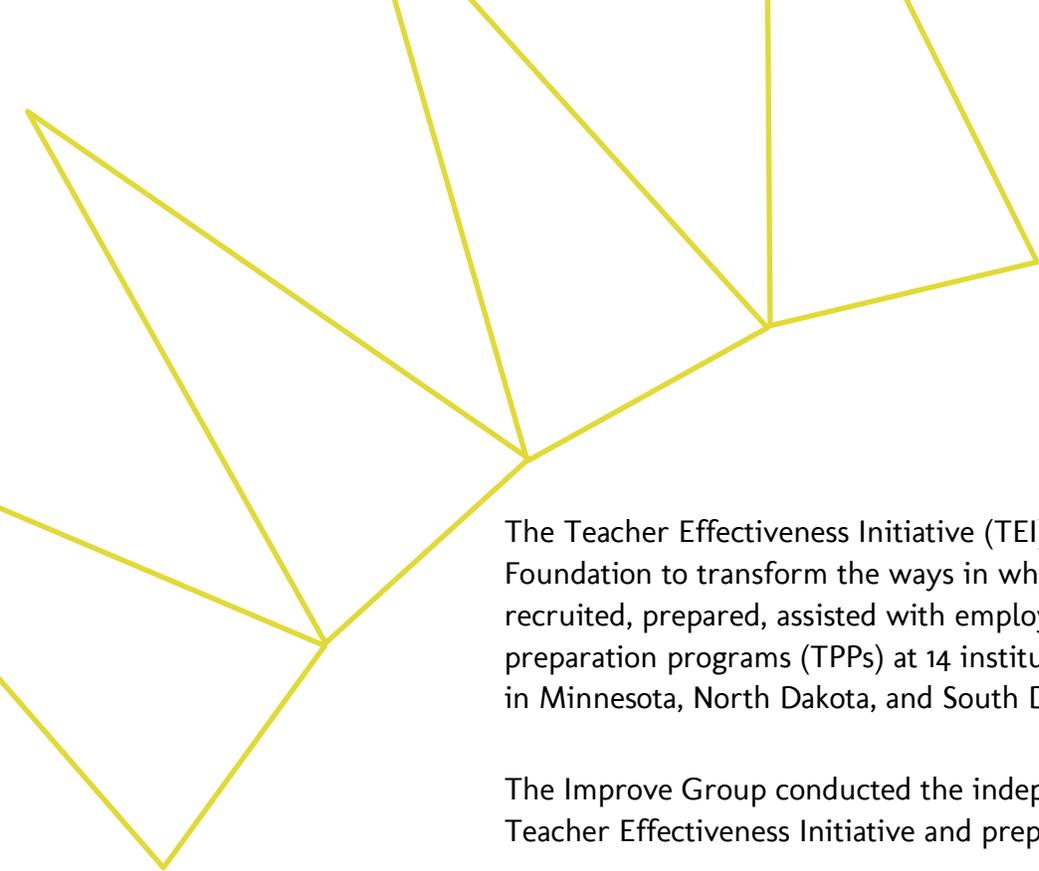




# The Teacher Effectiveness Initiative Midterm Report, 2014

Prepared for the Bush Foundation

A decorative graphic in the top left corner consisting of several yellow lines forming a series of overlapping triangles and polygons, resembling a stylized fan or a cluster of geometric shapes.

The Teacher Effectiveness Initiative (TEI) is a 10-year effort by the Bush Foundation to transform the ways in which teacher candidates are recruited, prepared, assisted with employment, and supported by teacher preparation programs (TPPs) at 14 institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota.

The Improve Group conducted the independent evaluation of the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative and prepared this report.

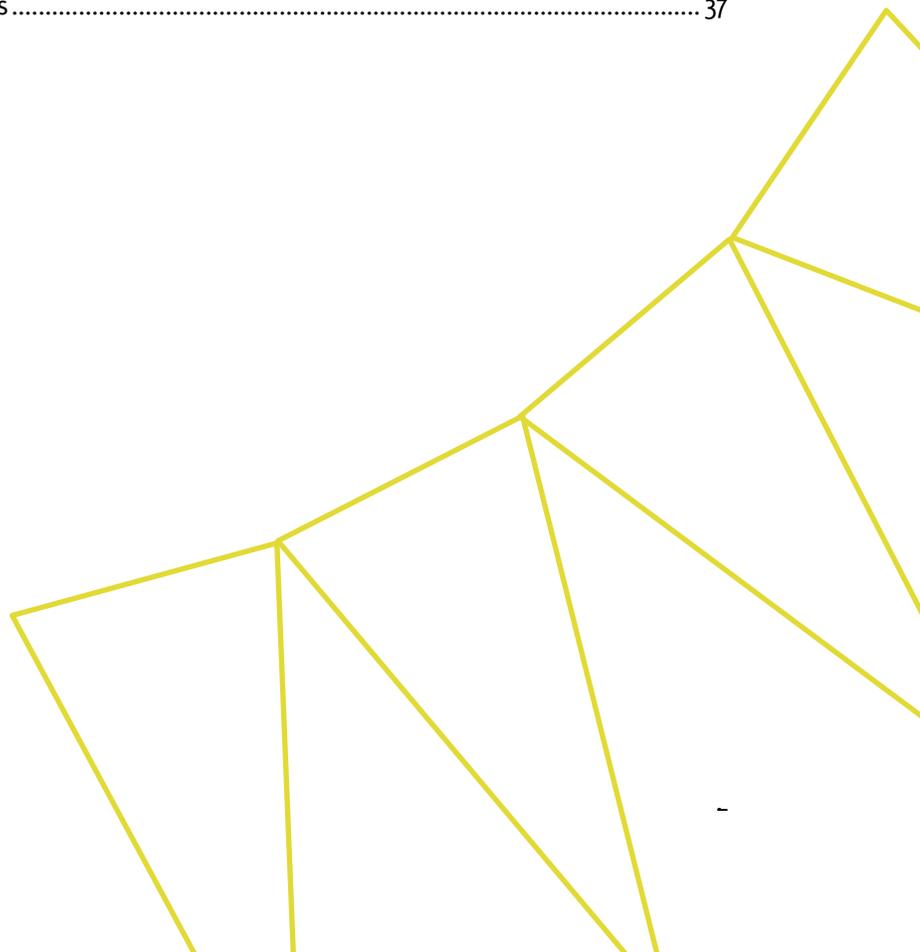
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# Acknowledgements

## The Bush Foundation

The Bush Foundation invests in great ideas and the people who power them. Established in 1953 by 3M executive Archibald Bush and his wife, Edyth, the Foundation encourages individuals and organizations to think bigger and think differently about what is possible in communities across Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota and the 23 Native nations that share the same geographic area.

## The Improve Group

The Improve Group is an independent research, evaluation, and planning firm with the mission to help organizations deliver effective services. The research design, data collection, analysis, and reporting expertise of the Improve Group particularly emphasizes building the capacity of local organizations to make information meaningful and useful.

## Additional contributors to this report

This report was prepared with a great deal of cooperation and support of partnering institution project leads, faculty and staff, including: Augsburg College, Bethel University, Concordia University-St. Paul, Hamline University, Minnesota State University-Mankato, Minnesota State University-Moorhead, North Dakota State University, St. Catherine University, St. Cloud State University, University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, University of St. Thomas, University of South Dakota, Valley City State University, and Winona State University. This evaluation was also supported by the coordinators of the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative's (TEI) two consortia, the Twin Cities Teacher Collaborative (TC2) and the Valley Partnership.

In addition, coaches from FHI 360, a nonprofit human development organization that has provided critical coaching and expertise to the TEI institutions since inception, were instrumental in helping shape the evaluation and providing context on the work completed by institutions for the TEI.

Also, a special thanks to those who were willing to share their experiences in TEI. Thank you to partnering teacher preparation programs (TPPs), including students currently enrolled in TPPs, recent graduates of TPPs employed as teachers, cooperating teachers responsible for supervising student teachers, school district administrators tasked with supervising new teachers, and school district administrators involved in building partnerships with TPPs.



