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ABSTRACT

Each school district in the state of Florida was required to submit for approval a model for implementing the Beginning Teacher Program mandated by the Florida legislature. The program model required that a support staff, consisting of a peer teacher, building-level administrator, and at least one other professional educator be assigned to assist each beginning teacher. Following an initial performance evaluation, a professional development plan is revised which serves as a basis for assistance and classroom observations by the support staff. At least three formative observations and follow-up conferences must be conducted. A summative evaluation must also be conducted to document the successful demonstration of minimum essential competencies on which certification recommendation is made. This paper presents a synopsis of the program and an evaluation of the implementation procedures. A listing of the competencies and selected measures and forms used in the program are appended. An audit of 80 beginning teacher portfolios and on-site audits provided evidence that the program was being implemented as designed. (JD)

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Beginning Teacher Program:

A Study of Field-Based Teacher Certification

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Beginning Teacher Program:

A Study of Field-Based Teacher Certification

Abstract

The Florida Legislature mandated implementation of the Beginning Teacher Program. The program requires that participants be evaluated and provided assistance through a Support Staff which consists of a peer teacher, building-level administrator, and at least one professional educator, prior to certification. Program evaluation involved examination of portfolios of 80 Beginning Teachers and analysis of questionnaires completed by Support Staff members and Beginning Teachers. The majority of all groups agreed that methods of observation and documentation were effective and that sufficient assistance and support were available to Beginning Teachers. The majority of portfolios contained evidence that the program was being implemented as designed.

Introduction

Each school district in the state of Florida was required to submit for approval a model for implementing the legislative-mandated Beginning Teacher Program. This paper presents a synopsis of the program and an evaluation of the implementation procedures.

The objectives of the Beginning Teacher Program are to assist the Beginning Teacher in the demonstration of minimum essential competencies and to provide for continued professional development through a support system designed collaboratively with local universities.

The evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Program involved the following objectives: 1) to determine if formative and summative evaluations were completed as specified in the approved plan, 2) to monitor inservice activities, and 3) to ascertain participants' reactions/evaluations of the program.

The Beginning Teacher Program has been implemented in response to a legislative mandate regarding procedures for certification of teachers (State Board Rule, 6A-5.75). A Beginning Teacher is defined as follows:

> A teacher who holds a bachelor's degree or equivalent vocational level temporary certificate and who does not have three (3) full school years of successful out-of-state teaching experience within the last ten (10) years, in increments of not less than one (1) full school year. (State Board Rule, 6A-5.75, p. 304)

