Co-Designing Teacher Residencies

Sharing leadership, finding new opportunities

December 2020

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We wish to express sincere thanks to our school district partners in Ferndale, Washington. Your willingness to engage in reimagining our partnership and the energy, ideas, and commitment you brought to this work is inspiring.

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PREPARED TO TEACH

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From fall 2018 through summer 2020, Prepared To Teach worked with teacher preparation/P-12/higher education partnerships to design and pilot more sustainably funded residencies. This report shares lessons learned from the Western Washington University/Ferndale School district partnership.

Leaders came to the table with good will, hoping to address common challenges teacher preparation often faces. Four key areas of need surfaced during initial meetings: Teacher candidates needed stronger communication and alignment between program and placement sites; the university and district both needed more effective approaches to placing candidates in schools; faculty wanted to work more closely with candidates and schools; and districts wanted to integrate their initiatives into the program.

DRAMATIC RESULTS FROM JUST OVER A YEAR OF CO-CONSTRUCTION

In the first year, the partnership built a vision for joint responsibility to meet the twin goals of serving P-12 students and enhancing the preparation experience. The first year of residency placement saw several meaningful shifts:

Residents filled staffing needs and were able to earn money while learning their craft. A state requirement for universal professional development for paraprofessionals allowed residents to sub at least once per week. Through these career-aligned work opportunities, residents built a stronger sense of the complexities of schooling and grew more professional, all while meeting district needs and earning a consistent income.

Placing residents—which once took several weeks—transformed into a two-hour meeting. Key district personnel, principals, and faculty met to review resident files to determine strong placement matches. Principals could easily see who would be a good fit for their grade levels, mentors, and students.

Residents became employees deeply committed to supporting student learning. District executive leadership led an "on-ramp" process to introduce policies and priorities and process residents as employees—complete with laptops and emails—which created energy, trust, and commitment among residents.

Residents received specialized opportunities to ensure their success. To ensure residents had what they needed to succeed—and to help meet district priorities—residents engaged in district-provided workshops on family conferencing, literacy

assessment administration, the new Social-Emotional Learning curriculum, and effective paraprofessional substitute teaching.

Residents enhanced the response to the pandemic's closure of schools. Residents brought high-level technology supports to the district, supporting teachers in the transition to online learning.

KEY INGREDIENTS TO SUPPORT RETHINKING TEACHER RESIDENCIES THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

Analysis of interviews with nearly 30 individuals involved in the program surfaced four key lessons that contributed to the project's successful launch:

Composition of the leadership team matters. District decision-makers from the superintendent and her leadership team, human resource staff, principals, university leaders, and site-based faculty were all crucial to the co-design efforts.

Begin early, work collaboratively. The team embraced an exploratory approach, with everyone on a level playing field, to identify shared needs and build trust.

Regular, efficient meetings matter. The university took responsibility for planning monthly agendas and facilitating next steps, allowing the busy district leadership team to engage fully.

Location matters. By holding coursework, professional development, and meetings in the district, residents saved travel time and expense, district leaders could attend and contribute to university classes, and the university built trust with the district.

Above all, the leadership team embraced a collective orientation toward the partnership that sought and was receptive to all kinds of information to help ensure the residency's success. Together, the ingredients contributed to a successful leadership structure to support teacher residents and the schools in which they learn to teach. The mindset shifts towards shared, adaptive leadership have created a "third space" for teacher preparation, one where learning is not exclusively the responsibility of the university and practice is not exclusively the responsibility of the school. With shared responsibility, partnerships can disrupt and improve the traditional systems and supports for teacher preparation. ●

INTRODUCTION

In the field of pre-service teacher preparation, it has been difficult to scale shifts that could provide all aspiring teachers equitable access to high-quality teacher residences (R. Burns, Jacobs, Baker, & Donahue, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Guha, Hyler, & Darling-Hammond, 2016; Larson & Kyle, 2014; van Es, Sandholtz, & Shea, 2014). Our pre-K to 12 and higher education systems were not built for intrinsic alignment of priorities, and they lack the time and structures to build a shared language of teacher and student support. Rarely do school districts and teacher preparation programs have opportunities to come together to think differently about how adjustments to their existing systems might more effectively support the mutual goals of strengthening both P-12 student learning and the education and preparation of new teachers.

Across the country, dozens of preparation program/district partnerships have been working to change that historic legacy, often with support from state and federal grants, philanthropy, or learning networks. *Prepared To Teach* works with programs across the country that exemplify these shifts.

Prepared To Teach was launched in 2015 to address a significant challenge in public education: how to ensure sustainable funding streams exist for affordable, high-quality teacher preparation programs so that a diverse pool of future teachers are well-prepared to lead 21st-century classrooms. *Prepared To Teach* is dedicated to understanding, disseminating knowledge around, and supporting the development of policies and practices that grow and develop strong, sustainably funded teacher residencies, ensuring all aspiring teachers have the preparation they need to be successful.

