Focus of Field Practicum III
This field experience is the third of three upper level sequential field practica that Early Childhood Education students are required to complete successfully prior to student teaching. In the last two terms, students focused particular attention on strategies used with individual children, including children with special needs, on classroom management strategies, and on the development of an effective learning environment. Field Practicum III will focus on curriculum, assessment, and professional collaboration opportunities. Participating students will be meeting regularly on campus for a one-credit course to discuss the field placement experience.

Practicum Calendar
The field practicum generally begins during the fifth or sixth week of the college term and lasts for eight weeks. [Your school principal has received an information sheet containing the exact dates for the practicum this term.] Students will be required to be present in your classroom for one full day – either Thursday or Friday – each week throughout the practicum period. They are not permitted to compact this time period. In the case of a student’s unavoidable absence, the student will be expected to make up the lost time at your convenience prior to the end of the term.

Student’s Level in Teacher Education
The students participating in this practicum are in the first semester of their senior year. This term, the students are enrolled in four methods courses: “Differentiated Literacy Instruction” [the last of three sequential courses], “Writing Development,” “Social Studies,” and “Engaging Young Children in Learning.” In their first two practica, the students were involved in a variety of activities in the classroom. They had the opportunity to plan, teach, and receive feedback on several lessons and completed methods courses pertaining to reading/language arts, science, mathematics, art, rhythmic experiences, and physical education.

Expectations for Students
We have established expectations for the students based on their level of study in the Division. A sample evaluation form has been attached to this letter to inform you of those expectations. You also will find a list of assignments that the student must complete. The assignments reflect the student’s level of development and the Elementary Education methods courses in which the student is enrolled this term, including assignments for working with children with special needs in the regular classroom.

We expect students to exhibit professional conduct including maintenance of confidentiality in all areas. In addition to the sample evaluation form, we include the Division of Education Professional Ethics Statement and Recommendations for Professional Appearance that are distributed to students. If at any
time one of our students is not punctual, does not arrive at the assigned date, is not prepared for assigned lessons or activities, or acts in an unprofessional manner, please call Ms. Loretta Zerby (814-269-7008) and give her the necessary information. We will deal with the matter promptly.

Participating Teacher’s Role
Please involve the student in as many ways as possible in your classroom, offer guidance that is consistent and frequent, and help the student to complete the required assignments. We also would like you to offer feedback on lessons that the student teaches and help the student to gain knowledge of adaptations made for children with special needs in your classroom. If it is not possible for the student to complete a required assignment in your classroom, please help him/her to make arrangements with another teacher in your building where the assignment can be accomplished.

Near the conclusion of the practicum, we will be sending you an official copy of the evaluation form for this first practicum level and a return envelope. Please rate the student on each criterion and provide written comments clarifying your assessment. Your written comments will be helpful to the student and to us as we guide the student appropriately in her/his development. Students who receive negative evaluations may be required to enter student teaching on a provisional status, or they may be advised to seek another major. Therefore, your candid and specific feedback is crucial in this step of the teacher education program.