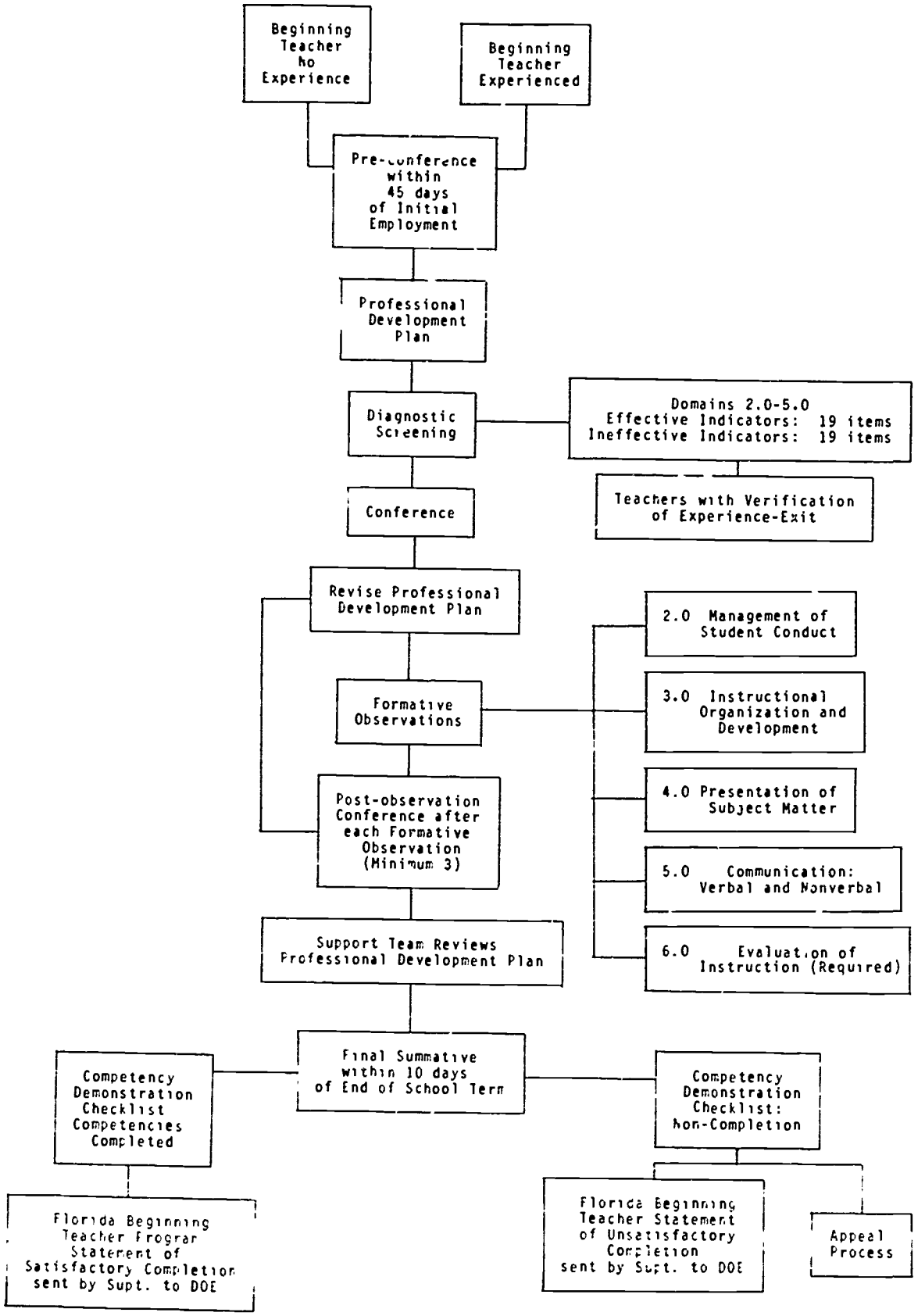
The Beginning Teacher Program was designed as a formal program of at least one full school year (180 days) plus preplanning and postplanning days, in accordance with requirements in the state statutes, Section 231.17(3).

The program model required that a Support Staff consisting of a peer teacher, building-level administrator, and at least one other professional educator be assigned to assist each Beginning Teacher. Following an initial performance evaluation, a professional development plan is revised which serves as a basis for assistance and classroom observations by the support staff. At least three formative observations and follow-up conferences must be conducted. A summative evaluation must also be conducted to document the successful demonstration of minimum essential competencies on which certification recommendation is made (see Figure 1). A listing of the competencies and selected measures and forms used in the program are located in the Appendix.

In accordance with State Board Rule 6A-5.75(8), each approved model included a plan for annual program evaluation. An evaluation report is to be submitted to the State Department of Education by September 1 of each school year. The findings of the evaluation are to be used by the district to improve the program. The Florida Department of Education is also to utilize the results to make recommendations for program improvements to the Legislature and State Board.

Figure 1.

Beginning Teacher
Program Process*



* Based on revisions mandated July, 1984.

