



TeachOregon

*Lessons Learned, Promising Practices,
and Recommendations for the Future*



PRESENTED BY
CHALKBOARD PROJECT



ABOUT CHALKBOARD PROJECT

Chalkboard Project is an independent education transformation organization dedicated to making Oregon's K-12 public schools among the best in the country. We are funded by a consortium of Oregon's leading philanthropic foundations with a central belief that expert research is essential to identifying policies and practices that improve outcomes for students. Launched in 2004, Chalkboard is the first initiative of Foundations for a Better Oregon (FBO). FBO founding foundations are: Meyer Memorial Trust, The Oregon Community Foundation, The Collins Foundation, The Ford Family Foundation, JELD-WEN Foundation, and The James F. and Marion L. Miller Foundation.

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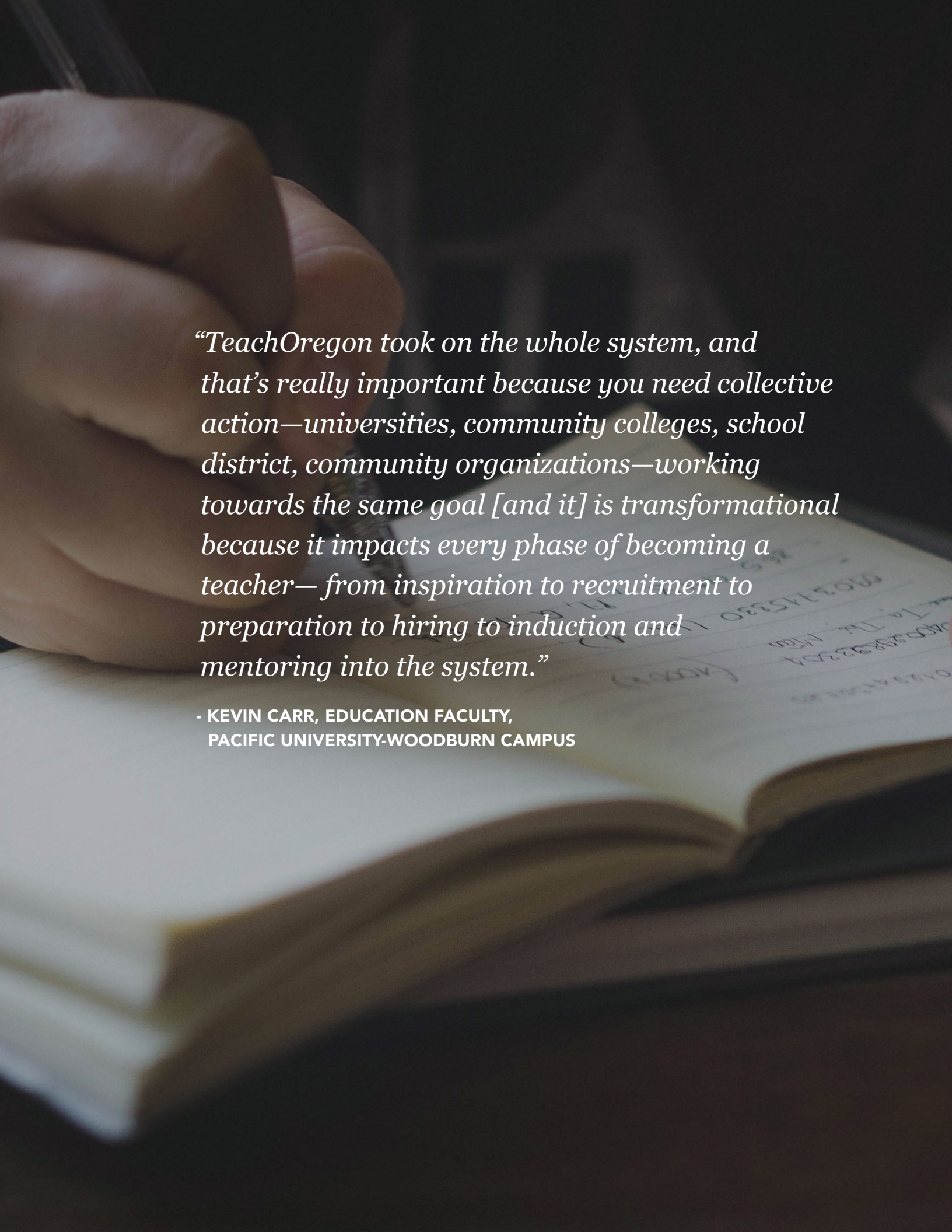
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A close-up photograph of a hand holding a pen, writing in a notebook. The background is dark and out of focus, emphasizing the hand and the pen. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, serif font.