# Introduction

## The Teacher Effectiveness Initiative

In 2009 the Bush Foundation announced a 10-year Teacher Effectiveness Initiative (TEI) focused on transforming the ways in which teacher candidates are recruited, prepared, assisted with employment, and supported by teacher preparation programs (TPPs). This initiative is guided by the Bush Foundation's educational achievement goal to increase the percentage of students who are on track to earn a degree after high school and eliminate disparities among diverse groups.

The initiative aims to increase K-12 teachers' quality and effectiveness, and thereby improve students' educational achievement. The impetus for this initiative lies in a strong body of evidence suggesting that teacher quality is the most influential in-school variable affecting student performance.

Fourteen institutions of higher education (IHEs) in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota involved in the Teacher Effectiveness Initiative are:

- Augsburg College
- Bethel University
- Concordia University
- Hamline University
- Minnesota State University-Mankato
- Minnesota State University-Moorhead
- University of Minnesota-Twin Cities
- North Dakota State University
- St. Catherine University
- University of St. Thomas
- St. Cloud State University
- University of South Dakota
- Valley City State University
- Winona State University

Nine of the 14 institutions organized themselves into two separate consortia and collectively applied for TEI funding. The two consortia are the Twin Cities Teacher Collaborative (TC2, comprised of Augsburg College, Bethel University, Concordia University, Hamline University, St. Catherine University, and the University of St. Thomas), and the Valley Partnership (comprised of Minnesota State University - Moorhead, North Dakota State University, and

Valley City State University). Institutions belonging to these two consortia collaborated on TEI proposal development, formed inter-institution steering committees and working groups to collectively implement new teacher education strategies and monitor progress, while also addressing the unique circumstances of each TPP.

TPPs have agreed to organize improvement efforts around four key pillars (recruitment, preparation, employment, and support), using data to measure performance and inform change (a fifth pillar). Because partner institutions all had a long tradition of providing teacher education prior to adopting the goals of the TEI, each has set an individualized series of priorities and goals in the core pillar areas that account for historical strengths and identified areas for growth.

## Purpose of the Evaluation

In nearing the midterm point for the 10-year, \$40-million investment in the TEI, the Bush Foundation engaged an evaluation partner to help understand the progress toward TEI goals. The Bush Foundation contracted with the Improve Group to design and implement an evaluation to:



Document what has occurred since institutions began implementing the Initiative;  
Inform refinement and future work of the Initiative; and  
Inform other Bush Foundation programs and the field of teacher preparation.

## Evaluation Methodology

To document progress toward TEI goals and challenges, the evaluators used a variety of qualitative methods including:

**Semi-structured interviews with project leads** from each TPP, coordinators of the Twin Cities Teacher Collaborative (TC2) and Valley Partnership, and FHI 360 coaches;

**Focus groups with faculty and staff** at all TPPs, as well as with each of the initiative's pillar working groups; and

**Online focus groups with students currently enrolled in TPPs**, recent graduates of TPPs employed as teachers, cooperating teachers responsible for supervising student teachers, school district administrators tasked with supervising new teachers, and school district administrators involved in building partnerships with TPPs.

The interviews and focus groups addressed a number of topics, including progress and challenges associated with each pillar area, changes to TPP culture, and the sustainability of changes made as part of TEI. In the Findings section of this report, interview and focus group participants are typically referred to as “respondents.” Unless otherwise noted, themes described in this report were invoked by respondents at a majority of TEI institutions.





# Findings

Evaluation findings are organized by the TEI pillars of recruitment, preparation, employment, support, and measurement. For each pillar, key achievements and challenges to implementation are identified; when relevant, consortia-level findings are also outlined. Examples of innovative approaches to the recruitment, preparation, employment, and support pillar areas are highlighted as mini-case studies in this section.

It should be noted that much of this report focuses on the description of strategies for affecting change in each of the pillar areas and the implementation of these strategies. Because of the complexity of strategy

implementation, the process of affecting change in the way that TPPs are structured required a significant investment of time and resources. At the time of data collection, IHEs did not yet feel that they could make conclusive claims about the impact of these strategies for most pillar areas. Thus, at this stage of the initiative, there is limited data available with which to quantify the impact of the changes described in this report. After several more rounds of common metrics data (defined on page 28 in “Measurement”) collection and further refinement of data management systems, TPPs should be able to make more conclusive statements about impact.

## Recruitment

Before the TEI, few TPPs had taken an intentional approach to the recruitment of teacher candidates. In most cases, few TPPs had the resources to devote to the development of a marketing strategy.

Reflecting on recruitment, most respondents observed that the TEI had caused TPPs to become much more strategic and intentional in their approach. TPPs have piloted a number of strategies to recruit teacher candidates with distinguished records of academic achievement, interest in high-need educational areas, and dispositions amenable to the teaching profession. In addition, respondents noted that while recruitment used to occur mainly at the level of the IHE (in other words, TPP recruitment was not distinct from a given university’s overarching recruitment efforts), new strategies were implemented by TPPs themselves to attract particular types of students, market the distinctive features of TPPs, and promote teaching as a viable career option.



# Areas of progress and remaining challenges

## **TPPs have enhanced marketing practices.**

Historically, TPP recruiting efforts were not distinct from those of the broader IHE of which they are a part. With the advent of TEI, TPPs have sought to more carefully define their distinguishing features and strengths, and better communicate them to potential teacher candidates. Complementing these efforts, faculty and staff at most TPPs have devoted more energy to raising the profile of the teaching profession. Most TPPs reported acting on recommendations from Haberman—a full-service marketing agency that provided recruitment advice—for strengthening proactive recruitment, and in addition, increased their capacity to promote themselves by forging collaborations with university marketing departments and/or adding education-specific marketing staff to apply branding techniques and redesign websites, informational brochures, and other materials. The Valley Partnership invested in several videos promoting the teaching profession that it features on its website and at a variety of informational events for prospective students.

Marketing and branding techniques were not only intended to make recruitment materials more attractive, but also to help forge an identity for TPPs. While TPPs sought to broadly promote teaching as a viable career path, they also engaged in smaller-scale practices that made teacher candidates more visible to the general public and to K-12 students who may eventually consider a teaching career. For instance, one TPP created branded clothing that students could wear during field experiences to identify their school and program, and foster a culture of connectedness among teacher candidates.

## **TPPs have sought to increase the number of teacher candidates of color that they enroll.**

Faced with increasing demand for teachers of diverse backgrounds in urban school districts and beyond, TPPs have prioritized the recruitment of students of color and implemented a number of strategies to address this demand. Many TPPs have tasked a recruitment staff member with established connections to schools and organizations in communities of color to engage in outreach with prospective students. In addition, those TPPs with a history of attracting significant numbers of teacher candidates of color have encouraged students to informally recruit from their communities by talking to peers about the profession of teaching, the learning environment at a particular TPP, and the forms of support available to students of color. Other methods for recruiting students of color include facilitating clubs for future educators in high schools and outreach to campus organizations that are geared toward

students of color. In addition, some teacher preparation programs have been able to offer scholarships for students of color, and several have built on or created cohort models that seek to attract groups of teacher candidates from certain ethnic backgrounds.

While representatives of many teacher preparation programs reported a modest increase in the enrollment of students of color, the task of diversifying the pool of teacher candidates at TPPs remains a daunting one. Many staff responsible for reaching out to communities of color reported feeling a lack of support for their efforts from TPPs and the broader IHE community. According to these and other respondents, conversations about the recruitment of students of color lack an appreciation of the unique barriers faced by these specific populations and do not adequately address the question of how to create and implement effective systems of support to address those barriers so that teacher candidates from diverse backgrounds can be retained. From this perspective, recruitment is as much about identifying appropriate forms of assistance for teacher candidates in order to increase retention rates as it is about simply enrolling the targeted students. More generally, some respondents suggested that recruiting strategically from specific populations requires a skill set that most faculty do not possess, which may hamper a TPP's ability to increase enrollments in the desired areas at programs with few dedicated recruitment staff.

## **Augsburg College's East African Student to Teacher (EAST) Program**

After using TEI resources to better understand the critical issues associated with the recruitment of students of color, Augsburg College designed an initiative to attract, prepare, and retain teacher candidates of East African origin. Emphasizing the recruitment of individuals who have already demonstrated success in previous academic training and/or professional experience, the recently launched EAST Program supports a cohort of approximately 15 students who are projected to gain licensure within the next two years.

