

**NOTICE OF INTENT**

**Form No. BAAC-01**

Section 1007.33(5)(d), Florida Statutes (F.S.), and Rule 6A-14.095, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), outline the requirements for Florida College System baccalaureate program proposals. The completed Notice of Intent form, incorporated in Rule 6A-14.095, F.A.C., Site Determined Baccalaureate Access, shall be submitted by the college president to the chancellor of the Florida College System at [ChancellorFCS@fldoe.org](mailto:ChancellorFCS@fldoe.org).

**CHECKLIST**

The notice of intent requires completion of the following components:

- Program summary
- Program description
- Workforce demand, supply, and unmet need
- Planning process

**FLORIDA COLLEGE SYSTEM INSTITUTION INFORMATION**

Institution Name:	<b>St. Johns River State College</b>
Institution President:	<b>Joe Pickens, J.D.</b>

**PROGRAM SUMMARY**

1.1	Program name.	<b>Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education (K12) with ESOL and Reading Endorsements</b>
1.2	Degree type.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bachelor of Science <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor of Applied Science
1.3	How will the proposed degree program be delivered? (check all that apply).	<input type="checkbox"/> Face-to-face (F2F) (Entire degree program delivered via F2F courses only) <input type="checkbox"/> Completely online (Entire degree program delivered via online courses only) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Combination of face-to-face/online (Entire degree program delivered via a combination of F2F and online courses)
1.4	Degree Classification of Instructional Program (CIP) code (6-Digit).	<b>13.1001</b>
1.5	Anticipated program implementation date.	<b>August 2025</b>
1.6	What are the primary pathways for admission to the program? Check all that apply.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Associate in Arts (AA) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate in Science (AS) <input type="checkbox"/> Associate in Applied Science (AAS)  If you selected AS/AAS, please specify the program:  Click or tap here to enter text.
1.7	Is the degree program a STEM focus area?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
1.8	List program concentration(s) or track(s) (if applicable).	<b>N/A</b>

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

*2.1 This section is the **executive summary** of this notice of intent. We recommend providing an abbreviated program description including but not limited to: the program demand, current supply, and unmet need in the college's service district; primary pathways to program admission; overview of program curriculum; career path and potential employment opportunities; and average starting salary. We encourage approximately 300 words for a sufficient description.*

St. Johns River State College's proposed Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education (BS-ESE) program with endorsements in Reading (K-12) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL, K-12) will train and educate teachers to assist and empower children with disabilities who need specially designed instruction and related services to meet the increasing demand for locally ESE-credentialed educators. With a focus on a high-quality education, flexibility, and experiential learning, this degree provides an opportunity for all students, specifically non-traditional students, to pursue their bachelor's degree in an educational setting best suited for their needs.

The workforce demand for teachers certified in the field of ESE is currently not being met, and this gap is projected to continue to grow both within our local region and statewide. Annually, the Florida Department of Education publishes a list of the "[High Demand Teacher Needs](#)," and for the 2024-2025 academic year, the subject area "ESE" which includes Exceptional Student Education is ranked first of all subjects in terms of need. ESE also ranks first in terms of the number of projected vacancies for 2024-25, and in 2022-23, ESE ranked first in total number of courses taught by teachers not certified in the appropriate field. In SJR State's tri-county service district of Clay, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties, the annual unmet need of ESE baccalaureate graduates is 73, and this unmet need increases to 141 throughout Workforce Region 8.

The BS-ESE degree will require a total of 120 semester credits and be a 2+2 program articulating from the Associate in Arts (AA) degree. All applicants will be required to have an earned associates degree prior to admission to include a total of 36 credits of general education coursework and 24 baccalaureate prerequisite and elective credits. The required prerequisite coursework will align with Florida's Common Prerequisite Manual, and a passing score on two of the four sections of the General Knowledge Test (GK) on the Florida Teacher Certification Exam (FTCE) will also be completed before being admitted into the program.