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Evaluation Plan

Staff from the district's administration and instructional auditing division designed a plan for evaluating the Beginning Teacher Program. The plan addressed the provisions in the legislation. The major components were as follows:

- Examine workshop evaluations to verify that Beginning Teachers received at least six hours of specific training and that Support Staff received training as specified in the legislation.
- Audit random sample of Beginning Teacher portfolios to verify date of initial performance evaluation, development of a professional development plan, dates of three formative observations and subsequent conferences, date of summative evaluation for making certification recommendations.
- Develop and distribute an attitudinal questionnaire and analyze results.
- Prepare a final report to be submitted to the Director of the Teacher Education Center.

Methodology

A random sample of ginning Teacher Portfolios (n=80) was selected for audit purposes. On-site audits were conducted to gather data on initial performance evaluations, professional development plans, formative evaluations, and summative evaluations.

In addition to the audits, inservice activities were monitored to determine if training was received as specified in the Beginning Teacher Program model. Attitudinal data were collected from program participants through distribution of questionnaires. Initial performance evaluations were examined to determine in which areas ineffective indicators were most often tallied.

Results

The portfolios of 80 Beginning Teachers were randomly selected for audit review in March, 1984. This number constituted 32% of the Beginning Teachers participating in the program. Of the portfolios audited, two were for teachers who had already successfully exited the program and one was terminated due to the resignation of that teacher. Portfolios for those teachers in the ran-

dom selection who completed the full year Beginning Teacher Program during the 1983-84 school year were again reviewed in July, 1984 to determine if a final summative evaluation had been conducted and if state inservice requirements had been met. Audit findings were as follows:

- 73% of the Beginning Teachers audited received initial performance evaluations within the 90-day period.
- 88% of the portfolios contained professional development plans based on the initial performance evaluations.
- Areas of greatest need for professional development were in management of student conduct and instructional organization and development.
- 90% of the portfolios contained evidence of formative observations in progress and subsequent planning conferences.
- 100% contained evidence of the final summative evaluation.
- During the 1983-84 school year 246 Beginning Teachers received the required six hours of inservice training. In addition, 263 peer teachers, 79 other professional educators and 149 principals received training in the Beginning Teacher Program.

Questionnaires (n=726) were distributed to the Beginning Teachers and each member of the Support Staff teams in order to obtain the attitudes and opinions of the participants concerning the program. Results were compiled and analyzed by staff in the research and evaluation department. The return rate for the questionnaires was 42% (see Table 1). The responses were summarized as follows:

- Beginning teachers (70%), peer teachers (79%), professional educators (74%), and principals (77%) agreed that the methods of observation and documentation were effective.
- The majority of all four groups (67% - 84%) agreed that sufficient time and opportunity were available for conferences. The lowest percentage agreeing was from peer teachers (67%). Many comments from peer teachers dealt with the difficulty of scheduling meetings with the Beginning Teachers, particularly at the secondary level.
- Fifty-five percent of Beginning Teachers, 80% of the peer teachers, 72% of the professional educators, and

Table 1. Beginning Teachers Evaluation Questionnaire 1983-84
Similar Items Across All Four Groups

Statements	Beginning Teachers (n=53)			Peer Teachers (n=124)			Professional Educators (n=43)			Administrators/ Designees (n=85)		
	+	-	N/O	+	-	N/O	+	-	N/O	+	-	N/O
1. Communications regarding the Beginning Teacher Program were timely.	60%	40%	-	72%	23%	5%	67%	28%	5%	75%	19%	6%
2. Communications regarding Beginning Teacher Program were easily understood.	83%	15%	2%	79%	17%	4%	74%	19%	7%	77%	18%	5%
3. Methods of observation and documentation are effective.	70%	17%	13%	73%	23%	4%	67%	26%	7%	87%	13%	-
4. Sufficient assistance and support for improving performance were made available to Beginning Teachers.	77%	15%	8%	86%	7%	7%	86%	5%	9%	88%	6%	6%
5. Sufficient time and opportunity were available for conferences among support staff.*	73%	19%	8%	67%	19%	14%	84%	2%	14%	-	-	-
6. Participation in the Beginning Teacher Program has been worth the time spent by me.	55%	34%	11%	80%	10%	10%	72%	14%	14%	78%	14%	8%

* Beginning Teachers, peer teachers and professional educators only

77% of the principals agreed that participation in the Beginning Teacher Program had been worth the time spent. It should be noted that 34% of the beginning teachers responding disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the time was well spent.

