



RDG 370/380/390

**THE TEACHING OF READING
READING & THINKING THROUGH THE LANGUAGE PROCESSES
LITERACY ASSESSMENT AND INSTRUCTION**

RDG 370/380/390 are required courses for the Elementary Certification EC-4 Reading/Language Arts program.

**College of Education
Department of Language, Literacy & Special Populations**

Through programs dedicated to collaboration in instruction, field experience, and research, the candidates in Sam Houston State University's Educator Preparation Programs acquire the knowledge, dispositions, and skills necessary to create a positive learning environment. Employing a variety of technologies, these candidates learn to plan, implement, assess, and modify instruction to meet the needs of our communities' diverse learners.

- Instructor:** Dr. Linda Ellis
TEC, Room 107F
SHSU Office Phone: 936-294-3864
Email: lellis@shsu.edu
Office hours: SHSU – Tuesday 9:00 – 4:00
Rice & Mitchell – By Appointment
- EC-4 Required Text #1:** Avery, Carol (2003). *...And With a Light Touch: Learning about reading, writing, and teaching with first graders.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- 4-8 RLA Required Text #1:** Atwell, Nancie (1998). *In the middle: New understandings about writing, reading, and learning.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Required Text #2:** New Zealand Ministry of Education (1997). *Reading for Life: The learner as a reader.* Learning Media Limited. **OR**
- Ellis, Linda and Jamie Marsh (2007). *Getting Started: The Reading-Writing Workshop, Grades 4-8..* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann: Heinemann.
- 4-8 Math, Science or SS:** Two texts from the Heinemann.com website related to reading and writing in your content area (see instructor for further instructions).
- Course Packet:** Details to be announced.

Additional Materials Needed for Class:

1. Texas Reading Initiative Language Arts Booklets.
Available : <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/products/products.html>
2. TEKS for Reading/Language Arts. www.tea.state.tx.us
3. TExES Practice Exam (On-line) – Bring to class on day we take the practice exam.
<http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/standtest/guidprepman.asp>
Under standards and testing go to test guides/preparation at
<http://www.sbec.state.tx.us/SBECOnline/standtest/guidprepman.asp>
Go to TExES at http://www.excet.nesinc.com/prepmanuals/prepman_opener.htm

Click to view EC-4 Generalist or 4-8 Reading Language Arts at
http://www.excet.nesinc.com/prepmanuals/PDFs/TExES fld101_prepmanual.pdf

4. TAKS Release Tests for 2007 for 4th grade Reading/Language Arts & Writing (On-line) at
www.tea.state.tx.us

Course Description: This course is designed as a field-based reading language arts methods course. As such, a high degree of professional commitment from candidates for certification is expected. At the conclusion of the course the candidates should understand the relationship between reading/language arts and the literacy experiences of children in grades EC-8. They should also understand the interconnectedness of content area knowledge and pedagogy.

Course Format: Course content is delivered through lecture, self-study, workshop, collaborative groups, and school experiences. During class sessions literacy concepts, theories, and strategies appropriate for elementary/intermediate/middle school learners are discussed and practiced. During the school service portion of the course candidates work with mentor teachers in elementary/intermediate/middle schools to apply with children the concepts, theories, and strategies discussed in class. The professor's instructional focus is to assist certification candidates in the process of becoming reflective practitioners. To facilitate this, a discovery learning approach is emphasized.

Standards Matrix: Highlighted activities indicate that candidates in SHSU's educator preparation program interact with K-8 public school students in a public school classroom in order to complete this activity.