The *Prepared To Teach* National Learning Network, launched in fall 2018, has demonstrated the potential to shift the teacher preparation paradigm to funded, yearlong clinical practice. Western Washington University and their district partners are part of the inaugural cohort of the Learning Network and will continue to develop their program over the course of the next two-year grant, begun in October 2020.

Prepared To Teach convened partnerships across seven states working together to change the face of teacher preparation so that high-quality programs are equitably accessible to all aspiring teachers, and so that programs and their graduates help strengthen P-12 schools.

This report focuses on the *Prepared To Teach* partnership between Western Washington University's Elementary Education program and Ferndale School district. It documents how we, as a group of university teacher educators, joined with district administrators to reconsider our collective approach to teacher preparation. Instead of viewing preparation as primarily the University's responsibility, our leadership team placed the needs of P-12 students and the district at the forefront of considerations, while also honoring a parallel goal enhancing the preparation experience. This repositioning of priorities led us to design new opportunities for residents—students in their final clinical practice placements who worked for a year in their schools—to engage in the work of the district in ways that served our district partners' needs and more fully supported our learning goals for the teacher candidates in our charge. Through a needs assessment, the careful development of systems to support candidates and their cooperating teachers, and a responsive and relational ethos, the leadership team engaged in clinical preparation in new ways, fostering a supportive and high-quality residency experience for teacher candidates while simultaneously reinforcing identified school district needs focused on student learning.

In this report, we will describe the systems of support that were co-developed by the leadership team and describe the processes that led to these systems. We begin with some information about our context and the challenges and tensions that existed at the outset due to mismatched needs and expectations among the partners. Next, we describe the successful outcomes of the work, including revisions to the residency that include work opportunities, a revised placement process, a district "on-boarding" process, and responsive professional development throughout the residency. Finally, we describe the "ingredients" that enabled the district and teacher preparation program to identify needs and priorities while uncovering opportunities to work differently together.

Throughout, the words of participants help tell the story of the partnership and highlight aspects of the work. These words come from structured interviews with school district personnel, university faculty, university administrators, cooperating teachers, and residents; the interviews were conducted several months after the revised residency program was underway. Throughout the report, we edit participants' transcripts for readability. Our hope is that our ongoing efforts to rethink the ways higher education and school districts "do business together" will provide ideas and insights for those who are engaged in similar efforts to build strong partnerships and robust, affordable residencies.

CONTEXT

This residency partnership is situated in Ferndale, a district made up of one high school, two middle schools, and six elementary schools in Northwest Washington state. Ferndale is located 15 miles north of our university and next to an Indigenous Nation reservation. Ferndale serves 4,800 students in grades preschool through 12. Most students who attend the district schools identify as Caucasian (63 percent), Latinx (18.4 percent), or Native American (8.5 percent). In the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year, 13 percent of families with school-age children lived below the poverty line, and 25 percent of those families' children qualified for free or reduced meals.

As with most teacher preparation programs, our teacher candidates take several methods and theory-based courses during their program of study that connect with practicum experiences situated in local schools. As is increasingly common in teacher preparation, they finish off their course of study by engaging in a full year of clinical practice that pairs residents with one mentor teacher. Throughout the year, residents ramp up their time in the classroom while they simultaneously finish course work, shifting from two half days in their first quarter of the residency to two full days in quarter two and full-time teaching in their third and final academic quarter.

Although this report focuses on our Ferndale partnership, where we piloted the Prepared To Teach initiative, it is just one of many districts with whom our university works to place preservice teachers for its yearlong residency. Annually, the university places 100 elementary teacher candidates across the region; 21 residents were selected to complete their residency in Ferndale during the 2019-2020 academic year.

CHALLENGES AND TENSIONS

Prior to re-envisioning our residency, mismatched needs and expectations among stakeholders created many challenges and tensions. Residents experienced tensions due to poor communication systems between the university and schools. They often expressed feelings of being "caught in the middle" as they tried to balance university requirements with mismatched expectations of mentor teachers in their residency classrooms. Both the university and district partners experienced challenges in placing residents, from identifying qualified mentors to communicating and establishing shared expectations; the need for expediency in solidifying placements often drove much of the process. For faculty, there were limited opportunities to work alongside district staff to ensure that placement experiences met the learning goals for teacher candidates. And for district partners, there were few occasions to situate their instructional frameworks and learning initiatives as central to the work of preparing residents as teaching professionals. These divergent needs, expectations, and challenges are not unique to our context, but characterize a common disconnect within the field of pre-service teacher education between local schools and universities (R. W. Burns, Jacobs, & Yendol-Hoppey, 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2014; Gelfuso, Dennis, & Parker, 2015; Jacobs, Hogarty, & Burns, 2017; Marshall, 2005; McCormack, Baecher, & Cuenca, 2019). Through the partnership work we engaged as part of Prepared To Teach, we have discovered that these common realities are neither intrinsic to pre-service preparation nor inevitable. ●