- Although most of those responding from each of the four groups agreed that communications regarding the Beginning Teacher Program were timely, 40% of the beginning teachers disagreed. There were many comments from all groups regarding missed or late notices of meetings and workshops.

These data must be interpreted in light-of the low return rate (21%) for the Beginning Teachers. The low percentage of returns for that group might have been related to the fact that 52% of the Beginning Teachers was hired after the school year had begun. Therefore, those Beginning Teachers might not have perceived themselves as needing to return the survey since they would not be completing the program until the subsequent school year.

Discussion

With the national emphasis on improving education, it is likely that most states will be examining teacher education/certification programs. Florida has already revised the teacher certification process to include demonstration of minimum competencies as evaluated by school-district and other professional personnel during the first year of employment.

Any program such as this has impact not only on the school districts but also on teacher education programs. The on-going evaluation of the Beginning Teacher Program will provide data which can be used to improve both preservice and inservice programs. For example, the examination of the initial performance evaluations revealed that attention should be given to questioning techniques, research results regarding the use of general, non-specific praise, and behavior management techniques. These areas can be addressed through inservice education programs. However, preservice teacher education programs could also adapt the "core curriculum" to more effectively address the above mentioned areas.

The 1984 Legislature again addressed the Beginning Teacher Program. As a result, the law was revised. A Beginning Teacher with prior teaching experience has now been defined as follows:

> a teacher with a minimum of one (1) full year of successful teaching experience may satisfy the requirements of the Florida Beginning Teacher Program by demonstration of successful performance as described in Rule 6A-5.75(5)(a), FAC.

The successful teaching experience must be documented by a notarized statement from the superintendent or chief administrative officer of the school district or nonpublic school where the individual had been employed. In addition, the experienced teacher may demonstrate successful performance of the minimum competencies during the first 45 days of employment and may then be recommended as having successfully completed the Beginning Teacher Program.

In addition to the change for experienced teachers, the following are noteworthy modifications.

- A full school day consists of at least four (4) hours.
- An individual who holds a temporary certificate may enter the program.
- A peer (support staff team member) for an applicant in an administrative/supervisory position must be a practicing administrator who holds a valid certificate in administration.
- The building level administrator (support staff team member) for an applicant in an administrative/supervisory position who is applying for certification in administration or supervision must be a certificated superordinate.
- A diagnostic observation of a beginning teacher must be conducted within 45 days of initial employment. The observation data are to be used to revise a professional development plan which is to include provision for a summative evaluation to verify successful demonstration of the minimum essential competencies.
- Verification of successful completion is to be provided to the Certification Section of the Department of Education within 15 working days of the conclusion of an applicant's participation in the Beginning Teacher Program.
- A program evaluation report is to be submitted to the Florida Department of Education by September 1 of each year.

Based on data from Duval County, it appears that additional modifications should be made to incorporate more appropriate observational measures for applicants in exceptional education, psychology, guidance, and media. Comments on the questionnaires indicated that measures currently being used are not appropriate for personnel in special categories.

While Florida has made significant changes in the teacher certification process, it appears that the teacher certification/evaluation process will continue to be closely scrutinized by the Legislature. As further changes are mandated, the Professional Development section and Research and Evaluation section will continue to work together to evaluate the implementation of the changes.

Appendix

GENERIC TEACHING COMPETENCIES

1. Demonstrate the ability to orally communicate information on a given topic in a coherent logical manner.

2. Demonstrate the ability to write in a logical, easily understood style with appropriate grammar and sentence structure.

