

Northwest Missouri State University

Proposed Program:

Education Specialist in Educational Diagnostician

Phase II Review

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## Cost/Revenue Analysis

### Five-Year Projected Costs for Ed.S. Ed Diagnostician Program

The projected five-year cost for the proposed Ed.S. program is a total of approximately \$199,335. These costs cover projected salary and benefits for existing full-time faculty and funding for adjunct faculty to cover teaching expenses for the program. This is the projected additional costs for the program since the existing infrastructure and other support features for the proposed Ed.S. already exist and are at a sufficient level to support the new Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician program. The current Ed.S. Program Director, Dr. Kristi Alexander, will continue her role without any additional expense to the institution. Below is a table demonstrating the breakdown of the proposed five-year costs.

Table 1.

<b>Cost Category</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>
Projected Salary	\$18,667	\$24,667	\$30,667	\$36,667	\$42,667
Projected Fringe	\$5,600	\$7,400	\$9,200	\$11,000	\$12,800
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$24,267</b>	<b>\$32,067</b>	<b>\$39,867</b>	<b>\$47,667</b>	<b>\$55,467</b>

### Five-Year Projected Revenue for Ed.S. Ed Diagnostician Program

The projected five-year revenue is based on a conservative projection of starting the program with 10 students in year 1, and adding five students each year to reach 30 by year 5. We anticipate 10 graduates in year 3 and 20 by year 5. The flat rate tuition for the program will be \$350/credit hour. Table 2 below demonstrates our projected revenue and projected net revenue based on the expenses shown in Table 1 above.

Table 2.

<b>Revenue Category</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>
Proj. Enrollment	10	15	20	25	30
Proj. Revenue	\$42,000	\$63,000	\$84,000	\$105,000	\$126,000
Proj. Net Revenue	\$17,733	\$30,933	\$44,133	\$57,333	\$70,533

## Sufficient Student Interest

The program addresses student needs in our region that includes prospective students from Missouri and other states. The demand in this field is increasing. The M.S.Ed. Program in Educational Diagnostician had over 20 students after only four months of enrollment time. Of these students, one-third already possessed a master's degree; offering the degree at the Ed.S. level will meet student demand for career advancement, content knowledge attainment, and compensation advancement.

There has been a shift in professional requirements in the field of special education. Districts are moving towards hiring educational diagnosticians, which is consistent with the shift of more individualized attention in the field. Additionally, a few states, including Alaska, New Mexico, Utah, and Texas, have implemented a requirement for districts to employ educational diagnosticians. In state statute §239.80 parts a and c of the Texas Education Code, Texas states that the educational diagnostician, "...plays a critical role in campus effectiveness and student achievement," who can ably "provide educational assessment and evaluation as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)". New Mexico

Public Education Department (PED) Title 6, chapter 63 (6.63.4.11) specifies that the Educational Diagnostician certification ensures the “demonstrated skills and knowledge in the screening, referral, and evaluation process for preschool through post-secondary schools,” with competence in “formal and information observational techniques of data collection,” and “application of psychometric theory necessary for interpretation of psycho-educational measures.” The field is asking for more qualified educational diagnosticians.

Three Missouri School administrators representing Liberty Public schools Human Resources, and superintendents of the West Platte and Rock Port districts have offered letters of support for consideration of MDHE leadership. They address the compelling need to bolster the workforce with skilled professionals and assert that Northwest Missouri State should offer the program at the Educational Specialist level. Please see attachments with the letters from Drs. Rinehart (West Platte), Vogelaar (Liberty), and Mr. Sickels (Rock Port). Missouri school leaders are facing a shortage in candidate pools for many vital positions. The workforce needs are clear, as is support from the field to offer this program, which would strengthen the workforce with specialized knowledge and training. We continue to monitor state trends related to expansion of licensure requirements across the region. Missouri is likely to follow the lead of Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana by revisiting existing state certification for school psychological examiners, a position which has become both expensive, hard-to-staff, and dated. States are moving to adopt the Educational Diagnostician model, job description, and framework. Our program is built with such knowledge, training, and experiences necessary to serve students and districts very well.

Many Missouri school districts are too small to have their own School Psychological Examiner. A 2021 study of graduate students enrolled in Educational Diagnostician programs revealed that almost 1/3 (32.5%) of districts participate in cooperatives for Special Education services. The same survey reveals that the cognitive assessments conducted for special education evaluations are assigned to the role of educational diagnostician one-fourth of the time; that number will likely increase. Almost half (46.43%) are unqualified to conduct this extraordinarily vital student skill testing, as they lack credentialing, training, and expertise. There is great need for Missouri districts to help prepare the teachers and counselors develop the analytical skills, content knowledge, and credentialing needed to thrive. Our Educational Diagnostician degree offers such preparation.

#### **General Resources (library, facilities, equipment, classroom, etc.)**

Given that Northwest Missouri State University already offers a M.S.Ed. in Educational Diagnostician, all general resources required to provide a robust, rigorous student experience are already in place. Additionally, the entire program will be delivered online in Northwest’s existing online platform, Canvas (branded as Northwest Online). No additional general resources are required.

#### **Accreditation Requirements**

Northwest Missouri State University’s School of Education is nationally accredited through the Association for Advancing Quality in Educator Preparation, or AAQEP. The Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician program will fall under the current School of Education accreditation. Additionally, Northwest aligns education programming with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and adheres to best practices in the field.

