

# **Adding Value for Teacher Candidates and P-12 Learners**

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## FINAL PROPOSAL FOR 2006 CHRISTA MCAULIFFE AWARD

***Describe your program: mission, goals, structure, etc. Include discussion of how this is a cooperative effort among education, arts and sciences, and P-12 schools.***

Northwest Missouri State University is honored to apply for the Christa McAuliffe Award for Excellence in Teacher Education. One important excellence goal of the Northwest Teacher Preparation Program is to add value to our candidates so they can effectively reach P-12 learners. This value added component should reach from the college classroom into the P-12 classroom. This goal has long been realized by producing high quality, well prepared teachers since its inception as the Northwest Normal School in 1905. Of the more than 6,000 students who attend the institution yearly, more than 1,600 are enrolled in professional education programs. The University is a national and state leader in not only preparing high quality teachers but by utilizing technology in learning processes and in promoting Continuous Quality Improvement through our *Culture of Quality*. As a result, Northwest is a three-time winner of the Missouri Quality Award and three-time finalist for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award.

In order to support continuous improvement for candidates, programs and the Unit, Northwest's quality focus is supported by data generated in the college of education which are used extensively in decision making processes. One source of data that demonstrates the ability of Northwest teachers to increase P-12 student learning is derived from the Teacher Work Sample (TWS). Of the 220 teacher candidates who earn their Northwest education degrees annually, all complete a TWS during their student teaching experience which emphasizes effective planning, assessment and instruction. The TWS enables our candidates to produce and analyze data which demonstrates a positive impact of their instruction on P-12 student achievement. The TWS process, part of Northwest's professional education assessment system, provides a foundation for value-added excellence.

Northwest Missouri State University has enjoyed an outstanding reputation as a leader in teacher education, both within the state of Missouri and nationally. At a recent State Board of Education meeting where Northwest's accreditation was continued for another seven years, Missouri's Director of Teacher Education noted, "Northwest has provided a state model for others to emulate and has in fact, set a new standard in many of the program reviews," and commented that "Northwest is the best kept secret in Missouri teacher education." During accreditation site visits, (NCATE and Missouri DESE), team members had the chance to observe an assessment event, as 80 professionals from Professional Development Schools (PDS) and across the Northwest Professional Education Unit (PEU) collaboratively evaluated Teacher Work Samples from senior teacher candidates. As a direct result of Northwest's site visit, the state accreditation team changed its policy to include more authentic assessment options, such as the TWS, that demonstrate attainment of Missouri's eleven Beginning Teacher Standards while showing the impact teacher candidates have on student learning in P-12 schools.

Northwest is considered a regional and, it can be argued, a national leader in collaboration. Members of the PEU, with representatives from all Colleges and many University units, collaborate regularly and systematically with colleagues in P-12 settings. A systematic effort has been undertaken over the past five years to expand membership numbers of Arts and Sciences

team members on all PEU teams, including COTE (Council on Teacher Education), TEAC (Teacher Education Admission Committee), TAG (Teacher Education Student Services Advisory Group), the Secondary Education Coordination Council (SECC) and all other key professional education teams. The past four as well as the current chairs of the Secondary Education Council have been faculty in the Arts and Sciences College.

Governance authority for planning, delivering, and operating all educator preparation programs is vested in the COTE. This elected Council is composed of individuals from the College of Education and Human Services, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Booth College of Business and Professional Studies, graduate and undergraduate student representatives, and P-12 members from Northwest's PDS partners. Collaboration between colleges and departments across campus has been strengthened over the past three years, as well, by broadening the voting eligibility of COTE. The PEU leadership team, which represents all of these communities, brings the entire Northwest education community together each trimester to evaluate unit and candidate performance and to set and establish processes to achieve new benchmarks.