3. Demonstrate the ability to comprehend and interpret a message after listening.

4. Demonstrate the ability to read, comprehend, and interpret, orally and in writing, professional material.

5. Demonstrate the ability to comprehend and work with fundamental mathematical concepts.

6/19 Demonstrate the ability to comprehend patterns of physical, social, and academic development in students and to counsel students concerning their needs in these areas.

7. Diagnose the entry level knowledge or skill to be diagnosed, and determine the most appropriate method for conducting the diagnosis.

8. Identify long-range goals for a given subject area.

9. Construct and sequence related short-range objectives for a given subject area.

10. Select, adapt, and/or develop instructional materials for a given set of instructional objectives and student learning needs.

11. Select/develop and sequence related learning activities appropriate for a given set of instructional objectives and student learning needs.

12. Establish rapport with students in the classroom by using verbal and/or visual motivational devices.

13. Present directions for carrying out an instructional activity.

14. Construct or assemble a classroom test to measure student performance according to criteria based upon objectives.

15. Establish a set of classroom routines and procedures for utilization and care of materials.

GENERIC TEACHING COMPETENCIES (continued)

16. Formulate a standard for student behavior in the classroom.

17. Identify causes of classroom misbehavior and employ a technique(s) for correcting it.

18. Identify and/or develop a system for keeping records of class and individual student progress.

20. Identify and/or demonstrate behaviors which reflect a feeling for the dignity and worth of other people including those from other ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and economic groups.

21. Demonstrate instructional and social skills which assist students in developing a positive self concept.

22. Demonstrate instructional and social skills which assist students in interacting constructively with their peers.

23. Demonstrate teaching skills which assist students in developing their own values, attitudes and beliefs.

24. Demonstrate the ability to recognize and be aware of the instructional needs of exceptional students.

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DIAGNOSTIC/SUMMATIVE OBSERVATION INSTRUMENT

DOMAIN	EFFECTIVE INDICATORS	FREQUENCY	FREQUENCY	INEFFECTIVE INDICATORS
3.0 INSTRUCTIONAL ORGANIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT	1. Begins instruction promptly			Delays
	2. Handles materials in an orderly manner			Does not organize or handle materials systematically
	3. Orients students to classwork/maintains academic focus			Allows talk/activity unrelated to subject
	4. Conducts beginning/ending review			
	5. Questions: academic comprehension/ lesson development — asks single factual (Dom.5.0)			Poses multiple questions asked as one, unison response
	5. Questions: academic comprehension/ lesson development — requires analysis/reasons			Poses non-academic questions/non-academic procedural question
	6. Recognizes response/amplifies/gives corrective feedback			Ignores student or response/expresses sarcasm, harshness
	7. Gives specific academic praise			Uses general, non-specific praise
	8. Provides for practice			Extends discourse, changes topic with no practice
	9. Gives directions/assigns/checks comprehension of homework, seatwork assignment/gives feedback			Gives inadequate directions/no homework/no feedback
	10. Circulates and assists students			Remains at desk/circulates inadequately
4.0 PRESENT. SUBJ. MATT.	11. Treats concept - definition/attributes/examples/ non-examples			Gives definition or examples only
	12. Discusses cause-effect/uses linking words/applies law or principle			Discusses either cause or effect only/uses no linking word(s)
	13. States and applies academic rule			Does not state or does not apply academic rule
	14. Develops criteria and evidence for value judgment			States value judgment with no criteria or evidence
5.0 COMMUNICATION VERB./NON-VERB	15. Emphasizes important points			
	16. Expresses enthusiasm verbally/challenges students			
	17.			Uses vague/scrambled discourse
	18.			Uses loud-grating, high pitched, monotone, inaudible talk
	19. Uses body behavior that shows interest - smiles, gestures			Frowns, deadpan or lethargic
2.0 MAINT. STU. CON.	20. Stops misconduct			Delays desist/doesn't stop misconduct/desists punitively
	21. Maintains instructional momentum			Loses momentum - fragments non-academic directions, overdwells

6.11 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN
DUVAL COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Name_____ School_____
Beginning Teacher Name & Number

CONFERENCE/ OBSERVATION RECORD			BEGINNING TEACHER IMPROVEMENT OBJECTIVE	STRATEGIES PLANNED TO MEET EACH OBJECTIVE	ANTICIPATED COMPLETION DATE	ACTUAL COMPLETION DATE	SIGNATURES AND DATE (To Coincide with Conference)
Observation							
PRE	POST	DATE					

The undersigned agree that all Beginning Teacher Improvement Objectives have been met as stated above.

