

Continuous Improvement Focused Discussion (CIFD) Groups Summary

Bethel University Educator Preparation Provider
Academic Year 2025–2026

Overview and Purpose

Bethel University’s Educator Preparation Provider (EPP) utilizes Continuous Improvement Focused Discussion (CIFD) Groups as a key component of its systematic data collection and continuous improvement process. These structured focus groups are designed to gather qualitative evidence from key stakeholders, including P–12 administrators, cooperating teachers, program completers, and faculty, to evaluate candidate preparedness and program effectiveness.

CIFD Groups are intentionally designed to:

- Include 6–10 participants representing relevant stakeholder groups
- Be facilitated by trained faculty or program leaders with expertise in the content area
- Focus on targeted topics aligned to program standards and candidate competencies

The CIFD model emphasizes open-ended dialogue, collaborative discussion, and reflective analysis to move beyond surface-level feedback and identify the underlying reasons (“the why”) behind stakeholder perceptions. This process ensures that data collected are meaningful, actionable, and aligned with CAEP expectations for evidence-based continuous improvement.

Use of Data for Continuous Improvement

Data gathered through CIFD Groups are systematically analyzed and triangulated with other EPP data sources (e.g., CFAST, employer surveys, completer surveys, Title II data). Findings are used to:

- Identify program strengths and areas for growth
- Inform curricular revisions and instructional practices
- Strengthen clinical experiences and partnerships
- Improve candidate preparedness and impact on P–12 learning

For the 2025–2026 academic cycle, the EPP will continue to strengthen the intentional use of CIFD data by aligning findings more explicitly to program-level decisions, documenting resulting changes, and monitoring the impact of those changes over time.

Summary of Stakeholder Feedback by Program Area

Elementary Education Program

Stakeholders consistently reported that candidates demonstrate strong pedagogical knowledge, particularly in literacy instruction grounded in scientifically based reading research. Candidates are viewed as:

- Knowledgeable in foundational reading instruction and instructional strategies
- Responsive to student needs and capable of differentiating instruction
- Prepared to engage learners through effective planning and classroom management

Strengths identified include:

- Strong instructional strategies and engagement techniques
- Effective use of formative assessment and progress monitoring
- Positive dispositions, including a willingness to learn and accept feedback

Areas for continued growth include:

- Deepening application of content across disciplines
- Strengthening intentional instructional decision-making beyond curriculum reliance

Overall, stakeholders rated completers as well prepared to very well prepared, with strong interest in hiring future Bethel candidates.

Secondary and All-Grade Programs

Stakeholders indicated that candidates are well prepared in building relationships, fostering inclusive environments, and collaborating with colleagues. Candidates are described as:

- Reflective practitioners who seek feedback and continuous improvement
- Strong collaborators who contribute positively to school teams
- Equipped with foundational instructional strategies and content knowledge

Strengths identified include:

- Strong learner-centered practices and relationship-building
- Commitment to professional growth and ethical practice
- Effective use of formative and summative assessment

Areas for continued growth include:

- Application of content to real-world and interdisciplinary contexts
- Continued development of assessment practices in authentic classroom settings

Stakeholders indicated that they would consistently consider Bethel candidates for employment, noting strong alignment between preparation and professional expectations.

School Administration (Principalship) Program

Stakeholders reported that candidates demonstrate strong understanding of leadership theory, ethical practice, and school improvement processes. Candidates are viewed as:

- Thoughtful and reflective decision-makers
- Grounded in ethical leadership and professional norms
- Prepared to engage in collaborative leadership practices

Strengths identified include:

- Strong conceptual understanding of leadership frameworks
- Commitment to ethical decision-making and professional responsibility
- Ability to engage in continuous improvement processes

Areas for continued growth include:

- Expanding practical leadership experiences across diverse school contexts
- Increasing exposure to operational and managerial complexities
- Incorporating more case studies and current-event analyses into coursework

Stakeholders emphasized the importance of clinical and internship experiences as critical to developing leadership capacity.