Collaborative teams review and study data on student academic success and make recommendations with regard to admissions, initiatives and policy matters to COTE based on these regular reviews. A number of important reviews/revisions of programs, policies, and curriculum have demonstrated unit collaboration throughout the university and the education community. This collaboration is particularly important in the area of secondary education as the content methods faculties are housed in various departments across the Booth College of Business and Professional Studies and the College of Arts and Sciences as well as in the College of Education and Human Services. Approved in the fall of 2004, the "reinvention of secondary education" has brought what PEU members believe to be the most far-reaching enhancement to the secondary program in the history of Northwest Teacher Education. The new program results in:

- 30% more time in the field during the secondary student teaching experience
- A more authentic school-based, focused experience in the Secondary Teaching Practicum II
- A separate course in classroom management as well as added authentic experiences in assessment, curriculum development and literacy
- A block of key educational courses will provide close supervision focused on a high quality, real-classroom, pre-student teaching practicum experience

The Unit provides collaboration and facilitates discussion with faculty in other colleges involved in preparation of professional educators. The Unit's commitment to quality through continuous review and development is demonstrated in daylong retreats and *Best Practice Seminars* every trimester. These retreats and seminars provide collaborative colleagues from across the Unit an opportunity to engage in rich discussions about teacher preparation. Additionally, the one and two-day Unit Leadership Retreats that have been held each trimester for the past three years enhance interaction between and among faculty members from different units. Leaders from the Colleges of Education, Arts and Sciences, and Business gather to discuss the preparation of professional educators.

***What evidence do you have of the program’s positive impact on its teacher candidates or in-service teachers?***

At the dawning of this decade, colleges of education and states across the nation were focused on the standards and accountability movement. With the inception of the Federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation, new reporting requirements, which were established under the terms of the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act’s (HEA) Title II were designed to demonstrate that all teachers were highly qualified. External accountability, for Northwest, led the Unit to re-examine and put in place more rigorous teacher competencies and standards, as well as implementing effective support processes that improve teacher candidate performance and P-12 student learning. This has resulted in increased teacher candidate performance on key assessments, both in comparison to other moderately selective institutions and all teacher training programs. More than 70% of recent Northwest education graduates perform at or above the national average across all programs and achieve a 94% Praxis-II pass rate.

Northwest chose, rather than being frustrated or challenged by accountability, to look at these new requirements and expectations as an opportunity to proactively and collaboratively build an ethos of greater personal responsibility on the part of teacher education candidates from an early and enhanced understanding of their own strengths and vulnerabilities. The Unit sought to empower and enable its teacher candidates by providing more valuable information, while also sharing teacher candidate performance data with faculty and advisors. Both faculty and students benefit from an assessment system which shares dozens of data points originating from both formative and summative assessments, including authentic and field-based assessments.

The result of these efforts has been a revolution in both preparation and performance of teacher candidates in terms of significantly improved scores and favorable comparison to the national average on Praxis-II licensure exams (see blue line in graph below for teacher candidate trend data above 50<sup>th</sup> percentile nationally). Additionally, teacher candidates have shown excellence on authentic assessments including both portfolio and Teacher Work Sample measures. Most importantly, value has been added from entrance to exit, resulting in improved teacher candidate performance and higher retention rates to successful program completion and certification.

