

Edwardsville Public Library to host "National Trends in Special Education and School Psychology: Conversations with SIUE Professors"

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EDWARDSVILLE - The U.S. Department of Education has reported nationwide shortages of special educators and school psychologists, which experts say have far-reaching consequences on other educators, children with special needs and their families.

In an effort to boost knowledge of and career interest in those fields, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville's Stacie Kirk, PhD, and Jeremy Jewell, PhD, will present

“National Trends in Special Education and School Psychology: Conversations with SIUE Professors” from 7-8:30 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 18 at the Edwardsville Public Library.

“We encourage interested members of the community to attend, particularly those who have questions or an interest in special education or children with special needs, and the important role that special educators and school psychologists play in supporting students with disabilities in school and community settings,” said Jewell, professor of psychology in the School of Education, Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB), and director of the Clinical Child and School Psychology graduate program.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, 46 states report teacher shortages in special education. Additionally, by the year 2020, there is projected to be a shortage of approximately 15,000 school psychologists.

“The impact of these shortages affects students and their families, as they may be less likely to receive the individualized support that will help them be as successful as possible,” explained Kirk, an associate professor of special education in the SEHHB’s Department of Teaching and Learning.

“The shortages place additional demands on the teachers that are present,” she added, “contributing to increased potential for burn-out, as they are expected to spread their time and efforts across a larger number of students, with not enough time in the day to support each student to the level they deserve.”

During the presentation, Kirk will highlight the strengths of SIUE’s special education program, the important collaborative relationships that it forms with cooperative districts, and the ways that special education services benefit all students. Jewell will emphasize the multiple roles of a school psychologist, collaborative efforts SIUE’s program faculty have undertaken and employment opportunities.

“This is an ideal moment in history for prospective college students to think about careers in special education or school psychology,” said Paul Rose, PhD, interim dean of the SEHHB. “In the SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior, we feel a responsibility to inform members of the community about such professional trends. Our region and our nation need skilled professionals who are firmly committed to the well-being of children with disabilities.”

The interdisciplinary presentation demonstrates the ways in which both professions are critical to student success.

“Special educators and school psychologists work collaboratively to assess students and determine the services that are most likely to help them succeed in school and in the community,” Kirk said. “It is important to understand that there is not just one group of professionals that support individuals with a range of needs and abilities, but that it is a collaborative effort.”

The [SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior](#) prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.