



Message from the Department Chair

Welcome to the Special Education Newsletter. The Department of Special Education (SED) is excited to have you be a part of our family. The Department, as you know, is one of the most respected in the country. We don't settle for the ordinary—we strive for the extraordinary.

This year, new opportunities continue to be added. Quite a few students have begun to add an ESL endorsement as they go through the program, and we have a few who are completing requirements for a Bilingual endorsement. Also, freshmen Learning and Behavior Specialist students have a new opportunity to participate in an accelerated program that includes focused mentoring and meeting all graduation requirements in 3.5 years. We are continuing efforts to supply urban special education teachers through our Innovative Network of Future Urban Special Educators (INFUSE) which collaborates with both the Chicago Pipeline to the Chicago Public Schools and the new Decatur Teacher Education Pipeline.



Stacey Jacobs-Beck
Chairperson

This newsletter will help you keep up with all that is going on in the Department, including requirements and opportunities. There is a new look as we shortened the newsletter by using links to other websites and reduced the number of actual articles. Besides the information in this newsletter, you can also keep up with current SED events on social media:



Whether you are new to our Department or in your final year, we are excited that you are a member of our special education family and we wish you much success throughout the academic year!

Sincerely,

Stacey

Advisor Information

If you have questions and/or concerns, request an appointment with an academic advisor or contact by e-mail. Appointments can be scheduled on-line, by visiting the front desk in The Teacher Education Center-Lower Level of DeGarmo Hall, Room 56, or by calling Connie Steffen at 309-438-1690.

Megan Baxter

[Schedule an appointment](#)

309-438-2314
DeGarmo Hall 61D

Janet Caldwell

[Schedule an appointment](#)

309-438-2949
DeGarmo Hall 61E

Jane Koscielak

[Schedule an appointment](#)

309-438-5133
DeGarmo Hall 61C

Keep on Schedule with University Calendars

ISBE News & Updates:

Testing Changes

- Highly Qualified status no longer exists so students no longer need to take the state test to fulfill that requirement. If your Plan of Study has the Elementary/Middle Level Content Test #110 on it, you will not need that test. ISBE states that being licensed to teach means you are qualified.
- Any current special education student will no longer be required to take the APT test. The EdTPA has replaced this requirement.
- As of October 2015, the test of Basic Skills (whether met by TAP, ACT, or SAT) is now valid indefinitely. All other state tests are good for 10 years.
- In December 2015, ISBE reduced the ILTS test retake policy to 30 days between tests. This would impact any student taking the TAP or content tests.
- ISBE changed the acceptable score for using the ACT in Lieu of the TAP as the following
 - Pre Sept. 2015 test-22 Composite and 19 on E/W (must be on the same test) or
 - From Sept. 2015 test to the Sept. 2016 test- 22 Composite and a 16 on the writing (must be on the same test)
 - Post Sept. 2016 test-22 Composite and 6 on the writing (must be on the same test)
- ISBE also accepts the SAT to meet the test of Basic Skills requirement. The state of Illinois is currently moving towards using the SAT instead of the ACT for current High School juniors. This may lead to changes in the coming years in test availability so more of our current students may want to know the current ISBE requirements to use the SAT in Lieu of the TAP for licensure.

- Old format-1030 composite (R+M) was required with a 450 on writing
- Current format-1110 composite (R, W, + M) and 26 on writing and language test

Go to http://education.illinoisstate.edu/teacher_education/gateway1/tap.shtml to check for updates on meeting the Basic Skills requirement.

Licensing Updates

You may hear a buzz about big changes in licensure requirements among your friends or faculty from the TCH department. Those big changes do not affect you as a Special Education major unless you are pursuing a Middle Level Endorsement.

Current Middle Level Endorsements will be available until January 31, 2018. After that the required courses change. Any changes made at that time would affect DHH, LBS 1, or LVB majors who are completing requirements for Middle Level Endorsements, but have not yet received their license with the endorsement.

The good news is that the new course requirements for endorsing a K-12 license continue to be 24 hours. ISBE just announced these requirements so ISU is just learning of the need for specific methods classes and deciding how students will meet the methods course requirement.

Special Education Teacher (PK-21) Middle Grade Endorsements

Time period	Endorsed on or before 1-31-18	Endorsed on or after 2-1-18
Course Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 semester hours in a content area • 6 semester hours of middle school professional education coursework. (PSY 302, TCH 233) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 semester hours in a content area • 3 semester hours in content specific middle grades methods
Tests Required	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content test • General Middle Grades test (<i>only required if educator is seeking endorsement outside the 4 core Middle Grade areas: Math, Science, Social Science & Language Arts</i>)

It is ALWAYS good practice to apply for your license within a week of graduation because laws may come into effect that will disqualify you from earning endorsements for which you have worked. Fall 2017 graduates who expect to earn the middle level endorsement must especially be alert to complete the licensing process promptly or they will no longer meet the qualifications for their endorsement.

Information on the Early Childhood
Special Education Letter of Approval.

[Read More](#)

Considering a Double Major?

