SECTION V – USE OF ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO IMPROVE CANDIDATE AND PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

The PB SPED program conducted a thorough curriculum review based on recommendations from the initial CEC SPA review. Significant revisions to assessments took place to provide more accurate descriptions in scoring guides and rubrics as well as to align and target more closely assessments to standards (see Section IV). A curriculum proposal for a change to the PB SPED program will be submitted for KSC review in Fall, 2008 which will include moving this program from post-baccalaureate certification to graduate initial certification including an M.Ed. This program will build on the assessment system established for our undergraduate and PB SPED program as well as add a graduate special education research and capstone component to enhance the critical thinking and research skills of candidates who receive special education certification. With the movement in the field of special education to the use of evidence-based practices this will be an important addition to our existing PB SPED program.

The revised as well as new assessments (Assessments 7 and 8) provide more thorough coverage of CEC Core Standards and will help guide our future program development. In the revised assessments, a strong attempt was made to align each of the new assessments to the CEC Core Standards. Also, Assessment 2, *Grades in Core Courses*, was deleted as a program assessment and the *Special Education Process Work Sample* (formerly the *IEP Work Sample* Assessment 7 in previous report) was moved to the Assessment 2 slot. This was a suggestion from the initial CEC SPA review.

Data is provided for Assessments 1-7. Assessment 8 is a new assessment targeting Standard 6: Language and will be initiated in the newly-proposed graduate initial certification and M.Ed. program as well as the Undergraduate Special Education Program.

1. Content knowledge
The grade scores from the previous report and the additional data from the *Content Based Portfolio Review* and *Special Education Process Work Sample,* show evidence of overall candidate mastery of special education content knowledge. Currently, New Hampshire does not require the PRAXIS II test for certification so we have utilized these two comprehensive assessments to measure content knowledge of our candidates.

The assessment tools that are utilized to assess content knowledge are comprehensive and systematic and provide an accurate picture of the content knowledge for PB SPED candidates. The *Special Education Process Work Sample* has traditionally been used as an assessment in the Undergraduate program and was adopted in its entirety for the PB SPED program. It has been descriptively aligned to the standards to more accurately assess content knowledge of our candidates. As we move to a significant curriculum proposal in connection to the PB SPED program, we will utilize the data related to content knowledge to make important curricular adjustments. One important change will be the addition of a new course, *Positive Behavior Supports,* to insure that we have solid

content knowledge coverage related to Standard 5. Much of this course content was integrated into the internships.

2. Professional and pedagogical knowledge, skill, and dispositions

The two year set of data for each program assessments show that candidates achieve solid mastery of CEC knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The interpretation section for each of these assessments provides specific insights into how well candidates have achieved mastery of standards in the PB SPED program (see Section IV). We have improved assessments to be more descriptive and aligned them accurately to standards. Assessments 1 (portfolio), 2 (special education process), and 4 (field work evaluation) are comprehensive in nature and provide broad program improvement data. The other assessments provide encouraging data related to candidate's instruction and assessment skills.

It is important to note that assessments were redesigned to address Standard 6: Language and a new assessment will be instituted (Assessment 8) to provide foundational content knowledge related to this standard area. We are excited about this assessment as comments from our previous SPA review, information from instructors, and two years of data showed we needed to develop a more targeted assessment for Standard 6.

Assessment 7, *Teacher Candidate Dispositions Assessment*, is a KSC Unit assessment that was included as a new program assessment. This, in combination with our revised Field Work Evaluation rubric, provided us with solid evaluation data related to Standards 9 and 10. Overall, candidates appear to be strong in the areas of collaboration and professional behaviors, but we plan to meet as a program faculty to discuss ways to more specifically tailor or extend the dispositions assessment to special education. We are looking forward to accumulating more data to make accurate program evaluation decisions in the future as the existing two years of data with small sample sizes limits our interpretation.

3. Student learning

Assessment 5, *Formative Assessment and Instruction Work Sample*, provides solid data on the impact of candidates' teaching on student learning. The data tracking components of this work sample provide clear data-based evidence of a candidate's impact on student learning. Candidates showed mastery of CEC skills related to standards 4, 7, and 8 through this assessment. Results from this assessment show that candidates can demonstrate, in the various components of the assessment, the link between evidenced based interventions they use and the impact of these on student learning. The assessment tool was rewritten in a rubric fashion to more accurately align to the standards as well as provide for a more rich description of the outcomes related to the work sample. Based on the use of this work sample and data, we will need to improve and refine how we teach candidates to track student improvement based on curriculum-based assessment techniques. Again, we look to the data in future years as well as qualitative feedback from various stakeholders to make improvements in the area of student learning.