Objectives/Learning Outcomes	Activities (* indicates field-based activity)	Performance Assessment	Standards: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>State Standards</u> • <i>ACEI Standards</i> • <i>NAEYC Standards</i> •
#1 Candidates will demonstrate their knowledge of theories, processes, and principles of children's language and literacy development from emergent through fluent level readers, writers, listeners, and speakers.	Responses to readings and group discussions Reading/Writing Workshop *Work with students in the field Read aloud in university classroom *Read aloud in field-based classroom *Writing process activity in field-based Classroom *Case Study Self Assessment of learning	Reflections on Professional Reading Reflexive Writing Rubric Writing Process Rubric Book Shares Case Study Final Self Assessment Rubric	001, 002, 004, 007, 008, 009, 010, 011, 012, 014, 015, 018, 019 <i>1, 2a, 2b, 2i, 3a, 3d, 5b</i> <i>1</i>
#2 Candidates demonstrate knowledge of current approaches for teaching reading and writing, listening and speaking, and the components of a balanced literacy program.	Responses to readings and group discussions *Writer's workshop *Book shares	Mentor Evaluation Writer's workshop rubric & reflection Book share rubric & reflection Case Study	003, 005, 008, 009, 010, 019 <i>1, 2b, 2i, 7.1k-7.3k</i> <i>1</i>
#3 Candidates demonstrate skill in using language arts	*Writer's workshop *Book shares	Lesson plan rubric Mentor Evaluation	001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 013, 017, 019

instructional strategies and knowledge of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS).	Reporter's Formula Activity *Writer's Workshop *Book Shares *Case Study	Book share reflection Writer's workshop rubric Case Study Rubric	<i>1, 2a, 2b</i> <i>4b, 4c, 4d</i>
#4 Candidates demonstrate awareness of diversity in students abilities, cultural backgrounds, and language, and ability to use these understandings to develop appropriate instructional strategies and practices.	*Writer's workshop *Book shares Case Study *Mini lessons for writer's workshop and tutoring * Literature Kit	Lesson plan rubric Mentor Evaluation Writer's workshop rubric Book share reflection Case Study Rubric	<u>003, 018</u> 2b, 3d 1.4s, 1.7s, 2.1s-2.3s, 3.2s, 4.1s, 4.9s, 5.3k, 5.5k, 5.1s-5.6s, 6.4k, 7.4k, 7.1s, 7.12s, 8.3k, 8.2s, 8.3s, 8.4s, 9.4s, 9.5s, 10.5k, 10.2s 3a.5
#5 Candidates demonstrate a knowledge of interesting and grade appropriate trade books for children.	*Lesson Plan Genre Presentation Book Project	Lesson plan rubric Genre Presentation Rubric Book Project Rubric Final Self Assessment Mentor Evaluation	<u>003, 018</u> <i>2b, 3b</i>
#6 Candidates demonstrate an ability to reflect on their own learning processes, seek answers to questions, and participate in and lead collaborative tasks.	Responses to readings and group discussions *Writer's workshop *Book shares *Reflections on learning experiences in mentor teacher's classroom Conference reflections Literacy Autobiography Best Practices Reflection Final Self Assessment	Writer's workshop rubric Book share reflections Literacy Autobiography Reflection Observation/Learning Log Best Practices Reflection	<i>2b, 5b, 5d</i>
#7 Candidates understand the framework and key vocabulary of assessment-based literacy instruction.	Responses to readings and group discussions Case Study	Case Study Rubric Final Self Assessment	1.3k 1.5k-1.7k, 2.1k-2.4k, 3.1-3.2k 3.4k <i>2b, 4, 5</i>
#8 Candidates understand the need for and use of a variety of assessment tools (formal and informal) and techniques and are able to determine the reading level of a student in order to provide reading/writing instruction.	Case Study *Study & administration of informal assessment tools and techniques Response to readings and group discussions	Preliminary Case Study Report Final Case Study Report	1.8k, 3.3s, 4.9s, 5.4k, 5.7s 6.3k, 6.1s, 7.1s, 7.10k, 9.6k, 9.1s, 10.1k, 10.2k, 10.4k, 10.7k, 10.1s, 10.2s, 10.3s <i>2b, 4,5</i> <i>2, 4d</i>