### **Curriculum Alignment with Knowledge and Competencies**

In order to ensure high quality curriculum is provided to Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician students, Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) standards for diagnosticians was consulted and the program aligned to it. Additionally, these notions were cross-walked with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) School Psychological Examiner certification competencies, as the program leads towards recommendation for the certification endorsement. Also, as our university suggests three to six outcomes for each program, four outcomes were formulated that encompass all CEC and DESE objectives/competencies. These outcomes include: The Educational Diagnostician graduate student will use multiple methods of assessment to determine special education eligibility; The Educational Diagnostician graduate student will use culturally sustaining theories to inform the evaluation process and make recommendations to assist individuals with exceptional learning needs; The Educational Diagnostician graduate student will utilize current research-based practices to make recommendations for legal and ethical placements of individuals with exceptional learning needs; and The Educational Diagnostician graduate student will collaborate with multiple stakeholders to develop an effective learning environment for individuals with exceptional learning needs. Each of these outcomes will be evaluated at two points throughout the program to ensure knowledge growth and attainment within our students.

### **External Learning Experiences in Region**

Within each of the six core courses, the students take part in external field experiences that serve as a cornerstone of our program. There are a variety of field experience expectations, depending on the course, that dictate what type of experience is expected. The field experiences include work with a mentor, which is holistic across all of the experiences. Additionally, a few classes have cognitive assessments as part of the curriculum that are required to be facilitated under the guidance of the mentor. Also, there are academic assessments, behavior assessments, and observations that are facilitated with the guidance of the mentor. These experiences produce artifacts, as well as video that is reviewed by the faculty of the course. All of these external experiences are catalogued to meet the 150 field experience hours expectation of DESE towards meeting certification. The mentor with whom the student is working must be a DESE certified school psychological examiner or school psychologist. With this mentorship and field experience requirement, these students will forge strong relationships with mentors and school districts within our region that will increase the likelihood that our graduates will be placed as educational diagnosticians at districts within our geographic area.

### **Assessment Plan for Meeting Workforce Need**

Our proposed Ed.S. program will participate in Northwest's Academic Program Review process, which includes a "4-Up" evaluation tool used university-wide that assesses challenges, upcoming goals, and recent accomplishments, as well as providing a series of metrics that indicate program performance. This review is conducted every five years. As a component of this model, the program faculty will review current trends, the universities offering similar programming, and workforce needs within the school districts who may employ the Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician program completers. During this process, the program's advisory committee is convened to provide input on findings and suggested changes. Once this step is completed with all faculty working within the program and our external advisory committee, the findings from the School of Education is then reviewed internally by our associate provosts, members of our university assessment committee, and the Provost. The comprehensive Academic Program Review report is shared by the Provost with our University President and Board of

Regents as an FYI item during schedule Board of Regents work sessions. Changes noted as necessary to keep up with workforce demands are aligned with an implementation timeline to ensure timely and appropriate application. Additionally, any resources needed to ensure implementation of workforce needs being met are identified so they can be considered and eventually procured.

**Contribution to CBHE’s Blueprint for Higher Education**

The proposed Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician program will contribute to CBHEs Blueprint for Higher Education, enhancing each of the Blueprint Goals of Attainment, Affordability, Quality, Research and Innovation, and Investment, Advocacy & Partnerships.

<b><i>Blueprint for Higher Education: Specified Goals and Strategies Advanced via the Proposed Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician Program</i></b>	
<b>Blueprint Goals</b>	<b>Comment</b>
1. Attainment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proposed Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician program will be offered 100% online, which increases accessibility for all students.</li> <li>• Students can attend full- or part-time</li> <li>• Existing student support services and flexible nature of online programming encourages non-traditional and working learners to pursue the degree.</li> </ul>
2. Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northwest offers a flat tuition rate of \$350/credit hour regardless of residency.</li> <li>• Students are able to maintain their current jobs and living situations while they earn their Ed.S. degree.</li> </ul>
3. Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northwest has been offering Ed.S. degrees since 1981.</li> <li>• Northwest has been providing online education for over 20 years.</li> <li>• Northwest’s School of Education is nationally accredited by AAQEP, which focuses on educator prep, consistent with our statewide mission</li> <li>• All Northwest online programs follows a Quality Matters rubric, which is recognized for high quality online curriculum design.</li> <li>• The Ed.S. program is aligned with Council of Exceptional Children Outcomes for Diagnosticians and Department of Elementary and Secondary Education School Psychological Examiner certification competencies.</li> </ul>
4. Research and Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northwest’s School of Education has been nationally recognized as an AACSB Christa McAuliffe award winner twice for innovation and quality.</li> <li>• Northwest is the region’s leader in providing educator preparation.</li> <li>• Northwest Educational Diagnostician faculty are conducting research and publishing about diagnostician issues.</li> </ul>
5. Investment, Advocacy, & Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northwest partners with an OPM to help provide excellent student support for all programs, as well as continued investments in market awareness.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Northwest School of Education alumni are located in nearly all school districts in Northwest Missouri and around the region.</li> <li>• Northwest Educational Diagnostician faculty partnered with a regional school district (St. Joseph Schools) and their diagnosticians in the development of the courses and the course content.</li> </ul>
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**Academic Resources**

Faculty, both full-time and adjunct, will be required to possess a terminal degree in the area or related to the discipline to provide instruction in the program. Experience in the field will also be a preferred trait for all faculty members. With the program being online and provided in the LMS Canvas, the learning will be mostly asynchronous, with occasional synchronous events designed for student retention and interaction with faculty and advisors. The courses have been designed by faculty who follow a Quality Matters methodology for online course design and instruction. It is anticipated that the program will be taught by full-time faculty 50% of the time, with the other 50% being taught by adjunct instructors. Adjuncts will be recruited and managed by the School of Education, an Academic Operations Coordinator, and other offices serving HR and HR-related functions.

