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ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHER TALENT

**How Strong, Bold Partnerships between
School Districts and Teacher Preparation Programs
are Transforming the Teacher Pipeline**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an era of rigorous college- and career-ready standards, students' increasingly diverse backgrounds, and tougher educator evaluation systems, novice teachers are entering classrooms that require new and higher levels of expertise and instruction. Yet many district leaders face the prospect of not being able to put anyone, much less a high-quality teacher, in front of each student on the first day of school. This is a risk they cannot afford. Preparation programs, too, are challenged to find strong student teaching placements, ensure jobs for their graduates and keep up with the rapidly changing requirements of the teaching workforce. Many of these organizations have realized they cannot do it alone. The rapidly changing environment requires strong, bold

partnerships between districts and preparation programs, supported by effective policy, to ensure all students have access to an excellent teacher. This report, written by Education First with support from the Joyce Foundation, examines the most sophisticated partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs. It also presents a roadmap with ten recommendations for partners interested in taking a proactive, dynamic approach to shaping teaching talent pipelines through similar partnerships.

The report, primarily intended for school district and preparation program administrators, provides specific examples of each recommendation, grounded in the daily

A Roadmap for District and Teacher Preparation Programs to Build and Sustain Strong, Bold Partnerships

INITIATION STAGE

1. Districts should understand their talent pipeline and discuss these needs with teacher preparation programs
2. Partners should set the initial vision and goals together, with a focus on relationship-building and trust
3. Partners should align on rubrics and key expectations for program graduates
4. Partners should commit to sharing and looking at data together to drive action

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

5. Partners should jointly select and train mentor teachers and strategically place candidates
6. Partners should ensure coursework matches clinical experiences and district language
7. Partners should communicate and meet frequently
8. Partners should spend more time in schools together

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE

9. Partners should be open to change, and regularly step back to honestly discuss progress and challenges
10. Partners should ensure that district needs drive shifts in teacher preparation programs' pipelines, structures and systems

work and challenges of partnership. From revamping field and coursework expectations to examining the data together to developing new processes for joint mentor teacher selection, the report highlights ways that partners are changing the way they do business, in order to

reshape the teacher workforce for a new era. In doing so, partners are aiming for the same results: high-achieving students who receive an excellent education regardless of their background, taught by a talented, well-prepared corps of teachers ready to teach on day one.

INTRODUCTION

Suppose you are the new chief human resources officer at a mid-sized urban school district. The new school year is approaching, and you know you have nearly 200 teaching vacancies, with many in math, science and special education. School leaders are requesting candidates with a variety of backgrounds, credentials and experiences. You and your team filter through the applications your district has received, but you realize that you don't have many candidates who are credentialed in the right subject areas. Additionally, it is hard to tell whether they will be prepared for all of the changes your district is facing, including new standards and evaluation systems. You notice that some of your applicants are from a local teacher preparation program, which you know has placed student teachers in your district, but you've never engaged too deeply with the clinical preparation process or with the program. You consider reaching out to the program's leaders to have a deeper conversation about your district's needs.

Imagine now, that you're an administrator of a teacher preparation program. You've been preparing teachers for years, but recently, your staff has reported greater difficulty in finding high-quality student teaching placements in local schools. While you know many of your graduates work at local school districts, you aren't able to easily access data on how they perform. Anecdotally, you've heard from graduates, however, that due to new standards and evaluation requirements, many have found unexpected challenges in their work. You consider reaching out to local school district leaders to have a deeper conversation.

In an era of rigorous college- and career-ready standards, students' increasingly diverse backgrounds, and tougher educator evaluation systems, novice teachers are entering classrooms that require new levels of expertise and instruction. Many district leaders, similar to this example, face the prospect of not being able to put anyone, much less a high-quality teacher, in front of each student on the first day of school. This is a risk they cannot afford. Preparation programs, too, are challenged to find strong student teaching placements, ensure jobs for their graduates and keep up with the rapidly changing requirements of the teaching workforce. **As a result, a growing number of districts and teacher preparation programs have begun to form strong, bold and mutually beneficial partnerships to produce teacher candidates who better meet district needs.** These partnerships, when done well, take significant time and resources on behalf of both organizations, but can also transform the work of partners, creating joint responsibility for the development of effective educators. And in addition to benefiting the institutions, such partnerships can create a seamless experience where new teachers grow, thrive and advance student achievement.

This report provides a nationwide scan of some of the strongest, most sophisticated partnerships between districts and teacher preparation programs. It seeks to provide an "under the hood" look at what makes these partnerships work at three stages of development: initiation, implementation and continuous improvement. This report should provide both inspiration and a roadmap for districts and preparation programs looking to initiate, advance or sustain a partnership.

Recent National Work Supporting Partnerships Between Districts and Teacher Preparation Programs

2008

U.S. Department of Education initiates the Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) Grant Program, which supports partnerships between institutions of higher education and high-need districts and schools to develop a strong teacher pipeline. To date, the grants have affected 10,000 teachers. Since FY 2009, the program has awarded five-year grants to 64 grantees in 25 states. The total funding over the life of the grants is expected to be more than \$545 million.

2010

The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) creates a Blue Ribbon Panel to discern ways that teacher preparation efforts could be more effective. One of the final recommendations, "Strategic Partnerships Are Imperative for Powerful Clinical Preparation," emphasized the need for joint responsibility and accountability among multiple partners, including institutions of higher education, districts, unions and policy makers.

2013

After NCATE becomes the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP), it introduces standards for teacher preparation, including one that requires that "partners co-construct mutually beneficial P12 school and community arrangements... and share responsibility for continuous improvement of candidate preparation." CAEP emphasized that partnerships focus on the connections between theory and practice and shared accountability for candidate selection, licensure and outcomes.

2014

U.S. Department of Education releases draft regulations for teacher preparation programs. States would have to report program outcomes for candidates' placement, employment, effect on student achievement and other indicators to give school districts more data about preparation programs' quality. The final regulations are anticipated in early 2016.

Sources: ^{1,2,3}

METHODOLOGY

To further explore partnerships between districts and teacher preparation programs, the Joyce Foundation gave Education First a grant to research successful joint efforts and outline what made them work. Education First examined the research to find stellar partnerships in communities across the country, and consulted with eleven national teacher preparation experts and over two dozen districts and teacher preparation programs (see **Appendix C** for a complete list). Interviews with district and preparation program partners were comprehensive and candid, and partners shared extensively about both the hard work and rewards inherent in their work together. Conversations focused on:

- Partners' vision and goals for the partnership

- Critical elements of the partnership, including leadership, staffing, communication, stakeholder engagement and funding
- How partners engage in continuous improvement
- The results and key metrics of partnership success
- Where the partnership has fallen short and why
- What makes districts and teacher preparation programs "ready" to partner with one another

These partnerships are highlighted throughout the report, and seven are profiled in **Appendix A**. A more detailed spotlight on **Salem-Keizer (OR) Public Schools** and its partners in **Appendix B** touches on all ten recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of leading partnerships between districts and teacher preparation programs yielded a roadmap (see below) with ten recommendations outlining what partners can and should do to build and sustain partnerships. These recommendations, which emerged consistently across interviewed partners, can be

organized into three stages of partnership development: Initiation, Implementation and Continuous Improvement. While no partnership needs to have all ten of these recommendations in place, interviews and research suggest that the majority need to be present for partnerships to be both successful and sustainable.

A Roadmap for District and Teacher Preparation Programs to Build and Sustain Strong, Bold Partnerships

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INITIATION STAGE

PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

Initiating partnerships can be a significant challenge for district and teacher preparation program leaders. Laying the foundation for an effective partnership is time- and resource-intensive, and other pressing matters abound. However, potential partners must consider these efforts to be a necessary investment in bringing teaching talent to the classrooms and students that need it most. Where strong partnerships exist, districts receive the teachers they need, when they need them, to advance student learning.

“Districts need to be more aggressive consumers, ask for what they need in candidates and then be prepared to help train the teacher candidates in partnership with preparation programs.”

1. Districts should understand their talent pipeline and discuss these needs with teacher preparation programs

If the partnership is to serve the needs of school districts and their students, districts must be crystal clear on their needs, beyond just projected teacher turnover. The truth is, “districts don’t simply need a particular number of teachers; they need specific numbers of teachers trained in subject [often shortage] areas and specialties,” wrote Lesley Guggenheim, a vice president at **TNTP**, a nonprofit organization that partners with school districts and charters to improve public education.⁴ Additionally, districts need quality teachers who are trained (or ready to be trained) to serve their particular student demographic and who can quickly understand and implement the district curriculum. Districts must share those needs with preparation programs.

