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An Alternative for Alternatives: Designing a Teacher Licensure Program for Teacher-led Schools

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AN ALTERNATIVE FOR ALTERNATIVES:
DESIGNING A TEACHER LICENSURE PROGRAM FOR TEACHER-LED
SCHOOLS

by

Tim J. Quealy

A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

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To the teachers: May you always have the power
to lead your own profession.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

I have been often frustrated with my preparation as a teacher. At times, it felt long, unrelated, and wholly unnecessary. After dropping education as my major early in my college career, I found myself working jobs that more and more began to resemble teaching and finally decided to enroll in a licensure program. Once there, I was again bored and struggled to find relevance in many of the assignments, lectures, and discussions. However, independent of my studies, I was hired as an educational assistant at a local charter school. Here, in discussions with my coworkers, through observations of wonderful teachers, and with daily exposure to teaching, I learned quickly and grew as an educator. I began to question the value of my insulated teacher preparation, especially when compared to the daily application and growth while actually working in the field. Only increasing the discord between my formal preparation and my work experience was the fact that my school does not fit the traditional mold: we have no principal. Operating under a teacher-led model, the school is directed entirely by its teachers, a model never discussed in my graduate school curriculum, potentially leaving me wholly unprepared for several vital components of my job description.

Later, as I finished my first year as a licensed teacher in a teacher-led setting, I reflected back and wondered to what degree any success I had found could be attributed to my official teacher preparation, or if those successes were simply a product of my supplementary experiences in the field. I thought about all of the aspects of my first year for which my program failed to prepare me, despite the enormous amount of time and money required for licensure. Was all that necessary?

As these questions continued to germinate, another event catalyzed my thoughts. In March of 2011, the state of Minnesota passed a controversial new law allowing for an alternative path to teacher licensure. While the law did not provide an alternative path itself, it allowed for the creation of a certified program to do so.

The passing of such a law gave my earlier reflections greater weight, since in theory I could create my own alternative program to license teachers. I began to seriously consider what an alternative licensure program would consist of if it were designed specifically for teachers entering a teacher-led school setting. What components would be required? What elements would be added? What could be removed? Specifically, I wanted to answer one main question: What are the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school?

Path to Licensure

I was eighteen, brand new to college, and eager for the rigorous academic life that higher education promised. Sharpened pencil in hand, folders nicely organized, and a crisp, blank notebook in front of me, I was sitting in the very first of a long string of courses required for those of us seeking a degree in education and a license from the state. I was early for class; I was ready to learn. And, ten minutes later, I was absolutely bored out of my mind. I made it back only once more before dropping the class and the major entirely. This is not right, I remember thinking: I want to actually *learn* something.

Four years later I graduated with a degree in English from the University of Minnesota's College of Liberal Arts. In addition, I studied creative writing and mathematics. I lived abroad for a semester studying Spanish, participated actively in a

local writers' workshop, and even entered an amateur photography contest. None of this, I had been told, would have been possible if I had stuck to my original plan and pursued a teaching license. The schedule was far too demanding and rigorous, I was promised, and every academic choice had already been predetermined without room for deviance. Even playing soccer for the University would be a stretch, they told me. Yet somehow, studying literature, I managed to help the team reach the regional final.

After graduation, I sought no real office or professional job. Instead, I took jobs that paid little but I enjoyed. I worked for a youth development program for the YMCA. I started coaching a soccer team, first at a local club, then at the high school level. I began to spend my summers in northern Minnesota, taking kids on canoe and hiking trips in the surrounding wilderness areas. As I progressed and found some successes, I took on more responsibility. Eventually, what I was doing began very much to resemble teaching. Now, I decided, it was finally time to get a license.

I had lived in Minneapolis for many years and so only really researched the licensure programs within the Twin Cities metro area. I gathered as much information as I could about the competing programs, of which there were several, but could find little to separate them. They all took roughly the same amount of time, cost about the same overall, and produced exactly the same outcome: a teaching license certified by the state of Minnesota. I had some teacher friends, so I asked them if any of the programs was better than the others. No clear distinction was made.

In the end, I chose Hamline University's Masters of Arts in Teaching program, the very program for which I write this capstone. I chose Hamline not because its graduates receive the most awards, get the most jobs, or are generally the most qualified

as teachers. None of that information was readily available. Nor did I choose Hamline because of its prestigious national ranking. Rather, I chose Hamline because its classes were at night, which meant I could work during the day, and because a friend had made the same arbitrary choice just a year before. I hoped I could use some of his textbooks.

Once again I found myself with my pencil sharpened, my notebooks color-coded, and my mind set on the rigorous, academic life that graduate school promised. I had been a fine student in college, but had not taken my studies as seriously as I could have. Now, I said to myself, things would be different. I was more mature, more motivated, and, most importantly, more aware of the literal cost of what I was doing. Graduate school was expensive, and I was determined to get every penny's worth. I was ready, once again, to learn.

I did not drop the program after two classes, but the thought crossed my mind. It was not long before a familiar feeling returned: my preparation felt at times insular, irrelevant, and without substance. While there were certainly exercises, assignments, and discussions I found useful, I was, on the whole, bored once again.

Luckily, soon after enrolling, I was hired as an educational assistant at a local charter school. Working during the days, I was directly immersed in the field that we discussed only theoretically in class. I was observing good teaching daily, asking questions at lunch and after school, and gaining more and more experience actually working with students. As my role expanded, I was working one-on-one, leading small-group discussions, and advising on student-led projects. Additionally, I was learning small, subtle lessons that would serve to make my first official year easier: how an IEP worked, how to work with the various departments, how to develop proper boundaries

with students, what the myriad educational acronyms actually meant, how to solve discipline issues, how to talk to parents, plus countless others. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I was also fully immersed in the school's governance, since the school where I was working operated under a teacher-led model. As such, all decisions - administrative or otherwise - were decided through a cooperative made up of the entire staff, myself included. Working in such a setting requires a very unique set of skills and knowledge, and without this prior experience my first year would have been nearly impossible.

While some of the above topics were certainly covered in class, the lack of context rendered many of those lessons superficial. When class was useful or insightful, it was so largely because I could apply it directly the next day. Often I wondered about some of my classmates who were switching careers in the middle of their lives and had almost never set foot in an actual, contemporary classroom. I wondered about the last time that they were in a classroom. How will they use these lessons when they finally get a license, several years from now? How will they be prepared? To counter this, the program did require several observations, a short practicum, and a longer student teaching placement. Many of my peers said these were often the most useful parts of the program and I agreed. However, the experience taken from a thirty-hour practicum where you have no relationship with the school or the cooperating teacher, let alone the students and their families, is limited at best.

After completing each of the program's requirements – including quitting my job working full-time in a classroom to be an unpaid teacher at a school down the street – I finally received my license and began applying to jobs. I was lucky to be hired at the

same school where I had worked for the past several years. It seemed an unlikely prospect when I left for the summer, and so I applied blindly to over thirty-five districts around the metro area. Then, due to some unexpected turnover, a position opened up at my old school. The positive connections within the field that I developed were another distinct advantage I had over my peers due to my concurrent work experience. Even if a job had not opened up, I had strong references and access otherwise unavailable. Within a week of the opening, I applied, interviewed, and was officially hired back as a licensed teacher.

When I finished my first year, I reflected back and wondered to what I could attribute any success I found. These questions are further complicated when considering the alternative nature of my school. When I began my first year as an officially licensed teacher, I was already conversant in the basic structure of a teacher-led school model and had direct, applicable experience. Without this background, I would have struggled greatly to take on a role so different than the one for which I had been officially prepared. While I certainly made mistakes and learned an enormous amount during the year, it was, overall, a success, and I was excited to apply those lessons the following year. I received strong, positive feedback from parents, my fellow teachers, and my students. I was not burned out, overwhelmed, or defeated. I could not say the same for some of my graduate school peers.