After admission, students will be required to complete a total of 60 upper division credits in Classroom Management, Instructional Strategies, Reading, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), and Exceptional Student Education (ESE). The curriculum will ensure that candidates and completers are prepared to instruct kindergarten through grade 12 (K-12) students to meet high standards for academic achievement. The program faculty will instruct and assess each candidate's progress and mastery of the Uniform Core Curricula (UCC) in coursework and field experiences, as defined in Rule 6A 5.066(1) to include: 1) instruction/assessment in Florida Educator Accomplished Practices; 2) curricula and instruction using state-adopted content standards; 3) scientifically-researched and evidence-based reading instruction; 4)

content literacy and mathematical practices; 5) appropriate instruction strategies for English language learners, students with disabilities, differentiation, and classroom management; 6) early identification of students in crisis or experiencing a mental health challenge and referral methods; and 7) strategies to support the use of technology in education and distance learning. Multiple field experience placements will be required, culminating in a semester-long teaching experience. Obtaining a passing score on the professional education and subject area sections of the FTCE will be required prior to graduation.

All upper- and lower-division courses and course content will comply with Florida Statutes and Florida State Board of Education Rules.

As part of the initial exploration of potential baccalaureate degree expansion, SJR State surveyed interested community members and current, future, and former SJR State students to determine their career and educational interests. In addition to focusing on local, regional, and state employment data and trends, SJR State has also engaged with its Teacher Education Advisory Board members to ensure that the proposed curriculum is in alignment with and will meet the needs of Clay, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties. St. Johns River State College's baccalaureate in Exceptional Student Education is being proposed in response to this feedback and the documented gap between the projected number of open positions and the number of baccalaureate graduates being produced within our service district and region.

## WORKFORCE DEMAND, SUPPLY, AND UNMET NEED

*3.1 Describe the workforce demand, supply, and unmet need for graduates of the program that incorporates, at a minimum, the shaded information from Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.4. For proposed programs without a listed Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) linkage, provide a rationale for the identified SOC code(s). If using a SOC that is not on the CIP to SOC crosswalk, please justify why the SOC aligns with the baccalaureate program.*

Graduates of St. Johns River State College's Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education will be prepared for a wide range of in-demand careers in the field of special education that currently have significant unmet need. This degree will prepare graduates specifically for employment as K12 special education teachers. Average annual earnings range from over \$49,000 for Special Education Preschool Teachers to just under \$69, 000 for Special Education Preschool Teachers (see Table 3.1.2).

It is important to note that although this proposed baccalaureate degree is being designed for the residents and employers of the College's tri-county service district, Clay, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties serve as "bedroom communities" for the greater Jacksonville area of Workforce Region 8, and residents of these counties generally anticipate pursuing job opportunities outside of their home county. Furthermore, school districts in the greater Jacksonville area count on the residents of Clay, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties to fill teaching vacancies within their schools. For these reasons, the scope of analysis within this proposal has been broadened beyond SJR State's tri-county service district to include all of Workforce Region 8.

While the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) reports a healthy workforce outlook in Florida, it does not disaggregate data for teachers by field. However, data from Lightcast (formerly EMSI) indicates a projected growth of nearly 6.2% and 73 annual job openings in SJR State's three-county district (see Table 3.1.2), and an additional 75 annual job openings are projected in Baker, Bradford, and Duval counties for a total of 158 annual job openings within the six-county Workforce Region 8 (see Table 3.1.2b). Furthermore, according to the Florida Department of Education, in 2021-22 statewide there were 1,321 vacancies for Special Education teachers which represented 16.73% of vacancies that year. It should also be noted that over 46% of the current Region 8 Special Education teacher workforce are eligible for retirement in the next five years.

Within SJR State's service district of Clay, Putnam, and St. Johns Counties, there is currently no supplier of graduates in this field as there are no public universities and only one private university (Flagler College) that does not offer a baccalaureate degree with concentration in this area. Increasing the scope of analysis to all of northeast Florida reveals that the colleges and universities in all of Region 8 (University of North Florida, Florida State College at Jacksonville, Jacksonville University, Edward Waters University, Flagler College, and St. Johns

River State College) are only producing an average of 17 baccalaureate graduates per year in related CIP codes (see Tables 3.1.3 and 3.13b).

As tables 3.1.2, 3.12b, 3.1.3, 3.13b, and 3.1.4 illustrate, the supply of graduates of programs in the field of Special Education is not meeting the demand of the local workforce, resulting in an unmet need of 73 graduates per year in SJR State's District and 141 graduates per year throughout Region 8 according to the Lightcast and IPEDS data.



