

Sterling Teacher Education Program (STEP)

Surveys from Academic Years 2023, 2024, 2025

ASSESSMENT	PURPOSE	FREQUENCY
Alumni Surveys – surveys of graduates sent out yearly in the Spring around the end of February/beginning of March.	To provide an opportunity for graduates to reflect on their preparation to teach. To provide feedback for improvement of our program.	Graduates receive the first survey request in the spring of their first year of teaching. Then they receive a survey their second and third year out.

Alumni Surveyed	Surveys Sent	Response Rate
Graduates from Academic Years (3 years, 2 years, 1 year out)	Spring 2023	24/28 = 85%
Graduates from Academic Years (3 years, 2 years, 1 year out)	Spring 2024	13/35 = 37%
Graduates from Academic Years (3 years, 2 years, 1 year out)	Spring 2025	31/35 = 89%

Alumni Survey Results:					
Managing the Classroom	Need Additional Support	Developing Skill	Accomplished Skill	Able to Lead Others	% receiving Accomplished Skill or Able to Lead Others
Develop a behavioral management plan	0	16	12	3	48%
Organize professional spaces in preparation to teach	0	4	19	8	87%
Manage personal life in preparation to be a role model for students	0	1	17	13	97%
Evaluate ethical decisions in a professional environment	0	3	20	8	90%
Establish a positive classroom environment	0	1	20	10	97%
Establish grading procedures	0	8	16	7	74%
My overall assessment of my ability to manage my classroom	0	6	22	3	81%
Planning Units and Lessons	Need Additional Support	Developing Skill	Accomplished Skill	Able to Lead Others	% receiving Accomplished Skill or Able to Lead Others
Develop and explain learning outcomes	0	4	22	5	87%
Develop and explain learning objectives	0	4	20	7	87%
Design units of instruction	0	3	24	4	90%
Design effective lessons	0	3	25	4	94%
Implement planned learning activities	0	1	23	7	97%
Adjust instruction to address the emerging needs of learners	0	6	20	5	81%
My overall assessment of my ability to plan units and lessons	0	4	24	3	87%

Understanding the Learners	Need Additional Support	Developing Skill	Accomplished Skill	Able to Lead Others	% receiving Accomplished Skill or Able to Lead Others
Describe learning as a continuum of life experiences that change as students mature and develop	0	3	22	6	90%
Analyze established group dynamics	0	8	18	5	74%
Articulate established and desired group norms	0	5	20	6	84%
Understand and respect diverse learning needs of students from varying cultural and economic backgrounds	0	5	19	7	84%
Recognize differences between my experiences and the experiences of students who have different backgrounds from me	0	3	18	10	90%
My overall assessment of my ability to understand my learners	0	3	24	4	90%
Utilizing Methods of Teaching and Instruction	Need Additional Support	Developing Skill	Accomplished Skill	Able to Lead Others	% receiving Accomplished Skill or Able to Lead Others
Recognize varying modalities and learning styles	1	7	17	6	74%
Determine instructional approaches, based upon desired learning outcomes and objectives	0	4	20	7	87%
Utilize effective research-based strategies consistent with the learning outcomes	0	10	16	5	68%
Very instructional approaches to meet the different learning needs of specific students	0	8	17	6	74%
My overall assessment of my ability to utilize methods of teaching and instruction	0	8	18	5	74%
Assessing and Tracking Student Performance	Need Additional Support	Developing Skill	Accomplished Skill	Able to Lead Others	% receiving Accomplished Skill or Able to Lead Others
Document student performance	1	8	17	5	71%
Communicate expectations for mastering content	0	6	20	5	81%
Track student progress	0	11	15	5	65%
Provide specific, corrective, and supportive feedback	0	7	19	5	77%
Assess learning by developing Formative, Interim, and Summative Assessments	0	8	19	4	74%
Communication growth and change in student performance	0	7	19	5	77%