OUTCOMES OF A SHARED APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

Just as they would have in any year prior to this initiative, 21 residents graduated with their elementary teaching credential following a full year of work alongside their mentor teachers. Yet unlike years prior, there were additional positive opportunities for all of the stakeholders in the partnership. Teaching residents benefitted from experiences not only within their respective classrooms, but also across the district in ways that enabled them to engage in paid work opportunities and district-supported professional development that contributed to a more holistic understanding of schools and students. The university benefitted from a streamlined resident placement process, a deeper understanding of the district's needs, and more intentional placements for its residents in cooperating classrooms. And the district benefited from the opportunities to position the residents in needed work roles to support its teachers and students and from the expertise and enthusiasm the residents brought to their work.

CAREER-SUPPORTIVE WORK OPPORTUNITIES

One of the early priorities for the leadership team was to investigate work opportunities for residents that would align with program learning goals for our candidates and meet specific personnel needs from the school district. A key work opportunity placed residents in regular, weekly paraprofessional substitute positions throughout the district. The district needed these substitutes so they could provide the recently required training for all paraprofessionals to learn about new standards of practice. The requirement intended to improve student learning in the classroom, but with weekly trainings every Friday, it could have created gaps in instructional supports

without enough substitutes. Collective brainstorming led to the idea of allowing residents to work as paid paraprofessional substitutes. With careful planning to account for residents' requirements within their own classrooms, residents were brought on as district employees to work as paraprofessional substitutes not only in their placement schools, but also in other schools across the P-12 spectrum, including middle schools, high schools, and special education classrooms. Residents whose schedules allowed also worked additional days as substitute paraprofessionals beyond the every-Friday work opportunities.

"I can put that work energy into something that is adding value to my education"

Working as paraeducators provided residents with unique opportunities. One resident noted how she had to "work while I'm in school, but getting to work in the school where I get to see my first graders outside of the classroom gives me more credibility as a teacher. I get to know the whole school and all the staff. I can put that work energy into something that is adding value to my education, instead of 'well I'm going to work at this restaurant over here on the side.'" The experiences expanded residents' understanding of schools, put them in contact with a broader range of school professionals—from librarians to resource room staff and office administration—helping them better understand the wide variety of supports needed for student development and success. One resident, for example, described how the opportunity to work in a paraprofessional role leveraged opportunities to see the school day from a completely unique perspective. She described how, "When I was subbing for a para at my own elementary school, they had a para meeting in the morning that I got to go to. It was really interesting to hear the things that they're discussing and the problems they're trying to sort out as paras, and how different that is from my perspective as a resident in the classroom." Another resident suggested how working as a paraeducator opened up her understanding of the level of work required by paraeducators, noting "I have loved seeing what school is like outside of the classroom setting. I've been out at recess, I've gone into different classrooms as a para, and I've spent a lot of time in the resource room as well—it's such a distinct experience in each place, but everybody is

just working so hard to do the best for the kids. And I think as a teacher, it can be easy to think, 'Well, I'm doing most of the work,' which is not true. Everybody is doing a lot of work."

One resident summed up the overall themes across all the residents' interviews and focus groups, noting how the experience as a paraprofessional would support her future career: "It's humbling. I just imagine saying in an interview for a teacher position, 'I have a broader scope of the education system, from elementary to high school, what a student needs, and what it takes to educate a student and be there for them.'"

COLLABORATIVE PLACEMENTS

The leadership team also took on a novel approach to matching residents with mentor teachers, an approach that better aligned to a vision of teacher preparation as a collaborative effort between the school district and university. Placement of residents formerly followed a "door-knocking" approach, with the Director of Elementary Education often pleading with principals and teachers to take on a resident, without much vetting or understanding of the potential mentor's readiness to take on and support a resident—or the expectations, opportunities, and responsibilities of being a mentor. There was an expressed need from both parties for more systematic placement of residents in schools, as well as a demand for quality control in terms of identifying mentors with both willingness and adequate mentoring skills and support to effectively facilitate beginning teachers' professional growth.

