment and judgments of performance, we are implementing identified benchmarks and collaboratively developed rubrics for the assessment to support the process and to increase the reliability and validity of the assessment.

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