<p># 9 Candidates articulate and use information describing the stages of literacy development to assess and instruct a student in reading and writing.</p>	<p>Responses to readings and group discussions *Book shares *Writing Process Project with student *Lesson plans *Case Study</p>	<p>Lesson Plans Preliminary assessment reports Case Study Report</p>	<p>1.2k, 1.3k, 1.6k, 1.7k 1.3s, 1.7s, 4.1k-4.3k, 5.1k-5.5k, 6.1k, 6.2k, 7.5k, 7.7k, 7.1s, 7.7s, 7.8k, 7.9k, 8.1k, 8.2k, 8.3k, 8.5k, 9.1k-9.4k 2, 4b</p>
<p># 10 Candidates understand the importance of communicating with parents about ways they can encourage the literacy development of their child.</p>	<p>Final Self Assessment</p>		<p>1.8s, 2.4s, 3.4s, 4.10s, 5.8s, 7.13s, 8.8s, 9.7s, 10.4s 2, 4a</p>
<p># 11 Candidates understand the need to communicate with other professionals in order to learn about and share current literacy practices.</p>	<p>Class discussions & debriefings *Informal debriefing sessions after tutorials with classroom teacher</p>	<p>Self Assessment Mentor evaluation</p>	<p>1.9s, 2.5s, 3.5s, 4.11s, 5.9s, 7.14s, 8.9s, 9.8s 2b, 5b 5</p>

Web address for state standards: <http://www.tea.state.tx.us>

Web address for ACEI standards: www.udel.edu/bateman/acei/index.html

Course Content: This course is designed to help you become an informed, reflective decision maker who can translate understandings of literacy processes and methodology into appropriate instructional decisions for children. Specifically, this course will develop your:

1. Knowledge of the theories, processes, and principles of children’s language and literacy development from emergent through fluent level readers and writers, listeners and speakers.
2. Knowledge of current approaches--basal reader, language experience, and literature-based, the integrated language arts, thematic, writing workshop, creative expression and performing text--for teaching reading and writing, listening and speaking.
3. Skill in using language arts instructional strategies. You will learn various strategies for helping children become strategic readers and writers.
4. Awareness of diversity in student abilities, cultural backgrounds and language, and ability to use these understandings to develop appropriate instructional practices
5. Knowledge of children’s literature, including those with multicultural emphases, and skill in using trade books to teach the language arts.
6. Ability to use the most current research to reflect on your own learning processes, seek answers to questions, and participate in and lead collaborative tasks.
7. Knowledge of the degree and probable causes of children’s difficulty with classroom reading/writing processes.
8. Skill in using a range of assessment techniques to determine student’s literacy strengths and needs.
9. Ability to communicate student strengths and needs with colleagues and parents.
10. Ability to identify, select, and implement instructional strategies appropriate for meeting students’ assessed needs.

Course Requirements:

- 1) **Professionalism:** You are currently in a professional course of study in which you are preparing to be a teacher, accountable to and for children, their parents, your colleagues, and administrators. This is not a responsibility that

can be taken lightly. It is expected that your joyful and enthusiastic **participation** in activities as well as positive **attitudes and dispositions** toward learning be exhibited throughout your teacher preparation program. Rice Elementary and Mitchell Intermediate are our host schools for this course. You are a guest in these schools. That means your attitude and behaviors are those of the perfect guest: You look for the good things, you're cheerful and enthusiastic, and you show that you're grateful to be here. In this course, everyone begins the semester with 50 points, the maximum for exemplary professional behavior. Loss of points can be the result of absences, tardies, unfinished or poorly prepared work, poor communication between your colleagues or mentor teachers, negative attitudes, lack of initiative, impatience, rudeness, or other unprofessional behavior. A loss of 5 points for each such occurrence from your final grade can be expected. More points can be lost depending on the seriousness of the infraction. In addition, loss of most or all professionalism points will result in the submission of a note to the College of Education's Professional Concerns Committee. Solely the professors and your mentor teachers determine the final total of professionalism points. **NOTE:** If all professionalism points are lost, the final grades for RDG 370/380/390 cannot be higher than a D.