"There was an expressed need from both parties for more systematic placement of residents in schools"

To begin this placement process, two program faculty came together with the Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Director of Teaching and Learning, HR Director, and all five of the elementary principals at the district office. The faculty shared application files for each of the potential residents, including details, such as residents' grade-level preferences, academic majors, resumes, and letters of intent. As principals passed

around the files in what one team member described as "an athletic draft," they animatedly discussed the extent to which they thought a resident might be a good "fit" to maximize the potential for a successful experience with their teachers and students. For example, some of the residents were seeking English Language Learner (ELL) endorsements, and those principals with higher numbers of ELL students at their schools identified those candidates as especially desirable for their buildings. Some residents expressed a preference to work in kindergarten classrooms, and certain principals jumped at the opportunity to assign them with strong kindergarten mentors who had been wary of accepting a resident unless they were fully committed to working with young learners. According to one of the superintendents, "It was a unique process. It was this table, with all the principals, all of us just sitting around the table, and here's all these files, and we read every single file and we decided where the best placement was for that resident's success." In this way, the matching process moved beyond viewing residents as a "'a seven-digit code' coming out of the university" in need of a placement. The process had an additional benefit, too: Overall, the collaborative placements took just two hours as compared to a typical timeline of several weeks of back-and-forth conversations and emails.

"We read every single file and we decided where the best placement was for that resident's success."

Following the initial matches identified at the meeting, residents met face to face with their potential mentor teachers for an informal interview, again to confirm that this placement would be a space in which the resident could thrive. For any residents or cooperating teachers who felt that the match was not strong, the HR Director engaged in communication with building principals to re-place those residents in different classrooms. After a few shifts in the pairings between cooperating teachers and residents, the team had a cluster of two to five residents at each of the district's five elementary schools, adding up to 21 intentionally placed residents at five partner schools.

"ON-RAMP" TO THE DISTRICT

"From day one, they were like, we have a mailbox for you, we have all of this stuff. We get all the same paperwork that the teachers get, all the same emails. . .they definitely treat us as an equal teacher"

Another outcome of the partnership's initial monthly meetings was the realization of a need for a district on-ramp process for the residents to welcome them to the profession, orient them to the district, and explain Ferndale's systems of support. Unlike in years past when residents rarely met educators beyond their grade level or school, this orientation included presentations from the entire team of district administrators, as well as key staff members. Residents were introduced to district policies and priorities such as Ferndale's Social Emotional Learning (SEL) initiative, entered into the district personnel system to facilitate later work opportunities, and provided with laptops and identification badges, just as they would have been as newly hired full-time classroom teachers. One district leader described the orientation as "a little bit unheard of, from the standpoint of having the executive directors of every department there, running it all. There was a lot of energy, and I think residents walked away thinking 'This was a pretty cool day; we got a lot of time.' It said to them that you are valued, and you are important." The district effort that first day was not lost on residents. One remarked, "From day one, they were like, we have a mailbox for you, we have all of this stuff. We get all the same paperwork that the teachers get, all the same emails.... they definitely treat us as an equal teacher." Due to that initial orientation, residents began the school year as full-fledged district employees with a sense of the connection to the work of supporting student learning.

RESIDENT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

District-provided professional development stemming from emergent resident needs was another outcome of the collaboration. District administration had intimate knowledge of ways residents could support their initiatives, such as implementation of the new SEL curriculum and participation in upcoming family conferences. Similarly, the university-based

resident field supervisor, who also served on the leadership team for the partnership, brought residents' common needs, concerns, and questions to the table for consideration for upcoming professional development. The leadership team organized professional development that addressed these areas of need, such as support for weekly paraprofessional work from a paraprofessional panel; professional development on supporting family conferences; training on how to give the district's literacy screening assessment in a reliable, valid manner; and professional development on the district's SEL curriculum. The professional development opportunities occurred quarterly while schools were functioning face to face.

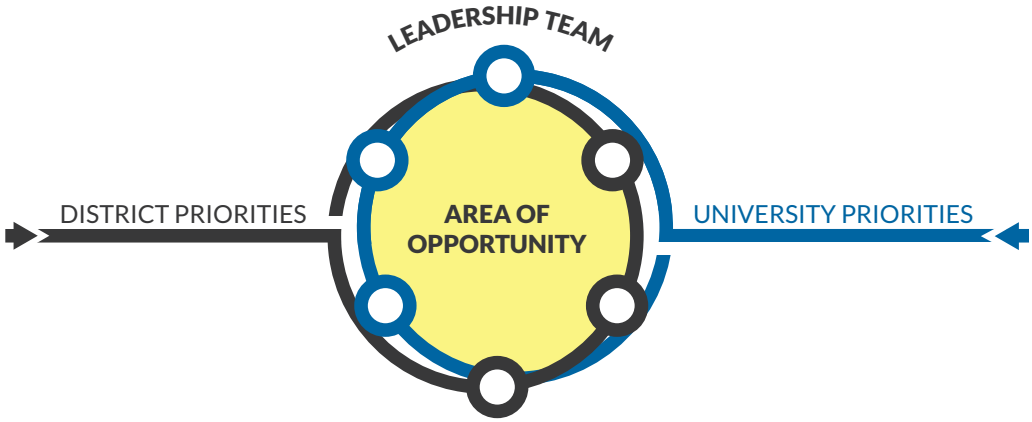
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSE TO EMERGENT NEEDS OF THE DISTRICT