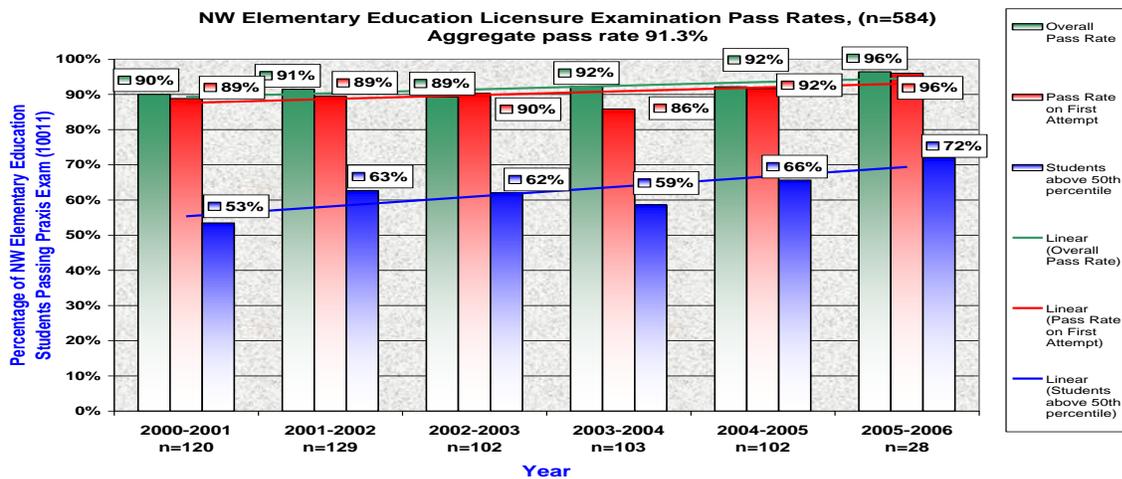


Figure 1

More evidence of the program’s impact upon teacher candidates is found in feedback from key stakeholders involved in the teacher preparation process. Northwest obtains these data annually through Beginning Teacher Assistance Program (BTAP) surveys, as well as twenty additional sources of data presented in the Annual Report to the COTE. This document summarizes and interprets these data, in order to avoid the problem of being *data-rich and information poor*. In 2005, BTAP survey data found that 98% of teacher candidates were highly satisfied with the Northwest teacher preparation program and 96% of principals employing our graduates were highly satisfied and would rehire their Northwest teacher candidate. (See Figure 2)

2003-2005 Beginning Teacher Assistance Program Teacher Responses (n=173), Question, "Would you recommend the Northwest Teacher Education Program to another student?"

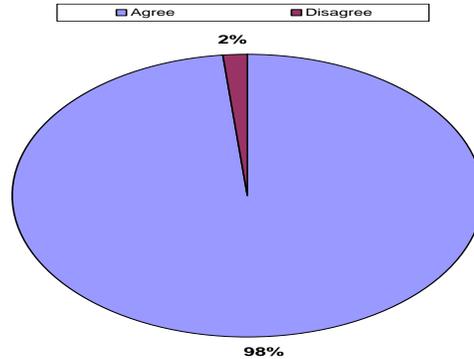


Figure 2

Not only have Northwest faculty used the data from these assessments to positively impact teacher candidates by making curricular changes, implementing support processes, enhancing teacher candidate engagement and responsibility but to also make major program revision. Other program improvements have been based upon faculty and P-12 advisory recommendations, Performance Based Teacher Evaluation (PBTE) formative and summative evaluations and BTAP Surveys. Also focus groups composed of teacher candidates from all grade levels and across programs are brought together each trimester to provide additional formative feedback about the teacher preparation program.

2006 AASCU Application Figure 3: Percentage of Northwest Teacher Education graduates' rated as "good" or "excellent" in managing student behavior in a constructive manner by their cooperating teachers and/or University Supervisors, 2004-2006 (N=1235)

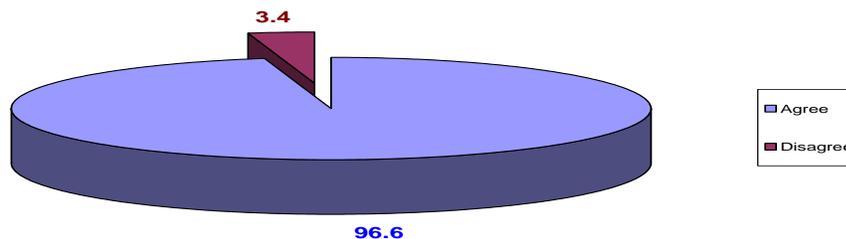


Figure 3

Northwest has long compared performance of each program and department on summative measures of student performance as evidence of positive impact on teacher candidates. Assessments such as Praxis II scores, College Basic Academic Subjects Exam Scores (C-BASE) and formative and summative PBTE provide trend data for analysis of candidate level performance. The result is that teacher education programs, and the Unit, have a great deal more useful information. Figure 4 is an example of such information, which shows the most recent three years of PBTE formative and summative data about teacher candidate knowledge of the subject matter they teach P-12 learners, as reported by their cooperating teachers and university field experience supervisors.

