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Teacher education program gets glowing review

The State Board of Education on Thursday approved Lindenwood University's teacher preparation program for recertification for the next five years. The report cited no weaknesses and numerous strengths.

The approval was based on a review of Lindenwood's program by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. That week-long review was performed in March by a team of educators from around the state.

Lindenwood's approval was recommended by Mike Lucas, DESE director of teacher education. Lucas presented the DESE review to the state board. Among strengths listed in the review were:

*Lindenwood's unique "guarantee" that its graduates know the subject taught and are effective in the classroom; and superintendents are satisified with the professional education of the student hired

*That 98 percent of principals surveyed rate Lindenwood graduates as above average to excellent

*That Lindenwood continually seeks input from area superintendents and administrators in finding ways to help school districts meet their individual needs

*That graduates and faculty members participate in a program called "Trading Places," in which roles are switched by university faculty members and public schools teachers for a day

*That formal partnerships exist with 28 urban, suburban and rural school districts providing a range of diverse settings for student teaching in some 250 school buildings

"We are absolutely thrilled with the results," said Rick Boyle, dean of Lindenwood's education division. "This validates our approach, which is really pretty simple. "Can the teacher teach and do their students learn?" That's what it is all about."

Lindenwood President Dennis Spellmann said the review was the best among all teacher education programs in the state so far. Spellmann said about two-thirds of the programs in all Missouri's colleges and universities have already had their DESE visit.

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