Two options for a double major within the department have been developed to meet the needs in the school systems. The first is a **dual major in Low-Vision/Blindness (LVB) and Learning Behavior Specialist (LBS)**. The plan of study is possible to complete in 5 years if a student chooses this option during freshman year and takes a few classes during the summer. Students will be fully certified in both fields upon taking the necessary state tests and completing the program successfully.

The second option is more challenging and would require **at least 5 years with intensive summer school**. This is the **Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) and Learning Behavior Specialist (LBS) Dual Major**. The drawback to this program is its length and intensity, and students who choose this option must consider it carefully. Both the program and state tests must be completed successfully for certification in the two fields.

The advantages to the dual major are the increased flexibility that you will gain as a teacher. A very high percentage of those students receiving services from LVB or DHH graduates will have multiple disabilities. By receiving additional training for LBS certifications, you will be better able to meet the needs of your students. For students planning to teach LBS, the addition of LVB certification may allow you to meet needs of students that may go unmet because of the shortage of teachers for students with visual impairments.

The Honors Program at ISU allows
students opportunities to customize
their educational experience using
cutting-edge resources to enrich
learning.

[Read More](#)

Information about SED departmental
honors.

[Read More](#)



INFUSE (Innovative Network of Urban Special Educators) is an urban-focused course sequence beginning in the freshman year for SED majors. INFUSE was created to address the need for high-quality special education teachers in urban areas in Illinois, with specific emphasis on preparing future urban special educators to teach in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and the Decatur Public Schools. As one of the first of its kind in the U.S., this specialized sequence will systematically fuse urban education and special education preparation together at the under-graduate level. Upon completion, students enrolling in INFUSE will demonstrate a commitment to teach in urban areas.

INFUSE redesigned core courses critically examine social issues that intersect with disability, including:

- Disproportionality in special education and disciplinary practices,
- Cultural views of disability,
- Culturally and linguistically appropriate pedagogy and evidence- and research-based practices,
- Meaningful inclusion of families and communities in the education of children in urban settings.

As part of their redesigned courses, students involved in INFUSE take part in meaningfully layered immersion experiences in Chicago and Decatur. Students observe instruction in classrooms, interact with students and staff, engage in meaningful dialogue with local community organizations, take part in service-learning activities, and experience the linkage between strong community partnerships and successful urban schools.

The current INFUSE redesigned courses and instructors are:

SED 205: Dr. Chung

SED 206: Dr. Cuenca-Carlino

SED 342: Dr. Zablocki

SED 345: Dr. Jozwik (tentative)

SED 360: Dr. Sheldon

SED 368: Dr. Freeman-Green

SED 388: Dr. Mustian

Further, LBS students involved in INFUSE have the opportunity to complete *both* field-base and student teaching semesters in Chicago Public Schools. This enables student to complete a full-year clinical across two separate CPS school sites. For more information about INFUSE, contact Dr. April L. Mustian, Faculty Liaison and Coordinator at (309)438-5752; or Dr. Robert E. Lee, Executive Director at (773)522-1780; rlee2@ilstu.edu.

**Interested in Finishing your LBS1
Degree in 3½ years?**

[Read More](#)

Study Abroad

Students in any of the Special Education majors can fit in a summer or semester of studying abroad if they begin planning for it early. Students need to plan freshman courses very carefully and go abroad during sophomore year if they want to do this and graduate in 4 years. Summers are a little more flexible, but still require careful planning. Since the Study Abroad classes are through ISU, the Special Education Tuition Waiver does cover the tuition. New opportunities are being developed, but here are a few websites that give you a sample of opportunities.

Costa Rica

Dublin, Ireland

Brighton, UK

All Destinations

STEP-UP Testimonial by Sabrina Smoot LBS graduating class of 2014

If you are looking for a resume booster, diverse clinical hours, or an opportunity to touch lives, STEP-UP can do all three for you. As a recent ISU graduate and a STEP-UP fellow alum, I can say that the experiences offered from this unique internship were one of the most beneficial and eye opening from any other experiences ISU had to offer me-AND IT WAS PAID! For four weeks over the summer, I learned so much more about the beautiful city of Chicago, the public education system, and about the communities and students I would be serving. Whether you think Chicago is the place you know you belong to teach or you still are finding your niche, I challenge you to go outside your comfort zone and be a part of this amazing opportunity. For about a month, I lived with a host-mother in a Southside neighborhood, and really felt welcomed by the community-literally. The most apprehensive feeling was knowing I was going to live in a stranger's house in a neighborhood I had preconceived negative thoughts of, and in the end I left a more well-rounded, open individual with a new friend. Besides actually living in the neighborhood and walking around/using the public transportation, I also got to take over my own classroom and add another teaching experience to my list by working with a local community organization to run a literacy program with another fellow. As a special education major we know a lot about collaboration skills, patience, and adapting and I was able to put into practice all three. After teaching during the day, we would typically have time scheduled to intern at a local community organization to really take on the role of a community member and be involved. I could think of no better way to truly encompass all aspects of being an involved, caring, and compassionate future educator than being able to live in, work for, and work within the community and really get to know the students and families you support. Finally, we had the opportunity to take advantage of professional development courses, community tours of different neighborhoods, fun times downtown, and being able to work on resumes in the CPS headquarters building and interviewing skills with CPS principals. Each day had something magnificent planned to really educate us as professionals and individuals and to most importantly have fun in the city!