Teach for America

During my graduate school education, three other concurrent events developed that influenced the topic of this capstone. First, in the fall of 2009, Teach for America (TFA) brought in its first set of teachers into the metro area schools. A sometimes

controversial program, TFA does not put its teachers through two-plus years of pre-service night school, but rather runs them through a shorter, more intensive summer preparation program before placing them in schools. Once in the schools, TFA teachers attend evening classes together to continue learning, improving, and supporting each other. Studies can be found that both support and refute TFA's practices, but on the whole Teach For America teachers generally perform at least as well as traditionally-trained teachers, and some argue they perform even better (see Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004). Having just spent two years and tens of thousands of dollars on my teacher preparation program, this idea was more than a bit intriguing. Are all of the painstaking requirements that I just completed really necessary? Are any of them? If so, which ones? Which parts of my program can actually be linked to my success as a first year teacher? Would I have had the same amount of success if I had been a Teach for America recruit?

My Wife Gets Rejected

Simultaneously, as I learned more about Teach for America, my wife, Anne, began to consider becoming a teacher. Anne has an employment history like mine: summers spent as a camp counselor, an active math tutor in local high schools, and several years in northern Minnesota working at an environmental education center, rewriting their entire curriculum and serving as director. She is also a licensed and practicing lawyer. However, to become a teacher, the state of Minnesota (and Hamline specifically) would require Anne to complete the full two-year load I had just completed. Additionally, despite her undergraduate degree in Geography from a prestigious college and diploma from a nationally-ranked law school, Hamline would require Anne to take

five or six content courses before they were comfortable giving her a license to teach social studies classes to high school students. Included in that list of content courses were, among others, a research-writing class, a United States history class, and a political science class. Despite her degree in Law and her substantial experience as an educator, the state felt that Anne was not quite ready to engage thirteen year-olds in discussions about history. She did not pursue her license.

Minnesota Statute 122A.24

In March of 2011, the state passed a controversial new statute that would combine these last two events: Minnesota Statute 122A.24, Alternative Preparation Licensing for Teachers. This new law, yet to be completely defined or detailed, allows for programs like Teach for America to provide a means for candidates like Anne to receive a teaching license without jumping through the traditional hoops. Among the loose and general guidelines the state has released are that a candidate must hold a bachelor's degree, must pass the teacher exams, and must complete an approved alternative licensure program. These programs, however, have still not blossomed: to date, only once such program has received official approval. The design of such a program will be subject of this study, with the focus on preparing teachers specifically for a teacher-led school setting. What should a program like this include? What is necessary for success? What will the requirements be? What specific challenges does a teacher-led setting hold that need to be addressed? Or, more generally, what are the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school?

Conclusion

The purpose of this capstone is to determine what the essential components of an

alternative licensure program would be if it were designed specifically to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school. My interest in this topic stems from several concurrent events. First, I was often frustrated with my experience in traditional teacher education programs, both as an undergraduate and graduate student. Though my first year as a licensed teacher was successful, I am unsure how much of that success can be attributed to my official preparation or to the experience I gained while actually working as an educator simultaneously. Additionally, this work experience allowed me to develop and practice the very specific skill and knowledge set required in a teacher-led school setting – a concept not discussed in my academic studies. Finally, toward the end of my first year, Minnesota passed a new state law allowing for the development of programs to certify teachers through an alternative route, largely as a result of the recent presence of Teach for America in the Twin Cities metro area. This capstone gives me the opportunity to research alternative certification and cater the new law to the specific needs of a teacher-led school setting.

In chapter two, I provide a review of the literature relevant to my topic. I include an historical overview of teacher education in the United States, focusing on two specific trends: the consistent call for higher, more centralized standards, and the departure of the field from its earliest roots as an apprenticeship model. These two trends set the stage for the enormous amount of tension surrounding certification and alternative licensure programs, two topics explored in the second part of the chapter. Finally, the chapter concludes by exploring teacher-led schools, providing the background necessary to understand the unique skills and knowledge needed to succeed in such a setting.

In chapter three, I discuss the methods through which I gathered the information

needed to develop a program specific to the needs of a teacher-led school. Through a series of interviews, I sought to determine which skills and knowledge sets an effective teacher must possess to be find success in such a setting. Once established, I conducted follow-up interviews, both individually and in small groups, to transform those initial findings into an outline for an alternative licensure program, highlighting the essential components necessary to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school.

In chapter four, I provide the results of my findings, including the outline for the teacher preparation program. I then discuss my program's main components, illustrating both the derivation and purpose of each.

Finally, in chapter five, I reflect on my research and on the process in general, making recommendations for future studies. However, before we are ready to properly understand and design an alternative licensure program designed for a teacher-led setting, we must first build an understanding of the important concepts, and that is the task of chapter two.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Chapter two provides a review of the literature pertinent to the formation of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school setting. The chapter begins with an overview of the evolution of teacher education in the United States, tracing its roots from the advent of the Normal Schools in the early 19th century to its current, post-No Child Left Behind state, following important trends and their impacts along the way. Specifically, the first major section of this chapter will trace the gradual departure of teacher education programs from locally-based apprenticeship models to a more centralized, standards-based systems, setting the foundation for current debates on education policy in the United States. It is necessary to properly understand the evolutionary arc of the policies and practices that have shaped teacher education to adequately answer the research question: What are the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school?

The chapter continues by exploring two debates, both with deep roots and staunch advocates, that developed as a result of the trends traced in the overview: the general merits of certification and the legitimacy of alternative paths to licensure. This section explores both sides of each topic, weighing their respective implications for teacher preparation and the educational system in general. Despite often polarizing rhetoric, a close analysis of the two topics can provide a very useful framework for effective teacher education. This framework is crucial in the development of an effective alternative licensure program.

After exploring these topics on the national level, chapter two shifts focus locally with a discussion of Minnesota's current educational status and defines the newly signed state statute allowing for alternative licensure programs in Minnesota. Finally, the chapter concludes by exploring teacher-led schools. A growing and powerful governance model, teacher-led schools give autonomy, voice, and leadership directly to those that work directly with the students. In order to determine the essential components of a teacher preparation program for such a teacher-led school setting, an understanding of its basic tenets is vital.

Historical Trends in Teacher Preparation

This section traces the history of teacher preparation in the United States from its earliest days to its current state, specifically following the development of certification and the growing impetus for high standards in the field. While not intended to be an exhaustive history, the section aims to emphasize the trajectory of policies and practices of teacher education as whole, as this provides the necessary framework for discussion of today's debates around certification and alternative licensure.

Chaos and inconsistency. The education of teachers in the United States once looked like that of many other professions, following the apprenticeship model of other trades, as teachers spent most of their preparation learning on the job under the guidance of another teacher (Hess, 2004). In the early 19th century, a teacher, typically a young, recent graduate, was qualified to teach any level that he/she had completed, and any training the teacher was given was largely dependent on the school that hired the teacher (Fraser, 2007). Control was locally-based, as the only people involved were the direct stakeholders (Hess, 2004).

On one hand, this was one of the apprenticeship model's greatest advantages: training was specific and directly applicable, two traits for which modern teacher education programs sometimes receive criticism (see Koerner, 1963; Walsh, 2004; and Wilson, 2001). Additionally, it is interesting to note that as the profession becomes more and more centrally-controlled over the next two centuries, the apprenticeship model does not really find a true descendent until the recent resurgence of residency programs, a type of alternative licensure program that requires concurrent experience working in schools with mentors and Master Teachers as candidates progress toward certification.