“TeachOregon took on the whole system, and that’s really important because you need collective action—universities, community colleges, school district, community organizations—working towards the same goal [and it] is transformational because it impacts every phase of becoming a teacher— from inspiration to recruitment to preparation to hiring to induction and mentoring into the system.”

- KEVIN CARR, EDUCATION FACULTY,
PACIFIC UNIVERSITY-WOODBURN CAMPUS

INTRODUCTION

TeachOregon (TO) is a partnership among universities, community colleges, and school districts to pilot innovative models for collaborative and needs-driven teacher preparation in Oregon. The TO partners include five project teams, representing 13 districts, one education service district, and 11 higher education institutions, which together prepare 60 percent of the state’s new teachers. Funded and supported by Chalkboard Project and the state’s Oregon Network for Quality Teaching and Learning, the higher education institutions and districts addressed four components of teacher preparation:



1. Recruitment and selection

2. Classroom experience/clinical practice

3. Hiring and placement

4. Mentoring and induction of new teachers

Increasing diversity in Oregon’s teacher workforce is another important aspect of TO: to close systemic gaps that create barriers for underrepresented students, and improve recruitment and retention practices to ensure diverse new teachers are well supported.

Chalkboard contracted with ECONorthwest (ECONW) to evaluate the program’s effectiveness, looking both at processes and impact, and taking into account unique features of each team’s pilot design. The evaluation included:

- Focus group interviews with project leads
- Surveys of teacher candidates, cooperating teachers, university supervisors, and beginning teachers
- Analysis of data provided by project partners and agencies

Data and information obtained from these analyses will form the foundation of the next generation of transformative efforts in teacher preparation, and help shape legislative priorities for the 2017 legislative session and beyond.



LESSONS LEARNED

While three-and-a-half years is a short time frame within which to address the above four components, the pilot work has already had an impact on the teacher preparation landscape in Oregon. There are strong indications that many of the promising practices currently in place will be sustained and are worthy of further research and funding.

The teams faced an array of challenges including leadership changes, unforeseen regulations, student privacy issues, data collection and crosswalk challenges, lengthy university institutional review board processes, and the aftermath of a state recession and massive teacher layoffs in 2011-2012 that made recruitment particularly challenging. Despite these challenges, the stakeholders formed strong and lasting partnerships—ones that did not exist in the past, but will be essential to continue the work of improving teacher preparation programs.

The lessons learned include information from individual project progress reports, insights from the field, and where applicable, data from ECONW's Year 3 evaluation.

Recruitment and Selection

To identify and recruit more teacher candidates with great potential to succeed, with a deliberate emphasis on diversifying the educator workforce.

1. Recruitment and selection of strong teacher candidates requires active intentional recruiting efforts and connections within the community including close connections with school districts. Recruitment requires consistent interaction with students and faculty in K-12 programs and key individuals in the community. Having a lead person working with partners who focuses on recruitment and maintains connections with prospective teacher candidates is showing positive results.
2. Stepping up the recruitment of teacher candidates did not result in a drop in grade point average among candidates upon admission. While some stakeholders voiced concerns about possible lower GPAs due to a more aggressive recruitment push, all TO programs reported candidates with 3.0 GPAs and higher. In other instances, working closely with community college programs helped other students increase their GPA prior to program admission.
3. The majority of Oregon's teacher preparation programs prepare teacher candidates at the graduate (master's) level, which makes it difficult to justify the time and expense (\$20K-\$50K) among prospective teacher candidates given low starting teacher salaries and the slow increase in salary over many years. Recently, the Teacher Standards and Practices Commission (TSPC) eliminated the need for a master's degree to qualify for continuing licensure. TO university partners are developing bachelor's level and alternative/flexible preparation programs to address this concern. Also, they are working with school district partners in providing placement options, and assistance and program flexibility for instructional assistants who need to continue their paid work while completing their training to become a teacher. These options are showing promise.
4. Multi-faceted marketing and social media programs that target culturally diverse students and their families in their native language help them explore teaching as a potential career for themselves or their children. Programs, such as Juntos at Oregon State University, have been especially helpful. Continuing these efforts will take resources and ongoing effort by collaborative partners.
5. Recruiting students into teacher preparation programs has been challenging due in large part to negative comments by teachers in the field, media coverage of the recession and layoffs, and pressures placed on teachers with new standards, evaluations, and student assessments.