One unexpected development from this work arose with the school closures caused by the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19. By the time the school closures occurred, residents were already fully integrated within their schools. In addition, their commitment to student learning beyond their classrooms had been fostered through their district-wide work opportunities. As a result, when schools closed, residents stepped up unhesitatingly to help with the transition. Through their personal initiative, they supported student learning across the district by planning grade-level lessons, learning new online platforms, and attending many online discussions and professional development sessions with other teachers and administration focused on their shift to digital spaces. Principals and the district administrators reported that the stronger identity of the residents as "digital natives" strengthened the district's navigation of the uncertain shift to virtual learning. ●

THE INGREDIENTS

We learned a great deal regarding leadership structures and commitments during this first year of our *Prepared To Teach* partnership that we hope to build on in the future. At the most basic level, instead of conceptualizing the job of teacher preparation as a university's responsibility and P-12 student learning as a district responsibility, our leadership team decided to re-envision our partnership with the specific goals of building deeper relationships, stronger systems of support, and a better shared understanding of each other's needs, opportunities, and resources. This team and its work made all the difference in our partnership. Together, we met monthly to discuss district and resident needs and then respond to those needs by finding innovative solutions that supported the goals of all parties involved. What follows are key learnings we think important to consider for anyone trying to engage in this kind of relational and collaborative work.





CREATING YOUR LEADERSHIP TEAM

THE "WHO" MATTERS

Deciding who to invite to your leadership team requires much thought. On the district side, we found benefits to having team members with decision-making power and knowledge of the complete schooling system. In our case, the leadership team on the district side evolved to consist of five key members: The District Superintendent, Associate Superintendent, Director of Teaching and Learning, Human Resources (HR) Director, and HR Staff. Within our team, the Superintendent early on had a vision of the potential of this partnership. A shared excitement floated around the room when discussing "being a lab district" in which more innovative approaches to supporting resident and student learning might take place. She grounded the excitement in pragmatic concerns as well, explaining, "I know from a lot of years of working with grants that if you don't figure out how to get 'under the hood,' the initiative goes away as soon as the grant goes away. So, one of our biggest considerations was being mindful about how to do this within the existing budget. Even if you came and said, we will give you the money, I would say, well, that'll work for a few years, but not for the long term…that was that was a big consideration." Long-term, fully integrated, high-quality sustainability—that was the vision from the start.

The composition of the leadership team meant that any discussions of potential changes to systems involved those with intimate knowledge of how the existing structures worked, as well as any potential implications. For example, when considering paraprofessional subbing and assessment work for residents, having the Human Resources Specialist present better enabled considerations of workforce/labor issues and whether certain work opportunities were sustainable. Conversations as to whether these new opportunities for residents might take away work from other district employees or whether the interrater reliability training

"Long-term, fully integrated, high-quality sustainability—that was the vision from the start."

necessary for some assessments was readily available were critical in the creation of sustainable systems. Similarly, the expertise of the HR Director and HR staff regarding the onboarding process for new teachers proved invaluable when planning a similar experience for residents. Following discussion with the leadership team, HR took the initiative to design a full-day orientation for residents, and all members of the leadership team attended in some fashion. Whereas previous welcomes to the residency may have consisted of "here's your mentor" or been limited to a particular school building, the HR Director explained that with these 21 residents, "We tried to do what we could to make them feel and seem like a regular staff member." The orientation supported residents from day one in their development of a professional identity.

We also recognized a too-often-overlooked level of leadership when working with districts: School partners. It is crucial to build ownership of the work **with** principals and teachers; they must know that these efforts will be worthwhile in both the short and long term. At every turn when discussions touched on school-based needs or contexts, the leadership team included school leaders.

We also knew we needed representation from the university, people with knowledge of the university and systems of teacher preparation, as well as effective practices in pre-service teacher education. Our Director of Elementary Education played an integral role given his familiarity with university and state-level credentialing requirements. Whenever possibilities of changes to existing structures arose in these leadership meetings, the Director could discuss potential ramifications on residents' ability to meet their learning standards. The Director also leveraged his expertise in mentoring, having been part of a research group that created observational tools and learning modules for mentor teachers focused on research-supported practices. This expertise proved valuable throughout the year, as it enabled the development of a shared language of mentoring practice for the Field Supervisor, cooperating teachers, and residents.

In addition, we knew that the team needed someone with a connection to the day-to-day experiences and learning taking place in residents' classrooms and university courses; for this role we selected the professor who taught one of the residents' methods courses and who had taken on a

new role the university had designed—Field Supervisor. For each cohort of residents, one Field Supervisor would be identified as the "point person," a conduit for information, needs, and concerns that arise between residents, cooperating teachers, building principals, and the university. The Field Supervisor for all our university programs is "on the ground" in classrooms and schools. In our Ferndale partnership, the Field Supervisor was able to inform administrators about emergent needs of residents and provide reports on residents' and mentor teachers' relationships and development. The Superintendent noted how the support of a clinical faculty member who also served on the leadership team was a great draw for her participation in the partnership: "Bringing in a number of residents where they assign a professor who is actually going to be engaged with the residents on the ground was very appealing."