On the other hand, the apprenticeship model did offer some advantages, it was not consistent, and the preparation a teacher received varied greatly; many complained it was far too dependent on the setting in which the teacher was placed (Hess, 2004).

Consistency, however, was not the model's only shortcoming. As James Fraser's authoritative (2007) details, the only real requirement for a hopeful teacher was "a willingness to declare oneself fit to teach and, if one wanted to be paid, someone ... who would pay" (p. 25). Standards for potential teachers were not the highest: "Perhaps the most important characteristic was the ability to maintain order among the students" (Labaree, 2008, p. 291). From these shortcomings came the first calls to standardize the education of teachers, a push that would continue for the next two hundred years and beyond (see Carnegie, 1986; Darling-Hammond, 2002; and National Commission, 1996).

Just as advocates for alternative licensure programs trace their roots to the apprenticeship model, so too do their opponents, echoing the same rebukes made over a century prior: inadequate teacher preparation, beggarly standards, and general inconsistency (Darling-Hammond, 2010). The tension that begins here, between the

desire for local control on one side and the push for higher standards controlled by a central authority on the other, sets the stage for the debate still raging within the field.

Normal schools. The answer to calls for higher standards came with the advent of Normal Schools, schools meant to replace the “chaotic arrangements” with a “tightly organized school system” (Fraser, 2007, p. 26). This system began in the 1830’s with Horace Mann and rapidly spread throughout the country (Darling-Hammond, 1988). Labaree (2008) points out that while Normal Schools in many places still acted much like apprenticeship models, the goal was the promotion of a set of universal standards for teachers, hence its apt moniker, the Normal School. One of the Normal School’s earliest advocates, Cyrus Pierce, proclaimed the desired outcome of such a school in 1839: the development of teachers who would “know more of the nature of children, of youthful developments, more of the subject to be taught, and more of the true methods of teacher” (in Labaree, 2008, p. 292). In Pierce’s view, there were three components necessary in a high-quality teacher education program: an understanding of human development, mastery of subject material, and pedagogical fluency. These traits – like the calls for higher standards – are often repeated throughout the history of teacher education. In the end, it seems the debate centers not around what should be included, but exactly how much of each is really necessary. Labaree (2008) adds that Pierce’s letter also marks an early development in the push for teaching as a true profession.

Teachers’ Colleges and Universities. The push for higher standards did not go without repercussions. Higher standards for teachers meant that, in many cases, a potential teacher was now required to have taken classes toward a bachelor’s degree. As Rotherham (2004) notes, “as teacher-certification requirements rose, Normal Schools

transformed themselves into teachers' colleges and began to offer baccalaureate degrees" (p. 20). Fraser (2007), Labaree (2008), and Rotherham (2004) all trace the evolution of the Normal Schools around the country: first as State Normal Schools, then as Teachers' Colleges, and finally as independent departments within large universities.

The actual effect of higher standards for teachers is still debated. On the one hand, higher standards mean, in theory, creating teachers who are better prepared and more effective (see Akiba, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2002; and Wilson, 2001). However, others (Boyd, 2004; Eppley, 2009; and Walsh, 2001) argue that higher standards can serve as barriers to the profession as they discourage top candidates from entering the field, especially those candidates most underrepresented.

Fraser (2007) and Rotherham (2004) both cite several factors, in addition to the rise in requirements, responsible for the conversion of Normal Schools into university education departments. One of the most prominent influences was the exponential growth of the population attending schools in the United States. Fraser (2007) writes that by 1930, the number of students in American schools was twenty times greater than it was just forty years prior in 1890, resulting in an exploding demand for new teachers. More specifically, as the population of students at the high school level rapidly increased, so too did the demand for teachers with higher-level, content-specific skills. After producing mostly elementary school teachers for half a century, teacher preparation programs suddenly needed to train teachers whose "preparation would differ markedly from the academic generalists of the lower grades" (Fraser, 2007, p. 147). Where was this additional, content-specific preparation to be found? Only within the halls of the universities.

By the early 20th century, most preparation programs throughout the country now existed within education departments at major universities, with the last of the Normal Schools disappearing by 1950 (Labaree, 2008). This shift marks another step toward higher, more centralized standards for teachers, in many ways continuing the pursuit of the original Normal Schools. However, it also marks a step into the arms of academia and, arguably, away from the direct contact and experience that marked the earliest models of teacher preparation (Rotherham, 2004). Fraser (2007) notes the subtle but striking difference between the two schools: while Normal Schools hired faculty “who were primarily teachers to teach teachers,” universities “hired researchers” (p. 146-7). Opponents of traditional teacher preparation (Koerner, 1963; Walsh, 2001) still cite this distinction, calling such university-based programs aloof, inapplicable, and irrelevant to the actual practice of teaching: the programs contained “not one thing about how you go about teaching – you are left to find out the practical ... on your own” (Koerner, 1963, p. 109).

This disparity can be seen in the contrast between the goals of the Normal School and the mission of the university-based setting, as characterized by the University of Michigan’s Department of Education in 1879, as cited in Fraser (2007). The department set out to achieve five objectives:

1. To fit university students for the higher positions in the public-school system
2. To promote the study of educational science
3. To teach the history of education and of education systems and doctrines
4. To secure the rights, prerogatives, and advantages of a profession
5. To give more perfect unity to our State educational system by bringing the

secondary schools into close relations with the university. (p.140)

These goals are a far cry from the focus on teacher preparation Cyrus Pierce had articulated just forty years before. In fact, those five goals focus far more on the promotion of the study of education rather than the actual preparation of effective teachers. This shift provides some evidence for the observation many (Fraser, 2007; Hess, 2005; Labaree, 2008) make, as they note that the tuition that comes with the teachers can be just as motivating - if not more - as the benevolent, civic-minded desire to serve the nation's teachers. This complaint, that schools of education are simply cash cows, still echoes today. In fact, Fraser (2007) adds that "after 1965 virtually nowhere was teacher education the prime mission of the schools that prepared the nation's teachers" (p. 187). Finally, to even further entangle teacher preparation and universities, the first Masters in Teaching programs began to appear in 1920 at Harvard University (Fraser, 2007). Many would follow.

Accreditation and certification. As schools of education became the main method of educating future teachers, there came a push, once again, to address consistency in the field. State certification of teachers had existed since the days of the Normal Schools, but the standards were low and often only required passing an exam (Fraser, 2007; Sedlak 1989). As requirements grew, the process became even more standardized and centrally controlled, especially as organizations urged for states to require programs to receive official accreditation (Ramirez, 2004). Many see this centralization as a hugely negative development in the history of teacher preparation. Michael Sedlak (1989) writes that before this shift, the hiring of teachers was simply a "negotiated procedure which occurred between someone with authority to employ and

pay a teacher, and someone willing to accept ... the responsibilities” (p. 257).

Sedlak’s complaint was that by centralizing the certification process, those most directly affected by the newly hired teacher – namely the school and its principal – are prevented from acting as judge, removing vital local power, control, and autonomy. Nevertheless, the movement for higher standards which began with the advent of the Normal Schools continued to march (Ramirez, 2004). While the claims for and against certification will be further discussed in a subsequent section, it is important to understand the factors behind the trend, and briefly consider some effects it had at the time.

