

Morning Enrichment Program Helps Teaching Candidates Develop Teaching Foundation

by Kalli Collins

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EDWARDSVILLE - Elementary education students at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville are preparing for their future classrooms by gaining valuable experience practicing instruction and communication skills with students at Eastwood Elementary in East Alton.

“The CIED 441 course was developed to train teacher candidates on the foundational methods of teaching and learning elementary level mathematics,” said Barbara Martin, EdD, assistant professor of teaching and learning in the School of Education, Health, and Human Behavior (SEHHB). “It is designed around professional principles and standards, including the six basic precepts of equity, curriculum, teaching, learning, assessment and technology. These precepts are fundamental to a high-quality mathematics education.”

The SIUE teacher candidates work with elementary students before the start of the school day. They engage the young scholars by creating games that are designed to practice math concepts such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, measurement and fractions.

“Having the opportunity to work with the kids at Eastwood Elementary has made me so excited and eager to become a teacher,” said Skyler Bailey, a junior from Auburn. “We’re getting great hands-on experience in an elementary school. This experience has made me more confident in my journey to becoming an elementary school teacher.”

“We are fortunate to have a collaborative partnership with SIUE,” said Kelli Decker, curriculum director at Eastwood Elementary. “This program allows us to improve academic performance, create a love for learning, and boost student confidence in math. It allows students to explore math in a play-based manner, which touches each child's learning modality.”

The partnership between Eastwood and SIUE was halted by the pandemic, but this semester the morning enrichment program is back and will continue throughout the academic year. Brian Johnson, PhD, associate professor in the SEHHB Department of Teaching and Learning, launched the program and conducts a similar practicum experience focused on literacy instruction in the spring semester.

“Reading, writing, and mathematics represent core communication abilities that support science, social studies, and arts instruction in any elementary school curriculum,” said Johnson. “For this reason, SIUE classes that focus on mathematics and literacy instruction include a teaching practicum like this morning enrichment program with Eastwood.”

The School of Education, Health and Human Behavior prepares students in a wide range of fields, including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching and learning. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which

enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.