**Student Services Support**

The breadth and scope of support services at Northwest are comprehensive and always under review. Northwest’s mission is to focus on student success – “every student, every day”. This lofty statement reflects our institutional commitment to all students – on campus, off-site, or online. Northwest offers advising services in person and via remote technology. Northwest’s student success program, called Northwest 360, provides faculty, advisors, and students opportunities for addressing immediate needs, reports student issues, and many other functions designed to improve the student experience. Additionally, Northwest partners with an online program manager (OPM) called Academic Partnerships (AP). AP provides coaching services for students to ensure they persist towards program completion. The Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician has been designed for high impact online delivery for the working professional. Courses are offered on a carousel scheduling model, which ensures all courses will be offered as posted.

Students seeking admission will have completed a graduate degree at a regionally accredited institution with a min 2.75 GPA. Either a teaching degree, teaching certification, or completion of a human development degree should be provided for admission. The student should either: a) hold a degree in special education b) show a service record of teaching in special education for one complete academic year or c) complete Northwest’s EDCI 62-642: Introduction to Teaching Students with Mild to Moderate Disabilities course during the first term.

## Appendix A

Appendix A will address The University of Missouri's questions asked via their letter during the public comment period of Phase I of the comprehensive review.

1. What specific skills and competencies are graduates of the proposed program expected to have upon graduation?

The outcomes for this program were written in conjunction and consideration and consultation with the Council for Exceptional Children National Objectives for work as an Educational Diagnostician. Our four program outcomes include: 1) the student will use multiple methods of assessment to determine special education eligibility; 2) the student will use culturally sustaining theories to inform the evaluation process and make recommendations to assist individuals with exceptional learning needs; 3) the student will utilize current research-based practices to make recommendations for legal and ethical placement of individuals exceptional learning needs; and, 4) the student will collaborate with multiple stakeholders to develop an effective learning environment for individuals with exceptional learning needs. Although there is not a program outcome that embodies the notion of legal and ethical competency of the diagnostician, it is a state level expectation and therefore legal and ethical competencies are threaded throughout multiple courses, not just housed in one particular course. We believe these encompass and embody the national expectations in the field, as well as our university's expectations of developing a holistic agent educational diagnostician who is able to recognize the importance of the culture of the students in schools where they work and utilize multiple assessments to make effective and impactful recommendations to improve student learning.

2. How does the proposed program differ from Northwest's existing MEd in Educational Diagnostician with respect to purpose, curricula, time to complete, cost, and target audiences?

The purpose for the program is to ensure that all schools have highly trained and highly qualified professional staff who can skillfully and collaboratively assess needs and make recommendations about assessments impacting PK-12 students who are most in need. Our program faculty have conducted a study at Northwest to inform our educational diagnostician experts. Results of the study reveal that there are many Missouri school districts utilizing other people (non-diagnostics) to perform, interpret, and recommend based on their testing and assessments. In many cases these staff members only hold a teaching degree, a counseling degree or a unrelated degree without proper training or preparation to give, interpret, and/or recommend based on cognitive assessment and other assessments typically utilized to inform eligibility for special education. In particular the program we are recommending or putting forward for acceptance offers higher level coursework than master's level coursework. There are four courses that are offered at the Ed.S. level and six courses that are offered at the masters or specialist level. This makes the program unique from the master's program, and provides the Ed.S. student with additional tools for potentially larger roles in their respective school district.

A main difference between a person obtaining a master's degree in educational diagnostician and a specialist degree in educational diagnostician is the level of understanding of the statistical analysis, understanding of program evaluation, developing policies, and district level leadership competencies learned and practiced. Having a person who has a specialist degree in educational diagnostician could allow a district greater latitude at utilizing the person in a larger capacity than they may typically do. For example, this could be a school district that does not typically use educational diagnostician as process



coordinators, but with a specialist degree and higher level of training they then could use them in that capacity.

Another significant difference between the two degrees includes the salary commanded by the individual who has a specialist in an educational diagnostician compared to a master's in educational diagnostician. In the state of Missouri, the level of teacher pay (and many other educator lines within schools) is contingent on the level of degree the person has completed. Therefore, a person completing two masters degrees does not earn higher pay than a person who has completed only one. Conversely, a person that has a specialist degree will earn a higher salary in most districts. A student who already has completed a master's degree and then would join this program would therefore command a higher salary. Thus, this program holds a robust economic incentive for educators. As there is a large need for these positions in the state of Missouri and far too few individuals trained to serve in the capacity of educational diagnostician (in its many forms with many duties, roles, and titles in Missouri's school) positions in our state. We fully expect that program completers of the proposed Ed.S. program will be highly coveted and those with the specialist degree in educational diagnostician will procure employment. Currently, 98% of Northwest School of Education graduates obtain gainful employments and/or pursue advanced education within six months of completion of one of our programs.

The Ed.S. program we are proposing is on the same timeframe as the master's program. Students may begin their program and complete within one year. This is not, however, a typical situation as most of the candidates in the Ed.S. program will be working full-time and may take one class per seven weeks; expected completion for these candidates will be approximately two years. For someone whose robust life experiences warrant a faster time-to-completion, the one-year completion timeframe is possible. This requires a person to take four courses per academic term. Additionally, the cost for the program we are proposing is the same as the master's program. This is consistent with other School of Education programs we have on campus. The target audience for this program is students who have previously completed a master's degree. Target candidates either have a teaching area or a student services area and/or have previous teaching credentials and successful experiences. What we have seen through our master's program is approximately 50% of our students entering our master's degree for Educational Diagnostician have previously earned a master's degree in another education area. Many possess a graduate degree in particular special education and wish to take the next degree at the Ed.S level so as to afford career advancement. This explains a bit about prospective or target candidates for the program.