"The Field Supervisor for all our university programs is 'on the ground' in classrooms and schools."

IDENTIFYING NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK

BEGIN EARLY AND COLLABORATIVELY

A crucial aspect to establishing effective collaboration between leadership team members involved spending a good deal of time in an exploratory space. In early meetings, the team surfaced the mutual needs of both the district and teacher preparation program, identified the benefits to disrupting our systems to do things differently, and brainstormed opportunities that could meet those needs. At the beginning of our work together, all partners brought their needs to the table. On the higher education side, team members discussed shared challenges in finding qualified mentors who were willing and ready to host residents, as well as a desire for more consistent systems for placing residents and a hope to cluster residents within schools.

Clustering at a small number of schools had not been a consistent part of the teacher preparation program previously; the hope was that this shift might help foster community between residents, mentor teachers, and the Field Supervisor through increased contact time. As for the district needs, team members discussed a desire to "preview" residents as potential hires within their district, as well as a strong need for paraprofessional educators and support for beginning-of-year screening assessments.

In discussing needs and ways to attend to them, we found it critical for the leadership team to position district and higher education goals on a level playing field, viewing them as "shared" needs. Team members asked how to find ways to meet district needs while simultaneously supporting the growth of student learning and resident professional development. The spirit in the room at that first brainstorming of potential opportunities was lively. The Superintendent described the process: "We came up with a document [see table, page 16] that showed all the tasks we could ask residents to do that would not take away from unions; we had long conversations about those. Then we took another lens, asking, 'Is this a job that would benefit the resident in the long run to be able to do this, like assisting in a classroom, maybe with some of those assessments where it was appropriate?' I would be happy to hire a teacher who already had some background knowledge and had worked as a paraeducator. Some of them are going to end up in positions where they have a paraeducator. I think walking in those shoes for a bit would be beneficial for the residents." The process showed us all that, with intentional planning, we could create a win-win for everyone.

As the Superintendent noted, ensuring that work opportunities for residents would not negatively affect other district employees was an imperative for the team. One leadership team member explained that he filtered any opportunity brought to the group through a lens that asked whether the work for residents, regardless of how helpful to their professional growth, would replace existing district employees: "With all of the possibilities that we thought about, we work with five unions, so we thought, okay, is this potentially a union issue that we're taking some work away, that would otherwise be part of a particular union's work? We always had that filter on." With this lens on feasibility, the leadership team was able to focus on work opportunities that would not displace existing district employees.

"I would be happy to hire a teacher who already had some background knowledge and worked as a paraeducator"

OPPORTUNITY	TIMELINE	LIKELY DAYS OF WEEK	LIKELY HOURS
Paraeducator: Paraeducator releases for weekly professional development	Friday releases	Fridays. We have never really done this. This project opens the possibility. New para requirements may make it necessary.	Could be ½ day or full day.
Paraeducator: Paraeducator substitute on high volume days	TBD (Mondays & Fridays)	Mondays and Fridays are the highest need days. Could work with the building AA's to get priority for the interns.	1-3 each Monday –Friday (first month notwithstanding)
Paraeducator: Paraeducator substitute/sub-pool	TBD – ongoing (opportunities every week)	M-F as residents are available outside of their course and student teaching requirements	8-24 hours per week, depending on resident availability
Assessment: Literacy Benchmark Testing	September, January, May/June	This has typically been done in a 3-4 day stretch at each school depending on the size of the team and the school. It is not dependent on days of the week.	Probably about 6 days (2x3) per building 9:30-3:30
Assessment: WAKids Screeners/Assessments	September October	Each kindergarten teacher gets 1 hour per student for this. The assessments are scheduled by the teacher. It could easily be scheduled into a Monday Friday schedule if it was organized early.	Approx. 20 per classroom. Schedule flexible.
Assessment: Literacy Assessment Progress monitoring	Ongoing beginning in October/November	This is scheduled at the building level. There would be enough time at the typical school to have 1-2 full days per school, per week.	1-2 Full or half days. October-May
Assessment: Report Card Assessments	January, May/June (could be limited need in October and March)	Scheduled teacher by teacher. Would require communication at the building level to schedule on Mondays and Fridays and coordinate with the interns.	1-2 days per K-1 teacher
Assessment: Smarter Balance Testing	Fall and progress monitoring at end of year	Scheduled by the teacher. It could easily be scheduled into a Monday Friday	20 hrs.

