



University Council

September 13, 2024

UNIVERSITY CURRICULUM COMMITTEE – 2024-2025

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Undergraduate Student Representative – Ella Colker

Graduate Student Representative – Marggie Vazquez

Dear Colleagues:

The attached proposal from the Mary Frances Early College of Education to deactivate the major in Middle Grades Education (B.S.Ed.) will be an agenda item for the September 20, 2024, Full University Curriculum Committee meeting.

Sincerely,

Susan Sanchez, Chair

cc: Provost S. Jack Hu

Dr. Marisa Pagnattaro

# PROPOSAL FOR DEACTIVATION OR TERMINATION OF AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM

**Date:** July 15, 2024

**School/College:** Mary Frances Early College of Education

**Department/Division:** Educational Theory and Practice

**Program (Major and Degree):** Middle Grades Education (B.S.Ed.)

**Which campus(es) offer this program?** Athens

**Deactivation or Termination?** Deactivation

**Proposed Effective Date:** Fall 2025

**Last date students will be admitted to this program:** Fall 2024

**Last date students will graduate from this program:** Fall 2026

## **Program Abstract:**

As one of the oldest middle grades-focused teacher certification programs in the country, the Middle Grades Education (EDMG) program at the University of Georgia is a leader in the field of middle-grades reform. The program is focused on enacting justice-oriented curriculum and instruction to become middle-grades teachers. Students who complete the program choose two content areas from the following as the focus of their middle grades certification: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. The program prepares candidates to earn an initial teaching license to teach one or more of these content areas in Georgia middle and elementary schools (Grades 4-8).

## **1. State the reasons for deactivating the program and provide copies of any relevant documents.**

This request is to deactivate the program for two years with an intended relaunch date of Fall 2027. The number of students enrolling with Intended majors for Middle Grades Education has progressively dwindled from Fall 2019 to present. The program has the capacity to enroll 50 students (25 per cohort each fall). In Fall 2023 and Fall 2024, the number of B.S.Ed. students who moved from Intended Middle Grades to Middle Grades was 17 and 15. Projected enrollment for the Fall 2025 and Fall 2026 cohorts, based on the number of students enrolled in Intended Middle Grades majors, is 9 and 2, respectively.

Given that students must choose two academic content areas, the Fall 2025 and Fall 2026 cohorts do not meet minimum course enrollment requirements. Overall, there has been a steep decline in students pursuing degrees in education at UGA and across Georgia and the nation. Some reasons for such decline include cost-benefit of degree costs to market salaries, changing public perceptions of teaching, increased regulations to become a teacher, and quality of life concerns among educators.

## **2. What will be done to minimize the impact of the deactivation of the program upon the personal and professional lives of the faculty and staff involved? Include specific information on: a) how faculty and staff will be notified of the deactivation, and b) how faculty and staff will be reallocated.**

Since 2022, the Middle Grades Education faculty members have been actively engaged in a redesign of the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in Middle Grades Education program with the Clarke County School District (CCSD). Through a potentially-funded opportunity launching in Fall 2025, it appears that the partnership between UGA and CCSD has a greater potential to draw students into the Middle Grades Education suite of programs while allowing for initial certification to teach in the middle grades, defined as grades 4-8 in the state of Georgia. If this partnership produces its intended results, lessons learned from that funded project can provide additional data as to whether or not preparation to teach middle grades should continue at the B.S.Ed. level or move to the M.A.T. level.

Regarding the personal and professional lives of the faculty and staff involved, faculty would continue to develop a refined B.S.Ed. program and focus their attention on teaching in the Middle Grades Education M.A.T. and M.Ed. programs and in the Middle Grades Education Ed.S. and Ph.D. areas of emphasis. All faculty and staff were made aware of this planned deactivation in May 2024, have an eye toward refining the B.S.Ed. program, and anticipate relaunching the program in Fall 2027. There are no proposed changes in staffing as department staff serve multiple programs within the unit.

**3. What will be done to ensure that deactivation of the program does not weaken other programs (graduate, undergraduate, or professional) for which the department may be responsible?**

This planned deactivation will provide the faculty with the time needed to launch their innovative M.A.T. program, learn lessons from that activity, and either redesign or make plans to terminate the B.S.Ed. program.

**4. State the plans for allowing students currently enrolled in the program to complete degree requirements, including specific information on: a) how students will be notified of the program deactivation, and b) how students will be advised on completing the program.**

Students who have just moved from the Intended Middle Grades Education major to Middle Grades Education, including those beginning upper-level coursework in Fall 2024 and those who would have had the opportunity to enter in Fall 2025, have either been advised through some creative planning on completion of Area VI offerings to either enter the Fall 2024 cohort or have been advised to select another education program that overlaps with the certification grade bands for middle grades education (e.g., elementary education, special education, secondary education in English, mathematics, science, or social studies education). All students who entered in Fall 2023 and Fall 2024 will complete the present program without interruption.

**5. What plans, if any, are there for subsequent reactivation of the deactivated program?**

Since 2022, the faculty have been actively engaged in a redesign of the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) in Middle Grades Education with the Clarke County School District (CCSD). Through a potentially funded opportunity launching in Fall 2025, it appears that the partnership between UGA and CCSD has a greater potential to draw students into the Middle Grades Education suite of programs while allowing for initial certification to teach in the middle grades. If this partnership produces its intended results, lessons learned from that funded project can potentially inform a redesign of the undergraduate program or provide sufficient information to make a determination about termination. The intent is for reactivation in Fall 2027.

## Documentation of Approval and Notification

**Proposal:** Deactivate the major in Middle Grades Education (B.S.Ed.)

**College:** Mary Frances Early College of Education

**Departments:** Educational Theory and Practice

**Proposed Effective Term:** Fall 2025

School/College:

- Department of Educational Theory and Practice Department Head, Dr. Julie Kittleson, 7/15/24
- Mary Frances Early College of Education Associate Dean, Dr. Stacey Neuharth-Pritchett, 8/19/24
- Mary Frances Early College of Education Dean, Dr. Denise Spangler, 7/15/24