Special Education Program

Stakeholders reported that candidates demonstrate strong dispositions toward inclusivity, advocacy, and collaboration. Candidates are described as:

- Compassionate and student-centered practitioners
- Prepared to collaborate with families and multidisciplinary teams
- Knowledgeable in using assessment data to inform instruction

Strengths identified include:

- Strong ethical practice and confidentiality awareness
- Effective collaboration skills
- Exposure to real-world assessment data and instructional planning

Areas for continued growth include:

- Increased opportunities to apply assessment data in field placements
- Greater consistency in field-based instructional practice opportunities

Stakeholders indicated that candidates are well prepared and demonstrate strong commitment to the field.

ENL (English as a New Language) Program

Stakeholders indicated that candidates demonstrate strong preparation in supporting English language learners, particularly in:

- Language development for social and academic purposes
- Cultural responsiveness and inclusive practices
- Alignment to WIDA standards and instructional planning

Strengths identified include:

- Strong emphasis on adapting instructional resources
- Effective use of formative assessment aligned to language proficiency levels
- Commitment to supporting multilingual learners and families

Areas for continued growth include:

- Expanding exposure to content-area academic language (e.g., science, social studies)
- Increasing understanding of evolving student demographics and literacy needs

Stakeholders reported strong confidence in program completers and indicated high likelihood of hiring future candidates.

Cross-Program Themes and Programmatic Response

Across all programs, several consistent themes emerged:

Program Strengths

- Strong candidate dispositions (professionalism, collaboration, responsiveness)
- Solid pedagogical preparation and instructional strategy development
- Commitment to continuous improvement and reflective practice
- Positive employer perception and strong hiring potential

Areas for Continuous Improvement

- Increased opportunities for applied, real-world practice
- Expanded use of case studies and problem-based learning
- Greater emphasis on data-driven instructional decision-making
- Strengthening connections between theory and practice

Planned Actions for the Upcoming Academic Year

In response to stakeholder feedback, the EPP will:

- Increase the integration of case studies and current educational issues across coursework
- Expand opportunities for candidates to analyze and apply student data
- Strengthen clinical partnerships to ensure more consistent, high-quality field experiences
- Continue modeling the use of research and evidence-based practices in lesson design and instruction

Conclusion

The CIFD process provides critical qualitative evidence supporting the EPP's commitment to continuous improvement, stakeholder engagement, and candidate success. Data from the 2025–2026 CIFD Groups indicate that Bethel University candidates are well prepared to enter the profession, demonstrate strong professional dispositions, and positively impact P–12 student learning.

The EPP will continue to refine its data collection, analysis, and implementation processes to ensure alignment with CAEP standards and to maintain a strong, responsive, and high-quality educator preparation program.

CAEP Alignment

CAEP Standard	Evidence	Implication
Content & Pedagogical Knowledge	Stakeholder feedback confirms candidates demonstrate strong pedagogy and content knowledge.	Candidates are prepared to support diverse learners.
Clinical Partnerships	Feedback highlights the effectiveness of fieldwork and student teaching placements.	Clinical experiences contribute to readiness.
Program Impact	Employers indicate candidates are well-prepared and hireable.	Completers positively impact P-12 learning.
Continuous Improvement	CIFD data used to revise curriculum and instruction.	Program adapts based on stakeholder input.

Elementary Education Program

Strengths	Areas for Growth
Strong literacy instruction and pedagogy	Increase cross-disciplinary application
Effective formative assessment use	Enhance instructional decision-making
Positive dispositions and adaptability	Expand independent instructional planning

Evidence: Stakeholders rated completers as well-prepared to very well-prepared and indicated strong hiring interest.

Secondary/All-Grade Programs

Strengths	Areas for Growth
Strong relationships and collaboration	Application of content in real-world contexts

Reflective practice	Assessment implementation consistency
Solid instructional strategies	Depth of interdisciplinary connections

Evidence: Employers consistently indicate willingness to hire Bethel completers.

Special Education Program

Strengths	Areas for Growth
Strong collaboration and advocacy	More field-based assessment application
Ethical practice and confidentiality	Expanded instructional opportunities in placements
Use of real-world data	Consistency in field experiences

Evidence: Stakeholders report candidates are well-prepared and demonstrate strong professional dispositions.

Programmatic Actions

- Increase case-based and real-world learning
- Strengthen data-driven instruction
- Expand clinical practice opportunities
- Model research-based practices across coursework