

## Abstract

The School of Special Education, School Psychology, and Early Childhood Studies at the University of Florida proposes to restructure and improve our high incidence teacher education program. More specifically, we propose to restructure our on-campus Unified Elementary Proteach (UEP) masters degree program, which leads to dual state certification in elementary education and high incidence disabilities. We will collaborate with colleagues from our student services office and faculty from general education to ensure that program graduates meet the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements of IDEA 2004. We will also collaborate with colleagues from general education, professionals from local districts, and other members of our advisory board as this program is restructured. The restructured program will be designed to improve the quality and quantity of beginning special education teachers, and to address the shortage of highly qualified teachers in Florida and the nation by producing approximately 34 highly qualified teachers per year during the project period. The Project **Restructuring and Improving Teacher Education (RITE)** will include the most current information regarding effective, research-based practices to improve outcomes for students with high incidence disabilities in urban, suburban, and rural settings, including students in high need schools. Graduates will be prepared to a) use research-based practices to improve academic and behavioral outcomes for students with high incidence disabilities; b) address the needs of students from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds and those from high need schools; c) collaborate with general educators to improve outcomes for students with disabilities who are educated in general education classrooms; and d) improve student outcomes on high standards for learning in core academic subjects. Project RITE is submitted in response to the Special Education Preservice Program Improvement Grants request for proposals (CFDA 84.325T). This project addresses the competitive preference priority related to dual certification.