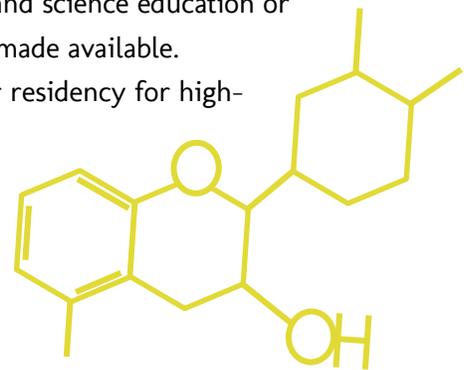
Augsburg faculty and staff understand the need to remove financial barriers to enrollment for students of color, and the EAST Program covers tuition costs toward initial licensure for admitted candidates. After graduating from the EAST Program, new teachers are likely to be in high demand in increasingly diverse Twin Cities area school districts and beyond. EAST graduates are expected to teach in Minnesota for at least two years after gaining licensure. Augsburg faculty and staff hope that the initiative will prove to be a scalable and sustainable model for bringing more people of color into the teaching profession.

**TPPs have attempted to attract students interested in high-need areas, such as STEM<sup>1</sup>, special education, ESL<sup>2</sup>, and ELL<sup>3</sup>.**

As the demand for particular specializations grows, teacher preparation programs have sought to recruit talented students with interests in high-need areas. In many TPPs, there has been discussion about when to target potential teacher candidates for high-need areas, particularly with respect to STEM. A number of respondents noted that it makes the most sense to look to students already enrolled at a given IHE who have decided on a STEM major and may be persuaded to add a second major in education. Faculty from teacher preparation programs have increased collaboration with STEM departments and have begun to regularly promote the merits of a teaching career through formal presentations and discussions with students at STEM-related events.

In some cases, scholarships targeting students interested in math and science education or willing to double major in education and a STEM field have been made available.

Preparation and mentoring models, such as the TC2 urban teacher residency for high-achieving math and science teacher candidates, also have the potential to attract STEM majors to the profession. Still, respondents observed that the prospect of a teaching career does not often prove to be an attractive value proposition for talented STEM students, who typically have a broader array of career options than others.



While faculty and staff at TPPs largely feel that it is not their place to dictate to students which area of teaching they should pursue, they impress upon students that exploring a high-need area may be beneficial in a tight job market. Students that choose an area that is generally in low demand are encouraged by faculty and staff to consider obtaining a certificate or endorsement in a high-need area to bolster their employment prospects. In the example of the TC2 consortium, increased collaboration across institutions has, at times, led to a more coordinated approach to recruiting in which students who become interested in a high-need area not offered at their institution are referred to another TPP within the consortium. Likewise, the Valley Partnership TPPs allow students enrolled at any of one of its three member institutions to take courses at one of the other universities that will result in a specialized certificate, credential, endorsement, or minor.

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<sup>1</sup> Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics

<sup>2</sup> English as a Second Language

<sup>3</sup> English Language Learners

## **TPPs are attempting to build multiple pathways to teaching careers.**

Faculty and staff at TPPs recognize the need to facilitate entry into teacher preparation programs for “nontraditional” students. More specifically, respondents observed that students of color and others who may be well-positioned for a teaching career may be unintentionally excluded from conventional recruitment efforts and have thus begun to open to pathways to TPPs. For instance, some institutions have begun to promote teaching careers to community college students and explore partnerships that would allow students interested in pursuing teaching to transfer credits. In addition, TPPs have identified paraprofessionals as a likely source of potential high-quality teachers. Some TPPs have observed that there are a significant number of people of color working as paraprofessionals who would likely be interested in a teaching career if not for barriers such as cost and challenges associated with licensure (e.g., some of the content areas in standardized tests required for licensure may prove difficult for non-native speakers of English if appropriate test preparation support is unavailable). Finally, TPPs have continued to tailor their training to the needs of career-changers in post-baccalaureate programs, whose schedules may not mesh well with the traditional structure of a TPP.

## **As research on the dispositions of effective teachers grows, TPPs are likely to make dispositional factors a key component of their recruitment strategy.**

In addition to academic achievement and other skill sets, TPPs recognize that dispositional factors are useful in predicting which sorts of individuals are likely to develop into effective teachers. As research sheds new light on the types of dispositions that are associated with teacher quality, TPPs are likely to integrate this knowledge into their recruiting practices in the coming years. At this stage, dispositional factors do not figure prominently in recruitment practices, but many respondents observed that the accumulation of common metrics survey data—data from four instruments developed by and for TEI institutions to facilitate program improvement—will likely help to inform decisions about the role of disposition assessment in recruitment. If one conceives of recruitment occurring on a continuum, some TPPs have already begun to assess disposition through interviews and other forms of evaluation that occur at various stages prior to student teaching. Evaluation of disposition in the earlier stages of a teacher candidate’s education helps to identify issues that can be rectified before the student engages in long-term clinical/field experience, and allows faculty and staff to transition students not suited to teaching careers into new areas of study more smoothly.

## Preparation

Faculty and staff at TPPs were well-versed in the literature on best practices in teacher training prior to the TEI but faced a range of barriers to the implementation of changes to teacher education. TPP respondents felt that many of the changes that have been enacted using Bush Foundation resources would likely have been attempted at some stage, though not nearly as quickly or efficiently. TPP faculty and staff reported that prior to receiving Bush Foundation support, they simply did not have time to engage in the kind of collaborative planning and strategic decision-making necessary to rapidly transform the process of teacher preparation.

TPPs have made the most wide-ranging and significant changes in the area of preparation. While many of the ideas underlying changes to preparation had been under consideration by TPP faculty prior to the TEI, the funding that accompanied the initiative freed up time and resources for faculty and staff within and across IHEs to form working groups, decide upon strategies, and begin to implement changes. This coordination of efforts has led to a generally consistent approach to change that adopts best practices in teacher preparation and is responsive to local contexts and needs.

## Areas of progress and remaining challenges

### **TPPs made significant progress toward the implementation of redesigned curricula.**

TPPs have engaged in sweeping redesigns of their curricula based on research-derived best practices, feedback from school district partners, and alignment with shifting standards for TPP accreditation and teacher licensure. Some of the TPPs that were able to launch their redesigned programs quickly have also drawn upon common metrics exit survey data to “backmap” changes into their curriculum. Across all TPPs, faculty and staff have invested a significant amount of time in the rethinking of the content of coursework to emphasize current trends in learning theory, classroom management, differentiated instruction, educational technology, and formative and summative evaluation, among other topics. Describing the process of redesign, respondents noted that TEI funding was invaluable in that it afforded them the time to convene working groups and collaborate closely with colleagues. Respondents described a unique process of strategizing that led many faculty members to relinquish ownership over particular content areas and work toward implementing changes intended to fulfill a shared vision of effective teacher education. Respondents also described

productive partnerships with colleagues across departments and colleges that have enabled TPPs to better integrate high-need area content (e.g., STEM) into their curricula.

Perhaps the most significant achievement common to all TPP redesign efforts is the effort to better link theory with practice by embedding a variety of clinical/field experiences in coursework beginning with the earliest stages of teacher training. All TPPs have demonstrated a commitment to illustrating educational concepts by exposing students to the sorts of schools and classroom environments where they will have the opportunity to work in the future. Respondents report that the expansion of early clinical/field experiences has had a number of benefits. First, students are better able to reflect upon the ways in which situations they have observed or were involved in illuminate abstract concepts from educational theory. In addition, students are given more opportunities to discern whether pursuing a teaching career is right for them, as well as which grade level will be the best match for the candidate's skills and dispositions. Also, respondents have observed that early clinical/field experiences help teacher candidates mature more quickly and allow them to hone skills like lesson planning and classroom management, which eases their transition into student teaching.

Other strategies employed by TPPs to use field experiences to improve teacher candidate preparedness by tying theory to practice include teaching methods courses at school district sites, a practice which is often directly linked to the teacher candidate practicum. Also, while many TPPs have adjusted course content to address the need for cultural competence in increasingly diverse schools, a number of schools located in less diverse regions have mandated field experiences in districts or schools that serve populations of color. Some TPPs have also created opportunities for students to gain international teaching experience.