The Professional Education Unit and the University-wide assessment systems share data to add further layers of information on teacher candidate quality, which improves the timeliness and quality of advisement that Northwest teacher candidates receive. For example, a PEU advisor can readily access from a computer the following information on teacher candidates in his/her program: Praxis II scores, C-BASE comparisons, and data on BTAP surveys, PBTE formative and summative evaluations, student disposition evaluations, TWS and portfolios.

2006 AASCU Application Figure 4: Percent of Northwest Missouri State University Teacher Education Graduates' *subject matter ratings* as "good" or "excellent" as rated by Cooperating Teachers and/or University Supervisors, 2004-2006 (N=1236)

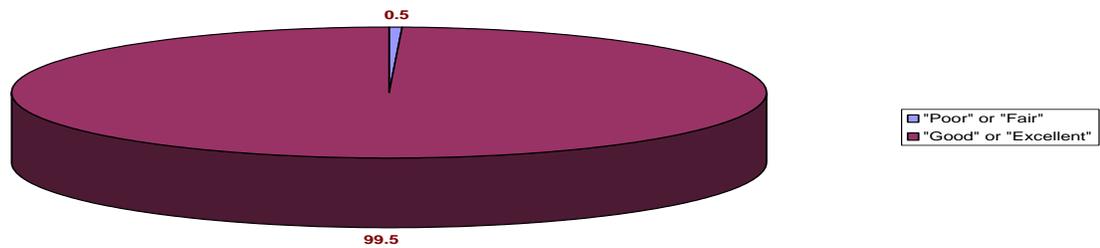


Figure 4

Summary evidence of the program's positive impact is derived from external evaluations and accreditation reports which provide valuable feedback used to improve the teacher preparation programs and processes. Northwest PEU programs were accredited by NCATE and DESE in 2005. As noted earlier in the report, Missouri's Director of Teacher Education stated, "Northwest has provided a state model for others." Another endorsement that the Northwest teacher education program has a positive impact on its teacher candidates is found in a recent report from a site visit to Northwest by the Columbia University School of Education Study Team, which stated, "... one has to admire the temerity of Northwest, located in one of the most rural settings imaginable, in taking the lead in running such an innovative program... Schools of education that say they want to serve urban schools would do well to watch the progress of Northwest Missouri's bold education venture."

**What evidence do you have of the program graduates' positive impact on P-12 pupil learning?**

Based on Northwest's historic commitment to initiate change based on data and as a means to engage in more authentic assessments, the PEU undertook a study which led to the ultimate adoption of TWS. Several members of the PEU formed a collaborative, cross-functional team that investigated the TWS at a two day training seminar presented by the Renaissance Group. The team determined that both our teacher candidate and P-12 student performance could be measured and enhanced by implementing the TWS (See Figure 5) into our curriculum. This process fulfilled the goal of validating candidate impact on P-12 student learning.