3. What types of occupations are graduates of this program expected to enter upon graduation? What are the median earnings for these occupations?

Occupations that are typical for students who exit the program would be the position of educational diagnostician at a school district, process coordinator, or other positions in the district that allow program completers to deliver and interpret cognitive and other assessments. As each district titles these positions slightly differently, it is difficult to narrow to only one title. At the district level each of these positions are allowed to do different things. The only consistent piece that exists within the state of Missouri is the school psychological examiner certification. This is associated with the program we are proposing. With this particular certification from the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), a person with the school psychological examiner credential can give and interpret cognitive assessments and other assessments associated with special education eligibility. However, it is not typical that school districts title their positions as a school psychological examiner because the salary considerations for such a role are considerably higher than other roles, and many districts (particularly

in rural Missouri) cannot afford a specific school psychological examiner. Due to the fluid nature of the positions and the dynamic difference among school districts in the state of Missouri, some positions might warrant a \$50,000 salary while other positions might warrant a \$70,000 salary. The dynamic difference in size of districts allowed to exist in the state of Missouri and the disparate financial and human resources afforded to school districts only add to the challenges presented to address the needs of students.

4. How will these occupations differ from existing school psychological examiner positions with respect to responsibilities, compensation, and educational requirements?

School Psychological Examiner is a DESE certification classification, not a profession. As such, the positions a person who holds the proposed Ed.S. would apply for are termed differently by different districts (e.g. Educational Diagnostician, Process Coordinator, etc.). These professions do have requirements associated with them, but are not consistent throughout the state, and across the region. Process Coordinators can be people who have a degree in Educational Diagnostician or a School Psychologist. In some districts, those who serve in that role have higher degrees in Special Education. Educational Diagnosticians are similar in how the role requirements differ between districts. However, if a person who has one of these varying degrees also holds a School Psychological Examiner DESE certification, they are seen by DESE as possessing the qualifications consistent with administering and interpreting assessments that can lead toward eligibility determination, including cognitive assessments. A person who has a higher degree in Educational Diagnostician and a School Psychological Examiner DESE certification would be highly qualified for these professions.

## Appendix B

Appendix B is the “Need Narrative” provided during Phase I of the comprehensive review.

### **Need for Education Specialist Educational Diagnostician at Northwest Missouri State University**

There is a need for Northwest Missouri State University to offer a new Education Specialist degree in Educational Diagnostician. This will not be an inappropriate duplication of any current programming. Potential duplication, per the Code of State Regulations, has been assessed within the context of student and state/regional workforce demand, the student population being served, and the cost of instruction. The program is consistent with Northwest’s statewide mission committed to educator preparation.

#### Student Demand

The program addresses student needs in our region that includes prospective students from Missouri and other states. The demand in this field is increasing. The M.S.Ed. Program in Educational Diagnostician already has 21 students, after only four months of enrollment time. Of these students, one-third already possess a master’s degree; offering the degree at the Educational Specialist level will meet student demand for career advancement and content knowledge attainment.

#### Workforce Demand

There has been a shift in professional requirements in the field of special education. Districts are moving towards hiring educational diagnosticians, which is consistent with the shift of more individualized attention in the field. Additionally, a few states, including Alaska, New Mexico, Utah, and Texas, have implemented a requirement for districts to employ educational diagnosticians. In state statute §239.80 parts a and c of the Texas Education Code, Texas states that the educational diagnostician, “...plays a critical role in campus effectiveness and student achievement,” who can ably “provide educational assessment and evaluation as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)”. New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) Title 6, chapter 63 (6.63.4.11) specifies that the Educational Diagnostician certification ensures the “demonstrated skills and knowledge in the screening, referral, and evaluation process for preschool through post-secondary schools,” with competence in “formal and information observational techniques of data collection,” and “application of psychometric theory necessary for interpretation of psycho-educational measures.” The field is asking for more qualified educational diagnosticians.

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staff, and dated. States are moving to adopt the Educational Diagnostician model, job description, and framework. Our program is built with such knowledge, training, and experiences necessary to serve students and districts very well.

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### Geographic Availability and Student Population Served

The population being served at Northwest will include students from our region within and outside of Missouri. Given our location, we are a regional entity in Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. Of the 21 students currently enrolled in the M.S.Ed in Educational Diagnostician at Northwest, fifteen reside in Missouri and the other six represent a diverse pool of states (Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Arizona, Tennessee, and Iowa), leading us to conclude that there is regional, and perhaps national interest in the Educational Diagnostician content and training we have developed and implemented.

Another student population to be served includes those who have already completed a Master's degree in Special Education who are not interested in receiving another Master's degree. This is based on feedback from current and prospective students in this and other education fields. Our attached letters of support from Missouri public school superintendents and a Human Resources Director confirm the sentiment that the content should also be offered at the Educational Specialist level to support educator progression and skill development since many interested candidates will already possess a master's degree.

### Cost of Instruction

Northwest is committed to offering affordable, relevant, and rigorous programming. With our flat rate online graduate tuition regardless of residency, this program will be attractive to residents in Missouri and other states. Our strategy for instruction within this program encompasses current full- and part-time faculty, as well as instructional coaches that assist our lead faculty members with appropriate interactions to ensure course and student success. There are no additional costs attributable to this program that are not already incurred as part of Northwest's online strategy.

### Summary

Northwest has been committed to educator preparation since its founding in 1905. Additionally, Northwest has provided academic programming at the Education Specialist level since 1981. As a leader in educator preparation, our teacher and leader preparation programs have twice been recognized for excellent and entrepreneurial program quality from the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) by receiving the Christa McAuliffe Award for Excellence in Teacher Education (2006 and 2018). As we seek to expand our offerings in service to our state and region, the addition of the

Education Specialist Educational Diagnostician program will provide the means for our schools to educate students with special educational need with cutting edge methods and techniques. With increasing demand in special education, paired with a shift in methodology, Northwest is demonstrating its historical commitment to educator preparation.