My overall assessment of my ability to assess and track student performance	0	10	18	3	68%
Technology Integration	Need Additional Support	Developing Skill	Accomplished Skill	Able to Lead Others	% receiving Accomplished Skill or Able to Lead Others
Promoting interactive technologies locally and globally	0	7	22	2	77%
Collaborating in face-to-face and virtual environments	0	5	22	4	84%
Using technology to support assessment practices	0	1	23	7	97%
Engaging learners to access, interpret, evaluate, and apply information	0	4	24	3	87%
Modeling safe, legal, and ethical use of information in source citation	1	3	17	10	87%
Respecting others in the use of social media	0	1	16	14	97%
My overall assessment of my ability to integrate technology to promote learning	0	2	23	6	94%
Equity	Need Additional Support	Developing Skill	Accomplished Skill	Able to Lead Others	% receiving Accomplished Skill or Able to Lead Others
Managing the learning environment to actively and equitably engage learners	0	6	19	6	81%
Accessing school and/or district-based resources to evaluate the learner's content knowledge in their primary language	2	4	22	3	81%
Facilitating learners' ability to develop diverse social and cultural perspectives that expand their understanding of local and global issues	1	5	21	4	81%
Collaborating with families, communities, colleagues, and other professionals to promote learner growth and development	0	5	20	6	84%
My overall assessment of my ability to foster an equitable learning environment	1	4	23	3	84%

From the Alumni Survey: The last section of our survey is “Please share any additional comments.” The following statements relate to effectiveness from and satisfaction with our program per our graduates. When graduates are effective in their classroom, they are satisfied with their training.

Academic Year 2023 Graduate Survey Feedback
I felt pretty prepared.
I love my job and so glad I chose to be a teacher!
I felt prepared going into my first year. I have been in the school districts growing up as well with my dad being a teacher.

Thank you for all you have done!
I feel like I was well prepared for my role by my advisor, and student teacher. As curriculum and training changes, I just need to keep adapting to be successful.
Loving my job and what I do!! :)
Academic Year 2024 Graduate Survey Feedback
I feel the program adequately prepared me for the classroom.
The classroom management class that I took at Sterling did not prepare me at all for real life situations. That should be one of the most important classes and I often find myself lacking in that area. During student teaching at Sterling Grade, I didn't experience the behaviors that I experienced last year so I was just learning as I went and felt like I could have been slightly more prepared in that area.
I learned more from being in the school setting than learning in the classroom. I am lucky to have had experience outside of college that grew me in classroom management before I started teaching. Teaching in the public school system today is more about managing behaviors. No teaching can be done if a classroom is not well managed. Spend more time teaching this and letting future teachers be inside the schools as much as possible.
I believe Sterling prepared me very well for my teaching career.
Spend less time building lessons and units. Spend more time looking at how to effectively adapt lessons to fit IEP's and 504's.
Teach more lessons to actual classes, instead of being in a class. Have students observe with discussion questions in mind. Real time in classroom is only way to actually prepare teachers.
SC gave me an excellent education. I am not leaving the field because I do not feel equipped, but rather because the politics of the public school makes it too difficult to enjoy teaching itself. I plan to stay home with my babies and hope to put my education to use in the future through either homeschool or private school teaching.
Center based learning and how those can be standards based and effective if used correctly.
Adding Restorative Practices. Many schools use this and it would be beneficial to have heard about them before I was expected to implement them.
The Sterling College preparation was topnotch. My mentor teachers were highly impressed with their content and assessment of their student teachers. Mrs. Gidget Dinkel made all the difference. She is the most amazing professor/advisor, she is the consummate professional who exhibited grace, love, kindness, godliness, and content knowledge. I am so proud to have had my education through Sterling and specifically with the help through my whole education with Professor Dinkel!
More role playing when students are escalated, cussing, and an effective way to learn how to handle and track those behavior incidents for later.
Teaching is a wild ride. Wild and rewarding. I wish I had been a little more prepared for just how much teachers are on their own. We run our classrooms and become islands. You need to be able to run your room, and I didn't realize how much of being a teacher would just be ME. I feel very blessed that I am self-motivated and can work on my own, but it was still a little alarming when I got started.
Consider that some of your secondary education students will end up teaching in large Title 1 buildings. With that being said they need to be well versed in behavior management skills if that's the path they're wanting to take. They also need to understand that they will be teaching in a building where a lot of students are behind in their educational journey. During my time at ****Middle School in **** we had 880 kids through 3 grades, only 9% of them were on grade level. My first two years trying to meet them where they were at was difficult. And I took it personally. What saved me was the relationships I built with my students. Curriculum is great but, in my opinion, knowing your kids is a lot more important. If you could stress the importance of social intelligence and relationship building in the classroom, I think it would really help young teachers