Sustainability, too, factored into conversations. Funding sources like AmeriCorps were discussed, but the parameters and the uncertainty of the funding streams led the team to reject those opportunities. The team also considered pragmatic matters of residents' readiness when finding funding opportunities. According to one team member, early meetings involved "thinking out loud about the things that we've been doing, like placing paraeducators into classrooms in the fall to help with certain assessments and how there were several assessments that we do where we bring in substitutes to help administer them. There are certain assessments that have requirements in terms of inter-rater reliability, so we had to be very mindful that whatever position we put residents in had to be something that they were already prepared for, or that we could provide training, or that the role didn't have specific requirements. Otherwise, they wouldn't be sustainable systems."

KEEP THINGS CONSISTENT

REGULAR MEETINGS AS FUNDAMENTAL TO COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS

Monthly face-to-face meetings involving members of the leadership team proved essential to maintaining momentum within the partnership. In our experience, it worked well to have clear identification of project roles and work processes prior to, during, and following our meetings. As someone with experience in a leadership role, the university Director took the lead in planning agendas and facilitation of next steps, a role that was appreciated by busy district administrators. As one team member noted, "when we got together, he had sent us in advance, 'This is what we are going to be talking about,' so we could be mentally prepared. We came in, we worked efficiently. And then there was no power struggle. He took the notes, he listened to us, he came back the next time with an agenda or whatever that reflected the

input that he'd gotten from us." Following each meeting, the Director sent out notes that included action items for various team members. One district team member said, "He kept the vibe....it was very collaborative. And he was very much the facilitator."

"Early on, the district embraced its role in supporting the residents' professional growth in areas that the preparation program could not."

Whereas the Director of the university program planned the leadership meeting agendas, the district took the lead in planning most professional development opportunities for the residents. Early on, the district embraced its role in supporting the residents' professional growth in areas that the preparation program could not. This support began at the very start of the academic year when the district planned a full-day professional development training for the residents focused on how to give the K-5 literacy screening assessment to students in a reliable and valid manner. Following that training, residents were prepared to give these one-on-one assessments, thus supporting their mentor, other classroom teachers in their building, and literacy specialists by enabling teachers to continue with instruction and relationship building in the classroom and lightening the assessment load of the reading specialists. Residents benefitted by gaining expertise in giving and interpreting assessments. Similarly, to prepare residents to constructively engage in upcoming family conferences, the district planned and facilitated a panel that included a classroom teacher and two principals. The panel members shared strategies for engaging in family conferences that would place the residents in a more supportive and productive role during these important meetings with families.

This pattern of leadership in district-planned professional development continued throughout the year. As our residents took on the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessional substitutes throughout the district, they faced scenarios for which they initially felt unprepared. Residents had had experience in the K-5 setting, but little if any in middle and high school; working with older students presented new learning opportunities and challenges. Based on feedback and questions shared by the residents with their Field Supervisor, the team decided to offer a professional development session on working as a paraprofessional substitute. The session focused on

details, such as who to sign in with at the front office and arrival/departure times, as well as more nuanced issues related to the varied roles that paraprofessionals serve, ranging from academic to behavioral and socioemotional support. Such professional development support could only come from the district, as ground-level supports for paraprofessional work were not part of the preparation program's expertise.

K-12 students within the district benefitted, too, by the increased confidence and knowledge the residents brought to vital aspects of teaching. For example, the leadership team identified a need for a professional development session for residents focused on social-emotional learning (SEL). SEL was a priority for the district during the 2019-20 school year. The district's SEL Coordinator facilitated this session with residents by reviewing important concepts and skills related to social-emotional learning within the classroom, such as emotion identification, expression, and regulation. These concepts were part of residents' university curriculum, but the SEL coordinator was able to link the concepts to the district's newly adopted SEL curriculum. Perhaps because of their familiarity with the curriculum following the professional development session, teaching the SEL curriculum ended up becoming one of the first instructional roles taken on by most residents in their classrooms.

" K-12 students within the district benefitted, too, by the increased confidence and knowledge the residents brought to vital aspects of teaching"

Residents left professional development sessions reinvigorated for their expanded roles within the district. As one resident explained, "I really do think this gives a more holistic learning experience for us as students. I don't think we have mentioned the fact that we're learning in this, too. There's a lot of learning that's happening outside of our university classes because of this program." Each of the professional learning opportunities that the district designed for residents was the result of our regular meetings to address residents' learning and districts' needs.