By the middle of the century, teacher preparation had nearly become, in Labaree’s (2008) words, “canonical” (p. 296). The “teacher-proof curricular reforms” (Darling-Hammond, 1988, p. vi) of the 1950’s were further strengthened with the formation of organizations like the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), who advocated for greater centralized control – via higher standards and required accreditation – over the profession. Many others were soon to follow, including the National Education Association (NEA) and the National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards (TEPS) (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Rotherham, 2004). These groups worked to increase both the quality and prestige of the profession by pushing for rigorous standards and the national accreditation of teacher programs. They sought to influence “the content, quality, and control of teacher preparation” (Rotherham, 2004, p. 24).

These organizations – if they do not still exist, and several do – all have their modern equivalents, including the Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support

Consortium (INTASC), the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), and the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) (Fraser, 2007; Ramirez, 2004). Like their antecedents, these groups continue to work to ensure a high, universal standard for our nation's teachers. However, as laudable as these ambitions are, they do not come without consequence: any increase in the role of a centralized gatekeeper necessitates diminishing local control. This criticism of the standards movement – already seen once before – continues today in the debates around the merits of certification and the legitimacy of alternative paths to licensure. In the design of an alternative licensure program, it is necessary to strike a delicate balance between meeting the high standards set while maintaining requisite local control: since the program will be designed for a very unique setting, that control is vital.

A Nation Prepared. The standards movement picked up further steam with the release of two staggering reports on the state of the education system in the United States. The first, *A Nation at Risk*, published in 1983, portrayed a very grim picture of the country's schools and created a national sense of urgency for continued reform (Fraser, 2007; Ramirez, 2004). The focus, however, was on the education of students within the system, not on the teachers themselves. It was not until the Carnegie Institute (1986) released *A Nation Prepared* three years later that the focus turned to inadequacies of the teaching force (Fraser, 2007; Labaree, 2008). Among the myriad criticisms detailed in *A Nation Prepared* was a focus on the inequalities throughout the system, especially in relation to those born into poverty or of minority descent. The report claimed that while the old model may have worked for previous generations, it desperately needed to be altered to reflect the changing demographic of the country (Carnegie, 1986).

Additionally, the report called for more intelligent teachers, citing the decline in average SAT scores of education majors. The overall intelligence of teacher candidates is still cited by some today as a root cause of shortcomings of the field (see Boyd, 2004; Leal, 2004). To ameliorate the issue, *A Nation Prepared* – following reformers of the past – urged even higher standards for teachers (Carnegie, 1986).

One part of the report envisioned a viscous and cynical downward cycle that begins with teacher shortages, which the report predicted would happen immediately and end apocalyptically with the downfall of the country as a whole. This section of the report is detailed here because both the effects of and responses to teacher shortages weigh heavily in contemporary discourse around alternative paths to licensure (see Education Commission of the States [ECS], 2005; Marszalek, 2010; and Wilson, 2001). The 1986 report claimed that when faced with a shortage of teachers, the typical reaction of the profession has been to lower standards. This, the report asserts, permits and encourages less capable candidates, which forces the state to exert more control and remove some teacher autonomy. This, in turn, will further demean the profession and discourage intelligent, capable applicants. As the teacher quality drops, so too does the quality of education for the students, further increasing the problems of the undereducated lower class. Without a proper education, the lower class will be unable to positively contribute to society and the country will lose its prominence on the world economic stage (Carnegie, 1986). This dark vision is outlined here because many (Marszalek, 2010; Walsh, 2001; and Wilson, 2001) profess that it can be wholly prevented by alternative licensure programs, claiming such options can quickly fill vacant positions with desirable candidates. While most agree with the assertion that alternative

routes can effectively address teacher shortages, they divide sharply when predicting the quality of those alternatively licensed applicants.

It is not necessary to detail the 130-page *A Nation Prepared*, but rather to understand its role and influence. To summarize, the report advocated three aspects necessary for improving the teaching profession: raise teacher standards, recruit highly skilled teachers, and restructure the schools to reflect this new professional class. A central tenant of the Institute's plan was the creation of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards mentioned earlier. The report sought to differentiate between a state license, which represented the absolute minimum requirements for a teacher, and a professional certificate, which represented the profession's high standard (Carnegie, 1986).

While *A Nation Prepared* did echo many reforms of the past, it deviated in two important aspects. First, in addition to raising standards, the report mentioned a need to develop clinical schools, comparing them to teaching hospitals. This marks one of the first efforts to return teacher education to its roots as an apprenticeship model. Second, the report detailed a need for more than one centrally-controlled factory model, encouraging states to “develop alternative routes to teacher preparation which meet standards equal to those in regular university programs” (Carnegie, 1986, p. 77).

Exactly ten years later, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (1996) released *What Matters Most: Teaching For America's Schools*, offering a “blueprint for recruiting, preparing, and supporting excellent teachers in all of America's Schools” (p.1). The findings and recommendations of the National Commission's report (1996) neatly mirror those outlined in *A Nation Prepared*, citing as its top priority that

states needed to “get serious about standards” (p.2). Finally, in the year 2001, after nearly two hundred years of education reformers consistently calling for the implementation of higher standards, someone, at long last, seemed to be listening.

No Child Left Behind. To claim that the signing of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 marked the first time recommendations for higher standards had been heeded is, of course, a bit hyperbolic. For one, as has been documented here, standards had been rising steadily throughout the 20th century (Darling-Hammond, 1988; Fraser, 2007; Rotherham, 2004). Second, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act was not the invention of President Bush and the 107th Congress of the United States, but rather was the reauthorization – with some modifications – of several federal laws signed before it. Previous permutations include the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965, which first introduced use of standardized testing; the Education Consolidation Act of 1981; and the Reading Excellence Act of 1998 (Eppley, 2009; Ramirez, 2004). The law was not so much groundbreaking as it was a steady continuation of the larger trend toward a centralized, standards-based approach to certification (Akiba, 2009; Ramirez, 2004). In fact, while many want to vilify President Bush, the law was the result of a strong bipartisan effort and it should be noted that Vice President Al Gore, his Democratic adversary in the 2000 election, campaigned for education reform that also included greater accountability and higher standards (Rotherham, 2004). So what was new this time?

Highly qualified teachers. While there are many aspects of the law worthy of discussion, the part relevant to the subject of this study is the effect it had in defining teacher preparation programs. One of the major shifts outlined in the law was the

stipulation that Title I schools must hire only “highly qualified” teachers, designed to limit (and eventually eliminate) the number of teachers working outside of their licensure area, without proper license, or without fully completing the standards of the law (Rotherham, 2004, p. 72). Further, the law attempts to prevent the use of “emergency certification and waiver loopholes” (Rotherham, 2004, p. 45). No Child Left Behind stipulates that a highly qualified teacher must meet three requirements: 1) hold a bachelor’s degree; 2) have full state certification or have passed the state licensure exam and hold a license to teach; and 3) demonstrate competence in his/her subject (Ramirez, 2004).

While certainly the law was an ambitious effort to increase the role of the federal government in teacher certification, it still leaves much of the definition of a “highly qualified teacher” up to the individual states themselves, as it is the states that define the certification process (Hess, 2005). Due to this ambiguity, Eppley (2009) notes that compliance with the law has been quite varied throughout the country, and she raises several concerns about its overall effectiveness. In fact, Darling-Hammond (2006) observes that a few states have actually spent more resources avoiding the law’s intentions through complicated definitions of “highly qualified” than actively pursuing the goals of the act. Indeed, Boyd (2007) notes that while the federal requirements for a highly qualified teacher are hardly unattainable, many states still struggled to meet them.