Beginning Teacher _____ Date _____

Other Professional Educator _____ Date _____

Peer Teacher _____ Date _____

Building Level Administrator _____ Date _____

8.40 PROVISION FOR BEGINNING TEACHER EXHIBIT

8.41 Portfolio Check List
BEGINNING TEACHER PROGRAM

Beginning Teacher _____ (Name) _____ (Date of Hire) _____ (School #)

REQUIRED ITEMS:	Yes	No	N/A	Comments
1. Portfolio Format/Individual Implementation Plan				
2. Summative Evaluation Instrument(s) a. Screening (within 45 days of date of hire) b. Final Evaluation (within 10 teaching days of program completion)				
3. Formative Observation Instruments (min 3) . Planning . Management of Student Conduct . Instructional Organization . Presentation of Subject Matter . Communication . Evaluation (Required)				
*4 Planning Data Forms for each observation				
5. Conference Planning Guides for each obser.				
6. Professional Development Plan (signed)				
7. Competency Demonstration Checklist (signed before submission)				
8. Statement of Appeal Process (signed by Beginning Teacher)				
*9. Class Discipline Plan				
10. Daily/Class Activity Schedule Specifying Times Allocated to: . Review . Lesson Development . Practice . Homework				
*11. Sample of Beginning Teacher's Communications to Parent/Peer/Administrators				
*12. Teacher developed test--to include rationale for the test and student performance records				

* Exhibits of successful performance submitted by the Beginning Teacher.

_____
Reviewer

8.50 PORTFOLIO FORMAT

BEGINNING TEACHER PROGRAM

NAME _____ GRADE LEVEL AND/OR SUBJECT/SERVICE AREA _____

DISTRICT _____

SCHOOL _____ / _____ / _____
Name Address Phone Number

STARTING DATE _____ ENDING DATE _____

MEMBERS OF SUPPORT STAFF:

BUILDING LEVEL ADMINISTRATOR/DESIGNEE _____ TITLE _____

PEER TEACHER _____ GRADE LEVEL AND/OR SUBJECT/SERVICE AREA _____ LOCATION (If other than B/T) _____

OTHER PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR (SPECIFY POSITION)

_____ / _____ / _____
Name Title Location

OTHERS _____

_____

9.30 COMPETENCY DEMONSTRATION CHECKLIST

Teacher's Name _____ School (Name & Number) _____

COMPETENCY	OBSERVATION	INTERVIEW	PORTFOLIO MATERIALS	EXPLANATION & REFERENCE #	DATE
1. Oral Communication					
2. Written Communication					
3. Listening Comprehension					
4. Reading Comprehension					
5. Fundamental Math Skills					
6/19. Human Growth,Development					
7. Entry Level Diagnosis					
8. Long Range Goals					
9. Lesson Objectives					
10. Instructional Materials					
11. Select/Develop, Sequence Activities					
12. Establishes Rapport					
13. Present Directions					
14. Test Construction					
15. Establishes Routines					
16. Behavior Standards					
17. Management Techniques					
18. Record Keeping System					
20. Cultural Awareness					
21. Study Self Concept					
22. Positive Interaction					
23. Values Clarification					
24. Special Needs Children					

All Competencies listed above have been satisfactorily demonstrated.

_____
Principal Date

Competencies unsatisfactorily demonstrated are the following:

_____
Number(s)

_____
Principal Date