## University of South Dakota Year-Long Residency

The University of South Dakota conducted several pilots of a year-long residency experience for teacher candidates. This final year experience occurs entirely in the field, where teacher candidates are placed in schools and paired with a mentor teacher with whom they practice co-teaching. In addition, teacher candidates complete coursework in the field that complements their experience in the classroom by emphasizing skills that can be applied immediately in the classroom. In addition to creating a tighter link between theory and practice, the residency facilitates the statewide adoption of Common Core standards, which emphasize the application of skills and problem-solving techniques in addition to acquiring conceptual knowledge for grades K-12. By the 2014-2015 academic year, all teacher candidates will be required to complete a year-long residency requirement. Recently, the South Dakota Board of Regents recommended that all state-funded IHEs with TPPs move from a single-semester student teaching experience to a year-long residency model.



## TPPs are restructuring student teaching experiences.

Across all TPPs, program redesign strategies have included improving the centerpiece of teacher preparation, the student teaching experience. TPPs have begun to increase the duration of student teaching experiences and have advocated for a change to the pedagogical approach characterizing such experiences. Across TPPs, the trend has been toward increasing the length of a student teaching placement, and many TPPs now expect students to spend a full academic year in the classroom. In addition, TPPs have invested a great deal of resources in the training of faculty, teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, and supervisors of cooperating teachers in the co-teaching model.

The co-teaching model emphasizes collaboration between the cooperating teacher and the teacher candidate, and shared responsibility for the planning, delivery, and evaluation of instruction. Respondents report that the school districts' response to this model has been overwhelmingly positive, and that many districts are looking almost exclusively at co-teaching placements. Many TPPs have made significant investments to ensure the sustainability of co-

teaching by providing training to key personnel (faculty and cooperating teachers, among others) who will be able to transfer their knowledge to others in a kind of train-the-trainer model; however, not all TPPs have been able to afford ongoing, large-scale co-teaching training, and the long-term financial viability of the model is uncertain in some cases because the maintenance of the model requires significant ongoing investment from both the TPP and partner school districts.

A number of Minnesota-based TPPs noted that the restructuring of the teacher candidate experience has also been beneficial for incorporating the new edTPA (Education Teacher Practice Assessment) licensure requirements into teacher education. EdTPA is an assessment process required by the Minnesota Board of Teaching that requires teacher candidates to demonstrate that they possess the skills necessary for teaching. A multiple-measure assessment, edTPA covers the areas of planning, instruction, assessment, analysis of teaching, and academic language. The introduction of edTPA standards has helped to create a more structured teacher candidate experience that forces candidates to engage in deeper reflection about teaching practice and in rigorous self-assessment. Respondents reported that redesigned student teaching experiences put heavy emphasis on many of the edTPA assessment areas, leaving candidates well-prepared to demonstrate teaching skills. Respondents from several TEI TPPs outside of Minnesota noted that while their states do not require edTPA for licensure, they have nonetheless used its measures to help inform their own student teaching models.





## Strategic partnerships with school districts have enabled successful expansion of clinical experiences.

In order to facilitate changes to clinical experiences, TPPs have begun to emphasize a more strategic form of partnership with the school districts where they place teacher candidates. Many respondents noted that in the past, partnerships with school districts and the placements that resulted from them were largely dependent on existing relationships between specific faculty and school administrators. In addition, less thought was given to the needs of the school district and what it may gain from hosting a teacher candidate. During the program redesign phase of the TEI, TPPs actively sought the advice of school district supervisors as they considered how to restructure practicum experiences, and these discussions have allowed partnerships to evolve in ways that are conducive to the goals of both TPPs and school districts.

The increased presence of clinical faculty to support expanded field experiences has been one of the means through which TPPs have gained insight into the unique characteristics and needs of particular schools. In addition, many TPPs have created liaison positions (the position name and responsibilities vary somewhat across TPPs) which are frequently occupied by former K-12 administrators and teachers (though may also be faculty supervisors or work in tandem with faculty supervisors) whose work encompasses a variety of functions. The liaisons play a direct role in the professional development of teacher candidates by helping to support, mentor, and evaluate their clinical/field experiences.

Liaisons also play an important role as mediators between TPPs and school districts. Often, the liaisons are assigned to a specific school or set of schools, and become familiar with a school's culture, teachers, and student population. Liaisons are thus well-positioned to make recommendations for student teaching placements that will benefit both the candidate and cooperating teacher. The liaison is also in a position to address any concerns that a cooperating teacher may have about a teacher candidate and, if necessary, communicate those concerns back to TPP faculty so that the student can be advised appropriately.

In the case of the TC2 consortium, where a significant number of TPPs operate in close proximity to one another, the idea of clinical cluster sites in two large school districts emerged from collaborative coordination of student teaching placements. TPPs were assigned schools to work with in one district and, in the other, collaborated to ensure that there were not too many cases of overlapping placements in a given school. Generally speaking, clinical cluster sites were chosen on the basis of their commitment to improving teacher



effectiveness, willingness to engage in ongoing communication and planning with the TPP, and openness to adopting the co-teaching model. Through this model, TPPs and schools hoped to develop mutually beneficial long-term partnerships; however, the assignment of TPPs to specific schools did not account for strong pre-existing relationships, and the large combined output of candidates at TC2 schools has, at times, made it difficult to find appropriate placements for some students, particularly those in high-need areas.

While the aforementioned issues may be somewhat unique to the large urban context in which TC2 institutions operate, the development of partnerships in other regions has not been without challenges. One basic challenge has to do with the availability of quality cooperating teachers with whom to place candidates. While the strategic approaches to partnership taken by TPPs have resulted in greater understanding of K-12 needs, the demands of hosting a teacher candidate are such that it is not feasible for many cooperating teachers to perform this task in consecutive years.

Some TPPs with partners located in less populated regions have found that it can be difficult to place students in more remote areas, as many young professionals prefer to live in more populated areas. A lack of placements in these partner schools may cause them to have fewer opportunities for co-teaching training and other sorts of in-service events that a TPP may sponsor. Lastly, school districts that partner with more than one TEI institution, while appreciative of TPPs' increasingly strategic approach, sometimes feel that it would more



efficient for institutions to establish a uniform set of procedures for working with partners. The Valley Partnership has addressed this sort of issue by creating a standard student teacher evaluation that can be used for candidates from any of the three schools in the consortium.

Despite these challenges, discussions with administrators and cooperating teachers indicate that partnerships have largely been mutually beneficial and fulfilling. Administrators were happy to have been included in the initial stages of TPPs' preparation planning and continue to feel that their feedback is taken seriously and acted upon. Most cooperating teachers found that teacher candidates exhibited a high degree of professionalism despite their relative lack of experience and were quick to adapt to the challenges associated with leading a classroom. Focus group discussions with cooperating teachers suggest that today's candidates from TEI partner TPPs are now better-prepared for student teaching and other clinical/field experiences.

While classroom management is a challenge for many teacher candidates, cooperating teachers found the TEI candidates with whom they worked to be well-versed in content, effective lesson planners, and confident communicators. Both cooperating teachers and administrators linked the preparedness of TEI teacher candidates to the range of clinical experiences that these future teachers were exposed to prior to their student teaching placement.



# Employment

TPP faculty and staff did not typically see their teacher training role extending to employment before the TEI, and, in some cases, there was minimal systematic follow-up with graduates to learn about employment outcomes.

The employment pillar emphasizes greater TPP involvement in candidates' job searches in order to identify positions in schools that are committed to supporting the success of teachers. While many respondents noted that their programs have become more intentional about preparing students for the job market, a number of factors make it difficult for TEI TPPs to devise an employment strategy that can be applied systematically across institutions. In light of this challenge, the TEI promotes flexibility in employment pillar strategies in order to address specific regional challenges.

## Areas of progress and remaining challenges

### **Teacher candidate employability is enhanced during preparation.**

A logical starting point for faculty and staff primarily accustomed to thinking about teacher education in terms of the preparation pillar has been to integrate practices that will enhance employability into the curriculum. Many respondents noted how the seminars that often accompany student teaching experiences provide opportunities for students to learn more about what employers are looking for in new teachers and how to market themselves for open positions. In many seminars, faculty invite administrators from partner school districts to talk with students about the type of candidates that they consider a good fit, and, in some cases, administrators have conducted mock interviews with teacher candidates and provided feedback on their performance.

In a similar vein, TPP faculty members encourage teacher students to leverage the lengthier clinical experiences borne out of preparation pillar strategies to increase their employment prospects. Faculty members push teacher candidates to think of the student teaching placement as an opportunity not just to practice the craft of teaching, but also as a chance to effectively audition for future positions. Accordingly, student teachers are encouraged to place heavy emphasis on displaying maturity and professionalism when managing their appearance, demeanor, and interpersonal relationships in their placement schools. Respondents hold the perception that lengthier clinical experiences are leading to increased

offers of employment for teacher candidates, though there is little available data to determine whether this is the case.

Respondents also suggested that the growth of deeper relationships between TPPs and partner schools that result from the increased presence of clinical faculty and liaisons has made it more common for schools looking to fill openings to directly approach TPPs to learn about teacher candidates on the job market. Because partner school districts have responded positively to the changed approach to clinical/field experiences and feel that their input regarding the strategies pursued was taken seriously, they find that the skills offered by TPP graduates often address their hiring needs.

### **There is increased coordination with career services offices.**

Many TPPs have begun to work more closely with their institutions' career services offices to help students cultivate the skills necessary to embark on a successful job search. The role of career services is largely to assist teacher candidates with cover letter and resume preparation, interviewing techniques, and other related skills. Respondents note that career services staff are mainly involved during the student teaching phase of a teacher preparation program, and are working to determine how IHE career centers can better address the specific needs of teacher candidates from the earliest stages of their education. While some TPPs have developed education-specific placement centers and staff positions to track recent graduates' employment outcomes, many programs lack the resources to establish more robust employment preparation units that focus solely on transitioning teacher candidates into full-time positions.

## **Twin Cities Teacher Collaborative (TC2) and Minnesota's Teacher Education Redesign Initiative (TERI) Job Fair**

TC2 and the University of Minnesota's Teacher Education Redesign Initiative conducted a successful job fair with Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts. The school districts identified their areas of need, and teacher candidates enrolled in licensure programs at TC2 universities or the University of Minnesota were invited to attend. Participants in the fair had the opportunity to learn more about how their career goals fit with the districts' current and future hiring needs. Representatives of the two districts also had the opportunity to identify candidates to interview during the fair, and a number of candidates received early contract offers. The organizers of the job fair hope to hold the event on an annual basis.

## **TPPs have developed coordinated approaches to facilitate teacher candidate employment.**

TPPs have begun to make a greater effort to routinely communicate with school districts located in their region in order to learn more about hiring needs. Some TPPs have taken steps to organize events and establish systems that more easily facilitate direct interaction between job-seekers and school districts with position openings. For example, the TC2 consortium collaborates with Minneapolis and St. Paul school districts to organize an annual recruitment fair that brings students and district representatives together for job interviews. Winona State has piloted an approach to employment that involves sending letters to every school district in its region to inform the districts of the projected number of graduates by licensure area for the year. To complement this outreach effort, Winona State created a secure internal website where students are able to create a profile, upload a resume, and describe their preparation; interested districts are given accounts through which they can access the site and view teacher candidates by licensure area.

Respondents are hopeful that the improved tracking of graduate employment outcomes necessary for common metrics follow-up and support efforts will help them to gain a more complete sense of where graduates begin their careers and will allow TPPs to establish stronger relationships with districts that may not be formal partners but could provide another important source of employment for graduates.

## **TPPs support a culture of connectedness to facilitate employment.**

To ensure positive employment outcomes for graduates, many TPPs rely on or seek to create a culture of connectedness with teacher candidates. When describing the concept of a culture of connectedness, TPPs typically referred to their ability to sustain relationships with and among students in order to monitor their progress toward employment. Attempts to cultivate this culture often rely on some combination of social media, face-to-face relationships, and informal networking events.

While the sophisticated use of social media is not present across all TPPs, some have begun to explore the possibilities offered by tools such as LinkedIn and Facebook. TPPs have used these social media tools to create a closed networking space where graduates can interact, share tips, and learn about job openings that have been passed on by faculty and staff. Such tools also assist TPPs in their efforts to track recent graduates and may allow staff to reach out more efficiently to those struggling to find a position.

At smaller TPPs, faculty and staff value the opportunities available to them to develop deeper relationships with teacher candidates, and in such contexts, attempts to foster connectedness

rely more heavily on face-to-face interaction and outreach. For example, some faculty and staff at TPPs host informal social events for recent graduates of their programs. Among other things, such events offer graduates the opportunity to maintain ties with former classmates and mentors, and receive tips about potential job opportunities. Many respondents at smaller TPPs noted that they often check in with recent graduates who have not yet received placements to see if they can provide assistance; similarly, these same respondents observed that graduates having difficulty in the job market typically feel comfortable reaching out to faculty and staff at their TPP for advice.

## **TPPS make use of labor market analysis and employment prospects.**

While most TPPs do not have the capacity to conduct comprehensive labor market analysis to inform their employment strategies, they do make use of existing data sources published by state governments and the findings from broader national research to get a sense of shifts in demand for new teachers from year to year. Respondents suggested that more targeted, complex analysis of regional markets may only be of limited value given the wide geographic distribution of graduates. Many TPPs are finding that significant numbers of graduates secure their first positions in schools outside of the partner district network, particularly when a graduate's licensure area does not fit high-need criteria.

In addition, many respondents indicated that more detailed labor market analysis may not be helpful in the sense that TPPs seem unlikely to regulate admissions based on demand for particular licensure areas. While a few TPPs have, in fact, changed admissions practices to reflect demand or have had discussions about doing so, many faculty remain uncomfortable with the notion that admissions procedures should be restructured to align with the demand for high-need areas when so many teacher candidates are still exhibiting a passion for licensure areas where competition for jobs is particularly fierce. Faculty feel responsible for informing students about the challenges they will likely face once they enter the job market if they are pursue an area such as elementary education, but are not convinced that it is their role to exert any greater influence over teacher candidates' career decision-making.

Respondents are hopeful that improved tracking of graduate employment outcomes necessary for common metrics follow-up and for support and induction efforts will help them to gain a more accurate sense of where graduates find employment. At the same time, respondents are concerned that their capacity to continue monitoring of graduates' outcomes will be diminished without TEI support; some expressed doubt about their ability to effectively administer Transition to Teaching and Supervisor surveys without extra technical assistance.



## Support and Induction

A key component of the TEI involves TPPs provision of support and induction assistance to graduates during the early stages of their teaching careers. The provision of ongoing support for new teachers is intended to ease the transition of recent graduates into teaching careers and provide a variety of opportunities for professional development during the period of time that is perhaps most crucial in the development of an effective teacher.

Prior to the TEI, many TPP faculty and staff viewed support as informal mentoring for graduates. This was and is particularly the case at smaller TPPs where faculty and staff may have more opportunities to get to know students. In some cases, large, well-resourced school districts had their own support and induction systems, while states like North Dakota have regional mentoring programs. Overall, few partnerships between TPPs and school districts existed for the purpose of delivering support and induction programming.

A support and induction working group comprised of representatives from all TPPs was convened at the request of the TEI institutions, and its participants proposed a tiered support model that emphasized systematic tracking of graduates, collaboration with partner school districts, and mechanisms for engaging struggling new teachers. While this model was ultimately not implemented, TPPs have pursued a variety of approaches to the support pillar at the local and regional levels. The outcomes of these efforts have been varied, and many TPPs have found it challenging to define their role in the ongoing provision of support.

## Areas of progress and remaining challenges

### **TPPs are considering ways to increase collaboration with partner districts.**

In the Twin Cities area, large school districts often have well-defined support programs for new teachers. Many respondents working with such school districts indicated that their partners prefer to manage the process of supporting new teachers in a manner that is largely independent of TPPs. In such instances, respondents frequently perceived a clear division of responsibility; however, given the aims of the TEI, they were considering how TPPs could complement school district efforts. While TPPs operating in this type of context are exploring a variety of options, it is clear that they may be well-positioned to assist with direct mentoring of recent graduates.