Impact of NCLB. No Child Left Behind has both critics and admirers. Boyd (2007), Darling-Hammond (2006, 2010), and Rotherham (2004) all note that one impact of the policy was the data it produced and the awareness it created. While the overall merits or validity of test scores will not be explored here, the resulting data did expose an

overwhelming achievement gap throughout many parts of the country (Darling-Hammond, 2006). These results drew levels of national attention to the field of education, including the preparation of teachers, that had not existed since the release of *A Nation Prepared* twenty years prior (Fraser, 2007). Specifically, researchers and media began to seek the connections between those underperforming schools and the teachers who staffed them. While the conclusions of those studies differ greatly (see Walsh, 2001; and response of Darling-Hammond, 2002), it was clear that the country faced a dire need for higher quality teachers. The tough question, of course, is how to find, prepare, and retain them.

One unintended consequence of NCLB is that as it seeks to standardize – and centralize – teacher requirements, it forces the use of one-size-fits-all models to enable comparisons between schools and states. Definitions of this type inherently limit local control and flexibility. Boyd (2007), Darling-Hammond (2006), and Eppley (2009) all warn of the implications of that loss of control. Eppley (2009) cites several schools in her study in which an administrator was forced to fire able and effective teachers that did not meet the requirements. Especially in rural or small schools, where teachers are more likely to work within several content areas, such broad standards can cause far more harm than good. Both Boyd (2007) and Eppley (2009) reference school settings in which specific knowledge of the school's curriculum, setting, or culture is far more valuable than any requirements for certification, but the law values only the latter, forcing teacher shortages even in places where none before existed. Finally, Boyd (2007) adds that the advanced requirements for licensure could likely prevent qualified and desirable candidates from entering the field, as those candidates will simply choose more

accessible – and likely more profitable – professions.

It is interesting to note that while many like Boyd (2007) warned that the requirements would serve as a gatekeeper, the law simultaneously encouraged the formation of alternative routes for certification (Daring-Hammond, 2006). Very much like *A Nation Prepared* did before it, *No Child Left Behind* sought to raise standards for teachers while opening alternative avenues for new, highly qualified converts. It seems there was something in the law for the all those involved – those for central, standards-based requirements and those for local, alternative routes – to both laud and admonish. It is these two debates, the merits of certification and the legitimacy of alternative licensure programs, to which this chapter now turns.

Current Issues

Throughout the evolution of teacher preparation in the United States, two thematic trends have been reoccurring. One such trend was the constant push for higher standards, with certification and accreditation administered by a central authority. The second trend was the gradual drifting from (and subsequent call to return to) local control, permitting those most affected to ultimately be responsible for their own decisions. This trend began with the early apprenticeship models and reappeared most often as alternative licensure programs.

While certification and alternative licensure are in no way mutually exclusive terms, the two opposing sides and their respective arguments often seem inextricable. In fact, many who advocate most fervently for the merits of certification are equally skeptical of the effectiveness of alternative licensure programs; likewise, the most cynical judges of certification are often alternative licensure programs' most zealous champions.

This section will briefly visit the two opposing sides, as an understanding of the issues at hand is crucial in the design of a program that seeks to combine the best components of each: providing specific, localized training for a unique setting while holding to high standards. The aim will be to identify the best arguments of each in order to incorporate those elements into the program: despite their seeming polarity, careful analysis can show places of convergent thought.

Certification. One of the only aspects regarding teacher preparation on which all researchers can agree is the fact that schools need high quality teachers. Many studies have demonstrated that, among the myriad factors that affect student achievement, teacher quality ranks among the highest (Darling-Hammond, 2010; Goldhaber, 2004; Leal, 2004; Walsh, 2007). It is with this goal in mind that many in the field call for higher, more regulated, tightly enforced standards for certification. Simultaneously, opponents of certification warn that such onerous regulations will only deter those same high quality teachers from entering the profession in the first place. The two conflicting sides will even cite the same studies as evidence (again see Walsh, 2001; and Darling-Hammond, 2001). Indeed, as Boyd (2007) observes, “to improve the quality of the teacher workforce, some states have tightened teacher preparation and certification requirements while others have eased requirements” (p.45). How can this be so? What is certification? And why is it so controversial?

Certification is simply the process through which a profession creates its stamp of approval (Fraser, 2007). There are various requirements for certification and they vary by institution, but the most common elements of a traditional program include some number of required courses, including both content and pedagogy; practicum or clinical

experiences such as student-teaching; and a passing score on an exam of some sort (Boyd, 2007). It should be noted here that while the words certification and licensure are often used interchangeably, certification is issued by a non-government organization, while a licensure is issued by the state (Fraser, 2007).

Advocates stress that if teaching is a true profession, it requires a very specific skill and knowledge set, and the only way to guarantee that all teachers have this skill set is through certification (Darling-Hammond, 2002). There are numerous studies that claim a strong positive relationship between certification and teacher effectiveness (Darling-Hammond, 2002, 2002b, 2010, 2011; ECS, 2005; Wilson, 2001). However, as with nearly all studies involved in education, determining an accurate method to define and judge teacher effectiveness can prove difficult. ECS (2005) conducted a review of nearly 500 studies, eventually focusing on 92 of them, and found strong support that certification level was positively associated with student achievement using mostly test scores, though many of the cited studies were math specific. Both Darling-Hammond (2002b, 2010) and ECS (2005) cite the fact that the nation's lowest performing schools – schools that also tend to have the greatest number of minority and low-income students – frequently had the highest number of teachers without proper credentials. While several reasons can be cited to influence this relationship, that fact alone draws attention to the necessity of placing high quality teachers in those environments. Other studies (Darling-Hammond, 2002b; Wilson, 2001) used qualitative analysis to judge teacher quality, citing characteristics like increased curriculum knowledge, a strong sense of self-efficacy, and lower attrition rates as proof of the effectiveness of certification. The arguments here are fairly straightforward: those who prepare do better than those that do not. Where is the

controversy in that?

Critics of certification look skeptically at such claims, arguing that the majority of these studies are simply untenable, and they do so for two reasons. First, opponents doubt the overall validity of the studies themselves, often attacking flaws in design, implementation, or analysis (Walsh, 2001). Boyd (2007) and Hess (2005) add to the apprehension, claiming that evidence was “simply too thin to have serious implications” (Boyd, 2007, p. 45). The ECS (2005) report, though it eventually supported the positive effect of certification, had to first throw out over 400 studies found to lack proper academic rigor. Second, even when admitting the research has been legitimately executed, opponents claim that seeking relationships related to teacher certification is futile since requirements for certification vary drastically. Indeed, Wilson (2001) admits that teacher certification acts only as a “weak proxy for pedagogical preparation” (p. 8), and adds that studies would be far more instructive if they detailed what that preparation actually included. As will be seen in the discussion on alternative licensure programs, the debate around certification greatly suffers because it assumes uniformity in a field where none exists.

But opponents do more than claim that certification cannot be proven to positively affect teacher quality: they claim the effect is negative. These dissenters traditionally make one of three claims: 1) that the programs themselves are poor, 2) that onerous requirements deter strong candidates, or 3) that central authorities remove vital local control.

First, many opponents attack the programs themselves. They claim coursework is often wholly unnecessary and irrelevant (Leal, 2004; Walsh, 2001, 2004; Wilson, 2001).

Since most preparation programs have no responsibility for their teachers once credentials are issued, universities have little incentive to make sure their methods are research-based or their programs are actually effective (Boyd, 2004). Goldhaber (2004) warns if the standards guiding a program do not directly reflect gains in teacher quality, the whole process is flawed.