- 2) **Class Attendance and Participation:** Students are expected to attend every class (attendance will be taken each class period) and to participate in class discussions, experiential activities, and collaborative projects. Students are expected to complete reading assignments, bring any materials, books, or mini-assignments, etc. required for conducting the class discussions and activities. All written work is to be submitted on time (for adequate instructor feedback prior to related scheduled activities or assignments). You are expected to be on time for all class meetings. Even if you turn in all assignments and they are complete, you are not guaranteed an A if you fail to attend class or are consistently tardy. This is a "hands-on" course in which many of the instructional techniques are demonstrated in class, applied in classrooms, and debriefed in large and small group discussions. Your participation and contributions are vital to your success. Attendance also demonstrates a level of responsibility and commitment that is expected of a professional. Therefore, regular and punctual attendance is expected. Each student is responsible for class attendance for all sessions. In the event of an absence, the instructor must be notified prior to the absence. If you are absent on a day when you are in the mentor teacher's classroom, that mentor teacher must be notified by e-mail prior to the absence. Absence without prior notice and approval will result in lowering of course grade. Ten points will be deducted from the final grade for each unexcused absence. Absences will only be excused with a doctor's note or with approval of instructor. Any class missed in case of an absence must be made up. It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with the instructor or the mentor teacher to make up work or time missed in your field-based classroom. If assignments are not made up, ten points will be deducted from student's final grade. Tardies and early departures are recorded. Two such occurrences are the equivalent of one unexcused absence unless instructor approves documentation of the student. It is your responsibility to inform the professor or mentor teacher of late arrival **before that class session ends** so the tardy is not recorded as an absence. Two absences without notice will result in student being dropped from class. Each unexcused absence or tardy will also result in loss of professionalism points. You must treat arrival and departure to class or your field-experience as seriously as if it were your job for the semester.
- 3) **Assignments:** All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the date assigned. Submission of work at any other time that day will be considered late. All assignments not submitted on time/due date will reduce Professionalism Points by 5 points each. Poorly completed or incomplete assignments in need of revisions deduct 2 points each. All assignments (unless otherwise noted in this syllabus or by the professor) must be typed in 12 point Times font with 1 inch margins on all sides and single-spaced.
- 4) **Reporter's Formula Interview and Introduction:** You will choose a partner to interview during class. This interview will be written into a newspaper article to be used in introducing your partner to the class and for display in the classroom. (25 points)
- 5) **Literacy Autobiography:** You will write two memoirs regarding your standout memories of reading and writing (+ or -) from preschool, elementary, adolescence, etc. These will be used as a springboard for class discussion of best practices in the teaching of literacy and the importance of reflecting on your practice. (25 points)

- 6) **Best Practices Activity:** This is an activity in which you will reflect on your best teacher and your worst teacher in two separate reflections. We will use these reflections in class to make implications regarding your own work with students in your field experiences and as a future teacher. (25 points)
- 7) **Professional Book Assigned Readings and Reflections:** Each student is responsible for complete and thorough reading of each chapter in the assigned textbooks. Discussion groups will be set up on Blackboard. Each student will contribute an elaborated analysis of your learning for each chapter on Blackboard and will respond to at least one classmates' reflection per chapter. These reflections provide a place for you to think. You must show evidence of critical reading and reflection. These reflections will be used as starting point for weekly in-class discussions (200 points, 100 per book).
- 8) **Reflexive Writing Piece:** Throughout the semester, I will guide you through writing activities to generate a reflexive piece of writing. This will in turn guide your work with your students in the classroom. You will select one of your own pieces to take through the writing process. A final piece of your own writing with drafts will be completed and turned in for a grade. It will be published in book format as a model for your students (100 points)
- 9) **Professional Development Activities:** Because professional growth opportunities are a part of your future, you will need to take part in eight (8) hours of educational growth opportunities. Each candidate will complete the following professional development activities (100 points):
- Research the International Reading Association (reading.org) and National Council of Teachers of English (ncte.org) websites and complete the following (40 points):
 - Read at least one position statement from each organization and for each type a summary/response paper reflecting on your learning from each position statement and your search on the website. (10 pts.)
 - Read and reflect on one article from each of the websites as follows. Articles can be found in the Wilson search engine through the university library. Some articles can be found online (20 points):
 - International Reading Association – *The Reading Teacher* (elementary) or *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy* (middle school) (10 points)
 - National Council of Teachers of English – *Language Arts* (elementary) or *Voices from the Middle* (middle school) (10 points)
 - Submit a copy of the online membership form for each organization. (This is to show me that you know how to join.) (10 pts.)
 - Unless circumstances prevent you from going (must be approved by the instructor), each of you will attend the Joan Prouty Young Child Winter Conference to be held at SHSU (date to be announced), the Early Childhood Winter Conference on February 2, Hyatt, Downtown Houston, the New Jersey Writing Project Conference in Austin, TX on March 27-30, or another literacy conference approved by the professor. You will turn in a typed reflection of your learning from each session that you attended with your conference certificate to receive full credit (60 points)
- 10) **Book Projects:** You will choose a way to present your favorite children's, young adult, or adult book with the class. Ideas will be provided by the instructor. (25 points)

PRACTICUM. A minimum of sixty hours of practicum is required for this blocked course. This component is NOT observation. You will be expected to be an active assistant and learner in these classrooms. Your University professor and mentor teachers jointly oversee all practicum experiences. The required school practicum experiences represent a collaborative effort by your host school mentor teachers and university faculty to meet program, state, and national standards as well as district goals. These experiences listed below constitute 50 percent of your course grade:

- 11) **Book Shares/Read Alouds:** The purpose of this experience is to give you a chance to teach literacy through children's literature. Although you may be reading books to children several times a week, you only need to formally document by turning in a lesson plan/reflection for two of the sessions. The first Book Share will be with your peers in the university classroom. Book Shares #2 and #3 will be with students in your field-based classroom.

Lesson plans must be turned in by due dates. See schedule for due dates. You will turn in your lesson plan with peer, mentor and self assessments attached by due date. (50 points each for 100 points).

- 12) **Writer's Workshop:** You will take one child, a small group of children, or an entire class through a modified writing process (to be discussed in class) that will result in the publication of their own books. Lesson plans with reflections will be kept. The final session will be an Author's Celebration. This event will feature the children reading their books to an invited audience of children, parents, and/or teachers. (100 points)
- 13) **Observation/Learning Log:** After each class session each day that you are in the classroom, take at least ten minutes before you leave the school to jot down, in a learning log, reflections that will contribute to your growing philosophy about literacy. These can be kept in a notebook. They do not need to be typed. The notebook will be turned in and used as a springboard for our discussions at our last class meeting. (50 points)
- 14) **Case Study:** Knowing one child well is to know all children better. Each student will complete one case study with a struggling reader in grades 1-6. This struggling reader will not only be struggling with comprehension but will be struggling with ways to problem-solve when reading. **Please submit preliminary & final case study reports in a binder with dividers.**

a) The preliminary case study must include:

- Background information on the student
- Results of assessments
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Recommended instructional strategies
- All documentation (including all assessment information & writing sample)

**Preliminary Report
(20 points)**

b) Weekly Lesson Plans/Reflections with Case Study Child:

- Lesson plan for each instructional session (turned in prior to the lesson for approval):
 - name of child
 - age of child
 - date of session
 - plan for session (must be from strategies learned in class)
 - ✓ read aloud – Name of book & author
 - ✓ instructional reading time – instructional strategies
 - ✓ writing – prewriting/revision/etc.
 - Reflection on the session (What went well? What would you do differently? What didn't work?)
 - Plan for future session

**Lesson
Plans/Reflections
(60 points)**

c) Final Case Study Report

- In-depth analysis of your work with your child
- Results of instructional sessions (what worked, etc.)
- Suggestions for parents', teachers' or tutors' future work with the child
- Summary statement of your learning—about your child and about the teaching of reading in general.
- Preliminary Case Study
- Lesson plans/reflections

**Final Case Study
Report (20 points)**

- 15) **Mentor Teacher Final Evaluation:** Each of you will receive two mentor teacher evaluations of your work for the semester—one midpoint and one final. (50 points)
- 16) **Final Exam:** Candidates will complete a **final self-assessment** that will include a fully elaborated analysis of your learning from each of the above assignments. This will be completed and turned in the last week of class. You can make this a cumulative learning experience by reflecting after each assignment is completed. I don't want you using notes for this assignment. Real learning should come from the head and the heart and should make connections to what one already knows and what one wishes to learn. Real learning never stops. Therefore, in the final case study (and you can do this after each assignment or at the end), you must set goals for how you plan to use this learning when you get your own classroom. This assignment will contribute to your evolving literacy philosophy. (60 points)