Leading partnerships exemplified just that. After noticing challenges across district classrooms and experiencing difficulties filling teacher vacancies, particularly in hard-to-staff areas, **Fresno Unified School District** initiated a partnership with **California State University Fresno**. Together, they looked at data and patterns within their city, particularly around poverty, student demographics and teacher retention. The two organizations decided to focus on bringing in strong math, science and special education teachers to teach grades 4-8, forming the Fresno Teacher Residency program. A teaching residency is typically a year-long program, and blends academic coursework with experiential learning under the guidance of a mentor teacher.⁵ Residencies focus heavily on providing a hands-on clinical experience for participants. Fresno’s residency, now expanded to K-12, fits into a broader district recruitment and retention strategy, which includes seven different talent pipelines, each focused on different district needs and types of teacher candidates.

In some cases, once districts understood their needs, they worked with preparation programs to build their own pipelines to supplement existing partnership pipelines. For example, **Denver Public Schools (DPS)** and its partners, **University of Denver** and the **University of Colorado Denver**, noted they were consistently challenged to bring in the talent the district needed to fill specific positions among its 800 to 1,000 annual teacher vacancies. Further analysis of the district’s talent needs led to the co-development and operation of three additional teacher preparation programs, in partnership with the universities. The three programs—the Denver Teacher Residency (DTR), Denver Teach Today (DTT) and the Student Teacher Residency (STR)—are each structured to accommodate prospective teachers with differing training preferences. The DTR teacher candidates earn a Master’s degree and commit to teaching in DPS for five years, while the DTT provides current professionals who are not interested in earning

a Master's degree a streamlined path to licensure. The STR serves undergraduate teacher candidates at the University of Colorado Denver and the Metropolitan State University of Denver.

Through this process, Denver Public Schools engaged proactively to understand its talent needs, and work with its partners to develop effective solutions. "Districts need to be more aggressive consumers, ask for what they need in candidates and then be prepared to help train the teacher candidates in partnership with preparation programs," Shannon Hagerman, Director of Teacher Preparation Pathways at DPS, said. Recent data shows that students taught by DTR alumni outperformed their counterparts taught by non-DTR alumni by 17 points on state math assessments. To learn more about these districts and others profiled in this report, please see **Appendix A**.

2. Partners should set the initial vision and goals together, with a focus on relationship-building and trust

Once partners have ascertained and understood district needs, they must ensure from the start that the partnership is focused on addressing them. This requires all potential partners to jointly establish a shared vision and goals for the partnership. To launch the Boston Teacher Residency, leaders from **Boston Public Schools (BPS)** worked with a local funder and non-profit to come to a common vision for program goals. These goals included a focus on training teachers in high-needs areas, with a dual certification in special education. They also set targets for specific retention rates of program graduates and an increasing financial commitment by the district to support the residency. All program goals were formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding among the three parties. And over time, the partnership is starting to see results. A 2011 evaluation found that by their fourth year of teaching grades 4 through 8 math, teachers trained in the Boston Teacher Residency were more effective than other Boston Public Schools teachers.

As these visioning conversations unfold, partners can also focus on the nuts and bolts of the partnership. Salem-Keizer (OR) Public Schools and its Oregon-based

university partners, including **Western Oregon University** and **Corban University**, went beyond a mission and vision to set targets, goals, benchmarks and a plan of action for each element of the partnership. These goals include developing an articulated process for purposeful placement for all new hires, focusing on recruiting culturally/linguistically diverse teachers; developing a plan for considering teacher candidates for early hiring; and better articulating the induction period for beginning teachers. To learn more about Salem-Keizer Public Schools, its partnership work, and how it has integrated all ten recommendations, please see **Appendix B**.

"We hold tightly to our shared values, and pretty much ignore things that detract from them."

Those interviewed reiterated the importance of starting the partnership with a focus on true relationship-building and trust, including a conversation around values and what expertise each partner brings to the table. From the beginning, "we found it particularly helpful to align around common values, specifically 'increasing kid-level learning' and 'preparing better teachers than before. We hold tightly to these shared values, and pretty much ignore things that detract from them," Mark Girod, Dean of the College of Education at Western Oregon University noted. The partnership's deep investment in activities that provide teachers and students with more support, e.g. clinical coaching and co-teaching, are a direct result of adherence to these goals. Western Oregon and its partners continually revisit their vision and goals, and recommit to the partnership annually.

Interviewees also emphasized intentionality about bringing *all* of the right stakeholders to the table, not just central office administrators. Districts should include principals and other site-level leaders to ensure efforts reflect their needs. Preparation programs must bring lead faculty and recruiters to create buy-in and shared understanding of district needs.

3. Partners should align on rubrics and key expectations for program graduates

For many teacher candidates, their clinical experience in placement schools can prove to be disconnected from their coursework in their preparation program. Each misalignment, however small, in language, tools and expectations, forces candidates to juggle differing expectations, in addition to learning how to teach. To avoid this, leading partnerships ensure that preparation programs are using similar, if not the same, tools and language around instructional effectiveness as partner districts. This enables them to achieve what teacher preparation expert Linda Darling-Hammond calls: “coherence and integration...a seamless experience of learning how to teach” from pre-service⁶ to in-service. Once aligned, leading partners use their shared tools and rubrics to intentionally drive every course, training and assessment their student teachers experience.

Salem-Keizer Public Schools and its partners use the same district-created instrument – based on the inTASC model core teaching standards– to gauge what teacher candidates should know and be able to do.⁷ Because of this alignment, Karen Spiegel, the district’s Induction Program Coordinator indicated: “Now our teachers don’t see themselves as a finished product when they graduate.” Instead, student teachers understand that they are on a consistent and coherent growth continuum, starting from their student-teaching experience, and continuing through their teaching career. **Washoe County (NV) School District** had a similar experience: The district uses a rubric similar to the **Framework for Teaching** to assess its teachers, and its partner, the **University of Nevada, Reno**, re-tooled its student teacher evaluation rubric so it could mirror the language of the Framework.

Even if perfect alignment is not possible, developing a common understanding of expectations for graduates is a step in the right direction. **DeSoto Parish (LA) School System** uses the **Teacher Advancement Program (TAP)** philosophy and rubric as a frame for its leadership, coaching and mentoring efforts. Through its partnership with **Northwestern State University**, a district employee

conducted a five-day TAP training for three university staff, who were then able to compare their own expectations and evaluation tools to TAP. University staff then revised their lesson planning template to reflect TAP. Northwestern State is now considering broader training opportunities.

4. Partners should commit to sharing and looking at data together to drive action

Existing state and local structures do not always make digestible, actionable data available. But to make partnerships succeed, both districts and teacher preparation programs must commit to generating, sharing and analyzing data together. This data must be comprehensive, and if possible, cover a breadth of indicators, for example, student teacher performance, professionalism and retention. Doing so is essential to discussing and advancing the progress of teacher candidates.

Teacher preparation programs should use the data as a focus of regular meetings with their districts, especially around the growth of teacher candidates. **Arizona State University (ASU)** provides its **iTeachAZ** partner districts with comprehensive teacher candidate evaluation data from performance assessments, walk-throughs, progress reports and notebook checks through an online pre-service teacher data dashboard. The dashboard allows teacher educators, site coordinators (university-supported coaches that recruit, support and train student teachers and mentors), mentors and teacher candidates to view data on teacher candidate progress. Quarterly governance meetings between districts and ASU staff center on data from the dashboard, which includes student enrollment status and observation and assessment measures. Partners use the dashboard to identify cohort trends, and the dashboard can alert teacher candidates where they should seek additional coaching or training. And iTeachAZ is producing results – 92% of iTeach graduates are still teaching after three years, compared with 76% statewide.⁸ In a survey of approximately 1,200 principals from across Arizona, iTeachAZ program completers outperformed the state

average on every indicator (e.g., “demonstrates in-depth knowledge and understanding about the subject(s) he/she teaches” and “implements research-based learning theories and instructional strategies”). And while research on the impact on student achievement is somewhat limited, in one partner school district, test results from third- through eighth-grade students of first-year teachers showed that those taught by iTeachAZ graduates scored significantly higher in reading and math than students taught by their traditionally trained peers.⁹

As a part of their partnership, TNTP staffed **Collegiate Academies**, a charter management organization in New Orleans, with a part-time teacher development coach who built skill among its instructional coaches and supported and evaluated teachers directly. The TNTP coach met weekly with the Collegiate program director, to examine data (based on TNTP’s **Assessment of Classroom Effectiveness** “ACE” rubric) for each new teacher. TNTP’s strong data team supported the coach’s ability to provide helpful analyses. And early results look promising: Collegiate’s program graduates received higher average scores on the TNTP Framework than their peers in the TNTP Academy preparation program, one of Louisiana’s top-performing teacher certification programs.