6. Changing cooperating teacher attitudes is paramount. This can be done by ensuring cooperating teachers are prepared, held in high regard for their role in the training process, viewed as teacher leaders, and provided with financial incentives for their work with teacher candidates that is over and above their contract day. These leadership opportunities create a satisfying work environment for practicing teachers.

ECONW: Salem-Keizer School District saw an increase in retention of cooperating teachers from 59 percent prior to TO to 92 percent. Portland Metro TLC had a retention rate of 92 percent. Cooperating teachers report increased satisfaction in their cooperating teacher role when prepared and supported using the TO model (97 percent) when compared to non-TO cooperating teachers (90 percent).

7. Developing a pipeline program in middle and high schools for prospective teacher candidates through teacher cadet programs, mentor programs, future educator clubs, and summer internships that involve classroom teaching experiences is critical to building a strong pool of future high quality and culturally diverse teacher candidates. These options give students an opportunity to experience the joy of teaching and are paramount in building a cadre of future teachers. A teacher cadet program at the high school level with career technical education or dual credit creates interest in teaching and gives high school students the confidence to handle college level work. Having university faculty participate in the teacher cadet program builds a bond between the university and teacher cadets and increases student comfort level for post-secondary education. Summer internships support district summer school programs and mentor programs engage community college students and make excellent use of AmeriCorps volunteer talent.

Examples: There are 230 students in TO teacher pipeline programs.

8. Most students, and especially first generation college students, require financial support to complete their college education. Navigating the world of financial assistance and scholarships is challenging, making the availability of support personnel to assist in the process critical. It's important that such personnel exist and students have easy access to their advice and expertise. Teacher candidates in the TO pilot received financial assistance primarily through funding available from university partners, project funding, and district resources through service agreements.

9. Recruitment of the next generation of teachers who are culturally and linguistically diverse, and more closely match the demographics of students in Oregon's pre-K-12 schools is dependent upon an increased awareness of the need and stronger relationships and frequent connections with community groups representing people of color. Employing recruiters in districts and in university preparation programs to make these connections is showing great promise. This is important work and requires a scope beyond that of the TO partners.

ECONW: The percentage of culturally diverse teacher candidates trained in TO programs has increased within the three-year period from 14 percent to 19 percent. This does not include the number of candidates on the pathway to earning a bachelor's degree prior to entering a master's program—a statistic that is difficult to track. There are more than 300 first year students at TO partner community colleges and universities who have declared education as their career path.

10. Continuing conversations and agreements with community college programs where culturally and linguistically students make up 27 percent to 35 percent of enrollment provides Oregon with an excellent source of diverse teacher candidates and helps us achieve our state education goal of 40-40-20. The execution of articulated pathway/transfer agreements between community colleges and universities that allow students to attend community college programs, live at home, and then complete their four-year degree and/or master's degree at the university is gaining ground and has additional support from new legislation (Oregon Promise). This is increasing the number of culturally diverse students and students from families living in poverty who are considering post-secondary education.
11. Through collaborative efforts, the TO partners provide feedback to state agency advisory groups and decision makers to change a rule or past practice that creates a barrier to diversifying the teacher work force.

Clinical Practice

To improve the clinical experience of teacher candidates and provide meaningful and relevant opportunities for them to develop and hone their craft.

1. Teacher candidates consistently report clinical practice to be the richest part of their training. The length of a clinical practice is an important determinant of a teacher candidate's success, with 30 weeks considered the minimum timeframe. All five teams implemented clinical practices of 30 weeks or more, with different configurations based on schedules and coursework. Involving teacher candidates in classrooms at the start of the school year yielded rich growth experience. In some instances, universities placed two teacher candidates with one cooperating teacher to provide better peer interactions during the clinical practice. The teams discussed the possibility of full-year residencies, but costs for such a program are prohibitive to partners and many teacher candidates.

ECONW: 75 percent of TO teacher candidates surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that the clinical experience helped them become a more effective teacher as compared to 67 percent of non-TO teacher candidates.

2. Selection of cooperating teachers using identified critical skills, dispositions, and equity-driven practices is important to the success of training teacher candidates.