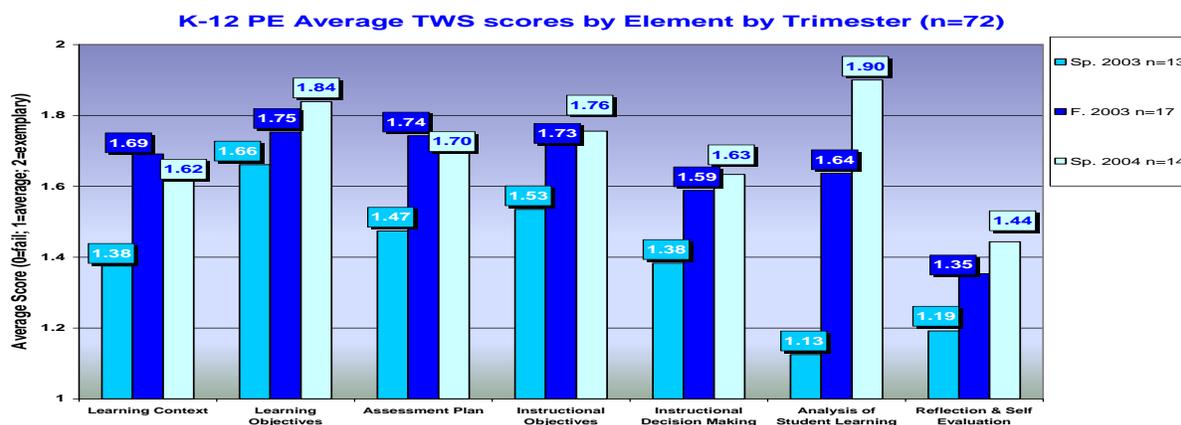


Figure 5

Beginning in 2001, the PEU undertook TWS integration throughout the preparation program. Regular training seminars are offered to faculty and PDS partners in order to achieve high levels of inter-rater reliability. Also performance evaluations for teacher candidates on the TWS are conducted by Northwest faculty and PDS partners. These events occur each trimester, involving 40-50 educators who review and evaluate the field-based TWS assessments completed by teacher candidates. Data resulting from recent evaluations of TWS demonstrate candidate ability to positively impact P-12 learning. Examples of candidate analyses of P-12 student learning are contained in element 6 of the TWS, and are highlighted in Figures 6 and 7 below, along with candidate reflections on what they learned about the achievement of their P-12 students:

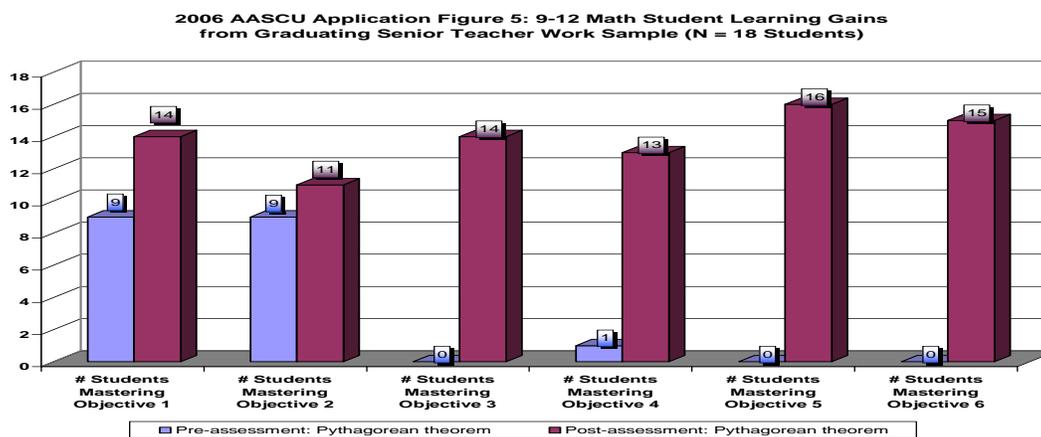


Figure 6

**Candidate reflection 1 based on TWS analysis of P-12 student learning in Figure 6:**

*“From the pre-assessment to the post-assessment there was an enormous gain of knowledge in the students when it came to the Pythagorean theorem. On the pre-assessment only one student was able to master an objective that related to the Pythagorean theorem. She was able to determine whether or not the given triangle was a right triangle using the correct process. By the end of the unit 72% of the students were able to identify whether or not a triangle was a right triangle. I think with just a little more practice more of the students would have been able to master that objective also....Overall there was a vast improvement in the skills of the students. The average score on the pre-assessment was 23%. The average score on the post-assessment was 80%. Clearly the students gained knowledge and were able to master the objectives set for them.”—NW graduate*

**2006 AASCU Application Figure 7: P-12 Physical Education Student Passing Skill Learning Gains from Graduating Senior Teacher Work Sample (Average Gain, 15%, N = 12)**