Districts also should provide data back to their teacher preparation programs, highlighting program strengths and areas for growth. Salem-Keizer Public Schools disaggregates iTASC evaluation data by preparation provider, and shares and discusses the results with its partners, who can then further disaggregate the data by teacher training pathway within university programs. Salem-Keizer plans to provide the universities with sorted Smarter Balanced data to better inform programmatic changes.



Initiation Stage: Lessons Learned from Partners

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Project district hiring needs as early and specifically as possible and share them with preparation programs. ■ Ensure that partners have a common vision and set of goals for the partnership. ■ Regularly share data on teacher candidate performance, professionalism and retention at the most disaggregated, detailed level possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Force a partnership if you don't share a similar vision or can't agree on a set of goals. ■ Exclude key stakeholders from early conversations. ■ Get hung up on having all identical tools between partners right away. Cross-walking materials towards alignment can be a good start.

FUNDING

Funding remains a critical component to making these partnerships work. Many of the sites profiled in this report have received grant funds to initiate the partnership, which has allowed them to add capacity in the short term to launch the Initiation Stage work.

However, grants are not a requirement for successful partnerships, nor are they a long-term solution. The partnerships profiled here are moving beyond grant funding to better sustain what they do. Arizona State University initially received a federal Teacher Quality Partnership grant; however, now the school districts pay mentor stipends, and ASU has reallocated funding for Site Coordinator salaries into its own budget. In **St. Charles Parish (LA) Public Schools**, while the district is continuing to look at other grants to support the partnership once its state-funded grant ends, it also is planning to put \$30,000-\$50,000 annually into its partnership with **Southeastern Louisiana University**.



To make these partnerships work with existing funding streams, sometimes districts and their teacher preparation programs need to get creative and reallocate funding. Western Oregon University is consolidating most teacher candidate placements to four local school districts, and the savings in travel costs will release faculty members to spend more time in partner districts supporting teacher candidates. Both **KIPP DC's** Capital Teacher Residency program and Denver's Student Teacher Residency place their teacher candidates in paraprofessional roles in their residency year to cover the cost of resident salaries and provide a deeper clinical experience for their candidates.

What is common among successful district and teacher preparation program partnerships are a strong vision and goals for the partnership, an openness to change and relationships that have deepened through frequent communication. Getting these elements right will help partners jointly sort out the long-term funding needed to grow and sustain their collaboration.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

WORKING ON THE PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER

The implementation stage is where the partnership rubber hits the teacher preparation road. Here, partners must discuss and work out program shifts in both districts and preparation programs, and set quality standards to ensure excellence and rigor on the ground. As this takes extra time and effort, it is critical that the organizational leaders bring in the dedicated staff needed to implement the details of the partnership.

5. Partners should jointly select and train mentor teachers and strategically place candidates

Two of the critical points of intersection between districts and teacher preparation programs are the training of mentor teachers and strategic placement of student teachers with mentors. A thoughtful placement with an effective mentor can help ensure a positive learning experience for the teacher candidate, and surveys of new teachers suggest that student teaching is the most critical part of their preparation.¹⁰ Research also supports the importance of a high-quality student teaching experience. A five-year National Bureau of Economic Research study on teacher preparation and student achievement found that programs that focus on clinical work and teaching practices produce more effective first-year teachers.¹¹ And a National Research Council report found clinical practice to be one of three “aspects of teacher preparation that are likely to have the highest potential for effects on outcomes for students,” along with content knowledge and the quality of teacher candidates.¹² The National Education Association also emphasized the importance of strategically partnering around the design and implementation of clinical practice.¹³ However, the student teacher placement process in many districts often bypasses the district central offices entirely, as preparation programs work with principals or teachers with whom they have existing relationships to make

placements. This makes it challenging for the district to ensure student teachers are consistently placed with those most ready and able to be strong mentors.

In strong partnerships, both districts and teacher preparation programs play an active and engaged role in this process. Partners participate in the selection process for mentor teachers together, helping to recruit strong candidates, setting a high selection bar and placing student teachers strategically. St. Charles Parish Public Schools (LA) chooses mentor teachers based on an evaluation of strong instructional practices as well as their capacity for mentorship. Together, staff from Southeastern Louisiana University and the district match teacher candidates and mentors based on a variety of factors including needs, certification, personalities and where the candidate lives.

In strong partnerships, both districts and preparation programs play an active and engaged role in strategically placing student teachers with effective mentors.

Both partners should also take responsibility for supporting and training mentor teachers, and mentors must be compensated for their efforts. At Arizona State University partner iTeachAZ district sites, university-supported site coordinators run monthly mentor trainings (with topics informed by data) and debrief sessions to ensure teacher candidates are getting strong support on the right things. Initially, Arizona State University paid for mentor stipends using external funding, but now its partner districts include mentor stipends in their budgets. Their district partners typically pay mentors anywhere from \$500-\$1,000 annually, and some districts have adapted their career and compensation ladders to include

the mentor role. **Stockton University**, in partnership with the **Atlantic City (NJ) School District**, provides in-school training and graduate course credits for those mentor teachers who complete it.

Districts should develop policies that tie mentor selection to evaluation or performance data, ensuring that only teachers rated at the upper end of an evaluation continuum or rubric are eligible to be mentor teachers.¹⁴ Additionally, mentor teachers should be screened for ability to work with and coach adults; interviewees emphasized that not all effective teachers of students are effective teachers of teachers.

Mentor teachers should be screened for their ability to work with and coach adults; interviewees emphasized that not all effective teachers of students are effective teachers of teachers.

6. Partners should ensure coursework matches clinical experiences and district language

Beyond teacher observation rubrics and similar tools, partners must align on the specifics of their program offerings to ensure coherence. Specifically, districts and teacher preparation programs must analyze the entire program and ensure alignment of curriculum and training throughout. When St. Charles Parish Public Schools and Southeastern Louisiana University came together, they realized that the district field experience, university coursework and professional learning sessions were disconnected and misaligned. Student teachers were getting different messages around what to focus on at different times in the residency experience. The partners realized that when, for example, the district was focusing on training student teachers on questioning techniques, it was important that university coursework had a similar focus. As a team, they redesigned their programming, jointly agreeing on the short list of best practices they wanted students to learn, and in what

order, and re-organized assignments and professional development. **Long Beach Unified School District** went through a lengthy alignment process with **California State University Long Beach**. Through an external grant, which paid for release time for faculty members, they jointly created an integrated teacher preparation program. The two organizations spent a year rewriting the teacher preparation curriculum and coursework and building relationships with one another in the process.

District staff also may co-teach some of the coursework with faculty members from the university. For example, in the Fresno Teacher Residency, a district administrator and university faculty member jointly design and teach coursework to student teachers. As a result, courses feature Fresno Unified-specific systems and structures, a huge benefit to residents who will be in the district full-time a year later. “Walking into all the classrooms this year, they [the graduates of the residency] look like they have been teaching forever,” said Teresa Morales-Young, Instructional Support Director at Fresno Unified School District.

7. Partners should communicate and meet frequently

Frequent communication and meetings were constant theme across all successful partnerships. In many instances, as partnerships deepened, district and preparation program staff met even more frequently to engage in real-time problem solving and build the trust needed to discuss challenging issues. In Salem-Keizer Public Schools, the district partnership coordinator and the deans at its partner institutions talk twice a month and meet in person once a month. They also hold site network meetings monthly to discuss successes and challenges and troubleshoot. As Mark Girod, Dean of the College of Education at Western Oregon University noted, “There’s no magic involved; we’re just a group of people who got together and decided that we could do this better if we do this collaboratively. We go to a lot of meetings and see each other a lot; everyone is busy, but we need time and

space to cultivate high-quality relationships... [this results in] a level of trust and investment at the table, and open discussion of evaluation data.”

Additionally, these communications must happen at all levels of each partnership organization. With Long Beach Unified School District and its partner, meetings occur across multiple partnership layers. The district superintendent and university dean meet monthly; a steering committee with members from each partnership organization meets regularly, and topical working groups convene as needed.

8. Partners should spend more time in schools together

Partners need to be in schools together. Teacher preparation faculty should spend time at host school sites to observe student teacher candidates, teach coursework in district classrooms, model strong instruction and provide professional development to district teachers. Doing so solidifies relationships between stakeholders, including principals, mentor teachers, university faculty, program coordinators and student teachers. It also builds the credibility of teacher preparation programs as they better understand their partner district and its

needs. Additionally, being in schools provides partners a chance to align on common expectations for teaching in the district. Site-based partnerships create whole school environments focused on teacher training and growth that, ultimately, support both the readiness of new teachers and improvements among veteran teachers.¹⁵

To make this shift to site-based work, some preparation programs have overhauled traditional faculty roles. Arizona State University, for example, removed the traditional role of the faculty supervisor, and instead placed a site coordinator at each partner district. The site coordinator is a clinical faculty member housed full time in a partner school district, and is assigned a cohort of teacher candidates that are trained in that district. Each site coordinator manages shared governance meetings with the district, mentor teacher training and support, clinical supervision, and course instruction.

Similarly, Fresno Unified School District has a faculty liaison at each school site. District staff conduct monthly site walk-throughs with partners at Fresno State University, and they discuss what is most important to the district, trends in data and the implications for their partnership. For their teacher residency, the district provides classrooms to house university courses.

Implementation Stage: Lessons Learned from Partners

Do's	Don'ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Provide mentor teachers with frequent professional development that responds to teacher candidate performance and aligns with competencies.■ Take an active role in the placement of student teachers.■ Ensure there is a point person at both the district and the preparation program responsible for making the partnership succeed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Limit schools' interaction with preparation program to observations or housing methods classes.■ Underestimate the value of face-to-face meetings.■ Sacrifice quality for quantity. If needed, cut down the number of partnerships to go deep on a few.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE

SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

Partnerships that last do so because they persevere through leadership transitions, as well as shifts in funding and priorities. Below are key characteristics that help partnerships sustain their work.

9. Partners should be open to change, and regularly step back to honestly discuss progress and challenges

While strong partners communicate regularly in informal ways, they also should set aside time to engage in big-picture “state of the partnership” conversations. In doing so, partners should keep data front and center to guide these conversations. Additionally, as partnerships mature, connections between partners should reflect respect, honest feedback and openness to change.

“The best partnerships are those where the district has given honest feedback to the preparation program and caused it to improve.”

For example, St. Charles Parish Public Schools has quarterly meetings with its partner programs, and conducts program assessments and surveys. Twice a year, the partners get together to review and assess application and recruiting processes, and discuss changes that need to be made. Similarly, in Denver Public Schools, the district holds quarterly meetings with all of its university partners at once to outline district hiring needs and discuss evaluation data on program graduates. In Fresno Unified School District, the district meets quarterly with its Fresno State University leadership and key faculty to formally discuss the teacher residency. During these meetings, the district includes a shared learning experience for partners to engage in, for example, reading about recent research on effective teacher preparation together.

Long Beach Unified School District’s long-lasting partnership with CSU Long Beach represents this well; both have a deep respect for the strengths each brings to the table. As a result, even when they disagree, the relationship remains intact. Partners from Arizona State University emphasized thought partnership and feedback. “The best partnerships are those where the district has given honest feedback to the preparation program and caused it to improve. Moving to the co-teaching model [where two or more people share responsibility for classroom instruction] was due to district feedback,” said Sarah Beal, former Executive Director of SEED and NEXT Grants at Arizona State University.

Openness to change often can mean significantly shifting course. At Collegiate Academies, the charter network realized that it had overly focused on classroom management, and a real need of its residents was learning effective instructional practice. TNTP, its partner, was not only willing to shift focus, but also unexpectedly did some direct teacher coaching because teachers needed it. Partners both had a willingness to be flexible, and make changes in the moment, and let the partnership and the needs of the students and school determine their path. At **Montclair State University**, district input led to the preparation program creating dual certification opportunities, increasing clinical hours, introducing the co-teaching model, and setting a higher entry bar.



10. Partners should ensure that district needs drive shifts in teacher preparation programs' pipelines, structures and systems

Ultimately, for strong partnerships to succeed, teacher preparation programs must flexibly respond to district needs. As the future employer of its teachers, the district should be viewed as the valued consumer of the university's teacher candidates. The Boston Teacher Residency, for example, receives annual subject area and candidate diversity targets from Boston Public Schools, and uses them to shape its incoming cohort. Washoe County School District realized that it was hosting nearly 20 social studies teachers for student teacher positions, but only had 2-5 open positions annually in that content area. The district expressed the disparity to its university partners and brainstormed creative options with them. One solution was to add special education credits to the social studies teaching track to enable them access special education job openings.

For Salem-Keizer Public Schools, its university partners, Western Oregon University and Corban University, have worked to shift student teacher schedules to start earlier in the fall, even if their university semester has not yet begun. This enables teacher candidates to observe

In some cases, teacher preparation programs have developed entirely new pathways to support district talent needs.

teaching in Salem-Keizer from the very first weeks of school, which are critical to a teacher's ability to set tone and expectations in his or her classroom.

In some cases, teacher preparation programs have developed entirely new pathways to support district talent needs. The University of Colorado Denver, in partnership with multiple districts, including Denver Public Schools, is implementing a new "NxtGEN Pathway" program. This new initiative is a four-year undergraduate residency model that seeks to recruit and develop a more diverse teacher pipeline and meet the district's need for high-quality paraprofessionals. Students begin the program freshman year and engage as half-time paraprofessional interns at Denver Public Schools sites for three years, and then move into the full-time student teacher residency program in their senior year. As principals were struggling to find quality paraprofessionals, this program creatively provides both a short-term support for schools, as well as better prepared and diverse talent in the long term.

Continuous Improvement Stage: Lessons Learned from Partners

Do's

- Discuss financial sustainability early and often, as well as at step back meetings, particularly if grant funds support your partnership.
- Ensure you are taking the time to effectively onboard new staff and leadership to help them understand any existing partnerships.
- Consider expanding your partnership beyond pre-service; think about how to jointly support new in-service teachers as well.

Don'ts

- Rely on "gut feeling" and anecdotes at partner step-backs. Make sure data is always central to the conversation.
- Hold on too tightly to the "way it has always been." As needs and capacities change, each program and district must adjust as well.
- Do this work alone. Reach out to learn from other districts and teacher preparation programs in partnerships.

POLICY

Policymakers at the federal, state and even local level can create, or hinder, the environment for successful partnerships. Here are a few policy considerations that arose from strong partnerships and teacher preparation experts:

- **Allow for flexibility in the types of organizations that can endorse for licensure.** In some instances, school districts have been able to “grow their own” teacher preparation programs in large part because the state agency overseeing educator certification has granted the flexibility for districts and nonprofits to endorse candidates for licensure. That was the case in Boston Public Schools as new flexibility in Massachusetts has allowed the Boston Teacher Residency to endorse teacher candidates for licensure. Similarly, Denver Public Schools has a waiver from the state that allows the district to endorse candidates for licensure just like the process a university might follow.
- **Articulate a developmental continuum between pre-service and in-service.** Policymakers can ensure that states play a helpful role in outlining a seamless growth trajectory across a teacher’s career, thus facilitating partnership work. In Missouri, the state’s Teaching Standards outline performance expectations on five quality indicators for teacher candidates as well as for in-service teachers at varying levels of effectiveness. The University of Missouri—St. Louis uses this continuum to drive aligned expectations in conversations with its district partners.
- **Formalize and strengthen the role of a mentor teacher.** In many of the highlighted partnerships, the district and/or teacher preparation provider ensure that mentor teachers meet a minimum performance threshold and compensate the teachers for their time and expertise in supporting student teachers. In fact, **new legislation** in Oregon requires training for mentor teachers that likely will influence and bolster the partnership between Salem-Keizer Public Schools and its partners.
- **Facilitate open data sharing around program graduate performance.** Data sharing often remains a challenge to the ongoing growth and strength of partnerships. Local and state entities must work together to ensure that anonymized individual-level data on program graduates is made available to partners, as data that is not carefully disaggregated in this way is often unusable as a source of information or guidance for programmatic change. In Los Angeles, the **LA Compact**, which includes **Los Angeles Unified School District** and 12 higher education institutions, is developing data-sharing agreements.

CONCLUSION

The nation's schools are becoming more complex, not less. College- and career-ready standards, tougher state assessments, new ways to evaluate educators, advanced uses of technology and an increasingly diverse student population mean that school systems can take few chances about the quality of their teachers. Strong partnerships between school districts and teacher preparation programs, like the ones highlighted in this report, are a strategy not only to shape but to increase the quality of teachers at the head of the class. Many in the field say it's about time that supply and demand have a meeting of the minds. "I see great interconnectedness between districts and teacher preparation programs, and am perplexed why partnerships aren't initiated on a regular basis because of this. It only makes sense that we are at the table together," Kristin Dixon, Dean of Education and Counseling at Corban University, said.

From meeting district staffing demands to investing in the student teacher experience to revamping preparation program coursework, partnerships focused on the front

end of the talent pipeline are just the beginning. Once they start working together, school systems and teacher preparation programs inevitably find other ways to collaborate – jointly supporting the challenging first few years of a teacher's experience, for example, or providing opportunities for veteran teachers to become coaches or mentors for their peers. Partners that have a solid footing find it easier to tackle challenges together down the line.

Ultimately, the partnerships must be about results for districts, teachers, preparation programs and students. School systems see the benefits of stronger partnerships with teacher preparation programs and realize that investments in such arrangements are not a matter of if, but when. As Shannon Hagerman, the Director of Teacher and Principal Preparation at the Denver Teacher Residency said: "Data has shown our district that the investment in this is worth it—either invest on the front end in these types of programs and partnerships, or keep paying to fill the same positions or in professional development for unprepared teachers."



PARTNERSHIP PROFILES

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY (ITEACHAZ) & PARTNER DISTRICTS

Overview

Arizona State University (ASU) partners with 25 school districts in the Phoenix area and American Indian communities of Arizona with the goal of graduating teachers who in their first year match the effectiveness of second-year teachers. The partnership began in 1999 as a Professional Development Schools Model – a partnership between a school and university focused on improving teacher preparation and professional development – and was redesigned as a residency program in 2010. Students in the program begin student teaching during their junior year and as seniors spend four days per week teaching in pre-K-8 classrooms and one day attending courses on-site in districts.

Highlighted Partnership Characteristics

INITIATION STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

- **Data Sharing:** ASU developed a pre-service teacher data dashboard. The dashboard allows all teacher educators, site coordinators, mentors and teacher candidates to regularly view evaluation data on teacher candidate progress from performance assessments, walk-throughs, progress reports and notebook checks. ASU and its partner districts hold quarterly governance meetings to discuss the data, and the results are used to determine topics for coursework and training. Data is entered through a mobile app, which site coordinators use to collect and enter data in real-time during classroom observations.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE: WORKING ON THE PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER

- **Partners Jointly Select and Train Mentor Teachers:** At each of its partner schools, ASU site coordinators run monthly mentor teacher trainings informed by teacher candidate performance assessments and walk-through data to ensure the candidates are getting support where they most need it. Partner districts ensure that each mentor teacher is instructionally effective based on evaluation data and prepared to coach teacher candidates. Many of the partner districts also provide stipends of \$500-\$1,000 to mentors to attend training. Districts that do not offer stipends use a career ladder system to increase compensation for mentor teachers.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE: SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

- **Partners Discuss Progress and Challenges:** ASU meets quarterly with each of its partner districts to discuss teacher candidate data and any other issues. As a result of district feedback, ASU made several changes to the iTeachAZ program, including co-developing a rubric with districts to assess candidate professionalism with districts and shifting mentor teachers from a more traditional role to a co-teaching model.

Analysis & Impact

Evaluation scores from a sample of iTeachAZ teachers who graduated in 2009-2010 show that 88 percent were rated as either effective (76 percent) or highly effective (12 percent) in their first year of teaching.

In a May 2011 college exit survey, 88 percent of iTeachAZ graduates rated their student teaching experience with a grade of A or B. In fall 2011, 91 percent of the 436 teacher-candidates in iTeachAZ were recommended for certification in Arizona's public schools. Eighty-seven percent of students from the first cohort of iTeachAZ entered their third year of teaching this year, compared with 76 percent in Arizona and 80 percent nationally who make it to their third year. Eighty percent of graduates are employed in partner districts, and 32 percent of iTeachAZ graduates are teachers of color, compared with 19.1 percent in Arizona and 18.1 percent nationally.

In a survey of approximately 1,200 principals from across Arizona, the iTeachAZ program outperformed the state average on every indicator, and in one partner school district, test results from third- through eighth-grade students of first-year teachers showed that those taught by iTeachAZ graduates scored significantly higher in reading and math.

Funding Considerations

In 2009, ASU received a \$24.7 million federal Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant for iTeachAZ, in 2013 the university received an \$11.5 million three-year SEED grant, to increase the number of highly qualified STEM teachers, and in October 2014 the university received an \$11.5 million, five-year TQP grant to focus on problem-based learning and English language development in all math and science methods classes. Also in October 2014, ASU received a separate \$550,000, three-year federal grant to develop an evaluation of the effectiveness of iTeachAZ on college graduation rates; the contribution of previous iTeachAZ reforms to teacher preparedness; and the impact of iTeachAZ-trained teachers on the academic achievement of their students. ASU expects to have student achievement data at the end of the 2015-16 school year.

The partnership is now fully supported by funds from the university and districts. Arizona State University spends roughly \$100,000 per site. This includes the salaries of the site coordinators, who run monthly mentor teacher trainings, manage all of the printing and materials for courses, facilitate quarterly governance meetings with district staff and lead Friday pedagogy class with students. They are also responsible for coaching student teachers. District provide a classroom, a computer and overhead projector, a faculty member office in the classroom, and support for the mentor teachers.

Sources/Links

- [Arizona State University](#)
- [iTeachAZ](#)



BOSTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Overview

The **Boston Teacher Residency** (BTR) began as a joint initiative of the **Boston Public Schools** (BPS) and the **Boston Plan for Excellence** (BPE), a local education foundation, with the twin goals of placing an effective teacher in every classroom and building a diverse workforce. Residents in the full-year program are in BPS classrooms with experienced mentor teachers four days per week and spend one evening and one full day per week on graduate-level coursework. Through AmeriCorps funding, residents receive a \$12,500 stipend for the yearlong program. Graduates of BTR are eligible for a Massachusetts Initial Teacher License and receive a master’s degree in education from the **University of Massachusetts Boston**. They commit to teaching in BPS for at least three years; for each year of teaching in BPS, BTR forgives one-third of a graduate’s initial \$10,000 loan.

BPS additionally has three “grow your own” teacher pipelines that prepare racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse teaching candidates that reflect the diversity of the students the district serves. The High School to Teacher Program (HSTT) is an eight-year effort to support the development of BPS high school students through high school through college graduation, and then have them return to BPS as teachers. The Community Paraprofessional Development Program (CPDP) develops Boston community members interested in becoming educators by first preparing them to become paraprofessionals in Boston Public Schools. The Accelerated to Community to Teacher (ACTT) is an intensive 9-month program designed to prepare interested residents of the Boston community (including BPS paraprofessionals/substitutes) who hold a Bachelor’s degree to become novice teachers with a preliminary license.

Highlighted Partnership Characteristics

INITIATION STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

- **District is Strategic about Talent Pipeline:** BPS developed three “grow your own” pipelines – HSTT, CPDP and ACTT – to support its vision of building a diverse teaching workforce. Key statistics for the first cohorts are below:
 - HSTT: 47 percent of participants identified as African American and 39 percent Hispanic. Additionally, 87 percent of mentors are African American.
 - CPDP: 36 percent of participants identified as African American and 40 percent Hispanic. It includes BPS parents, alums and Boston residents with a range of academic experience and linguistic diversity.
 - ACTT: 62 percent of participants identified as African American and 28 percent Hispanic.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE: SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

- **Partners Discuss Progress and Challenges:** BTR staff act as thought partners for broader BPS hiring and human capital strategies. In addition, each year BPS provides BTR with district needs and targets for the makeup of the next BTR class, by subject area and candidate diversity.
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Analysis & Impact

Eighty percent of the BTR graduates hired by BPS are still teaching in the district after three years; this is significantly higher than the national average urban school teacher retention rate of 50 percent.¹⁷

In 2008, 60 percent of new BPS science and math teachers were trained by BTR, up from 40 percent in 2007 and 10 percent in 2006. Currently, 37 percent of all BTR graduates teach ESL or SPED and 49 percent are teachers of color.

In a recent survey of school principals, 97 percent responded that they would recommend hiring a BTR graduate.

Of the 38 members of the inaugural 2015 cohort of the Accelerated to Community to Teacher program (ACTT), 36 completed the program, and 28 percent are currently teaching in BPS schools.

A 2011 evaluation found that by their fourth year of teaching grades 4 through 8 math, BTR teachers are more effective than other BPS teachers.¹⁸

Funding Considerations

BTR receives support from several local and national organizations. In the first few years, the residency was funded entirely with private funds and then for several years the district assumed an increasing share of BTR costs. Due to severe district-wide budget cuts, BPS no longer provides funding to BTR.

Currently BTR receives funding from the Massachusetts Service Alliance, which administers the AmeriCorps State program for Massachusetts, and from private foundations. BTR is the recipient of several federal grants: a four-year Investing in Innovation (i3) grant to deepen preparation and induction work with BPS; a five-year Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant focusing on recruiting and preparing teachers for BPS high-need subjects and areas; a five-year Transition to Teaching (TTT) grant to continue training, development and support of highly effective BTR teachers for BPS. BPS is using Title II funds to pay for the “grow-your-own” programs.

Sources/Links

- [Boston Public Schools](#)
 - [Boston Teacher Residency](#)
 - [University of Massachusetts Boston](#)
-

DENVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Overview

Denver Public Schools (DPS) has three separate partnership programs for teacher candidates with different profiles. It partners with the **University of Denver** on the Denver Teacher Residency (DTR) for about 75 candidates annually who earn Master’s degree and commit to five years in the district, one as a resident and four as a teacher of record. It also partners with **Metropolitan State University of Denver** and the **University of Colorado Denver** on the Student Teacher Residency (STR) for undergraduate students. DPS also houses the Denver Teach Today (DTT) program for about 20-50 candidates annually who are not pursuing a Master’s degree, already have Bachelor degrees and want on-the-job training toward a teaching license. The district has a waiver with the state of Colorado to be the endorsing entity for those candidates to receive licensure. DPS hires between 800 and 1,000 teachers per year due to retention, retirement and population growth.

Highlighted Partnership Characteristics

INITIATION STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

- **District is Strategic about its Pipeline:** Denver Public Schools operates three separate programs for teacher candidates with different profiles. DPS leaders believe that districts should clearly communicate teacher candidate needs to university partners and be prepared to help train candidates.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE: SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

- **Partners Discuss Progress and Challenges:** DPS has built strong relationships with each of its university partners. The district holds quarterly meetings with each of its university partners to outline district hiring needs and discuss novice teacher performance on end-of-year LEAP ratings, student perception survey results for novice teachers and retention data.
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Analysis & Impact

DPS captures data on teachers of record through internal evaluations and shares it with its university partners. Recent data on the Denver Teacher Residency shows that students taught by DTR alumni outperformed students taught by non-DTR alumni by 17 points on state math assessments.

DPS is currently doing an evaluation on the DTR and STR through Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant funding.

Funding Considerations

The Denver Teacher Residency is funded through the University of Denver, and the district offers a \$10,000 stipend to teacher candidates as part of reimbursement in the residency year. DTR had a Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant from 2010-15 and was awarded an extension of \$500,000 to maintain research and evaluation for three more years. In addition, between 70 and 80 percent of the tuition money the University of Denver receives from teacher candidates in the program goes back to Denver Public Schools to pay for operating costs for the partnership.

Denver Teach Today is funded primarily through the DPS general budget with some funds coming from a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant.

The Student Teacher Residency was awarded a \$250,000 start-up grant from the Rose Community Foundation, a Denver-based philanthropic organization, and currently receives approximately \$250,000 per year as a TQP grant subcontractor to the University of Colorado - Denver.

Sources/Links

- [Denver Teacher Residency](#)
 - [Denver Public Schools Pathways to Teaching](#)
 - [Metropolitan State University of Denver](#)
 - [University of Colorado Denver](#)
 - [University of Denver](#)
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FRESNO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Overview

Fresno Unified School District and **California State University, Fresno** partner on several teacher pipeline initiatives, including the Fresno Teacher Residency Program. The goal of the pipeline programs is to train highly qualified teachers to work in Fresno Unified schools.

The goal of the Fresno Teacher Residency Program is to develop exemplary teachers of STEM in order to improve student academic achievement. Teacher candidates spend five days per week at a school site co-teaching with mentor teachers and taking courses co-taught by CSU Fresno and Fresno Unified faculty. The district provides professional development to both residents and mentor teachers, and residents commit to teach in Fresno Unified for a minimum of three years after graduation. The residency trains 50 teachers over a two-year period and plans to expand from focusing on grades 4-8 to K-12 in 2016.

Highlighted Partnership Characteristics

INITIATION STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

■ **Districts are Strategic About Talent:** Fresno Unified School District initiated a partnership with California State University Fresno as a direct response to math and science student data in grades 4-8, and difficulties filling their teacher pipeline, particularly in hard-to-staff areas. Together, they looked at data and patterns within their city, particularly around poverty, student demographic, and teacher retention, and decided to focus in on bringing in strong math and science teachers in grades 4-8 due to low student achievement data in those areas, forming the Fresno Teacher Residency program. The residency fits into a broader recruitment and retention strategy in Fresno, which includes seven different talent pipelines.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE: WORKING ON THE PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER

■ **Partners Spend More Time in Schools Together:** Fresno Unified staff has monthly school walk-throughs with California State University, Fresno to discuss district needs, trends in data and the implications for their partnership work together. There is collaboration at all levels of the organizations and each partner school has a CSU Fresno faculty liaison. For the Fresno Teacher Residency program, the district schools house the university classes, allowing residents to feel part of the school culture. Preparation coursework is co-taught by district staff and CSU Fresno faculty members. Fresno Unified also prioritizes designing common learning experiences across institutions including: reading and processing teacher preparation related articles and research, assessing the rigor of new Smarter Balanced assessments and performance tasks, and analyzing student work to build shared language and ensure calibration.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE: SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

■ **Partners Discuss Progress and Challenges:** Fresno Unified and CSU Fresno meet quarterly to formally discuss the teacher residency program. The district coordinators and university liaisons meet monthly to discuss teacher candidates' strengths and challenges.

Analysis & Impact

Qualitative data collected from principal interviews and the district's Instructional Practice Guide shows that teachers in the Fresno Teacher Residency program are as effective as teachers who have been in the classroom longer. Specifically, residents have rated higher in two focus areas: Creating a Culture of Learning and Challenging Content.

The district's teaching corps is more diverse since implementing the pipeline programs: 95.7 percent of enrollees in the Teacher Academy, 65.2 percent in the most recent Teacher Residency Cohort and 80 percent in the TQP Teacher Residency cohort are minority candidates.

Funding Considerations

The Fresno Teacher Residency program is funded through a two-year, \$740,869 grant from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation. The district provides funding for some of the collaboration efforts and the university pays for the liaison salaries.

In addition, Fresno Unified received a five-year, \$7.9 million Teacher Quality Partnership (TQP) grant to expand the residency program. The district contributes heavily to program operations as well, providing salaries for Fresno Unified and Fresno State staff, funds for district professional learning days and site leadership support.

Fresno Unified uses funds from the CSU Math Science Teacher Initiative (MSTI), a system-wide initiative to double the annual production of credentialed teachers in math and science over a five-year period, for conferences, travel and professional memberships. The district receives about \$12,000 per cohort.

Sources/Links

- [California State University, Fresno](#)
 - [Fresno Unified School District](#)
 - [Fresno Teacher Residency Program Factsheet](#)
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LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Overview

The broad partnership between Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD), Long Beach City College (LBCC), and CSU Long Beach—now called the Long Beach College Promise—was established in 1994 in response to a number of demographic and economic changes in the community and includes over 300 different partnership activities. One of the partnership’s primary activities is the CSU Long Beach Urban Teaching Academy (UTEACH), a yearlong residency program co-developed by the three institutions that serves 30 students annually. UTEACH methods courses are taught by CSU Long Beach faculty and LBUSD staff on-site at LBUSD schools. Frequent, open communication between partners and a strong sense of accountability to the Long Beach community have helped the partnership sustain through changes in institutional leadership.