**DEMAND: OTHER ENTITY INDEPENDENT OF THE COLLEGE – (Lightcast)**

*3.1.2 The Excel spreadsheet below is set up with predefined formulas. To activate the spreadsheet, right click within the spreadsheet, go to "Worksheet Object," and then "Open." To exit, save any changes and exit out of the spreadsheet. Alternatively, double click anywhere on the table. To exit the spreadsheet, single click anywhere outside of the table.*

Occupation			Number of Jobs				Salary		Education Level	
Name/Title	SOC Code	County/ Region	2023	2031	Level Change	Total Job Openings	Average Hourly Wage	Annualized Salary	FL	BLS
Special Education Teachers, Preschool	25-2051	Clay, Putnam, St. Johns	27	29	7.41	18	\$23.71	\$ 49,315	B	B
Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and	25-2052	Clay, Putnam, St. Johns	154	172	11.69	106	\$30.01	\$ 62,414	B	B
Special Education Teachers, Middle	25-2057	Clay, Putnam, St. Johns	73	75	2.74	46	\$29.65	\$ 61,665	B	B
Special Education Teachers, Secondary	25-2058	Clay, Putnam, St. Johns	555	606	9.19	363	\$33.02	\$ 68,678	B	B
Special Education Teachers, All Other	25-2059	Clay, Putnam, St. Johns	76	83	9.21	50	\$27.35	\$ 56,892	B	B
								\$ -		
								\$ -		
								\$ -		
					Total	73	\$ 28.75	\$ 59,793		

**DEMAND: OTHER ENTITY INDEPENDENT OF THE COLLEGE – (Lightcast)**

3.1.2b The Excel spreadsheet below is set up with predefined formulas. To activate the spreadsheet, right click within the spreadsheet, go to “Worksheet Object”, and then “Open”. To exit, save any changes and exit out of the spreadsheet. Alternatively, double click anywhere on the table. To exit the spreadsheet, single click anywhere outside of the table.

Occupation			Number of Jobs				Salary		Education Level	
Name/Title	SOC Code	County/ Region	2023	2031	Level Change	Total Job Openings	Average Hourly Wage	Annualized Salary	FL	BLS
Special Education Teachers, Preschool	25-2051	Region 8	54	60	11.11	37	\$22.93	\$ 47,700	B	B
Special Education Teachers, Kindergarten and Elementary School	25-2052	Region 8	342	377	10.23	229	\$30.44	\$ 63,316	B	B
Special Education Teachers, Middle School	25-2057	Region 8	117	127	8.55	79	\$29.40	\$ 61,142	B	B
Special Education Teachers, Secondary School	25-2058	Region 8	1312	1379	5.11	794	\$33.46	\$ 69,591	B	B
Special Education Teachers, All Other	25-2059	Region 8	191	207	8.38	124	\$27.04	\$ 56,236	B	B
								\$ -		
								\$ -		
								\$ -		
					<b>Total</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>\$ 28.65</b>	<b>\$ 59,597</b>		





## ESTIMATES OF UNMET NEED

3.1.4 The Excel spreadsheet below is set up with predefined formulas. To activate the spreadsheet, right click within the spreadsheet, go to "Worksheet Object", and then "Open". To exit, save any changes and exit out of the spreadsheet. Alternatively, double click anywhere on the table. To exit the spreadsheet, single click anywhere outside of the table.

**CLICK [HERE](#) FOR INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE ESTIMATES OF UNMET NEED SECTION:** If institutions do not have data available for completers in the service district, please report statewide data. You may note these are statewide figures.