Additionally, even when opponents admit programs could contribute to student gains, they claim that entrance standards for traditional programs are simply too low to actually be effective. As a gatekeeper, the role of the certification process is barring those who are unqualified from entering the field, while giving desirable candidates the skills necessary to be effective teachers. However, as Leal (2004) points out, over 80% of all applicants studied were accepted into programs and an even higher percentage successfully completed all requirements: “either this is a very talented group of candidates or a relatively undemanding experience” (p. 115). Similarly, echoing some of the concerns first voiced in *A Nation Prepared*, Walsh (2004) claims that such low entrance standards continue to allow candidates of less than average intelligence. Finally, opponents question the legitimacy of any teacher preparation program because, as Walsh (2001) and others have claimed, the best predictor of teacher quality is not certification, but rather the verbal ability of the teacher. If that is the single most important factor, why necessitate anything else?

The second rebuttal is that certification requirements act as a barrier: a lengthy and onerous licensure process will actually deter desired candidates from entering the field. Boyd (2004) suggests that overly burdensome prerequisites will discourage those who have other options, especially those considering mid-life career switches and

possessing valuable content knowledge (Walsh 2004). The recruiting and retaining of able candidates is a major issue in teacher quality, and will be further discussed in the section detailing alternative licensure programs, as it is often a major impetus for such programs.

The third reason skeptics of certification often provide is that a centrally controlled set of standards removes power from local stakeholders. As the ECS (2005) report suggests, one of the most accurate ways to judge teacher effectiveness is by simply asking the principal. Boyd (2007) and Eppley (2009) both claim that factors such as knowledge of the school's curriculum, culture, or population need to be given greater weight, and this can only be done with local control.

To conclude this discussion on the alleged benefits of certification, it is important to make one final point: as will also be seen in the debates around alternative licensure programs, those invested are incredibly entrenched and defensive, and have been for many years (Hess, 2005). In many ways, the gulf between them is representative of the historic trends traced in the first half of this chapter. Additionally, those advocating for the status quo – in the form of lofty requirements, certification, and accreditation – are also those currently in control, while those advocating change are not (Hess, 2005). This power disparity adds further incentives, as admitting defeat will likely result in significant loss of influence.

This context of “bitterness and hyperbole” (Hess, 2005, p. 12) is necessary when seeking to gain something useful from the debate. Despite the often-vitriolic rhetoric used by both sides, it is possible to glean some valuable lessons to keep in mind when planning an alternative licensure program. First, while requirements do often lead to

teachers that feel more effective, confident, and knowledgeable, it is necessary to create those requirements without limiting local control or creating too much disincentive for potential candidates. One way to achieve that balance is to locate, through the research outlined in chapter three, only those requirements most effective in the preparation of teachers.

Alternative licensure. The call for alternative routes to licensure has grown concurrently with the movement to standardize the central model. As some in the field espoused the necessity to create national organizations to regulate teacher education, others warned that such one-size-fits-all definitions would be detrimental to the teaching force. Both sides were equally encouraged and concerned with the passage of No Child Left Behind in 2001: while working to define a high quality teacher at the national level, NCLB simultaneously encouraged the development of alternative paths to licensure (Darling-Hammond, 2010).

Goldhaber (2004) and Darling-Hammond (2010) note that the earliest alternative licensure programs were designed initially as alternative to four-year undergraduate programs, and most of those programs were through Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs. In the last decade since NCLB, such programs have grown exponentially, with more than a third of all existing alternative programs created since the turn of the century (Boyd, 2007). In theory, such programs allow teacher candidates to enter the classroom by postponing, shortening, or all together forgoing many of the criteria traditionally required (Boyd, 2007).

Most researchers cite two main reasons for the proliferation of alternative licensure programs. First, the expediency of the program can allow a rapid and

immediate response to vast teacher shortages (Boyd, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Similar to observations made in relation to certification, these shortages most often occur at schools with high numbers of minority and low-income students, and so represent a dire need (ECS, 2005). Second, alternative licensure programs claim to be an effective way to recruit high quality teachers, especially those that are more representative of an increasingly diverse student population. In evaluating these claims it should be noted, as the ECS (2005) report does, that “the amount of variation in requirements and structure in these programs makes it difficult, if not impossible, to meaningfully refer to them categorically” (p. 36). Wilson (2001) further notes that while some programs can require up to two years of preliminary coursework, others offer only a few weeks of training. Like certification before it, this lack of uniformity limits the scope of any studies that make general claims.

Just as the proponents for certification did before them, those in favor of alternative licensure recognize that a teacher is one of the greatest single factors that can influence student achievement. Indeed, many studies (ECS, 2005; Marszalek, 2010; Walsh, 2004; Wilson, 2001) of alternative licensure programs note the recruitment of talented, diverse teachers as a major ambition. But do these claims hold true? Wilson (2001) confirms that many programs have been successful in attracting a more diverse pool, but questions their record of attracting “the best and the brightest” (p. 27). While some programs like Teach for America have a long record of attracting some of the country’s top graduates (Boyd, 2007; Walsh 2007), other programs have set the bar quite low (Darling-Hammond, 2002b; Marszalek, 2010; Wilson, 2001). How low? One study profiled a program where there was only a single criterion: attendance (Wilson, 2001).

In addition to attracting a diverse group of high quality candidates, advocates also claim that alternative licensure programs produce effective teachers without burdensome requirements. Wilson (2001) notes that when studying only those programs she defined as high quality, she finds that alternatively licensed teachers were rated on par with their peers in terms of attitude, self-efficacy, confidence, and overall performance. While similar studies have replicated those results, others have found opposite results. Linda Darling-Hammond (2002b, 2010), a fierce critic of many alternative licensure programs, found alternatively licensed teachers woefully unprepared and ineffective. Darling-Hammond (2002b) cites teachers' lack of pedagogical knowledge as one of the major deficits in alternatively licensed teachers. While she admits that subject knowledge is important, equally so is knowledge of curriculum development, teaching strategies, and cognitive development. It is one skill to know a subject, but another entirely to teach it. Pedagogical preparation trains effective teachers to reorganize their own knowledge in a way that makes it accessible to students (Wilson, 2001).

Finally, opponents of alternative licensure also cite attrition rates, in addition to their overall doubt about recruitment and effectiveness, as a major cause for concern (Darling-Hammond, 2002b). Studies show that alternatively licensed teachers leave the field faster than their peers (Johnson, 2004; Latham, 2007), claiming that over half will be gone after five years. This is a significant problem. Almost all research concurs that teachers improve over time (Darling-Hammond, 2001, 2010; ECS, 2005; Latham, 2007; Wash, 2001), making attrition one of the major obstacles to improving overall teacher quality. Whether traditionally or alternatively prepared, when a teacher leaves the profession, so too does any gain accrued as a result of his/her experience. This represents

an enormous loss to the school in terms of invested time, money, and expertise (Darling-Hammond, 2006). Especially in the cases of low-income schools, which often suffer from both the highest rates of turnover and the lowest test scores, it is more vital than ever to not only attract high quality, effective teachers, but also to retain them. Throwing newly licensed teachers at the problem, regardless of their preparation, is akin to “spending all our energy filling a leaky bucket” (Darling-Hammond, 2006, p. 6).

Before concluding this section, it is necessary to reiterate that as with certification, the magnitude of variance across the spectrum of alternative licensure programs makes any real generalizations nearly impossible. At one end, some programs are so minimal in their entrance requirements, pre-service preparation, and continued support that they most closely resemble emergency or temporary licenses, and should be categorized as such (ECS, 2005; Wilson, 2001). At the other end, some alternative licensure programs are so costly, time consuming, and rigid that they nearly mirror their traditional counterparts (Goldhaber, 2004; Wilson, 2001). Indeed, some are even housed within the same universities and taught by the same professors (Walsh, 2007).