Some respondents observed that because district-based support programming is likely to be accompanied by some form of assessment, TPPs may be able to provide more informal types of mentoring or feedback that could take place in one-on-one or group formats. This more informal mentoring approach may be a good fit for smaller TPPs where faculty and students establish deeper relationships. Respondents suggested that an informal mentoring approach would also be compatible with the strategy of cultivating a culture of connectedness to enhance employment prospects. In addition to hosting informal networking events and reaching out to recent graduates seeking employment, TPP faculty and staff can also leverage their strong relationships with students and their attempts to stay connected in order to learn more about the most significant professional challenges new teachers are faced with.

## Minnesota State University - Mankato Support and Induction Model

Minnesota State University-Mankato has partnered with the New Teacher Center to build a culture of support and induction rooted in research on best practices that values leadership and professional growth for educators. It is essential that such a system spans the continuum of teacher preparation and professional teaching, from candidate recruiting to distinguished teaching. The University describes its support and induction model with a machine metaphor in which four overlapping communities of practice are represented as gears:

**Partnership:** The first gear is focused on the necessity of collaboration between higher education and school districts to determine the needs of teachers over time. Effective comprehensive induction is aligned with and provides continuity and consistency across the continuum of pre-service, induction, and in-service resulting in a positive impact on retention, teacher effectiveness, teacher leadership, and student achievement.

**Mentor Support:** Mentoring is at the heart of support and induction work, and teachers receive high-quality training to improve their capacity for mentorship. Ultimately, the goal is to create a network of well-trained mentors that can support beginning teachers to meet the diverse needs of K-12 students more effectively.

**Beginning Teacher Support:** MSU-Mankato and its partners have begun to develop a focused curriculum to address the unique needs of beginning teachers. Seminars and other professional development opportunities bring new teachers together to help develop skills in areas of need identified through analysis of data (e.g., field experience final evaluation and data from districts).

**Leadership Support:** The final community of practice involves TPP faculty and staff working with teams of leaders from school districts to determine how to implement support systems at the school district level and define the University's role in them.

In other cases where support systems in school districts are less well-defined or do not exist, TPPs and their partners have worked collaboratively to pilot support and induction models. The models put into place are varied and respond to local and regional needs. Some examples of approaches to support and induction that have been piloted include the following:

**The Valley Partnership** consortium launched a New Teacher Academy, a multi-faceted support program that spans the first three years of new teachers' careers. The support program is focused on helping new teachers ensure that they are promoting student development based on evidence of learning and reflection on teaching practices. At this point, the New Teacher Academy has held three professional development events—one at each of its member campuses—to which all new teachers from the region's partner school districts are invited, whether or not they graduated from a TEI institution. Recent graduates of these Valley Partnership TPPs employed in North Dakota public schools also have access to a state-supported mentoring program available to all early-career teachers.

**The University of South Dakota (USD)** employed several different tactics as it seeks to determine what types of support and induction models will be most appropriate to the educational contexts that its graduates work in. First, it draws upon an existing Professional Development Center to provide a small group of graduates with the opportunity for an intensive year-long teaching experience guided by a veteran mentor, while at the same time allowing these graduates to work toward a master's degree. In 2012, USD also launched an online mentoring pilot project targeting elementary education teachers and is working with school district administrators to determine benefits and drawbacks of this approach. Lastly, because the state contains so many rural districts, USD has begun to partner with such districts to provide mentoring training so that students placed in more remote regions will have access to mentoring support based on established best practices.

**Winona State University (WSU)** initially hired a full-time induction coordinator to develop a plan for supporting new teachers. WSU is piloting a regional support and induction model involving Rochester Public Schools and several surrounding districts where graduates often find jobs; mentoring provided by a highly experienced, senior teacher is key to the model. An initial 2012 pilot yielded some interesting findings, including the fact that highly experienced teachers tend to take a prescriptive approach to mentoring rather than helping new teachers forge their own path in the profession. Similarly, pilot results suggest that it may be useful for recent graduates to engage in a mentoring relationship with someone who is not a senior teacher in their place of employment so that the new teacher does not feel inhibited from asking questions or seeking feedback due to the perception that the mentoring process may be tied to an assessment of job performance. WSU is using the results of its initial pilot to continue to refine its model in partnership with representatives of school districts where support systems are being expanded.

In addition to these examples, several TPPs have experimented with support-related courses and seminars for graduates (some of which yield graduate credits), while others are attempting to focus on better incorporating induction into pre-service training (e.g., by creating student observation and evaluation tools used by both a student teacher and cooperating teacher as a means of cultivating professional teaching practice).

## There are remaining challenges to the implementation of support and induction systems.

For many TPPs, a basic challenge has involved defining the scope of involvement in the provision of ongoing support. A TPP's role in support and induction is impacted by a number of variables, including size of program, presence or absence of support systems in partner school districts, ability to remain in touch with graduates, understanding of teacher support needs, and access to support resources external to the TPP. Frequently mentioned issues that pose challenges for the implementation of effective support and induction systems are outlined below:

**Distribution of graduates:** Most recent TPP graduates entering the teaching profession do not find jobs in partner school districts and often need to be open to opportunities far from their TPP. Some opportunities sometimes present themselves in other states or countries. The broad geographic distribution of recent TPP graduates raises the obvious question of how far-flung graduates can access tools that will help with their professional development. Several TPPs have begun to experiment with online systems of support, but viable solutions to this difficult challenge have yet to emerge.

**Staying in touch with graduates:** Graduates' geographic distribution makes it difficult to maintain contact with them over time. While most TPPs have improved their ability to track graduates, respondents noted that it is still difficult to remain in contact with those who have taken jobs in regions far from the TPP. Lack of contact with these graduates makes it more difficult to learn about the types of support that are available to them and the sorts of professional development resources that they would like to have access to. Respondents hope that the use of common metrics surveys will help to address the problems of ongoing contact with graduates and assist with learning about professional development areas of need.

**Support systems and new teacher identity:** Related to the tracking of recent graduates is the way in which new teachers assume a professional identity. TPP respondents noted that as students transition into their new careers, they often tend to lose their sense of affiliation with the TPP and identify more strongly with their school employer. New teacher respondents confirmed this claim, noting that the shift from student to early-career teacher entails an expected set of obligations and tasks that cause recent graduates to feel less connected to their TPP—a process that TPPs are

attempting to alter with the aforementioned development of a culture of connectedness. The adoption of a professional identity closely aligned with one's place of employment poses challenges for TPP/partner district collaboration on support and induction in areas where support systems are already well-developed on the district side. In such circumstances, TPPs struggle to define a role for themselves that will not appear intrusive or burdensome for new teachers.

**Financing support and induction:** While TPPs have been able to use TEI as an opportunity to bring support and induction resources to those partner school districts lacking comprehensive support systems, the extent to which school districts will have the resources to fund these efforts into the future remains unclear. Many respondents affiliated with TPPs noted that while their tendency toward viewing support and induction as a process that districts are responsible for has shifted radically since the start of TEI, they worry that the current fiscal climate will inhibit widespread implementation of support systems, which often require extraordinary amounts of funding to sustain.

# Measurement

Measurement, the final TEI pillar, emphasizes the importance not only of evaluating teacher effectiveness, but also of committing to make better use of data to inform decisions about the restructuring of TPPs. With several exceptions, most TPPs did not have systematic processes for measuring teacher candidate outcomes and using data to drive strategies for curricular and other forms of programmatic change in place prior to the TEI. Most TPPs did not have the human resource capacity necessary for harmonizing disparate data management systems and extracting actionable data. With the common metrics surveys functioning as an impetus, TPPs have made significant improvements to the ways in which they manage and make use of data to guide decision-making, though significant challenges remain.

## Areas of progress and remaining challenges

**Common metrics instruments developed for TEI have been positively received and are beginning to offer TPPs opportunities to adjust their practices to meet the needs of students and partner school districts.**

The development of the common metrics instruments by a working group comprised of representatives from each TPP has been one of TEI's great successes. A commonly cited barrier to the use of data in TPPs was the lack of quality instruments with which to assess the learning and performance of students and graduates. The common metrics working group created a rigorous multiple measure teacher evaluation system with a high degree of psychometric integrity. The four instruments that comprise the common metrics offer TPPs the opportunity to gather the same data about the backgrounds, dispositions, learning, and performance of teacher candidates from the beginning of their training program to the early stages of their professional careers.