	Demand	Supply		Range of Estimated Unmet Need					
	(A)	(B)	(C)	(A-B)	(A-C)				
	Total Job Openings	Most Recent Year	5-year average or average of years available if less than 5 years	Difference	Difference				
DEO Total				0	0				
Other Totals	158	24	17	134	141				

*3.2 Describe any other evidence of workforce demand and unmet need for graduates as selected by the institution, which may include qualitative or quantitative data and information not reflected in the data presented in Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.4, such as local economic development initiatives, emerging industries in the area, or evidence of rapid growth.*

Northeast Florida is presently ranked as one of the top five job markets in the nation, generating 5,300 new jobs with almost 4.1 billion dollars in private investment capital ([2021 JAXUSA Biennial Report](#)). Specific to this proposed degree, given that Florida's public school system is the [4<sup>th</sup> largest school system](#) in the United States with more than 4,000 public schools enrolling almost 3 million students each year, the existing critical shortage of qualified teachers in Florida, and public school enrollment in Florida projected to [increase by nearly 5%](#) over the next ten years, the job outlook for public school teachers is predicted to continue to increase.

Furthermore, [Section 1012.07, Florida Statutes](#), requires the State Board of Education to annually identify critical teacher shortages areas based on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Education. Annually, the Florida Department of Education publishes this in the document "[High Demand Teacher Needs](#)," and for the 2024-2025 academic year, the subject area "ESE" which includes Exceptional Student Education is ranked first of all subjects in terms of need. ESE also ranks first in terms of the number of projected vacancies for 2024-25, and in 2022-23, ESE ranked first in total number of courses taught by teachers not certified in the appropriate field.

*3.3 If the education level for the occupation identified by the Florida Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) or the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) presented in Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.2 is below or above the level of a baccalaureate degree, provide justification for the inclusion of that occupation in the analysis.*

Not applicable as no occupations requiring below or above the level of a baccalaureate degree are included in this analysis.

*3.4 Describe the career path and potential employment opportunities for graduates of the program.*

The career paths and potential employment opportunities for graduates of St. Johns River State College's proposed Exceptional Student Education baccalaureate degree will encompass a myriad of professions within education and related fields.

In accordance with Florida Statute and Florida Department of Education State Board Rule, St. Johns River State College's Bachelors degrees are all 2 + 2 degrees, so students in this proposed baccalaureate program must first earn their Associate in Arts (AA) degree. Students will be able to begin their academic program as early as high school by enrolling in general education and teacher education courses that lead towards the AA degree through dual enrollment.

Simultaneous to pursuing their associates degree, students will be able to begin their career path in entry-level occupations in the field that requires a high school diploma or some postsecondary credit or an associate degree such as a paraprofessional or substitute teacher. Course offerings at both the Associates and Baccaulaureate level will be designed to accommodate traditional as well as nontraditional students and will be scheduled in the evenings and online, enabling students to hold entry-level positions in the field while simultaneously pursuing their baccaulaureate degree.

With their earned baccaulaureate degree, graduates will be prepared to competitively enter the workforce in a variety of positions and career paths including ESE teacher, ESE Coordinator, and intervention specialist, and their degree coupled with experience working in the field will also support their promotion into positions with greater scope and leadership.

In addition to preparing students for employment, this baccaulaureate degree will prepare students who wish to pursue graduate study for transfer into Masters programs such as administration and/or other graduate studies such as guidance counselor. The creation of a seamless pathway into graduate studies via articulation to neighboring universities has already begun.

## PLANNING PROCESS

*4.1 Summarize the internal planning process. In timeline format, please describe the steps your institution took in completing the internal review and approval of the baccalaureate program. For example, summarize actions taken by the academic department proposing the degree, any non-academic departments, the college-wide curriculum committee, the college president, the Board of Trustees, and any other areas.*