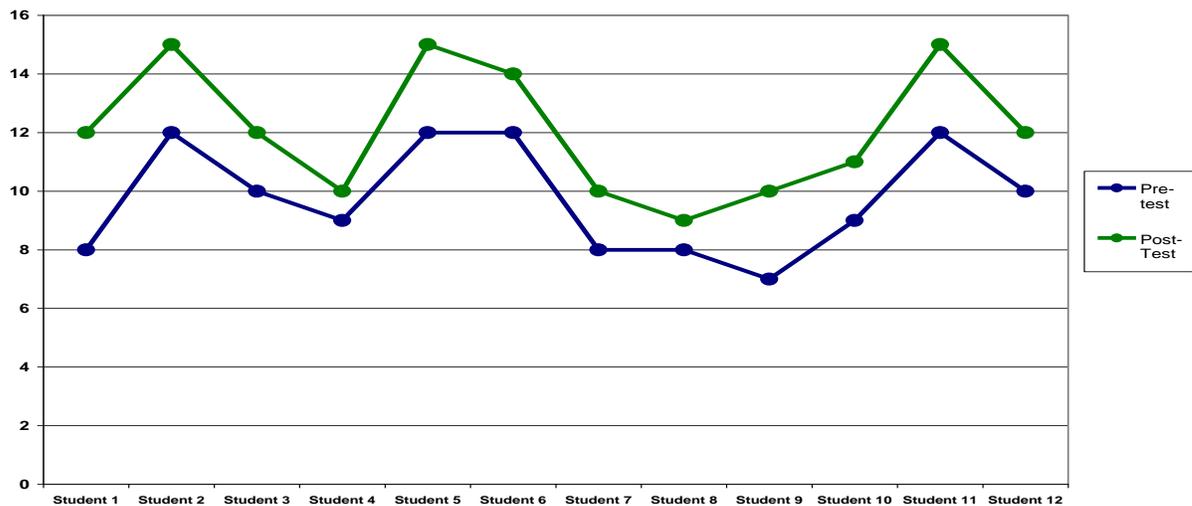


Figure 7

**Candidate reflection 2 based on TWS analysis of P-12 student learning in Figure 7:**

*“The graph was a very important aspect of my teaching. It showed me where the students stood after their initial testing and the different improvements that they made in all of the skills tests. After looking at the graph, I saw that every student showed improvement in their skills. The students who improved the most were the students who had average ability. I believe they made the biggest jump because they just needed some instruction on basic skills. Another important aspect, one that probably goes overlooked, is noticing if a student who usually excels does poorly. This may be because of a variety of reasons, but it may also show a problem away from school that you might be able to assist with.”*

The graphic below depicts teacher candidates in the classroom and satisfaction with completing the teacher education program superimposed on the TWS rubric utilized to assess teacher performance. Evidence of instructional planning, assessment and

reflection on P-12 learning demonstrated in the TWS builds the necessary foundation for the candidate's professional growth. The development and integration of TWS into the teacher preparation program and the assessment of the TWS based on the rubric below provides further evidence of graduates' positive impact on P-12 learning.

Teacher Work Sample Rubric - Northwest Missouri State Un				
Student Name:		Date:		Evaluator:
Major:		919#:		University Supervisor:
<b>0 Points Earned*</b>	<b>1 Point Earned</b>	<b>2 Points Earned</b>		
* If a student averages less than 1 on any of the seven elements, the student will				
<b>Element 1: Learning Context</b>				
No evidence of knowledge about community, school, learning level & differences among learners for planning considerations	Some evidence of knowledge of community, school, learning level & difference among learners for planning considerations	Strong evidence of knowledge of community, school, learning level differences among learners for planning considerations	<i>Northwest graduates leave the institution with a solid foundation in analyzing P-12 student learning, so that they can more positively impact the students they teach.</i>	
No evidence for planning for assessment or instruction connected to learning context	Some evidence of planning for assessment and instruction is connected to learning context	Strong evidence of planning for assessment and instruction connected to learning context		
<b>Element 2: Learning Objectives</b>			Points	Comments, Suggestions, and 1
No evidence objectives were stated using criteria that are measurable, observable, nor that is behavioral	Some evidence learning objectives were stated using criteria that are measurable, observable, and behavioral	Strong evidence learning objectives were stated using criteria that are measurable, observable & behavioral	2A	
		<i>Northwest's teacher education program uses advanced information technology, quality-rooted assessment systems, and ongoing faculty training to examine impact on P-12 pupil learning, such as this collaboratively-developed Teacher Work Sample rubric.</i>		
No evidence objectives are clear and appropriate				