ECONW: 95 percent of TO candidates surveyed agreed or strongly agreed that their cooperating teacher helped them become a more effective teacher as compared to 90 percent of non-TO candidates. Ninety-six percent of TO candidates reported they felt comfortable approaching their cooperating teacher for support and feedback as compared to 89 percent of non-TO candidates.

3. Providing relevant training for cooperating teachers improves their ability to coach and mentor teacher candidates and increases their professional satisfaction in that role. Examples include university co-teaching and coaching training, learning walks, professional learning communities, studio sessions, and professional development sessions. More than 670 cooperating teachers have been trained in co-teaching and other supportive strategies to date.

ECONW: 88 percent of TO cooperating teachers surveyed agreed they were provided with the information, training, and support needed to support their teacher candidates as compared with 61 percent of non-TO cooperating teachers. Ninety-four percent of TO cooperating teachers felt comfortable in approaching the university supervisor as compared with 86 percent for non-TO cooperating teachers. Ninety percent of trained co-teaching cooperating teachers report helping candidates plan lessons at least once a week as compared with 78 percent of untrained cooperating teachers. 95 percent of TO teacher candidates strongly agreed that their cooperating teacher helped them and provided high levels of feedback as compared with 90 percent of non-TO teacher candidates.

4. Consistency in evaluation is necessary for relevant and useful feedback for teacher candidates. Training sessions conducted with a Danielson consultant demonstrated that without collaborative training and inter-rater reliability work with university supervisors and cooperating teachers, evaluations are based on judgment rather than facts or evidence.

ECONW: 93 percent of university supervisors agreed the TO co-teaching model helps teacher candidates become more effective teachers. 91 percent agreed that the model helped cooperating teachers become more effective teachers. University supervisors generally agreed that clustering teacher candidates was helpful for candidates and for them as well.

5. Co-teaching training for teacher candidates helps them begin to co-teach actively with the cooperating teacher rather than spend clinical time in a more passive role. Learning walks, studio work, and participation in professional learning communities also help teacher candidates learn the instructional intricacies of the school environment along with their cooperating teacher.

ECONW: 90 percent of cooperating teachers felt that the co-teaching model helped the candidate become a more effective teacher.

6. Purposeful placements where (1) the teacher candidate is trained in co-teaching strategies; (2) the cooperating teacher is trained in co-teaching and other strategies for working with and evaluating adult learners; (3) and commitment of the school community to be supportive of the candidate creates a high-quality clinical practice placement for the candidate. This is considered a Level 3 placement.¹

ECONW: While purposeful placements are viewed as being valuable, only 70 percent of TO candidates are placed in level 2 and 3 placements. This number has increased each year but continues to need increased attention. TO teacher candidates across all three years improved more over the course of their clinical practice than did non-TO candidates with the exception of level 2 placements in 2015-16.

7. Teacher preparation curriculum aligned to the clinical practice experience allows teacher candidates to practice high leverage instructional practices while being carefully supervised by cooperating teachers who are skilled role models. This brings theory into practice. Establishing a productive dialog between universities and districts to align the preparation curriculum used to train candidates based on district expectations is critical.
8. Personal and targeted support for teacher candidates (especially those who are first generation college-going students) in the teacher-training pathway is critical to keeping students on track for program completion. Examples include cultural navigators assigned to assist students or pathway coordinators who work closely with districts to identify candidates for the program and work closely with the candidates during their training.

1. Purposeful placement consists of four levels: 0 – Teacher candidate did not receive training in co-teaching; 1 – Teacher candidate received training in co-teaching but cooperating teacher did not; 2 – Teacher candidate and cooperating teacher both received training in co-teaching; 3 – Teacher candidate and cooperating teacher both received training in co-teaching, and clinical experience took place in a school with intentionally improved communication between school and university.

9. EdTPA assessment completed by the candidate during the clinical practice experience provides an objective evaluation of their development. EdTPA is a nationally ranked teacher performance assessment for newly trained teachers adopted by TSPC. The evaluation process in Oregon is on a three-year phase-in schedule. The teacher candidate submits paperwork and a video of their teaching, which is then scored by a trained evaluation team outside the teacher preparation program. This process is similar to the national board certification model. The cost for edTPA is \$300 and paid by the teacher candidate. In 2016, Oregon teacher preparation programs were required to submit 30 percent of candidates' work for purposes of setting a passing score for Oregon. In 2017, programs will submit materials for evaluation by all teacher candidates who complete the preparation program, with consequences if candidates do not meet the passing score.