Date	Activity
11/3/2023	In response to discussion with and amongst faculty, community stakeholders, and students, on November 3, 2023, a group of faculty and academic leadership met to develop several workgroups to explore the expansion of SJR State baccalaureate degree programs. Items to be discussed by the workgroups include the top occupations in SJR State's service district and Region 8, the average number of available jobs, the typical entry-level education required, and the unmet graduate need.
Nov 2023	SJR State surveyed its current students regarding their interest in pursuing a baccalaureate degree in Exceptional Student Education at SJR State. Survey results indicated that 6% (n=147) were interested in this teaching degree.
11/13/2023	After examining the data and determining it reflected a local need for baccalaureate graduates in the field of Exceptional Student Education, SJR State faculty and leadership submitted to College Administration an email of intent to begin the process of exploring curriculum and program development.
11/15/2023	During the President's Cabinet Meeting, SJR State's President, Vice Presidents, and senior leadership team discussed the data, next steps, and timeline of the faculty workgroup's baccalaureate degree development efforts. During this meeting, the President's Cabinet indicated support for the potential program.
11/21/2023	Dr. Brown shared with the College's IPC the faculty workgroup's baccalaureate degree development efforts. The data, next steps, and timeline were discussed. During this meeting, the IPC voted to approve the continued development of the Bachelors in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation of Fall 2025.
12/6/2023	Dr. Brown shared with the SJR State Board of Trustees the faculty workgroup's baccalaureate degree development efforts. The data, next steps, and timeline were discussed. During this meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to approve the continued development of the Bachelors in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation of Fall 2025.
12/16/2023	During the Teacher Education faculty department meeting, the faculty discussed the data and program and curriculum research that had been completed by the workgroup and voted to approve the continued development of the Bachelors in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation of Fall 2025.
Jan 2024	Faculty began developing the curriculum, pathways to degree, course descriptions, and course outlines for the proposed Baccalaureate degree in Exceptional Student Education.

1/22/2024	During the Academic Affairs Curriculum meeting, the faculty workgroup's baccalaureate degree development efforts and the data supporting the degree development were discussed. At this time, the Academic Affairs Curriculum Committee voted to approve the continued development of the Bachelors in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation of Fall 2025.
3/15/2024	The Teacher Education faculty voted to approve the submission of the NOI and continued development of the Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation date of Fall 2025.
3/28/2024	The members of the President's Cabinet reviewed the NOI and indicated support of its submission to IPC and continued development of the BAS in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation of Fall 2025.
4/2/2024	SJR State IPC approved the NOI and continued development of the BS in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation of Fall 2025.
4/17/2024	SJR State Board of Trustees approved submission of the NOI for the Bachelors in Exceptional Student Education with a targeted implementation of Fall 2025.

*4.2 Summarize the external planning process with the business and industry community. In timeline format, please describe your institution's interactions and engagements with external stakeholders, including but not limited to industry advisory boards meetings, discussions with advisory committees, briefings from local businesses, consultations with employers, and conducting paper and online surveys.*

Date	Activity
9/20/2018	At SJR State's annual Teacher Education Advisory Board, Advisory Board members from the Clay, Putnam, and St. Johns County School Districts discussed the need for SJR State to develop additional bachelor's degrees leading to certification in critical needs areas including ESE, science, and mathematics. SJR State leadership vowed to research and pursue this as budgets and other considerations allow.
10/1/2019	Advisory Board members, at the annual SJR State Teacher Education Advisory Board meeting, discussed the need for specific programs in exceptional student education behavior management as well as critical teacher shortage areas such as math and science. Board members inquired on a plan to add a bachelor's degree in Exceptional Student Education as well as certification science and math. SJR State leadership indicated that research for the need of the critical areas has begun.
10/14/2020	At SJR State's annual Teacher Education Advisory Board meeting, held virtually due to COVID, an advisory board member discussed the need for teachers to have specialized training in Exceptional Student Education. Board members agreed and discussed the continued need of critical shortage areas such as math and science. SJR State leadership indicated that research has begun and is ongoing on determining what bachelor's degrees are needed in the tri county area the college serves. SJR State leadership indicated that budget considerations were being reviewed in response to the advisory board's feedback of these critical areas.
10/21/2021	Advisory board members present at the annual advisory board indicated the ongoing need for critical shortage areas of special education teachers, math and science. SJR State leadership indicated the college will be exploring these areas as possible future programs.
10/20/2022	SJR State's Teacher Education Advisory Board members stressed the need for teachers who are certified in critical shortage areas such as math, science, and Exceptional Student Education. SJR State leadership indicated they are aware and is actively exploring these critical areas.
10/16/2023	Advisory board members inquired on the status of adding additional programs in critical shortage areas such as Exceptional Student Education, science and math. SJR State leadership is actively exploring with considerations being made to the budget.
2/6/2024	SJR State's Teacher Education Advisory Board voted to approve the development of a Bachelor of Science in Exceptional Student Education.