### **Collaboration with Other Institutions**

During the planning stages of the Education Specialist Educational Diagnostician program, an assessment of regional and statewide schools was conducted, with a finding that no other institution offered such a program. As such, collaboration with another institution was not found to be feasible. This finding is consistent with language in the Missouri statute that “a good faith effort to explore the feasibility of offering the program in collaboration with an institution the mission of which includes offering the program.”

### **EdS Educational Diagnostician Comprehensive Review: Form 3 Attachment Northwest Missouri State University**

This document provides additional information on data sources and workforce needs per request of MDHEWD, and will serve as an attachment for Form 3 of the Comprehensive Review process.

### **Supply and Demand**

This section will demonstrate the data sources and methodology behind the data maps shared in Form 3 to demonstrate student demand.

#### Heat Map Data

Northwest Missouri State University partners with Academic Partnerships, an OPM, to provide online programming. The market for this program includes Missouri and many other states in our region, with even some nationwide interest. The heat maps shared in Form 3 are provided by Academic Partnerships, and are consistent with other materials utilized for other online programming that have proven to be accurate and effective in predicting potential enrollment in our online programming.

Academic Partnerships provided the methodology of collection for the heat maps. Each map represents unique student interest that come in for a particular program. They collect student interest when potential students self-select a program at the time of their submission of inquiry. The maps categorize the data of interest by the zip code where the student identifies their permanent residence. Because we do not have an exhaustive pool of non-representative programs (inquiry forms do not have every possible programmatic offering), the data collected is broken into three maps:

1. **NWMSU inquiries MEd Ed Diag** – all interest that has come into our system from students identifying that they are interested in both NWMSU and Ed Diag at the master’s level
2. **NWMSU inquires EDS** – all interest that has come into our system from students identifying that they are interested both NWMSU and an EDS
3. **Current EDS interest nationwide** – all interest that come into our system from students identifying that they are interested in an EDS (independent of University choice), demonstrating the national scope of EDS interest

### Student Demand/Case for Education Specialist

The program addresses student needs in our region that includes prospective students from Missouri and other states. The demand in this field is increasing. The M.S.Ed. Program in Educational Diagnostician already has 21 students, after only four months of enrollment time. Of these students, one-third already possess a master's degree; offering the degree at the Educational Specialist level will meet student demand for career advancement and content knowledge attainment.

The population being served at Northwest will include students from our region within and outside of Missouri. Given our location, we are a regional entity in Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. Of the 21 students currently enrolled in the M.S.Ed in Educational Diagnostician at Northwest, fifteen reside in Missouri and the other six represent a diverse pool of states (Nebraska, New Mexico, North Carolina, Arizona, Tennessee, and Iowa), leading us to conclude that there is regional, and perhaps national interest in the Educational Diagnostician content and training we have developed and implemented.

Another student population to be served includes those who have already completed a Master's degree in Special Education who are not interested in receiving another Master's degree. This is based on feedback from current and prospective students in this and other education fields. Our attached letters of support from Missouri public school superintendents and a Human Resources Director confirm the sentiment that the content should also be offered at the Educational Specialist level to support educator progression and skill development since many interested candidates will already possess a master's degree.

### Meeting the needs of Missouri's Workforce

There has been a shift in professional requirements in the field of special education. Districts are moving towards hiring educational diagnosticians, which is consistent with the shift of more individualized attention in the field. Additionally, a few states, including Alaska, New Mexico, Utah, and Texas, have implemented a requirement for districts to employ educational diagnosticians. In state statute §239.80 parts a and c of the Texas Education Code, Texas states that the educational diagnostician, "...plays a critical role in campus effectiveness and student achievement," who can ably "provide educational assessment and evaluation as required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)". New Mexico Public Education Department (PED) Title 6, chapter 63 (6.63.4.11) specifies that the Educational Diagnostician certification ensures the "demonstrated skills and knowledge in the screening, referral, and evaluation process for preschool through post-secondary schools," with competence in "formal and information observational techniques of data collection," and "application of psychometric theory necessary for interpretation of psycho-educational measures." The field is asking for more qualified educational diagnosticians.

Three Missouri School administrators representing Liberty Public schools Human Resources, and superintendents of the West Platte and Rock Port districts have offered letters of support for consideration of MDHE leadership. They address the compelling need to bolster the workforce with skilled professionals and assert that Northwest Missouri State should offer the program at the Educational Specialist level. Please see attachments with the letters from Drs. Rinehart (West Platte), Vogelaar (Liberty), and Mr. Sickels (Rock Port). Missouri school leaders are facing a shortage in candidate pools for many vital positions. The workforce needs are clear, as is support from the field to offer this program, which would strengthen the workforce with specialized knowledge and training. We

continue to monitor state trends related to expansion of licensure requirements across the region. Missouri is likely to follow the lead of [Texas](#), [New Mexico](#), and [Louisiana](#) by revisiting existing state certification for school psychological examiners, a position which has become both expensive, hard-to-staff, and dated. States are moving to adopt the Educational Diagnostician model, job description, and framework. Our program is built with such knowledge, training, and experiences necessary to serve students and districts very well.