Figure 8

Northwest teacher education program emphasizes learner-centered educational practices. The following graph (Figure 9) demonstrates the extraordinary ability of Northwest graduates to engage and motivate P-12 learners based upon feedback from cooperating teachers and university supervisors.

**2006 AASCU Figure 9: Percentage of Northwest Missouri State University graduates' rated as "good" or "excellent" in demonstrating ability to motivate students as rated by cooperating teachers and/or University Supervisors, 2000-2006 (N = 1236)**

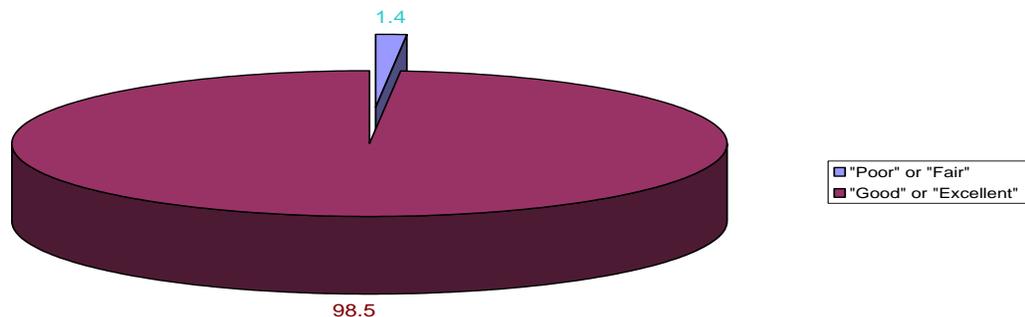
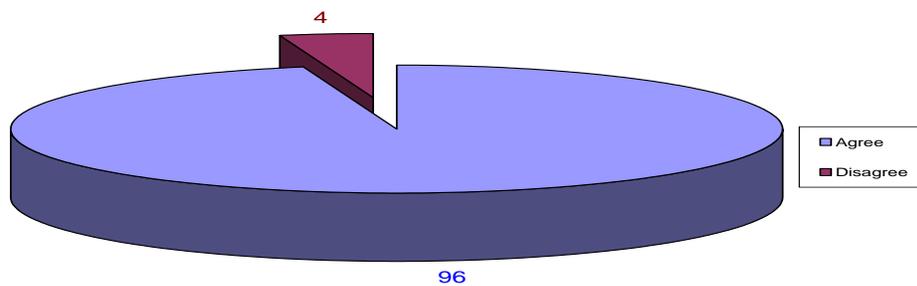


Figure 9

Additional evidence of program graduates' positive impact upon the P-12 learner is seen in the following graphic (See Figure 10). According to principals' ratings of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year practicing teachers, 96% of Northwest graduates have exceptional ability in using formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate their pupils' learning. The Northwest teacher education programs emphasize the importance of multiple measures of assessment and using that to inform instructional decisions focused on differentiated instruction to assure that all teacher candidates leave Northwest prepared to use these strategies to positively impact student achievement.

**2006 AASCU Application Figure 10: Percentage of Northwest Missouri State University graduates' principals' ratings of candidate ability to use formal and informal assessment strategies to evaluate P-12 student development, 2005-2006, (N = 67)**



