Purpose: This project will refine the existing special education teacher education program at East Carolina University. The program will be redesigned to prepare educators for either the initial (undergraduate or add-on license) or the initial and advanced license (MAT in Special Education) for students with high-incidence disabilities.

Method: The project is designed to improve outcomes for rural and low-wealth children with disabilities by planning an improved K-12 teacher education program (BS and MAT) that: (a) includes induction components, revised curriculum, and evidence-based interventions; (b) will prepare special educators to address the specialized needs of children with high-incidence disabilities from diverse cultural and language backgrounds, including English Language Learners with disabilities; (c) collaborates and is integrated with general education and provides extended clinical learning opportunities, field experiences, and supervised practica; (d) enables special educators to meet Highly Qualified Teacher requirements and be equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to assist children in achieving state standards; and (e) retains students in the teacher education program and supports new teachers through e-mentoring initiatives. Collaboration will take place among project faculty in special education (and elsewhere throughout the Department of Curriculum and Instruction) and among the College of Arts and Sciences. Additional collaboration with faculty from the University of Puerto Rico will strengthen efforts to provide teacher candidates with thoughtful and careful preparation work with students from culturally diverse backgrounds. Further, members of the Advisory Committee (including teacher candidates, recent
graduates, district and state administrators, individuals with disabilities, and parents of children with disabilities) have committed to working with the project to improve and enhance the on-campus and distance education teacher training programs to make them responsive to the needs and demands of the community.

Products: