

Chapter 11

Leveraging P–12 /University Partnerships to Better Prepare Pre–Service Teachers: The Value of Strong Partnerships in Both Traditional and Provisional Teacher Training Programs

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ABSTRACT

The primary responsibility for training pre-service teachers previously fell solely on the shoulders of university teacher-preparation programs, with a short field experience component in partner P-12 districts. As research continues to support the value of increased clinical practice in P-12 schools when training pre-service teachers, the responsibility is becoming shared equally between university teacher education programs and P-12 school districts. This chapter describes three innovative programs implemented by P-12 schools through strong partnerships with Monmouth University's teacher education and Provisional Teacher Preparation program. These strong partnerships afford students the opportunity to receive direct instruction in P-12 settings with the support of curriculum, mentors and professional development. The partnership with Lafayette Mills School (the last of three initiatives discussed) was also awarded, along with the university's other PDSs, the National Association of Professional Development Schools Distinguished Partnership award in 2017.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter exams three transformative leadership projects completed by doctoral students at Monmouth University, a private, medium sized university located at the New Jersey shore. The three students also serve in administrative roles that include a P-12 Principal, P-12 Vice Principal, and a Director of a provisional teacher preparation program. In spite of the three distinct roles, each project is focused on one goal: improving teacher preparation. The strategic leadership project required student leaders to identify and evaluate a school/district/program need and design a program or intervention that meets the need. The leaders serve as change agents to meet local educational needs. The three projects presented highlight the value of the university-P-12 partnership in preparing teacher candidates. The problems identified include an improved mentoring program, professional development and curriculum. The strategic partnership between the school districts and university allow for not only improved programming, but also a shared responsibility in cultivating highly skilled teachers.

THE DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A PRESERVICE MENTORING CULTURE

Introduction

While preservice teacher mentoring is acknowledged as a beneficial professional development activity, the limited research available does not articulate the ways in which schools and districts can design and implement a comprehensive mentoring culture. This transformative leadership project explores one district's initial design and implementation of a preservice teacher mentoring culture that aims to attract, recruit, and retain mentor teachers capable of supporting the future of the profession. Based on the work of Beam et al (2018), they articulate the development of a mentoring culture that (1) provides a clear articulation of expectations and outcomes for teacher candidates, (2) provides clear expectations for mentor teachers and an array of tools to support their work in meetings those expectations, (3) devises a plan to coordinate existing resources into the most effect means of communication for all stakeholders and (4) generates a willingness to advocate for and obtain new resources to make this a sustainable part of the teacher preparation program. By examining how the careful design and implementation of a preservice teacher mentoring culture can be used to impact the development of preservice teachers, value can be given to the role that it plays in both teacher preparation and new teacher retention.

Statement of the Problem

With teacher effectiveness as a top priority of the education reform movement, concerns regarding teacher recruitment and retention mount with each year. A Carver-Thomas (2016) report, analyzed evidence of teacher shortages, as well as national and regional trends in teacher supply and demand. In it, the authors included projections that estimated a large increase in 2017–18 and a projected plateau bringing annual hires demanded to approximately 300,000 teachers a year (Carver-Thomas et al, 2016). As

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