ECONW: In surveys, cooperating teachers voiced concern about the amount of time teacher candidates needed to put together the materials for edTPA. They view this as time taken from the clinical practice experience. Another concern was the lack of information about the new assessment for cooperating teachers.

10. Longitudinal, cross-agency, and partner data are important and necessary to determine what is and is not working, to continuously improve teacher preparation programs based on real-time evidence. This includes data obtained from the application process, after-hire impact, and beginning teacher mentoring. Collecting these and other types of data during the TO pilot was extremely challenging and for many reasons: (a) the data were not collected before, putting quality and consistency into question; (b) data systems were not linked. For example, school districts may have collected data on job applicants and hired individuals in two or more systems, without linking the data sources; and (c) staff may not be familiar with the data system or ways to link the data. These issues were lessened in the pilot's third year due to the consistency of the data evaluation process established by ECONW; however, data linking, design, and access to systems continue to be challenging. It's important to note that these types of impact data are required for teacher preparation programs to meet CAEP standards for accreditation.

ECONW recommends developing an inventory of data on teacher quality by developing teacher identifiers across data systems so that cross-organization data can be shared with teacher preparation institutions.

11. Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval for university partners needs to be addressed early in the process (preferably at proposal development time). Research and evaluation efforts cannot move forward without IRB approval because it defines the parameters of human subject research universities are required to follow. The process to secure approval is both time consuming and complicated. In addition, faculty members who submit requests must complete training mandated by the university and federal government adding time to the process. Eventually, all university partners secured approval, but the conditions varied as to data access, privacy concerns, and access to teacher candidate data.
12. Technology is a valuable tool to inform preparation. Videos provide the opportunity to observe skilled modeling from experienced clinical teachers and effective self-assessment feedback to teacher candidates. School districts also benefit from using videos in introducing the candidate during the hiring process, thereby creating potential for hiring and subsequent consideration of teaching assignment.
13. Cluster placements (placement of multiple teacher candidates from a single university program at individual schools) while not showing hard evidence of more rapid teacher candidate development did result in more effective use of university supervisors' time. Supervisors reported developing stronger school/university relations, having more time to observe candidates and interact with cooperating teachers. Supervisors reported additional social-emotional and development support to teacher candidates through interactions with their peers.



Hiring and Placement

To focus on successful hiring and placement practices that result in a highly qualified and diverse teaching workforce.

1. Efforts to hire more TO trained culturally diverse and bilingual teacher candidates included district recruitment earlier in the year and district-specific recruitment fairs combined with human resource and administrator contact with teacher candidates during their clinical practice experience. A more complete detailed database on human capital within districts provides information for the district human resources team on supply and demand for teachers in future years. This data when shared informs teacher preparation programs as to district employment needs.

ECONW: Demand for TO trained teachers has increased with TO trained teachers experiencing higher hiring rates in TO districts in their first year. Candidates of color who reported their race/ethnicity also have higher than average hiring rates. As a group, all graduates from TO universities have higher one-year retention rates than graduates of universities who did not participate in TO.

2. Training administrators and teachers involved in district hiring to recognize implicit bias and use behavior-based interviewing techniques breaks down barriers to hiring culturally and linguistically diverse teacher candidates. All TO partners received training in implicit bias and behavior-based interview techniques.
3. District hiring practices often involve obtaining teacher commitments for the impending school year in the prior year and honoring transfer requests before posting positions for hiring. This often means the loss of high-quality culturally diverse and bilingual teachers for the district and can often mean even losing the Oregon-trained teacher to another state. TO districts reviewed their hiring practices and collective bargaining agreements with their associations and with additional data were able to revise and update their practices to streamline hiring so that they were able to hire first choice applicants.
4. Efficient and cross-linked data tracking of new teacher hires is important in mapping performance and levels of support needed after hiring and retention. Analysis of this combined data provides useful information to teacher preparation programs for continuous improvement and to districts for planning professional development and staffing. Universities are required to submit these data for CAEP accreditation.

5. Placement of beginning teachers in schools with high-need students is challenging for new teachers and often results in early attrition. While districts recognize this challenge, more work needs to be done to address this issue. A complicating factor is that many of the newly trained beginning teachers have ESOL endorsements and are bilingual, which is often the very competencies needed in these high-need schools.

