

4.3 Employment Milestones and Employer Satisfaction

Employer surveys demonstrate that employers are satisfied with IUP completers' preparation for their assigned responsibilities working with P-12 students. One hundred percent of the employers Agreed or Strongly Agreed that IUP completers are prepared in the following InTASC Standards: 1, 2, 4, 9, and 10 and InTASC Critical Dispositions Standards: 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, and 10. One employer disagreed on the following InTASC Standards: 3, 5, 7, and 8 and InTASC Critical Disposition 5. Three employers disagreed with InTASC Standard 6 and two employers disagreed with InTASC Critical Disposition Standard 1 (See CAEP 4 Employer Survey Results).

Qualitative feedback from employers was very positive. When asked if employers were satisfied with the teacher's(s') preparation, all of the responses were affirmative. One employer stated, "Yes, RG2 used a variety of teaching techniques and instructional models in her classroom. She embraces the use of technology and new strategies. She is also open to feedback that supports her instructional growth." Another employer wrote, "Yes. The IUP graduates we hire are well prepared to take on the challenges of a classroom. They understand that all learners are different and that the learning opportunities must match the differences." A third employer noted, "Yes, (SHSS1) is a consummate professional in his approach to his role and responsibilities as an educator and is a teacher leader among the faculty of our building. He is very adept at maintaining focus on the goals and objectives of educating students while communicating effectively with all stakeholders the value and significance of quality public education." One principal who was evaluating a third-year teacher exclaimed, "Extremely satisfied! RG3 has the characteristics of a teacher who has 5+ years of experience. She is a natural. Her instructional practice is wide ranging."

When asked what advice they would have to improve IUP's educator preparation programs in order to prepare candidates for today's classrooms, one employer suggested that IUP should assist candidates with using data to adjust instruction. A high school principal said, "Remain cognizant of the importance of individualized learning and effective/efficient ways of promoting and sustaining such an approach to educating students for achievement and growth purposes." A former principal who is now a coordinator of technology recommended continuing to promote EdTech tools in the classroom and preparing early childhood candidates with a baseline understanding of Guided Reading and the Daily Five Framework. One principal wrote, "If RG3 is an example of what this university produces, continue what you are doing."

The final question asked if employers would consider hiring graduates from IUP's educator preparation programs in the future. The principal of an IASD grades 4-5 building who disagreed with several of the quantitative questions wrote, "Yes, IUP sends some of the top candidates." The principal from one district wrote, "Yes - we have only had good experiences with IUP graduates" and another agreed stating, "Yes. I have found that they are generally more prepared than other pre-service teachers from other universities."

Two of the IASD principals and one PPSD principal remarked about the Professional Development School (PDS) programs (See Standard 2). One PK-3 building principal wrote, "I am so pleased with the success of the PDS program...The students in this program are top notch and come to this school with a great work ethic and a willingness to learn and grow professionally." In response to the question of

whether he would hire IUP graduates, the IASD high school principal stated, “Yes, especially the graduates who participate in the year-long student teacher experience. The teachers who do so have the upper hand with deeper knowledge about student learning and experiencing sustained study of content and effective ways in which to instruct students. Because of such extended time, the relationship between coop teacher and intern strengthens the opportunity for such interns to experience positive risk taking with contemporary instructional strategies. Also, our students become more familiar with the intern teachers and such rapport allows for better motivation of students toward teacher instruction.” The PPSD principal said, “Absolutely because they have the urban cohort and they appear to be more prepared than other universities in the area.”

Results of the completers’ surveys and interviews demonstrate that IUP completers are reaching employment milestones such as promotion and retention, and they are continuing their professional growth. As per the information in the introduction to this Standard, many completers remain in the profession. Most of the completers (29/38-76%) represented in this study have earned Master’s Degrees; five responders (13%) have additional credits beyond a Bachelor’s Degree; 7 participants earned their Reading Specialist P-12 certification; two participants earned their Principal Certification; and one teacher earned her Special Education with Autism Endorsement. One teacher is currently enrolled in an IUP Doctoral Program, and one teacher is working toward her Education Specialist in Educational Technology certification at another university. These data demonstrate that IUP completers are reaching employment milestones and are furthering their professional development.

Data from this section of the case study also indicate that a few employers do not believe IUP completers are prepared to use multiple methods of assessments to engage, monitor, and guide; and completers do not respect learners’ differing strengths and needs. All IUP EPP candidates are required to take the same assessment course as part of their professional core. The Dean’s Associate for Educator Preparation met with the chairperson of the department where the course is housed (Educational Psychology) to discuss the results of this survey and to determine what topics might be more appropriate in an assessment course for future teaching professionals. The assessment course should include analyzing SLO data and other common school district and state assessments to guide instruction. Data were also presented to program coordinators who were encouraged to look at their curriculum to see where they address learners’ differing strengths and needs and other methods of candidates’ opportunities to assess learners’ needs and provide effective instruction.

One limitation of these data is that most of the employers were evaluating more than one teacher. Evaluations for individuals may have presented different and more comprehensive information and provided better data for individual programs. It is hard to determine if the suggestions for improvement were targeted at the unit as a whole, or individual programs. In the future, follow up interviews with employers would be helpful to tease out information about specific program completers in order to understand the feedback better and make recommendations to licensure programs.

See CAEP 4 Employer Survey Results