Highlighted Partnership Characteristics

INITIATION STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

- **Data Sharing:** The Long Beach College Promise regularly releases an **annual report card** to inform the community on the status of the partnership and holds twice-annual community events to discuss partnership progress.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE: WORKING ON THE PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER

- **Partners Ensure Coursework Matches Clinical Experiences:** LBUSD and CSU Long Beach used grant funding from the Knight Foundation to develop an integrated teacher preparation program. The grant allowed for release time for faculty and teachers from both institutions to engage in rewriting the curriculum and field experiences.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE: SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

- **Mutual Respect and an Openness to Change:** Leaders from LBUSD, LBCC and CSU Long Beach value each other’s expertise and perspectives and collaborate frequently to meet their collective goals. The three organizations did not sign a formal MOU but instead rely on mutual trust and respect to govern their partnership.
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Analysis & Impact

The district has seen significant achievement gains in some student subgroups. In 2014-15 at the elementary, middle and high school levels, the percent of Hispanic and African American students in LBUSD who met or exceeded math and ELA standards (as measured on the SBAC assessment) was higher than the state average.

Seventy-percent of Long Beach Unified’s teaching force comes from CSULB, and the district has reduced annual teacher attrition rates to seven percent.

The Long Beach College Promise has sustained because of the strong relationships that have developed over time and the partner organizations’ accountability and commitment to the Long Beach community.

Funding Considerations

In 1994, four Long Beach businesses contributed \$75,000 each to launch the partnership.

In 2000, the Knight Foundation awarded a grant to CSU Long Beach to co-develop a teacher preparation program.

In May 2012, CSU Long Beach received a grant from the James Irvine Foundation to implement Linked Learning models of teacher preparation.

In March 2015, CSU Long Beach was one of seven CSU campuses awarded grant funding from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation as part of CSU's Preparing a New Generation of Educators Initiative. CSU Long Beach received a \$230,000 grant for its teacher preparation efforts. The same month, the Long Beach College Promise received the Governor's \$5,000,000 Innovation Award.

Sources/Links

- [Long Beach College Promise](#)
 - [Long Beach Unified School District](#)
 - [CSU Long Beach](#)
 - [Long Beach City College](#)
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LOUISIANA BELIEVE AND PREPARE

Overview

Louisiana Believe and Prepare is an initiative of the Louisiana Department of Education launched in spring 2014 to fund districts to develop innovative teacher preparation partnerships. The goal of the Believe and Prepare initiative is to ensure that teacher candidates are able to practice their skills with students and draw on the expertise of Louisiana's best educators.

DeSoto Parish School System is partnering with **Northwestern State University** on a yearlong residency program. There are currently five candidates enrolled in the program. The goal of the partnership is to train high-quality teachers for DeSoto schools and to align the district's and university's expectations for teacher candidates. The district trained Northwestern State University staff on the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) educator effectiveness model, and as a result, the university revised lesson planning templates to align with TAP philosophy.

St. Charles Parish Public Schools and **Southeastern Louisiana University** have had a strong working relationship since the early 1990s and are now working together to redesign the final year of a traditional teacher preparation program into a yearlong apprenticeship that combines clinical practice and academic coursework. The program currently has 10 residents, up from five in the first year. The district and university jointly match residents with mentor teachers based on needs, personalities and additional factors, and they are collaborating on developing a training program for mentor teachers.

Collegiate Academies, a small charter school network in New Orleans, is partnering with **TNTP** to create a yearlong residency program that places TNTP program faculty on Collegiate Academies' campuses to provide professional development and feedback to teacher candidates. There are 10 residents at three Collegiate Academies' high schools.

Highlighted Partnership Characteristics

INITIATION STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

DeSoto Parish

- **Partners Align on Expectations for Teacher Graduates:** DeSoto Parish uses the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP) educator effectiveness model as a framework for its leadership, coaching and mentoring efforts. Through the partnership, a district employee conducted a five-day TAP training for three Northwestern State University staff. As a result, university staff revised their lesson planning template to align with the TAP philosophy, and Northwestern State University's leadership is considering broader training.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE: WORKING ON THE PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER

St. Charles Parish

- **Partners Jointly Select and Train Mentor Teachers:** St. Charles Parish selects mentor teachers based on an evaluation of strong instructional practices and capacity for mentorship. District staff works collaboratively with Southeastern Louisiana University faculty to place teacher candidates with mentors based on several factors including certification, dispositions, and location.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE: SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

Collegiate Academies

- **Mutual Respect and an Openness to Change:** "We had a willingness to be flexible, and make changes in the moment, and let the partnership and the needs of the students and school determine path." During a mid-year evaluation, Collegiate Academies and TNTP staff realized that residents were strong at creating a classroom culture but less effective at instructional practices. The two organizations mutually decided to shift their approach and add direct coaching for some candidates in order to address this need.

Analysis & Impact

At DeSoto Parish, principals have noticed that teacher candidates in the residency program are better prepared to meet district expectations. The district has collected preliminary data and will continue to monitor residents' effectiveness using TAP and Northwestern University evaluations.

Collegiate Academies Teacher Residency (CATR) program graduates received higher average scores on the TNTP Framework than their peers in the TNTP Academy preparation program, one of Louisiana's top-performing teacher certification programs. CATR teachers also outperformed TNTP Academy peers in growth over the course of the year and had the highest percentage of teachers receiving evaluation ratings of Proficient or Developing.

At St. Charles Parish, all five of the residents from the first cohort of the residency received effective ratings on their evaluations. The district is also beginning a study to track the Southeastern Louisiana University students it hires to compare their performance with that of teachers from traditional preparation programs.

Funding Considerations

In March 2014, The Louisiana Department of Education awarded grants of up to \$150,000 each to seven pilot districts, including DeSoto Parish, Collegiate Academies and St. Charles Parish. St. Charles Parish received \$120,000.

DeSoto Parish, Collegiate Academies and St. Charles Parish have dedicated district funds to support these partnerships. St. Charles has committed between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per year for the next three years to support and expand the residency program.

Sources/Links

- [Louisiana Believe and Prepare](#)
 - [Collegiate Academies](#)
 - [The New Teacher Project](#)
 - [DeSoto Parish School System](#)
 - [Northwestern State University](#)
 - [St. Charles Parish Public Schools](#)
 - [Southeastern Louisiana University](#)
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SALEM-KEIZER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Overview

In 2008, **Salem-Keizer Public Schools** and three universities (**Corban University**, **Western Oregon University** and **Willamette University**) entered into a partnership with a focus on strong mentorship of beginning teachers. The district and its current partner universities, Corban and Western Oregon, have aligned their evaluation rubrics and expectations for teacher candidates, and university faculty members are embedded in Salem-Keizer schools. In the 2014-15 school year, the district placed 40 teacher candidates from the two universities in its schools to help fill vacancies. In addition, Salem-Keizer and its partners collaboratively developed pipelines to meet unique district needs, including pathways focused on bilingual education, special education and diverse teacher candidates.

Highlighted Partnership Characteristics

INITIATION STAGE: PREPARING FOR THE PARTNERSHIP

■ **Data Sharing:** Salem-Keizer, Corban University and Western Oregon University use a district-developed rubric based on Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (inTASC) standards, a set of 10 model standards for novice teachers, to gauge teacher competencies. The district disaggregates inTASC evaluation data – for example, content pedagogy and planning – by preparation provider, and shares and discusses the results openly with its partners. Western Oregon University further disaggregates its data by the different teaching licenses it offers and looks at assessment and clinical experiences data regularly. Salem-Keizer plans to provide Western Oregon University with Smarter Balanced assessment data sorted by whether the teacher of record had a student teacher or a Western Oregon University co-teacher in the classroom to help inform both the district and Western Oregon regarding the needs of pre-service and beginning teachers.

IMPLEMENTATION STAGE: WORKING ON THE PARTNERSHIP TOGETHER

■ **Partners Jointly Select and Train Mentor Teachers:** Salem-Keizer has a teacher placement coordinator who works with school principals to strategically place candidates in classrooms with mentor teachers. The coordinator developed protocols and conducts observations to ensure fidelity of the preparation program across sites. The district holds an intensive summer training for mentor teachers and has leveraged the talents of its strongest mentor teachers to help train others.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT STAGE: SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

■ **University Partners Adjust Pipelines Based on District Needs:** Using teacher performance data that Salem-Keizer provided to Corban University and Western Oregon University, the two institutions collaboratively developed unique pipelines to meet district needs, including those for bilingual education, special education and diverse candidates. To better allow teacher candidates to feel like a part of the school and classroom in which they are teaching, Corban University and Western Oregon University have adjusted student teacher schedules to allow them to start at the beginning of the district's school year even if the university semester has not yet begun.