Many Missouri school districts are too small to have their own School Psychological Examiner. A 2021 study of graduate students enrolled in Educational Diagnostician programs revealed that almost 1/3 (32.5%) of districts participate in cooperatives for Special Education services. The same survey reveals that the cognitive assessments conducted for special education evaluations are assigned to the role of educational diagnostician one-fourth of the time; that number will likely increase. Almost half (46.43%) are unqualified to conduct this extraordinarily vital student skill testing, as they lack credentialing, training, and expertise. There is great need for Missouri districts to help prepare the teachers and counselors develop the analytical skills, content knowledge, and credentialing needed to thrive. Our Educational Diagnostician degree offers such preparation.

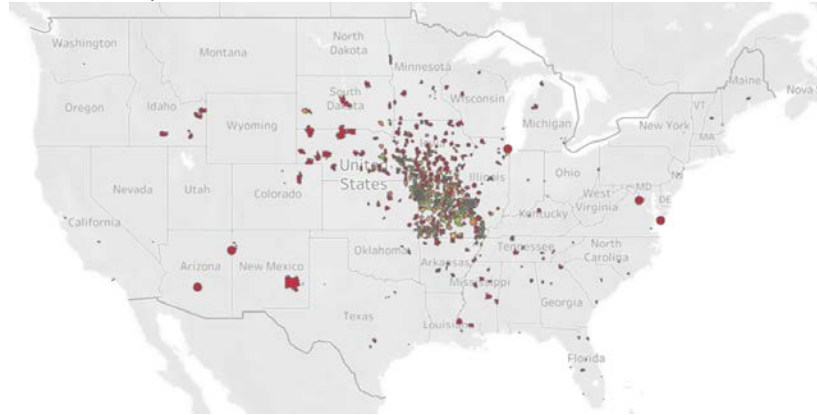
## Appendix C

Appendix C are the heat maps indicated in Appendix B.

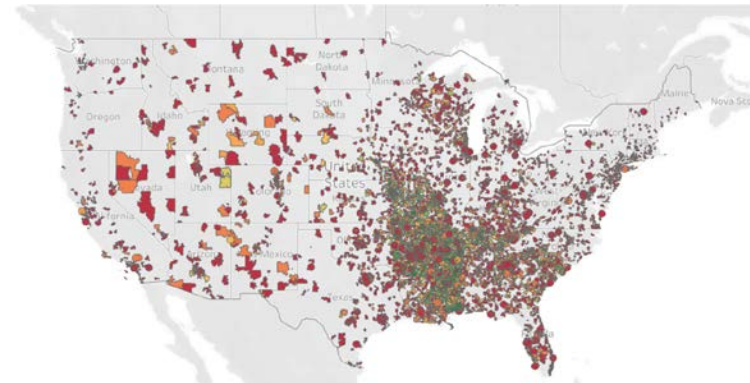
NWMSU inquiries MEd Ed Diag:



NWMSU inquires EDS:



Current EDS interest nationwide:





## **Appendix D**

Appendix D are three letters of support from school districts within our region.



# WEST PLATTE SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"Preserving the Past, Building the Future"*

Jan 31, 2022

To Whom It May Concern:

Missouri PK-12 school districts are faced with many personnel shortages. Among the more difficult positions to find and/or outsource are services related to educational diagnostics.

It has come to my attention that Northwest Missouri State University is in pursuit of a degree program by which candidates could earn endorsement to perform such work.

This addition is greatly needed in the PK-12 world. We are faced with increasing numbers of special education students, but, perhaps unseen, we see a great many more referrals to the special education process. We also are charged to screen for a variety of learning impediments, namely dyslexia, that we were not necessarily engaged in widespread discovery.

These realities mean more kids are tested formally for more conditions than ever before. At best, the people you have who are qualified to perform such analysis are stretched, at worst the backlog creates delays for kids who legitimately need access to enhanced services.

The education department at Northwest, per their long tradition of service to the region, has recognized this shortfall and is actively working to address the situation.

This program is needed in the area of largely rural Northwest Missouri. The University has provided top-shelf professional preparation for the area's educators for over 100 years. Please consider this as a needed and timely addition to preparations Northwest offers.

I would be delighted to discuss this issue in more detail. Please feel free to contact me by phone (816.640.2236) or email ([rinehartj@wpsd.net](mailto:rinehartj@wpsd.net)) to engage in such a discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Rinehart".

Dr. John Rinehart, Superintendent



# ROCK PORT R-II SCHOOL DISTRICT

**"To Be a Source of Inspiration and Knowledge for All"**

**600 South Nebraska Street    Rock Port, Missouri 64482    Fax (660) 744-5539    Web Page [rockport.k12.mo.us](http://rockport.k12.mo.us)**

**Mr. Ethan Sickels  
Superintendent  
(660) 744-6298**

**Mr. Donnie Parsons  
High School Principal  
(660) 744-6296**

**Mr. Steve Waigand  
Elementary Principal  
(660) 744-6294**

January 31, 2022

To: Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development

I am taking this opportunity to offer my support for a new Educational Specialist degree that Northwest Missouri State University is developing for Educational Diagnosticians. While I believe the need for more qualified individuals with this credential is beneficial for Missouri as a whole, I understand the impact this degree would provide for northwest Missouri school districts.

At Rock Port R-II we are involved in the Area Cooperative for Educational Support (ACES), a special education consortium with 21 other rural northwest Missouri school districts. Through this sharing arrangement, we utilize the services of one educational diagnostician. Our group could utilize another diagnostician, or perhaps even two; however, the available applicant pool that possess those credentials is sparse. Larger school districts who offer substantial salaries attract the available applicants, while we consider ourselves lucky to have one diagnostician who travels to 22 school districts providing their valuable testing abilities and expertise.

I share that example to illustrate the need not only for an additional Educational Specialist program focusing on Educational Diagnosticians, but especially here in northwest Missouri. Local educators who would be interested in this program want to attend a university they are familiar with, one that provides a terrific education, and one that can provide connections and support in our area to help students be successful in their role as educational diagnosticians. In addition, not only will the Educational Specialist degree increase the numbers of diagnosticians overall, but it will also help those educators pursuing this path become stronger in their educational field. As a superintendent, I would be fortunate to have a staff member in this program who not only provides diagnostician services, but improves their knowledge of learning challenges for students, communicates that information with our staff members and parents, and assists others in providing valuable evidence-based insight into what learning strategies may be best for our students.

While I am just one administrator here in northwest Missouri, I feel confident I speak for many supporting this program. The opportunities this Educational Specialist degree would provide to educators here in our area are extremely beneficial not only for our school districts, but our communities as well. If I can be of any more assistance throughout this process, please do not hesitate to contact me at [ethan.sickels@rpbluejays.com](mailto:ethan.sickels@rpbluejays.com) or (660) 744-6298. I appreciate your time and efforts to continually improve higher education in Missouri.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ethan Sickels".

Ethan Sickels



**Dr. Robert J. Vogelaar, SPHR, SHRM-SCP**  
*Assistant Superintendent | Human Resources*

January 31, 2022

Missouri Department of Higher Education  
and Workforce Development  
301 W. High Street  
P.O. Box 1469  
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1469

*Re: Advocacy for an Educational Specialist degree for Educational Diagnosticians*

Dear Program Proposal Review Board:

I am writing to advocate for the approval of an Educational Specialist degree for Educational Diagnosticians at Northwest Missouri State University. The need for program options that prepare students to advance their skills and abilities as diagnosticians are desperately needed. With too few offerings currently, school systems are left to provide growth opportunities, and many schools systems lack the resources to do this. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to approve the proposal that Northwest Missouri State University has brought forward.

They currently offer credentialing opportunities to Educational Diagnosticians as a Master's degree. Master's holders in Special Education want this degree opportunity at the next-level up, rather than just another Master's degree. As a result, more universities that can offer Ed.S. degree opportunities are necessary.

Below, please find the courses as Northwest currently offers at the master's level. I'm certain the advanced courses that build on the master's degree and the content within them will meet current educator needs to diagnose student learning challenges, communicate effectively with stakeholders, and help kids learn to the best of their ability. I've hyperlinked each of these offerings for you to take a closer look as well.

The courses include: <https://online.nwmissouri.edu/programs/msed-in-educational-diagnostician.aspx>

[EDUC 61641: Data Literacy and Assessment for Schools](#)

[EDUC 61642: Multicultural Education for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)

[EDCI 62635: Techniques for Conferencing and Collaboration](#)

[EDCI 62645: Theories and Techniques of Behavior Analysis and Intervention](#)

[EDCI 62601: Literacy-Based Assessment and Analysis](#)

[EDCI 62668: Academic Skills: Assessment for Intervention](#)

[EDCI 62658: Applied Learning Theory](#)

[EDCI 62685: Test Theory and Developmental Assessment](#)

[EDCI 62678: Educational Diagnosis and Individual Cognitive Assessment](#)

[EDCI 62697: Capstone Project: Educational Diagnostics](#)

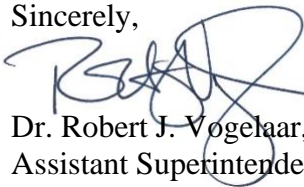
The program and its content will benefit Liberty Public Schools (as well as many other school districts across the region) by helping teachers become building-level leaders with the skills to:

1. Understand, assess, and communicate about learning challenges faced by students and families
2. Provide an informed, expert view on the academic testing results and how to support students based on evidence
  - a. Without having to hire an expensive, hard-to-find position for a school psychologist with certification in school psychological examiner.
3. Work with families and parents and district leaders to design and implement services based on data
4. Diagnose learning loss and provide resources for remediation
  - a. Especially important during the pandemic and hopefully soon, post-pandemic era.

Again, the degree should be at the Specialist level, because many of our practitioners already possess a Special Education Master's degree. Professionally, they are incentivized on our salary schedule to continue their professional growth by advancing their degree progression rather than duplicating it.

If I can answer any questions you have about what I have written or if you would like to receive further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr. Robert J. Vogelaar, SPHR, SHRM-SCP  
Assistant Superintendent | Human Resources

## Appendix E

Appendix E is a chart comparing the two MSED Ed Diagnostician and one EdS Ed Diagnostician programs.