While TPPs are happy with the common metrics instruments, most have not yet been able to make extensive use of the data that they yield for several reasons. First, the process of redesigning significant components of TPPs has taken a significant amount of time due to lengthy review and approval processes. Because many TPPs have fully implemented changes relatively recently, and some are still in the implementation phase, few cohorts of students have been exposed to reconfigured preparation and thus, in many cases, not enough time has passed for significant amounts of longitudinal data to be collected. In addition, some TPPs have found it difficult to acquire adequate response rates, particularly in the case of the



transition to Teaching and Supervisor surveys; however, at the same time, the administration of these latter two surveys has pushed TPPs to do a better job of tracking and keeping in touch with their graduates, an outcome of increasing interest to TPP accreditors.

Still, TPPs have made use of common metrics data when possible and are excited by the potential that the data has to continue to inform transformations to teacher preparation. Exit survey results have been used by several TPPs to adjust course sequencing and content, while a number of respondents suggested that entry data would be particularly useful for establishing evidence related to the dispositions of effective teachers.

### **TPPs have increased capacity for data management, analysis, and reporting.**

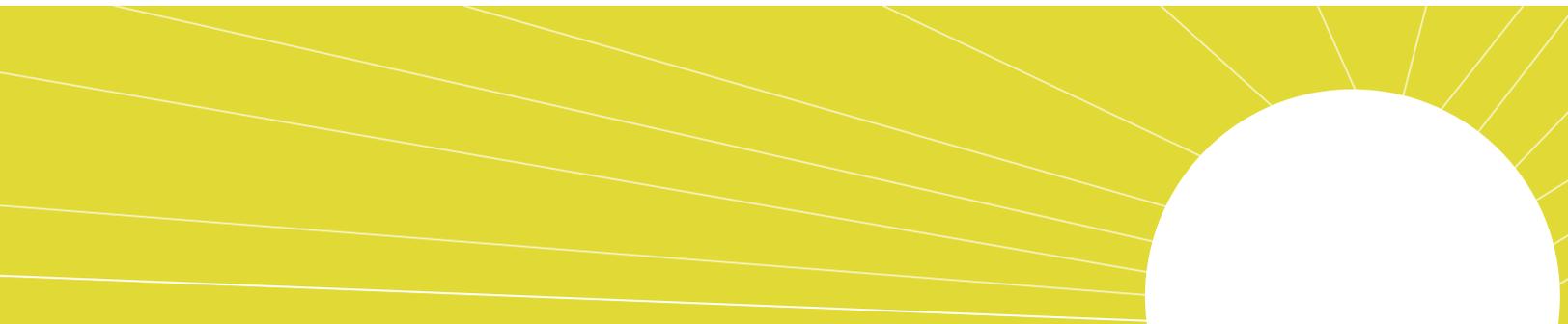
Prior to TEI, many respondents noted that TPP data use was hampered by inefficient or redundant data management systems. Through data capacity grants from the Bush Foundation, a number of TPPs invested in database and information system solutions that allowed them to link existing datasets stored in different systems and provide a centralized data entry interface for common metrics results and other new types of information. Using data capacity grants and other funding, TPPs lacking measurement and assessment experts or the faculty release time to devote to analysis created new positions for statisticians and data managers, enhancing their ability to manage data and incorporate insights from analysis into existing decision-making processes. While several TPPs report a history of data-driven decision-making, the majority of TPPs credited the TEI with pushing them to better manage, analyze, and learn from data. Despite the fact that such progress with data use has been significant in most cases, many TPPs had started from a baseline of minimal capacity for the management and analysis of data related to their teacher candidates, and more work needs to

be done to increase faculty and staff members' understanding of how best to learn from data and apply insights.

**TPPs are attempting to devote more time to learning from data, as well as sharing findings with other TPPs and partner school districts.**

Selected through a competitive proposal process in 2011, Hezel Associates is a critical partner for analysis and reporting of data on all four common metrics instruments as well as administration of the Transition to Teaching and Supervisor surveys. Hezel staff members have worked closely with the Bush Foundation and its IHE partners to establish and initiate these processes. TPPs appreciate the work done by Hezel Associates to disseminate common metrics data and are increasingly attempting to set aside time for data retreats where faculty members attempt to draw lessons from survey results for their programs. The practice of institutionalizing data days or data retreats has become increasingly common, and some TPPs have formed assessment committees responsible for thinking about the role of data in TPP strategic planning.

At the consortia level, some TPPs describe almost unprecedented sharing of data. For example, Valley Partnership schools have implemented a common evaluation form for student teachers, the results of which are shared among the various partner universities. TC2, University of Minnesota's TERI, and Minneapolis Public Schools have collaborated to launch an annual data sharing meeting, and during the inaugural event Minneapolis Public Schools shared teacher effectiveness data with the various TPPs and disaggregated the findings by institution to allow for comparisons in the different domains of effectiveness that were being assessed. Many respondents viewed these events as a sign of significant progress, not only because of the emphasis on leveraging data, but also because competing TPPs had been reluctant to share any data regarding their graduates' outcomes in the past.



## Culture Change

One of the assumptions underlying TEI is that the focus on the various pillars as a means of reorienting teacher preparation would lead to the implementation of strategies with the potential to change the culture of TPPs. If, in the context of teacher preparation, culture is understood as a set of shared beliefs, values, behaviors, and assumptions about what it means to properly prepare an effective teacher, then respondent feedback strongly confirms that cultural changes have occurred. Generally speaking, a basic cultural change evident at all TPPs is a fundamental shift in thinking about what the responsibilities of teacher training entail and how those responsibilities encompass activities such as recruitment, employment, and support that many faculty and staff were not accustomed to addressing. Following from this basic shift in philosophy, respondents described several more specific domains in which cultural transformation was evident.

### **The TEI has fostered collaboration.**

Respondents repeatedly returned to the theme of collaboration when discussing their perceptions of culture change. According to many, one of the lasting legacies of the TEI will be the way in which it has fostered collaboration within a diverse group of TPPs and created a professional network that has allowed faculty and staff from different institutions to exchange ideas and form lasting relationships. While collaboration across TPPs has occurred most formally in working groups, it is also evident in the planning phases at the consortia level where members of various TPPs organized themselves into committees to address the various pillars and create an overarching consortium vision. Finally, respondents reported increased collaboration within IHEs, both in the context of different TPP departments and between TPPs and other colleges/departments. The redesign process required faculty to relinquish ownership over certain courses and content areas in order to allow for a more coordinated, coherent vision of teacher preparation to emerge.

### **The TEI laid the foundation for increased data-driven decision-making.**

Another place where culture change is evident is in the area of data use for decision-making. The TEI helped to lay the foundation for this change by providing resources for the strengthening of information systems and the creation of positions for measurement and data management experts. In addition, the development of common metrics instruments and their positive reception helped to reinforce the importance of measuring learning and performance. While the process of common metrics data collection may still be in its early stages, TPPs have demonstrated that they are willing to begin to use data to think about how to adjust

preparation strategies and to create opportunities for data to be shared, both with other TPPs and partner school districts.

Coupled with the data retreats that are becoming institutionalized within TPPs, data-sharing events that bring together representatives of different TPPs have increased opportunities for faculty and staff to engage with and learn from the results of common metrics surveys and other forms of assessment. According to respondents, the increasingly routine sharing and collaborative interpretation of data—whether through retreats or presentations in smaller planning meetings—may help to build a sense of self-efficacy among those who work in areas of education that put less emphasis on measurement and data analysis.

### **TPPs have stronger partnerships with school districts.**

Because of the way in which virtually every pillar causes TPPs to account for the needs of graduates, TEI has changed attitudes about the form that partnerships between TPPs and school districts have the potential to take. TPP faculty and school district administrators alike cited strengthened, mutually beneficial relationships arising from the TEI and a planning process that incorporated the perspectives and needs of school districts from the outset.