3/14/2024	SJR State’s Teacher Education Coordinator Dawn Boles spoke with leadership at the Putnam County School District about the proposed BS in Exceptional Student Education. Kristin Carroll (PCSD Administrator of Certification, Recruitment, Novice Teacher Program, Instructional Experience, Intern Placement) indicated the School District’s support of the proposal and vowed that the District would continue to serve on the Teacher Education Advisory Board and to serve as a resource in curriculum development conversations. SJR State’s Dawn Boles followed up the conversation with an email to both Kristin Carroll and Executive Director of Human Resources Tonya Whitehurst.
3/26/2024	SJR State’s Teacher Education Coordinator Dawn Boles spoke with leadership at the St. Johns County School District about the proposed BS in Exceptional Student Education. Parker Raimann (SJCSJ Director of Instruction Personnel) indicated the School District’s support of the proposal and vowed that the District would continue to serve on the Teacher Education Advisory Board and to serve as a resource in curriculum development conversations. SJR State’s Dawn Boles followed up the conversation with an email to both Parker Raiman and Associate Superintendent of Human Resources Wayne King.
3/27/2024	SJR State’s Teacher Education Coordinator Dawn Boles spoke with leadership at the Clay County School District about the proposed BS in Exceptional Student Education. Samantha Wright (CCSD Supervisor of Certified Teacher Placement) indicated the School District’s support of the proposal and vowed that the District would continue to serve on the Teacher Education Advisory Board and to serve as a resource in curriculum development conversations. SJR State’s Dawn Boles followed up the conversation with an email to Ms. Wright providing additional information.

*4.3 List external engagement activities with public and nonpublic postsecondary institutions. This list shall include meetings and other forms of communication among external postsecondary institutions regarding evidence of need, demand, and economic impact.*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
3/12/2024	SJR State submitted a posting in Florida’s Academic Program Pre-Proposal Recognition System (APPRiSe) to notify all post-secondary institutions statewide that the College is considering developing a baccalaureate degree in exceptional student education and provide advance opportunity for discussion and collaboration. The comment period is scheduled to close April 26, 2024.
3/25/2024	SJR State’s President Pickens spoke with Florida State College at Jacksonville President Dr. Avendano about SJR State’s proposed bachelors degree in Exceptional Student Education. President Avendano shared his support of the proposal. Dr. Brown followed up their conversation with an email providing further information.
3/25/2024	SJR State’s President Pickens spoke with Daytona State College President Dr. LaBosso about SJR State’s proposed bachelors degree in Exceptional Student Education. President Avendano shared his support of the proposal. Dr. Brown followed up their conversation with an email providing further information.
4/5/2024	SJR State’s President Pickens spoke with Flagler College President Delaney about SJR State’s proposed bachelors degree in Exceptional Student Education. President Delaney shared that Flagler College did not object to the proposal.
4/5/2024	<p>Dr. John Kantner, Senior Associate Provost for Faculty and Research at the University of North Florida, entered the following comment in Florida’s Academic Program Pre-Proposal Recognition System (APPRiSe):</p> <p><i>“We would like to express our concerns regarding the potential impact of this proposed program on the enrollments of existing programs, particularly at the University of North Florida. We have a well-established ESE program with endorsements in Reading (K-12) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL, K-12). We have recently invested significant resources in redesigning our programs to ensure accessibility and flexibility for all students. Our program has been carefully redesigned to meet the needs of a diverse student population, including non-traditional students, by offering multiple pathways to licensure, including online and apprenticeship models. Expanding our existing program to accommodate a larger number of students has been particularly in response to the critical shortage of Special Education teachers statewide. Our efforts to meet this demand have involved collaborating with local school districts and community partners , including Clay and St Johns Counties, to provide practical, hands-on training opportunities for aspiring educators. We are concerned that the introduction of a similar program at SJR State, particularly within our College’s Workforce Region 8, will have a detrimental impact on our own enrollments. SJR State’s program will draw prospective students away from UNF as their tuition is lower. This will create direct competition for a degree program</i></p>

*that already struggles to attract a significant number of students in across Florida.”*

SJR State leadership will reach out to the University of North Florida to discuss their concerns and brainstorm ways in which SJR State and UNF can work together to help address the critical teacher shortage throughout Florida, particularly in Putnam, St. Johns, and Clay Counties. These conversations will be summarized in the Baccalaureate Proposal.