Finally, the appraisal of specific programs like the New York Teaching Fellows, Teach for America, and The New Teacher Project is both ubiquitous and ambivalent, and profiling such analyses falls outside the scope of this capstone. While useful, these studies can, at times, suffer from a hyper-focus that provides this study with little insight into the creation of an alternative licensure program designed specifically for a teacher-led school setting. Instead, the goal is to sift through the trends of both topics, certification and alternative licensure, and find those places where recommendations resonate.

Conclusions. The legitimacy of all studies can be debated, and studies can be found to support all sides. While some studies suffer from flaws in methodology, others suffer from definition or interpretation. Some identify the worst examples in broad categories and extrapolate to make general condemnations. But, as Goldhaber (2004) observes, the focus on traditional versus alternative licensure programs is simply counterproductive; instead, he urges “thoughtful reflection on what specific policies might encourage individuals who would make high-quality teachers enter the teacher labor market” (p. 99). Despite the rhetoric to the contrary, this can be accomplished with the proper sieve.

First, nearly all sides agree that when teacher candidates work in real schools and with real teachers, there is a significant shift in attitude and efficacy, especially when that work is connected to thoughtfully designed companion courses (Darling-Hammond, 2010; ECS, 2005; Wilson, 2001). Additionally, such placements are more effective when they are implemented over longer periods of time, include extensive mentoring and supervision, and involve substantial evaluation (ECS, 2005; Walsh, 2001, 2007; Wilson, 2001). Second, even those studies that support alternative licensure admit that some pedagogical training helps new teachers reach students, though the debate surrounds exactly how much is necessary (Darling-Hammond 20010; Wilson, 2001). Finally, all sides agree that high standards are imperative (Darling-Hammond 2002b, 2010; ECS, 2005; Goldhaber, 2004; Leal, 2004; Walsh 2001, 2007; Wilson, 2001). But high standards need to be more stringent both at the initial phase, like the very best of the alternative licensure programs, and at the end, like proper certification should guarantee. In the end, all of these factors need to be weighed against any possible deterring influence

such requirements may have on potential candidates by making every effort to limit the scope, length, and cost demanded.

The researcher believes that this can be accomplished if programs, whether traditional or alternative, are held responsible for their graduates after giving the blessing of certification to the newly licensed teacher. If programs are judged by the effectiveness of their teachers, it will create the incentive to attract, prepare, and produce effective teachers that remain in the field. As measures of teacher effectiveness are difficult to define, it will be important to develop a nuanced portfolio that includes a variety of elements, including several already being used in the cited studies: gains in student achievement, test scores, measures of self-efficacy, principal and peer evaluations, number of years in the field, and even school setting. When programs are defined by the type and quality of teachers they produce, control will again return to local stakeholders, as they can hire new teachers not based on some blanket, meaningless certificate, but rather on the efficacy of the specific gatekeeper. This in turn may create programs specific to setting and need, allowing principals to seek out the type of candidates they desire most. Similarly, state oversight can be simplified because programs that consistently produce poor candidates will quickly cease to attract new candidates.

One of the mitigating factors of this approach would be the recruiting and retaining of high quality candidates, an issue prevalent in all teacher preparation programs. To solve this issue, a few steps must be taken. First, as Darling-Hammond (2002b) notes, teacher salaries must reach levels closer to those of competing professions. Second, the cost of any preparation must be offset, either through subsidies or payments while working. Third, candidates need to be able to enter the field quickly and work

directly with students, though not necessarily as a fully licensed teacher. Finally, as ECS (2005) and Wilson (2001) suggest, to stem attrition the structure of schools needs to be redesigned to better support new teachers, including lighter initial loads, ongoing development, highly involved mentors, and increased professional autonomy. These recommendations will all be heavily considered while identifying the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school.

Having explored first the historical trends that shaped teacher education policy in the United States and then the resulting debates around certification and alternative licensure, it is now time to look specifically at those trends in Minnesota. Further, having developed some general recommendations on effective teacher preparation, the following section seeks to determine if those are applicable locally.

Issues in Minnesota

The state of Minnesota has been subject to all the trends documented in the first part of the chapter. Just as *A Nation Prepared* predicted, the student population in Minnesota has grown increasingly diverse. According to the State Demographers Office (2011), populations of color and of Latino origin have increased much faster than that of whites. While such populations only represented about 6% of the total state population in 1990, today they are nearly 30% (MDE Report Card 2015). As a student population, that growth will only, with the majority located within the metro area. Simultaneously, according to the organization Educators4Excellence (2015), the teaching workforce has been largely unchanged. In fact, in 2015, a staggering 96% of teachers statewide identified themselves as white. Certainly, the professed desire of alternative licensure

advocates to attract a more diverse workforce rings true.

Additionally, Minnesota must continue to work on the recruitment of high quality teachers. While Minnesota has a proud history of supporting education, it currently holds one of the largest achievement gaps in the country (MinnCAN, 2011). According to the Minnesota Department of Education's own reporting, the graduation rate for white students statewide was over 86%; for African-American students, that number drops to 60%. On the state math exam, 68% of white students met or exceeded proficiency standards in 2015, while only 32% of African-American students scored that well. Finally, the need for alternative licensure here in Minnesota is further bolstered by a growing number of teacher shortages in certain areas. The Minnesota Department of Education projects widespread shortages in Minnesota, with the majority in areas of math, science, and special education.

Alternative licensure in Minnesota. It was with the desire to address these three issues that the Minnesota Legislature passed Minnesota Statute 122A.09 in the spring of 2011. This law calls for the creation of new teacher education programs in Minnesota. It does not define what those programs will look like, but rather simply allows for their existence, pending approval from the State Board of Teaching. According to legislators (Minnesota Public Radio [MPR], 2011), the law is designed to attract mid-career professionals, recent college graduates, and teachers that hold out-of-state licenses. The law only stipulates a few specific criteria: candidates must have a 3.0 grade point average; must pass the required teacher exams in basic skills, pedagogy, and content; and must complete an approved program. While the law was certainly in part motivated by the recent presence of Teach for America in the Twin Cities, many see it as a necessary

part of improving teacher quality in Minnesota (MinnCAN, 2011; NPR, 2011).

Having established Minnesota's need for an alternative licensure program, and with the general recommendations for an effective program mind, the final section introduces the specific model for which the program will be developed.

Teacher-Led Schools

Teacher-led schools are, put simply, schools where teachers call the shots. As Charles Kerchner (2010) notes, teacher-led schools are “are not regular schools in which the tasks have been shuffled; they are schools where tasks are done differently” (p. 24) - and this difference is not minor. Rather, teacher-led (also teacher-run or teacher-powered) schools are “perhaps the most radical departure from other American schools, whether public, private, or charter” (p. 13).

While some teacher-run schools have functioned since the 1970's, they are still considered rare in the wider US educational landscape (Education Evolving, 2014). Recent years, however, have seen a renewed and increased interest in this alternative governance structure. According to the education group Education Evolving (2014), there are currently over seventy teacher-powered schools in fifteen different states, a number the group expects to rise: in a national poll, they found that 78% of teachers surveyed think teacher-powered schools are a good idea, and over half of those would be “very interested” in working at one.