[View STEP-UP and other experiences with high need communities.](#)

The University Research Symposium for ISU undergraduate and graduate students is held each spring.

Share your research project with others by presenting a poster. It is also a great chance to learn from other students by going through the display.

Read More

Scholarships and Tuition Waivers

College of Education
Scholarships

State of Illinois SED
Teacher Tuition Waiver

SED Clubs and Organizations

Read More

Required Testing for Special Education Majors

ACT + Writing, SAT, or Test of Academic Proficiency (TAP)

To be completed for Admission to Professional Studies. There are 3 choices to demonstrate that you have the basic skills necessary to become a teacher. If you do not earn at least a 22 on the ACT + Writing with the ENG/WRT composite score of at least 19 (or a 1030 on the SAT with a minimum 450 on Writing or 240 on each component of the TAP, you will be blocked from required courses (TCH 208 will be the first one affected) and will not move on to fieldwork and student teaching semesters. See the information at http://education.illinoisstate.edu/teacher_education/gateway1/tap.shtml to learn how to report your ACT + Writing or SAT scores for your Teacher Education records. .

NOTE: The TAP number is 400, however most students find it more expedient to meet the requirement with one of the other 2 tests.

The Special Education General Curriculum Test should be completed following completion of TCH 208 and/or 209 and is required for Admission to Student Teaching (Gateway II). Be sure to see the tips in this newsletter.

NOTE: The test # for SED General Curriculum Test is 163.

The Content Test for each individual major sequence must be completed with a passing score prior to registration for student teaching. Complete this test according to this plan:

- **LBS1 – toward the end of the 251 practicum semester – Test #155**
- **DHH – toward the end of the 247 practicum semester – Test #151**
- **LVB – toward the end of the 246/357 semester – Test #150**

This test is required for Admission to Student Teaching (Gateway II).

Additional Content Tests or Language Proficiency Exams as required for endorsements or letters of approval *to* be added to your license. These tests should be taken as soon as you have adequate training and experience to pass them.

The Registration Bulletins, study guides and practice tests for all the above required tests can be downloaded from the website www.icts.nesinc.com. Additional study information about Test #163 follows in this newsletter.

Registration deadlines are 6 weeks to 2 months before the tests. Dates and locations are listed at www.icts.nesinc.com. Registration is a 2-step process. A payment is made before the testing site, date, and time may be selected.

NOTE: Students taking state tests will be required to enter their social security numbers on the tests. It is important that the number entered is correct so it does not delay certification upon graduation.

Tips for the Special Education General Curriculum Test

Special educators must pass this test before they can student teach

The Special Education General Curriculum Test is different from the other state tests in that it is only 65 items long. Most students state that the content is all familiar, but it has been many years since they had exposure to some of the information so retrieval can be pretty challenging. The four sections of the test are Reading, Science, Social Studies, and Math. Each section assesses both **knowledge of the content** and **an understanding of appropriate teaching techniques**. Students are advised to take this test after completing TCH 208. Students who also take TCH 209 may benefit by waiting until they have completed part or all of that class.

The tips below were submitted before the development of a study guide that is now available at the library. **Wynne, Sharon A. (2008). *ICTS special education general curriculum 163: Teachers certification exam*. Boston: XAMonline, Inc.** Students have found this helpful. The library copy is on 2nd floor and may not be taken out of the library.

It is also helpful to do the online practice test for the Elementary/Middle Level Test 110 at the ICTS website. This is the test that you take to become Highly Qualified in more areas. It also overlaps some of the areas of the Special Education General Curriculum Test. All of the things below continue to be helpful as well.

Students who have taken the test in the past have passed on a variety of tips. Here is a brief summary:

- Follow recommended test taking practices such as getting adequate rest and eating a good breakfast.
- Reduce your anxiety by allowing plenty of time to take the test over in case you have a low score. Adequate preparation will also help with anxiety so take time to study the 4 areas covered by this test.
- Take your time and check your work as you complete the test using recommended strategies.
- Review the content that is on this test:
 - Take the online practice test.

- Go through the objectives online and gather the related information.
 - Review notes and materials from TCH 208 and 209 to help with the reading section.
 - Look over notes from geology classes or earth science classes from college, as well as textbooks for Illinois 5th and 6th grade students to enhance your performance on the science section.
 - Use resources like 5th/6th grade social studies texts, American History programming on the History channel, Illinois and US Constitution review guides to prepare for the social studies section.
 - Review material from math classes, especially if you have had methods classes, in order to prepare for the math section.
 - Teachers' manuals are especially good review tools since they include teaching techniques.
- Several students felt there was a high frequency of questions pertaining specifically to the state of Illinois in the middle two sections.
- Most students do not recommend taking this test with another test even though it is short and the state offers that option.