LOCATION MATTERS

REPOSITIONING UNIVERSITY WORK WITHIN THE K-12 SYSTEM

Our university and school district are located 15 miles from each other, which makes a difference for meeting with district leaders and for the time it takes residents to commute back and forth to campus. Repositioning residents' courses and professional development, along with leadership team meetings, within the school district proved helpful in multiple respects. Early on, members of the leadership team agreed that situating coursework at a school district location would extend the amount of time residents could remain in their classrooms by eliminating the need for residents to drive to campus, find parking, and walk to class. As such, district administrators secured a classroom for residents' courses at the site typically used for district professional development. They filled the classroom with desks, a projector, and supplies and allowed residents and course instructors to leave materials, such as chart paper notes and supplies in the classroom. By taking coursework at a location within the district, residents were able to remain in their classrooms longer, augmenting their time to observe, teach alongside, and debrief with their collaborating teachers. The saved time allowed residents to engage more deeply in their practice, and since they no longer needed to mentally "shift" to the college campus, they remained more grounded in that practice during their university coursework. Furthermore, this extension of time within the classroom allowed greater flexibility to the Field Supervisor for scheduling observations and debriefings with residents, as well as spending added time in schools building relationships with collaborating teachers. That time in schools matters in relationship-building. As one district administrator explained, "The fact that the Field Supervisor is out here is fabulous. And she is getting to know us. So, she's helping be the bridge between the university and the district."

This slight change in coursework location also enabled district administration to visit during university class time, something leaders did on many occasions. At times district leaders would contribute to discussions, noting connections between course material and district initiatives or goals,

thus demonstrating the applicability of course learning to the practice of teaching in the "real world." At other times, university instructors were able to adjust their teaching schedule to accommodate district professional development opportunities for the residents offered at the close of the academic day. Just as importantly, allowing residents to remain within the district the entire day may have better supported their developing professional identity; residents saw themselves more as members of the district than as university students. As one resident observed, "It feels like I'm part of the community."

"It feels like I'm part of the community."



MINDSET SHIFT

MAKING CHANGE POSSIBLE

All these ingredients contribute to a successful leadership structure to support teacher residencies and the schools in which they learn to teach. Mixing these different ingredients together in adaptive ways that are supportive of the partners' needs requires a commitment to creating a "third space" for teacher preparation, one where learning is not exclusively the responsibility of the university and practice is not exclusively the responsibility of the school. Instead, our leadership structure shared responsibility, proving itself amenable to disrupting the traditional systems and supports for teacher preparation. Throughout its work, the leadership team adopted a deliberative mindset (Gottfredson & Reina, 2020), a collective orientation toward the partnership that sought and was receptive to all kinds of information to help ensure the residency's success. This mindset relied on dispositions, such as mutual trust, consistent communication, and willingness to re-approach inevitable challenges when they arose. The prioritization of fostering strong working relationships between the school district and the preparation program on our leadership team helped us to envision new co-constructed systems for teacher preparation and helped the team to advance its work toward its goals. ●

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

In this report, we have shared how our leadership team, composed both of district and university teacher partners, joined forces to approach the task of preparing residents in ways that better served the need of all parties involved. We learned many lessons in this collective work, such as the importance of including district leaders with decision-making authority and knowledge of the complete schooling system on the leadership team, meeting early to conduct a needs assessment, and maintaining consistent and productive face-to-face meetings to support ongoing identification of opportunities and challenges within the partnership. One of our leadership team members summarized the shared outcomes of this joint effort in this way: "I just think what a wonderful opportunity for these residents. And what a fantastic opportunity for us as a school district to have these residents that have already experienced and been exposed to and trained in these specific areas that are very much aligned with our goals and mission." Simply put, taking the time to meet regularly in this "third space" for teacher preparation proved powerful in terms of offering fresh opportunities for residents to grow as professionals and simultaneously support district learning initiatives.

Our learning has inspired us to continue to strengthen these innovative approaches. Moving forward, we plan to include building principals more systematically in leadership team discussions. We are hopeful their perspectives can help us better understand schools' curricular, assessment, and instructional needs and, in turn, expand paid professional work opportunities for residents within their respective schools. Not only will this support school staffing needs, but it will also allow for more equitable access

to the residency by increasing financial supports for residents. We also intend to offer more thorough support and training to all of our mentors, both in terms of mentoring practices like co-teaching and instructional frameworks, given the essential role mentors play in the professional development of residents.

Our participation in the *Prepared To Teach* network supported other efforts besides ours. Across nearly 20 sites in the nation, lessons from preparation programs seeking to build new models for affordable, high-quality residencies have been distilled into a transformation framework. (see upcoming report from *Prepared To Teach*, coming Spring 2021). Beginning in the fall of 2020, partnerships in seven states will engage in a series of virtual Communities of Practice, with P-12 and preparation program participants learning together in each of nine Community of Practice strands. Not only will our Ferndale partners be taking part, but we are also expanding our residency model with a new leadership team with another school district partner, whose members will also be part of the Communities of Practice. We expect new and exciting opportunities to present themselves as we share and learn lessons with colleagues across the nation who are committed to creating high-quality, affordable, sustainable residencies that meet learning needs of both residents and K-12 students. ●

"We expect new and exciting opportunities to present themselves as we share and learn lessons with colleagues across the nation"

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