ECONW: 30 percent of beginning teachers are placed in schools with high-need student populations. While this is lower than in previous years, it still represents a challenge.



Mentoring and Induction

To strengthen new teacher induction practices that include mentoring and other proven teacher retention strategies.

1. Mentoring beginning teachers in the first two and preferably three years with trained mentor teachers provides the support they need, increases teacher retention, and is a sound and valuable practice. Not all TO districts had access to the state-funded mentor grants issued competitively by the Oregon Department of Education. As a result, five districts funded mentors using TO resources; four additional districts continued providing mentors for two additional years after their ODE grants expired.

ECONW: Of 212 TO beginning teachers surveyed, 50 percent strongly agreed that their clinical practice experience helped them become more effective teachers as compared with 41 percent of non-TO beginning teachers. Additionally, 53 percent of TO beginning teachers agreed that their cooperating teachers also helped them become more effective teachers as compared with 53 percent of TO beginning teachers.

2. Planned induction time for new teachers is needed before school starts. Beginning teachers report the start of school as challenging and often do not feel prepared at the start of school. All TO districts are using induction and orientation to support beginning teachers at the start of the school year. Timeframes vary from two days to a full week.

ECONW: 63 percent of beginning teachers TO and non-TO report they feel they are not fully prepared at the beginning of the school year.

3. Both TO and non-TO districts are increasingly interested in the new clinical model and entering into stronger collaborative partnerships with TO universities or forming partnerships with other universities similar to the TO model. It is encouraging to see this trend grow and take hold, providing new opportunities for scaling and expanding this work in the future.

Legislative Accomplishments

To assist in achieving the goal to transform teacher preparation, Chalkboard advocated for and worked with the Oregon legislature in 2015 to pass two pieces of legislation, based on the efforts of the TO teams, that will have a direct impact on the readiness and quality of new teachers as they step into the classroom to teach our children.

- Senate Bill 78 strengthens teacher preparation by requiring all of Oregon's teacher preparation programs to become nationally accredited by 2022 and provides \$200,000 to support programs as they prepare to become accredited.
- Senate Bill 83 strengthens the clinical practice experience by requiring training for cooperating teachers (the classroom teachers who guide and mentor teacher candidates).

Recommendations for Future Work

- Continue to build strong university, school district, and agency partnerships to continuously improve teacher preparation and professional development in Oregon.
- Continue teacher candidate recruitment efforts through directed marketing and social media with an emphasis on equity-driven strategies to increase the number of culturally and linguistically diverse teachers in Oregon.
- Monitor the work of TSPC as they implement the conditions set forward in SB 78 and SB 83 to increase transparency, accountability, and continuous improvement of teacher preparation in Oregon.
- Increase scholarship and financial assistance for teacher candidates, and increase access to planning specialists for families and students.
- Strengthen grow our own programs by providing early experiences such as cadet programs, mentor programs, and internships.
- Involve communities of color and their representative advocacy groups for a more equity-driven approach to recruiting and preparing culturally and linguistically diverse teachers.

- Continue work with community college partners and Higher Education Coordinating Commission to develop entry-level education-focused programs to university teacher preparation programs.
 - Increase the quality of the clinical practice experience for teacher candidates in training through careful selection of cooperating teachers, ongoing training for cooperating teachers, and purposeful placement of teacher candidates with trained cooperating teachers in partner schools that provide supportive environments.
 - Investigate the planning and funding of an annual conference for cooperating teachers that nurtures and supports the important leadership role they play in Oregon education.
 - Review and revise the state ethics determination that prohibits cooperating teachers from receiving stipends for their work in excess of \$50 and considers this work as personal gain even though this role requires hours above their contracted time.
 - Improve consistency and quality of evaluative feedback through further inter-rater reliability training and collaboration for university supervisors and cooperating teachers.
- Increase the use and availability of technology in teacher training.
 - Create a statewide cross-organizational and standardized longitudinal data system that provides impact data to teacher preparation programs for continuous improvement and information to school district partners for human capital management and professional development needs.
 - Strengthen mentor and induction efforts in school districts through development of regionally supported mentor programs during the first two years for every beginning teacher.
 - Expand and continue TO pilot work through a new RFP with equity at the forefront and with defined interventions, measurable outcomes, deeper analysis of root causes, and identification of the drivers that yield the most leverage in improving teacher preparation.
 - Integrate TO work with other initiatives currently underway: Leading for Learning and School District Collaboration Fund.



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