Phonics Test: You will work together in small groups to take a phonics test. Exam will be provided. (10 points)

TK-20 Assignment: Candidates will complete three assignments for posting on TK20 by the last class day (details to be explained) as follows (10 points each for 30 points):

- **Guided Reading Lesson** – Choose one lesson plan from your case study to post. See Guided Reading Lesson Rubric under Course Information
- **Writing Process Lesson Plan** – Choose one lesson plan from your writing process assignment to post. See Writing Process Rubric under Course Information.
- **Disposition Matrix** – Print out Disposition Matrix and bring to class first class day. This is an assignment that you will work on throughout the semester. You will self assess at the end of the semester and post on TK20. Find the Disposition Matrix under Course Information.

Evaluation: Instructor expectations for graded assignments will be clarified through assignment explanation handouts and grading rubrics. All work submitted for review must be edited. All projects/assignments are to be typed unless noted otherwise by the instructor. Late papers/assignments will be penalized one grade.

University Classroom Assignments	Possible Points	Points Earned
Literacy Autobiography	25	
Best Practices Activity	25	
Reporter's Formula Activity	25	
Professional Reading Reflection (100 for each book)	200	
Professional Development Assignment	100	
Reflexive Writing Piece/Book	100	
Book Project	25	
Total University Classroom Points	500	
Field Assignments		
Book Shares (2 @ 50 points each)	100	
Writing Process Project	100	
Case Study	100	
Preliminary 20		
Lesson Plans 60		
Final Report 20		
Observation/Learning Log	50	
Mentor Teacher Evaluation	50	
Final Self Assessment 60	100	

Phonics Test	10	
TK20 Assignment	30	
Total Field Points		500
Total Possible Points		1000

The professor reserves the right to alter course requirements to better meet the learning needs and maturity levels of the teacher candidates. Late work will not receive full credit. Ten points will be deducted for each class time the work is not turned in. No grade will be awarded unless all assignments are completed.

Evaluation:	A	90%-100%	900 to 1000 pts.
	B	80%-89%	800 to 899 pts.
	C	70%-79%	700 to 799 pts.
	D	60%-69%	600 to 699 pts.
	F	Below 60%	

University Policies: You may find online a more detailed description of the following policies. These guidelines will also provide you with a link to the specific university policy or procedure: <http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus/>
Academic Dishonesty: Students are expected to maintain honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*
Classroom Rules of Conduct: Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. Students are to treat faculty and students with respect. Students are to turn off all cell phones while in the classroom. Under no circumstances are cell phones or any electronic devices to be used or seen during times of examination. Students may tape record lectures provided they do not disturb other students in the process.
Student Absences on Religious Holy Days: Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*
Students with Disabilities Policy: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Further, they shall not be denied the benefits of these programs nor shall they be subjected to discrimination. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance should visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. *See Student Syllabus Guidelines.*
Visitors in the Classroom: Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

Expectations: Given the heavy emphasis on discussion and engagement, attendance is a requirement. In addition, mastery of the dispositions at the Emerging Competence Level is an expectation for this course. It is your responsibility to make these dispositions visible by showing that you do indeed consistently value and practice them. (Details will be forthcoming.) Failure to demonstrate these dispositions will result in a referral to the Professional Concerns Committee.

NOTE: All students enrolled in education courses with a field experience component in the public schools are required to APPLY at the beginning of the semester to the Educator Preparation Program before beginning their first field experience. Currently, applications are located outside TEC Room 213. Applications are to be submitted to the Associate Dean's office with a check for \$75.00 made out to SHCPDEP (Sam Houston Center for Professional Development and Educational Partnerships) with a criminal history background check release, an unofficial transcript, and an unofficial degree plan attached. Failure to do so will result in students not receiving credit for the course and not being allowed to complete their field experience. Compliance with this policy assures our partnership schools that criminal history background checks are initiated for all students participating in field experience in the public schools.