Too much time spent on detailed lesson plans. I keep lesson plans very simple.
I am moving from K-12 music to ELA 5/6.
Academic Year 2025 Graduate Survey Feedback
I think it could be really helpful if there was a class or unit on providing good, targeted feedback because that has been big part of teaching!
Perhaps it would benefit student teachers to observe and teach lessons in other content areas with other teachers, so they understand being cross-curricular and working with other teachers better. I feel like the program did a good job of preparing me for my teaching career, but the reminder that student teaching and full teaching are also different because there are so many additional, small things that pop up that teachers deal with.
Going over behaviors you may witness and how to address them.
Special Education is a growing edge with learning to modify instruction when some students are significantly below grade levels.
Classroom management is an area that is difficult to do well and more emphasis on it would be good for upcoming students as well as more practice using and implementing different curriculum as we are expected to teach most things the way the curriculum does and there was not much exposure to curriculum before student teaching
The only thing that comes to mind is how to advocate for yourself when getting introduced to a new district, especially in understanding the environment of a district in your first year.
Gidget was the best to learn from.
I felt prepared for a career in education at Sterling College. An aspect that would better prepare future music educators would be more instruction from specifically music educators. Classroom management, curriculum, scope, and sequence. My scope and sequence curriculum are very different from that of a homeroom teacher. Most of my instruction is based on the pieces I pick, it would have been beneficial to have more specific instruction in this area of teaching.
I never felt like I fully understood why I needed all of the standards in lesson plans. I was just told to make them. I honestly have used a written lesson plan maybe once in my time teaching, but I feel that's just the nature of teaching music since it's more rehearsal based.
Review the different types of behavior plans. CHAMPS, STOIC, capturing kid's hearts. Those kinds of things. Better overview of different types of IEPs, behavior plans and 504 plans.
Maybe with the upcoming ban on cell phones in Kansas (I'm not sure that has passed yet but if it does) a lot of students may suffer from withdrawal. When I first started teaching, I included a lot of things that included using a cell phone such as finding reference photos that they took, so units may need to keep that in mind.
Sterling's education program focused so much on lesson building and developing units of instruction, which is a practice I rarely use. We receive a curriculum and are tasked with figuring out how best to deliver that information to the students. I think I would have been better prepared for my career had we learned how to take a curriculum and turn it into engaging and productive lessons. I also think an area of focus needs to be learning how to correctly modify and adapt coursework to fit IEP's and 504 plans.
I believe going deeper into the Science of Reading would be so helpful. Implement a sort of LETRS class as a required credit to take! Also, I feel like I need more preparation for managing behaviors that are extreme. I did not learn many strategies until I got to the classroom.
I believe that the biggest area I need to work on would be grading papers (finding time) and managing school time to use less personal time.
When it comes to lesson planning and standard alignment, Sterling College classes prepared me well! However, teaching is a lot more than that, as you know! I feel as though if it weren't for my own subbing and working with kids, I would definitely not have been prepared for dealing with behaviors in a classroom. Spending less time on writing detailed lesson plans, and more time on

classroom management (structure, rules, de-escalating, SEL, etc.) would benefit students tremendously. Teachers plan so much, but writing detailed lesson plans is not realistic. Thanks!

More classes on classroom management and behavior management.

More teaching lessons to actual classes instead of peers. Start doing that earlier, the more lessons taught before student teaching the more confidence when you get an actual job.

The best experience is in the classroom, and teachers should be consistently in classrooms early into their education and often. Incorporating various types of classrooms, at various times, should be consistent in classrooms of the day and in various districts. Less teaching peers and more teaching kids even if they have a short lesson. Students also need help learning how to use a teacher's manual, dealing with staff issues, parent communication, work life balance, how to incorporate your faith into your teaching, good resources for teachers and the true meaning of fidelity in district resources.