

Expanding Capacity for Special Education Leadership (ECSEL)

*A Statewide Partnership Among the Campuses of
The University of Washington & Washington State University*

Newsletter / Summer 2015

DEAR COLLEAGUES,

This summer season marks the mid-point of the ECSEL program's second cohort. As I write, fifteen candidates from throughout Washington are beginning the second year of Saturday seminars and special education leadership internships. By next June, these candidates will leave ECSEL as Washington State-certified special education administrators, joining graduates of Cohort 1 in serving special education community as administrative leaders with exceptional skills and commitments.

We are also excited to begin the application and selection process for the next cohort of special education leaders. In partnership with school districts across the State, we are seeking special education teachers and teacher leaders, school psychologists, occupational/physical therapists or speech and language pathologists with at least five years of experience who are interested in preparing to move into higher impact administrative roles.

I hope you will share this Information with your colleagues who are ready to take the next step in changing the landscape of our profession. Please visit our website for additional information regarding the ECSEL program and the application process.

Sincerely,
Tom Bellamy
Professor & ECSEL Program Director

WHO WE ARE

ECSEL is administered by the **School of Educational Studies at the University of Washington Bothell**, and it operates with extensive involvement and support from our **university partners**, the **OSPI**, the **State's Education Service Districts**, and **many local special education administrators** who serve as members of the ECSEL faculty. With such broad involvement in ECSEL, new candidates join a large and growing network of special education leaders who will guide future special education services in Washington.

APPLICATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED!

Join the Next ECSEL Cohort – Summer 2016

- Are you a special education professional interested in moving into a leadership role? The ECSEL Program (Expanding Capacity for Special Education Leadership) will open for applications beginning August 5.
- Applications are due on February 15, 2016, with 18 candidates to be admitted for a program start in July, 2016.
- ECSEL is a 2-year program which prepares teachers and other special education professionals for positions in local special education administration. Coursework is focused on school and district-level leadership and is implemented through seminars meeting one Saturday per month, e-learning assignments, and two 400-hour internships. ECSEL graduates earn Washington State Residency Certification in Program Administration and a Master's degree in Educational Leadership.
- Tuition for the ECSEL program is covered at approximately 90% by a federal grant, and admission is highly competitive. For additional information about ECSEL, as well as criteria for admission and application materials, please visit our website: <http://www.bothell.washington.edu/education/ecsel>



ECSEL candidates gather for an intensive 3-day Summer Institute. During the Institute, candidates work closely with a collaborative team of faculty to prepare for the second year of their program.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

NICOLE PRESTON

Director of Special Education
Eastmont School District
ECSEL Cohort 1

In what significant ways has your practice as special education leader changed after graduating from the ECSEL program?

I attained a Director of Special Education position. I am now leading, managing, directing, and am in a role far different than my role as a School Psychologist.

Has the ECSEL program further shaped or changed your career goals and if so, how?

Substantially. I had not considered a place in educational leadership until my participation in the ECSEL program. While continuing to learn a great deal in my new position as Director of Special Education, ECSEL provided me with an incredibly strong base to continue to learn my new district and the new position.

What were the most valuable skills or attributes you acquired as a candidate within the ECSEL program?

Resiliency for managing enduring conflict, strong networking skills for problem solving, utilization of electronic reference library from all course work.

What was your favorite part of the program?

Saturday sessions together discussing materials covered prior to session. Hearing about other districts and learning about other systems.

What would you say helped you prepare for success within the program?

- Strong district support for participation in the program
- Building and central office support for internship experience
- Family support to attend Saturday sessions

FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

AMY VUJOVICH

Director of Student Services - 12 years
Shoreline School District
ECSEL Curriculum: Organizational Leadership

In what ways do you feel ECSEL is unique in preparing special education leaders?

It is the only program that I know of that specifically addresses the education and experiences needed to successfully step into the central office role of a special education administrator. Most of us current administrators came out of the classroom or building level, and received our admin credentials through a principal certification program. While those programs have much to offer, they didn't offer much specific to the complicated and specific role of being a special education administrator.

What are your favorite aspects of the ECSEL program?

The cohort model – I believe there is a tremendous amount of strength that is gained by partnering with, learning with, learning from and reflecting with your colleagues. These are relationships and partnerships that the graduates will greatly benefit from in their new positions.

What are the biggest changes you see in candidates as they complete their program?

Their confidence in their ability to do the job. And a large part of that is because their frame of reference changes – they move from thinking about their work from the vantage point of being a teacher/TOSA/psych to thinking about their work from an administrative position which functions as a part of the larger organization.

Why have you chosen special education teaching/administration as a career?

All of my jobs as an adult have involved teaching and caring for others. I specifically chose teaching as I believe successful public schools for all students are critical to the development of an inclusive community, and that an inclusive community (one where all members can fully participate and succeed) makes us better as a society. Protecting the rights of all students, in particular the rights of students with disabilities, and providing leadership that fosters an environment where all kids learn to be as safely independent as they can in the adult world starts at the top.



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