*Figure 10*

*Northwest leads MAP Achievement*

Another source of evidence that Northwest candidates are able to successfully shepherd increased performance from P-12 students was included in a report to the Missouri Board of Education at their February meeting this year. Included were statewide data demonstrating improved performance on the Missouri statewide assessment program (MAP). As shown in Figure 11, Third Grade Reading MAP scores are presented by percentages of successful students (by region). The data show that Northwest has led the state based on the state student achievement assessment displayed. Based on current Missouri DESE school data, for 12 districts in northwest Missouri, more than 75% of their teachers are Northwest graduates. Another 16 districts have 50% or more and 27 have at least 25% (25-49%). Therefore, of the 59 districts listed in our region, 49 have a minimum of 25% of their teachers from Northwest and 47% have more than 50% of their teachers from this institution. It is important to note that Northwest is the largest provider of teachers for the Northwest region and in fact, is the largest provider of Missouri teachers north of the Missouri River (a region approximating about one quarter of the state of Missouri). As can clearly be seen, the Northwest region was one of the high early performers in this endeavor, clearly among the leaders, if not the leader, in the state from 2001 forward.

### MAP Third Grade Reading Highlighting Satisfactory or Above—2001 to 2005

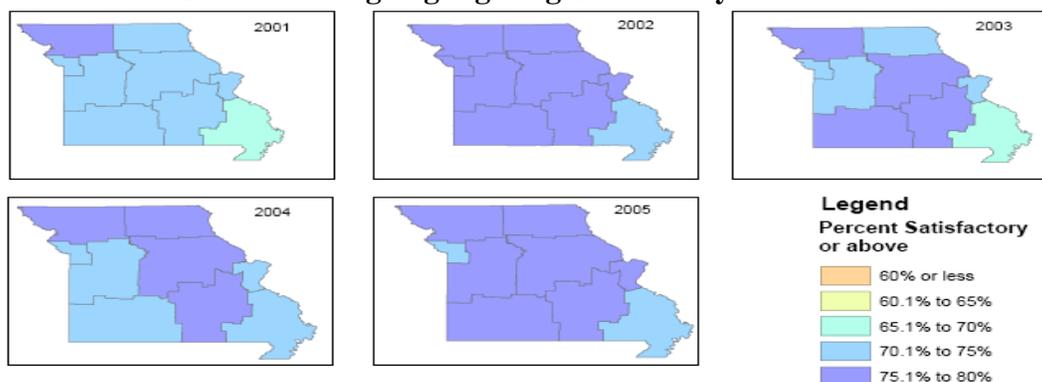


Figure 11

Further evidence of Northwest candidates’ positive impact on P-12 student performance is provided by Missouri’s School Improvement Program (MSIP), which rates districts annually on their performance. Data from this program highlight the strengths of classrooms and schools in the region served by Northwest (see Table 1 below).

Table 1: Comparison of Accreditation with Distinction

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Total Distinction</b>	35.69%	30.73%	33.59%	29.96%	33.96%
<b>NW Distinction</b>	47.46%	33.89%	37.29%	28.8%	32.2%

Northwest faculty are particularly proud of the progress made using the TWS and other methodologies employed through our assessment system, which allow faculty and advisors to drill down and isolate opportunities to proactively assist teacher candidates in improving their performance. As a result, more teacher candidates now pass the state’s exit exam, PRAXIS II, on their first attempt and routinely earn scores well above the national average. Considered one of the most effective teacher preparation programs in our state, Northwest focuses on individual teacher candidate excellence through strong field experiences, deep knowledge of the content our candidates will teach and emphasis on relating to P-12 students and inspiring them to excel. After a very successful NCATE and state accreditation visit in the spring of 2005, other institutions began to look more closely at how a moderately selective institution successfully prepared teacher candidates who achieve excellence on key assessments and truly reach students.

Several teacher education units from Missouri and across the Midwest have benchmarked Northwest’s assessment processes over the past two years. This provides evidence indicating that Northwest’s education unit and the assessment system which supports it employ the best practices in professional education assessment in the region. We believe that the value we add to our teacher candidates in turn adds value to the P-12 learner. The PEU is forging ahead to develop even more in-depth departmental assessment processes. Emphasizing continuous quality improvement in our teacher preparation programs through data-based decision-making and performance evidence allows us to prepare highly qualified teacher candidates. We know and can demonstrate that our candidates are making a difference in achievement and in the lives of students in P-12 schools of the Northwest Missouri region.