TPP respondents observed how the nature of their partnerships with school districts had become much more systematic with the TEI. In order to prepare for the implementation of preparation strategies that would bring TPPs and schools into more extended contact, TPPs shared resources with school districts by offering co-teaching training and professional development opportunities for cooperating teachers. As preparation strategies involving extended clinical/field experiences were put into place, representatives of TPPs engaged school district staff more closely and have begun to develop a more nuanced understanding of the unique needs of and challenges facing their partners. Greater knowledge of school district needs and challenges helps TPPs to adjust strategies associated with each of the pillars accordingly, and while approaches to employment and support remain unclear, those pillars too have benefitted from increased dialogue and interaction between school districts and TPPs.



## Sustainability Outlook

TPPs understand the importance of using TEI resources to implement sustainable changes in light of the precarious financial status of higher education. While strategies associated with some of the pillars—in particular, preparation—seem to have strong sustainability prospects, the overall picture is complex and in part dependent on variables external to TPPs. TPPs have responded to the future uncertainty by building sustainability planning requirements into change proposal processes. This section reviews the sustainability outlook for key areas of the TEI where significant change has occurred at this stage.

**Evidence-based changes to the preparation pillar focused on increasing the number and length of clinical/field experiences have been received positively by school district partners and appear very sustainable.**

Respondents noted that changes to the preparation pillar, particularly those associated with more frequent and comprehensive clinical experiences, are likely to be sustained. A number of factors account for the high probability of sustainability in this area. Respondents observed that the shift toward providing students with opportunities for clinical/field experiences more frequently throughout their academic careers and toward restructuring student teaching experiences around a co-teaching model that often lasts for an entire academic year has been enthusiastically embraced by partner school districts. Partner school districts report that students from TEI TPPs are better prepared to handle the rigors of student teaching and that the co-teaching model leaves candidates well-positioned to transition into full-time teaching. In addition, TPPs have invested significant resources toward the training of cooperating teachers in the co-teaching model, which has been adopted by the vast majority of partner school districts. Finally, the emphasis on clinical/field experiences meets the changing demands of teacher certification and TPP accreditation bodies.

**TEI TPPs are unlikely to be disrupted by leadership transitions.**

During the first several years of TEI planning, some TPPs experienced leadership transitions that caused strategy implementation delays and otherwise slowed forms of collaboration important to the initiative. At this stage, nearly all TPP respondents reported feeling that faculty and staff involvement in TEI was so widespread that the loss of a project lead or supportive dean would be unlikely to derail any of the work underway. TEI planning committees and decision-making structures have been well-established in most cases and no longer depend on a small group of individuals to ensure their functioning. In addition, most



TPPs reported receiving strong support from high-level administrators, such as university presidents and provosts. While these findings are encouraging, it should be noted that much of the TEI planning work was subsidized with Bush Foundation funding, as is some of the ongoing work done by project leads. Without resources to secure release time for project leads and other key faculty and staff members, teaching and administrative obligations seem likely to detract from time spent monitoring TEI-related changes.

**Collaborative structures are unlikely to continue operating at the same level in the absence of financial support.**

While TEI decision-making processes appear to have become standardized within individual TPPs, the formal collaborative groups and events that have been part of the initiative to this point are unlikely to continue, or will at least reduce the scope of their activity. While increased collaboration has been one of TEI's great successes, those involved in working groups and consortia feel that their ability to work together will likely diminish significantly. Of the working groups, common metrics seems the most likely to continue its work, though members of that group doubted that many of the TPPs would have the capacity to administer the Transition to Teaching and Supervisor surveys, and analyze and disseminate data as efficiently as Hezel Associates has been able to.

Consortia members also feel that their efforts are likely to be greatly reduced without some resources to fund their work, which requires significant travel and coordination time; leaders of these groups are already juggling multiple responsibilities, and it will be difficult for them to devote as much time to working with TPP partners. While TEI has provided a forum for collaboration that has produced strong working relationships across the various TPPs, the level of structured collaboration and engagement that has characterized the initiative to this point is likely to be diminished in the absence of resources; however, respondents feel part of a professional network and will probably continue to seek advice and exchange ideas in a less formal fashion. An exception to this trend is likely to be partnerships between TPPs and school districts, which have grown to depend heavily on one another due to changes in the preparation pillar.

**While TPPs have seen a shift toward greater data-informed decision-making, it is uncertain to what extent the capacity for data use can be further increased.**

While a cultural shift toward more frequent and efficient use of data to inform changes has occurred at most TPPs, continued progress is dependent upon several factors. For those TPPs that have used Bush Foundation funding to create data management and analysis positions, the ability to leverage data in the future depends, particularly for smaller programs, on whether future budgets allow for such positions to be maintained. Data analysis and dissemination is an incredibly time-consuming activity that many faculty and staff members simply are not able to devote much of their schedule to, and if a TPP does not already have a faculty or staff member working on assessment, it is likely that fewer opportunities to learn from data will be available in the future. In addition, many respondents noted that the assistance with common metrics from Hezel Associates has been indispensable, and some are concerned about their ability to carry out all survey administration on their own in the future; in a similar vein, many respondents felt that the compilation of aggregate data and sharing across institutions will become more difficult without Hezel's assistance.

**For many TPPs, the implementation of support and induction systems in partnership with school districts remains a complicated and expensive endeavor.**

In light of evidence linking support and induction to the growth and effectiveness of new teachers, there appears to be a growing demand for systems that promote the development of early-career educators. At the same time, in districts that do not already have well-defined systems in place, it is difficult to predict the feasibility of support and induction implementation due to the expenses associated with such a venture. Respondents noted that support and induction efforts require professional development events, mentor training, and a host of other potential costs that are difficult for districts and TPPs to fund at a high level. While TPPs continue to work on piloting a number of different support and induction strategies, a model that can be applied broadly has yet to emerge.



## A number of external factors have the potential to impact teacher preparation.

The most commonly cited external factor currently impacting teacher preparation is the decrease in state budget allocations for higher education, a trend which has the potential to jeopardize the sustainability of a range of TPP changes. In light of diminished availability of resources for education, TEI has provided TPPs with a solid foundation from which they can seek out other external funding sources. However, long-term strategic planning is difficult to do when institutions rely largely on grants to launch innovative projects. Shrinking budgets have also led to the discontinuation of faculty positions upon retirement, and some TPPs worry that the depletion of human resources—which are already over-extended in many cases—will impact the number of high-quality teachers that programs are able to train. In addition, respondents frequently mentioned the influx of new standards that accreditation bodies demand that TPPs adhere to. TPPs have, to this point, been careful to align TEI strategies with required standards, but mandated standards shift fairly frequently and ongoing alignment efforts require significant resources.



# Appendices

## Appendix A – Evaluation Questions

1. To what degree is the Foundation’s objective and theory of change clear and understood by all partners? What is and isn’t understood?
2. How well have the Foundation and higher education institutions executed on responsibilities? What factors contributed to the quality of implementation?
3. Focusing on the 4 pillars (Recruitment, Preparation, Employment, and Support) as well as measurement and culture, what has changed as a result of the initiative to date? What have we learned and what outcomes have occurred?
4. What roles have the Foundation and its staff, the TPPs, the K-12 partners, the advisory committee, and the coaches played in the outcomes?
5. How is the teacher preparation landscape changing across the three states?
6. Is the Foundation on track to meet its goals of 25,000 effective teachers? What impact might this have on the achievement gap in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota?

## Appendix B – Data Sources

Interviews	Number of interviews	Number of participants
Project Lead Interviews	16	16
Coach Interviews	3	3
Focus Groups	Number of groups	Number of participants
Staff and Faculty	14	82
Current Students	2	10
Recent Graduates	2	5
Cooperating Teachers	2	9
Supervisors of New Teachers	2	8
Partners	2	5
Common Metrics Working Group	1	6
Recruitment and Enrollment Working Group	1	12
Support and Induction Working Group	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>159</b>

## Appendix C – Photography credit

1. The photographs on the front cover, inside cover, and pages 6, 14, 18, 29, and 36 are of University of Minnesota-Twin Cities' teacher candidates at Earle Brown Elementary in 2014; Photos by Bruce Silcox.
2. The photograph on page 18 is of Beth Mann, P-12 Liaison at St. Cloud State University and Scott Staska, Superintendent of the Rocori, MN School District. Photo by the Bush Foundation.