<b>Program</b>	MSEd in Educational Diagnostician- Best Practice Track	MSEd in Educational Diagnostician with School Psychological Examiner Certification Track	Ed. S in Educational Diagnostician with School Psychological Examiner Certification Track
<b>Intended Student Background</b>	Teacher Education or Student Services (BSEd degree)	Teacher or Student Services Certification (BSEd degree)	MSEd in Teacher/Special Education, Student Services, or related area
<b>Curriculum</b>	61-641 Data Literacy and Assessment for Schools	61-641 Data Literacy and Assessment for Schools	61-723 Writing and Interpreting Statistics
	61-642 Multicultural Education for Diversity Equity and Inclusion	61-642 Multicultural Education for Diversity Equity and Inclusion	61-713 School Personnel
	62-635 Techniques for Conferencing and Collaboration	62-635 Techniques for Conferencing and Collaboration	61-623 Relational School Leadership
	62-645 Theories and Techniques of Behavior Analysis and Intervention	62-691 Advanced Educational Psychology for Educational Diagnosticians	62-791 Advanced Educational Psychology for Educational Diagnosticians (taught at a higher level than 62-691)
	62-601 Literacy –Based Assessment and Analysis	61-614 Intro to Teaching (Emphasis on Developmental Psychology)	61-614 Intro to Teaching (Emphasis on Developmental Psychology)
	62-668 Academic Skills: Assessment for Intervention	62-668 Academic Skills: Assessment for Intervention	62-668 Academic Skills: Assessment for Intervention
	62-658 Applied Learning Theory	62-658 Applied Learning Theory	62-658 Applied Learning Theory
	62-685 Test Theory and Developmental Assessment	62-685 Test Theory and Developmental Assessment	62-685 Test Theory and Developmental Assessment
	62-678 Educational Diagnosis and Individual Cognitive Assessment	62-678 Educational Diagnosis and Individual Cognitive Assessment	62-678 Educational Diagnosis and Individual Cognitive Assessment
	62-697 Capstone Project: Educational Diagnostics	62-697 Capstone Project: Educational Diagnostics	62-697 Capstone Project: Educational Diagnostics
	Degree Requirements: Completion of all coursework listed, completion of research paper, completion of 150 hours of practicum experience under the guidance of a mentor	Degree Requirements: Completion of all coursework listed above, completion of research paper, completion of 150 hours of practicum experience under the guidance of a mentor with School Psychologist or School Psychological Examiner certification	Degree Requirements: Completion of all coursework listed above, completion of research project, completion of 150 hours of practicum experience under the guidance of a mentor with School Psychologist or School Psychological Examiner certification

**Form 7: Comprehensive Review Checklist  
Phase 2, External Review**

**Northwest Missouri State University  
Education Specialist (EDSp), Educational Diagnostician**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Where Provided</b> (Institution complete)	<b>Current Status</b> (External Review Team complete)	<b>DHEWD Response</b>
The review team included faculty experts in the discipline to be offered and administrators from institutions already offering the program in the discipline and at the degree level proposed ( <i>required</i> )			
The review team included at least one faculty member or administrator familiar with the degree/discipline from a community college ( <i>strongly encouraged</i> )			

<b>The institution has the capacity to offer the new program, including <u>all</u> of the following:</b>			
General resources (library, facilities, equipment, classroom/lab space, etc.)	Phase II Narrative Page 4	See Note 1	
Academic resources, including faculty and staff, that are appropriate for the program being proposed (e.g., faculty credentials, use of adjunct faculty, and faculty teaching workloads)	Phase II Narrative Page 7	See Note 2	
Student service support	Phase II Narrative Page 7	See Note 3	
Comprehensive cost/revenue analysis	Phase II Narrative Page 1	See Note 4	

Respectfully Submitted,

Edward Schultz, PhD. Professor of Special Education at Midwestern State University, West College of Education, specializing in Educational Diagnostician Training.

Sarah Owens, PhD, NCSP, Licensed Psychologist President - Missouri Association of School Psychologists

Ann McCoy, Ph.D. Dean, College of Education, Professor, Elementary Mathematics Education, University of Central Missouri.

**Note 1-General Resources**

Northwest Missouri State University (NWSU) has well established systems and infrastructure in place to support this program. This program will be delivered via distance education. NWSU has more than adequate educational technology (Northwest Online-Canvas) to deliver instruction. The NWSU library has access to books, materials, and databases containing access to journals

and other electronic resources relevant to the field of study of Educational Psychology leading to School Psychological Examiner degrees.

### **Note 2-Academic Resources**

NWSU's Education Department has a well-established core set of full-time faculty who possess terminal degrees directly related to the knowledge and skills required of School Psychological examiners. Adjunct faculty are selected in a manner that enhance the students' learning and meet the program goals, and have relevant experience. Online delivery of instruction is a blend of asynchronous and synchronous events to maximize learning, consider the needs of the contemporary graduate student, and allow for quality feedback and student-professor interactions

### **Note 3-Student Support**

Institutional student support is evident across NWSU and the program has existing structures that offer strong levels of student support. NWSU's student success program (Northwest 360) provides faculty, advisors, and students a pathway to address immediate need, report student issues, and resources to support students. NWSU partners with Academic Partnerships, an online program manager, that provides coaching services for students to ensure they persist towards program completion. The program has been designed for high impact online delivery for the working professional, Courses are offered on a scheduling model which ensures all course will be offered as posted. The program admits students who have demonstrated success using multiple indicators (e.g., GPA, graduate degrees, service records).

### **Note 4- Comprehensive cost/revenue analysis**

NWSU has provided a detailed cost/revenue analysis with supporting projections. The projected five-year cost for the proposed Ed.S. program is approximately \$199,335. These costs cover projected salary and benefits for existing full-time faculty and funding for adjunct faculty to cover teaching expenses for the program. This is the projected additional costs for the program since the existing infrastructure and other support features for the proposed Ed.S. already exist and are at a sufficient level to support the new Ed.S. Educational Diagnostician program. The current Ed.S. Program Director, Dr. Kristi Alexander, will continue her role without any additional expense to the institution. The projected five-year revenue is based on a conservative projection of starting the program with 10 students in year 1 and adding five students each year to reach 30 by year 5. We anticipate 10 graduates in year 3 and 20 by year 5.

### **Other Notes**

The external review team reviewed the responses of NWSU to comments (page 8), specifically regarding question two. NWSU clearly delineated the main difference between the master's program and Ed.S. program. The main difference between a person obtaining a master's degree in educational diagnostician and a specialist degree in educational diagnostician is the level of understanding of the statistical analysis, understanding of program evaluation, developing policies, and district level leadership competencies learned and practiced. Having a person who has a specialist degree in educational diagnostician allows a district greater latitude at utilizing the person in a larger capacity than they may typically do. In addition, Appendix E of the Phase II document contains a table differentiating the courses.