Analysis & Impact

Salem-Keizer hired 25 of the 55 teacher candidates who participated in the clinical preparation program in the 2013-14 school year, while the remaining candidates chose to apply for jobs in other districts. As a result of the partnership organizations' shared expectations for teachers, Salem-Keizer has reduced its five-year teacher attrition rate from nearly 30 percent to 5 percent and survey data shows that new teachers feel better prepared as a result of the partnership program.

In the first year of implementation, teachers developed via the partnerships outperformed traditional teachers produced at the universities on 8 out of 10 inTASC standards: Learner Development, Learning Differences, Learning Environment, Content Knowledge, Application of Content, Assessment, Instructional Strategies and Ethical Practices.

To support the district's need for a more culturally and linguistically diverse teaching force, Western Oregon University accepted 24 bilingual high school scholars from Salem-Keizer into its teacher preparation program.

Funding Considerations

In September 2014, Salem-Keizer received a \$235,000 grant from the **Chalkboard Foundation's** TeachOregon project to expand its partnership work with Corban University and Western Oregon University. The TeachOregon initiative was launched in 2013 to bring together school districts and higher education partners to strengthen teacher preparation.

Sources/Links

- **The Chalkboard Project: TeachOregon**
 - **Salem-Keizer Public Schools**
 - **Corban University**
 - **Western Oregon University**
-

SPOTLIGHT ON SALEM-KEIZER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Salem-Keizer Public Schools is a suburban district, located about 50 miles southwest of Portland, Oregon. It is the second largest district in Oregon with over 41,000 students in 65 schools. The district's partnership with three universities originated in 2008 with a focus on mentorship for beginning teachers, but later expanded to include pre-service activities. Together, the district and its current partner universities, Corban and Western Oregon, have built a partnership that exemplifies each of the 10 recommendations in this report. While we only highlight Salem-Keizer and its partners in this way, please note that many of the partnerships we interviewed exemplified many, if not all of the characteristics.



1. Districts should understand their talent pipeline and discuss these needs with teacher preparation programs:

Salem-Keizer is committed to recruiting high-quality staff, with a focus on diversity and difficult –to-fill positions. To meet this commitment, the district focuses on developing students who have strong ties to its community through participation in Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) and Teacher Cadet classes. It works collaboratively with university partners to create a supported and seamless transition from high school to college for students. University faculty and Salem-Keizer teachers collaborate in teaching the Teacher Cadet classes. Salem-Keizer students spend time on campus for an orientation and apply for selection into the Bilingual Scholars Program. The district provided summer work opportunities in its summer school programs at elementary and secondary schools so that those candidates could earn money towards their university expenditures and have “hands on” learning opportunities with master teachers. Targeted support continues throughout the students’ college experience including their clinical teaching experience in Salem-Keizer and into their early career experience through the district mentor program.



2. Partners should set the initial vision and goals together, with a focus on relationship-building and trust:

Salem-Keizer and its partners collaboratively developed a mission and vision for the partnership, and set targets, goals, benchmarks and a plan of action for each. They continually revisit their vision and goals, and recommit to the partnership annually. They found it helpful to align around -- and keep coming back to -- common values, including: “increasing kid level learning” and “preparing better teachers than we have been.” The partnership’s vision statement is “Our dedication to the comprehensive, collaborative and systemic improvement of teacher education at both pre-

service and in-service levels will result in high quality instruction, continuous professional growth over a teacher’s entire career and improved academic growth and achievement for every student we serve. We share a commitment to increasing K-12 student achievement, recruiting and selecting a diverse and talented work force, increasing teacher effectiveness and increasing teacher candidate success.”



3. Partners should align on rubrics and key expectations for program graduates:

Salem-Keizer and its university partners use the same instrument to gauge teacher competencies, which was developed by the district and is based on the inTASC standards. Because there is an aligned experience for partnership student teachers, “now [their] teachers don’t see themselves as a finished product when they graduate.”



4. Partners should commit to sharing and looking at data together to drive action:

Salem-Keizer disaggregates teacher evaluation data by preparation provider, and shares and discusses the results openly with its partners. The data shows summative ratings and can also be broken down by the elements of each standard. Western Oregon University further disaggregates its data by the different teaching licenses it offers. The university looks at additional data internally as part of its regular practice, including assessment data and clinical experiences data, and hosts an annual internal event to look at performance data across the college. It is “very much a part of the culture in how we operate,” says Mark Girod, Dean of the College of Education, Western Oregon University. Salem-Keizer plans to provide Western Oregon with Smarter Balanced assessment data sorted by regular district teacher versus regular district teacher with a student teacher versus regular district teacher with a Western Oregon co-teacher.



5. Partners should jointly select and train mentor teachers and strategically place candidates:

Salem-Keizer has a teacher placement coordinator whose responsibilities include conducting observations of teacher candidates to ensure fidelity of the program across sites. The district has strengthened the training of mentor teachers, including an intensive summer training, and has tapped stronger mentor teachers to train others.



6. Partners should ensure coursework matches clinical experiences and district language:

Salem-Keizer considers program alignment to be a critical factor in creating successful experiences for teacher candidates. Through data sharing, purposeful placements and increased faculty presence, student teachers are better able to articulate the connections between the university coursework and district standards and expectations; connecting theory to practice.



7. Partners should communicate and meet frequently:

Strong communication is critical, especially across multiple higher education partners of differing types (private, public, religious). The partnership coordinator at Salem-Keizer and the deans at the district’s partner institutions talk twice a month and meet in person once a month. Although it didn’t start this way, they realized over time that this frequency was critical. They also hold site network meetings monthly to discuss successes and challenges and troubleshoot. As the dean from Western Oregon noted, “There’s no magic involved; we’re just a group of people who got together and decided hey, we can do this better if we do this collaboratively. We go to a lot of meetings and see each other a lot; everyone is busy, but we need time and space to cultivate high-quality relationships.”



8. Partners should spend more time in schools together:

In its partnerships, university faculty members are embedded at clinical schools. Salem-Keizer attributes some of partnership success to building strong site culture where staff are excited

about the partnership and mentoring new teachers. Western Oregon has been training student teachers in 80 districts, but now is moving toward placing 90 percent of its teacher candidates in one of four districts (the other 10 percent across ~20 other districts), to allow more time and resources to increase relationships, trust, data sharing and investment.



9. Partners should be open to change, and regularly step back to honestly discuss progress and challenges:

District and university leadership engage in regular step backs and meetings to set priorities, analyze data and progress and evaluate the successes and/or challenges in the partnership. They use multiple measures to gather evidence to inform decision making and engage key stakeholders (faculty, teachers, principals) to take active roles in promoting the growth and sustainability of the partnership. Trust has had to be repeatedly re-built between Salem-Keizer and its partners because there has been significant turnover in Salem-Keizer and across its partners. Remaining staff have worked to fully onboard new people when people leave their positions.



10. Partners should ensure that district needs drive shifts in teacher preparation programs’ pipelines, structures and systems:

The district provides data to its university partners on how teachers are doing in first three years, which has driven the collaborative creation of unique pipelines to meet district need: e.g., those focused on bilingual, special education, diverse candidates, etc. The universities and the district are also working together to create and support opportunities for Salem-Keizer students to access higher education through scholarships, work study programs, specific mentoring and support at the university (student leadership and faculty). Through its partnership, Salem-Keizer’s partners have shifted their student teacher’s schedules to allow them to start earlier, even if the university semester has not begun. This allows teacher candidates to be fully engaged at their district schools as soon as the K-12 year begins.

Icons courtesy of the Noun Project

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Endnotes

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Education First (education-first.com) is a mission-driven strategy and policy organization with unique and deep expertise in education improvement. We partner with practitioners, policymakers, funders and advocates to design and accelerate policies and plans that help all young people—particularly students in poverty and students of color—succeed in college, careers and life. We work with districts, states, higher education, leading organizations and foundations to develop stronger policies and programs to improve educator preparation.

Education First had the pleasure of interviewing seven leading partnerships for this report, but we know there are many more effective district and preparation program partnerships out there. If your district or preparation program is doing something innovative, please contact Priti Sanghani at psanghani@education-first.com to tell us your story.