Many researchers (Berry, 2013; Dirkswager, 2013; Education Evolving, 2014; IQS, 2013) find a correlation between this growing interest in teacher-powered schools and the increased level to which schools are now being held accountable for their results. In today's classroom, a teacher's efficacy can be judged (often publicly) by his/her

students' test scores, often without having a say in the tests themselves, the material they cover, or the way in which the material is taught. An advocate for teacher-led schools, the charter school authorizer Innovative Quality Schools (IQS) sees teacher-run schools as the antidote to this problem: "The underlying premise to this model is that if teachers had greater autonomy over the decision making of the primary factors impacting student learning, they would be more willing to accept accountability for the results" (IQS, 2013). Further, IQS (2013) asks, "Is there any other enterprise where the group that carries the majority of the responsibility for the success of the entire organization has so little say in how that organization does its' work?" (p. 1).

Beyond accepting greater accountability, teacher-led schools have several other powerful benefits as well. First – and perhaps most importantly - student learning improves. When those making the decisions are the ones working directly with the students, student learning is at the center of every decision. Similarly, schools governed by teachers are often far more flexible and responsive to student needs than their traditional counterparts. A second benefit, as Dirkswager and Farris-Berg (2013) find, is that an increase in autonomy positively affects motivation. Teachers are less likely to experience the frustrations and hopelessness that often lead to teacher burnout, and often remain in the field much longer. A third advantage, as IQS (2013) notes, is that by empowering professional teachers and increasing their authority within the schools, teacher-led schools make the occupation more attractive to potential candidates.

Teaching in a teacher-led school. Martinez (2014), details some of the work that teachers in a teach-led school control: "teachers commonly take on duties many traditional principals handle themselves, such as hiring staff, creating school schedules,

developing partnerships with off-campus corporations and museums, and even dealing with funders” (p. 32). Similarly, Berry (2013), highlights several of the most typical areas teachers in such settings gain authority in his book: teachers define the school model, curriculum and measurement tools; set policies like attendance and discipline; determine school schedule and calendar; hire, evaluate, and fire fellow staff members; assign staff duties; evaluate and adjust school budget; and modify and approve staff salaries and budgets. And teach, of course. They also still do the teaching.

These wide-ranging and varied areas of control certainly require a different skill set than in a traditional classroom setting: “The critique of teacher-run schools also notes that their faculty need a broader skill set than most teachers, and that is very much the case” (Kerchner, 2010, p. 24). While Martinez (2014) agrees, she notes that perhaps more important than any specific list of skills, teacher-led schools also require “a tremendous amount of trust and a willingness to truly empower educators” (Martinez, p. 33).

Conclusion. Teacher-led schools are quickly gaining both interest and interest, and this is in many ways because they can solve many of the issues are facing today. They add autonomy and authority to the already-present accountability. They make the profession more attractive to high-quality candidates, and they keep those candidates in the classroom for longer. They provide responsiveness and flexibility during a time when the very nature of school and learning is changing rapidly; and they exist in increasing numbers across the country. Now, they simply need teachers to run them: “the general consensus is our nation needs teachers who are ready, willing, and able to take on new, professional roles to transform teaching, schools, and schooling.” One potential problem,

of course, is noted by Kerchner (2010): “There is no teacher education program for teachers who want to run their own schools” (p. 32). The solution to that problem is the subject of this capstone: If an alternative licensure program were designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school setting, what would its essential components be?

Conclusion

Teacher education in the United States seems to have come full circle. While the constant push for standards drove the profession away from its roots as an apprenticeship model for over a century, recent calls for reform have sought to reintroduce some of those early characteristics. The diverging trends created an ideological gulf between two groups with the same mission: attracting high quality, highly effective teachers to the profession and keeping them there. While the advocates from both sides often employ heated, hyperbolic rhetoric to make their points, certification and alternative licensure are not irreconcilable. Careful examination of the arguments allows trends to appear, and this convergence creates a set of recommendations for the preparation of effective teachers. Finally, after a brief analysis of the state of education in Minnesota and the development of its own alternative licensure law, the chapter concluded by providing an overview of the history, benefits, and challenges of teacher-led school setting.

The discussion of teacher-led schools is continued in depth in chapters three and four, as the goal of the study is to identify the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school. In order to do so successfully, it is necessary to couple the general understandings of effective teacher preparation programs that have been synthesized in the literature review

with a concrete understanding of the unique skills and knowledge required to be successful in a teacher-led school. Determining just what those unique skills and knowledge are – and defining the training necessary to acquire them – is the goal of the research outlined in the following chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

In order to determine the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school, it is important to determine what specific skills and knowledge sets a teacher will need in such a unique setting. Once determined, the task shifts to designing the most effective way for the teacher to acquire those skill and knowledge sets, while keeping careful consideration of the recommendations and best practices underlined in chapter two. To examine these questions, this capstone employed two methods of action research, including a collection of interviews with prominent and knowledgeable personnel in the field and several sessions with a small focus group made up of dedicated and experienced teachers and educational leaders.

Having already visited the importance of the topic in chapter one and summarized the relevant literature in chapter two, chapter three provides a description of the methods used to answer the stated questions, detailing and providing justification for each individual research method used. Once each individual method is discussed, the chapter concludes by detailing the way in which the resulting data was used to answer the capstone's focal question: What are the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school?

Methodology

Two distinct research methods were employed and are detailed here in the same order in which they were be carried out. I chose methods that employed qualitative data gathering techniques. As Mills (2007) explains, "qualitative methods are more

appropriately applied to action research efforts” (p. 55) because such methods help define an experience and are naturally occurring in an educational setting.

First, I conducted a broad set of interviews with teachers and educational leaders within the field of teacher-led schools, working to determine which skills and knowledge sets are most vital for success in a teacher-led school. The interviews also helped determine which areas teachers felt most sorely unprepared for when they first began working in a teacher-led setting. Once I completed the interviews, I analyzed the transcripts, working to identify the most prominent and common responses. Next, I used this information, combined with the general recommendations summarized in chapter two, to create a rough outline of an alternative licensure program. With a rough outline in hand, I presented my idea to several small focus groups consisting of both experienced teachers and educational leaders. With their feedback and input, I refined the initial sketch into my final product: an outline of an alternative licensure program designed specifically for teachers working in a teacher-led school.

Interviews

I interviewed a variety of stakeholders within the teacher-led school movement, including current and former teachers, teacher leaders, policy makers, and prominent members in the field of education. The interviews allowed time and space for current and former teachers within teacher-led schools to discuss their experiences in such a setting. This helped determine any areas where for which teachers felt especially unprepared, forcing the me to give these areas conscious priority when designing the licensure program. Second, the interviews sought input from experienced professionals - teachers, administrators, professors, researchers, and policy makers alike - to determine the most

vital skills and knowledge sets required for success in a teacher-led setting.

While there are other methods to determine this information, interviews allowed for those interviewed to share their vast experience and unique perspective. Open-ended discussions provided greater insight, as many of the subjects have been involved with the creation of such schools and programs, or are actively involved in the preparation of teachers. The subjects included current and former teachers who have worked in teacher-led schools, consultants from organizations that support and encourage the expansion of teacher-led schools, and professors prominent in the field of teacher preparation with extensive experience in such settings. This group included several of the authors quoted in the second chapter: true experts in their field. The participants were all extremely familiar with the unique skills and knowledge required to succeed in a teacher-led setting, and interviews provided the best means to acquire this insight.

Interview Participants. In total, eighteen subjects were selected and interviewed. Ten of these are current teachers working in an active teacher-led school. Of the ten teachers selected, four have been teaching for over fifteen years, four have been teaching between five and ten years, and two have been teaching for less than five years. Three of the ten teachers are male; seven are female. Nine of the ten teachers work at the same school, an urban school in the heart of the Twin Cities and one of the earliest pioneers of the teacher-led school governance model.

The other eight interview subjects represented various fields within the broader education landscape: four are well known researchers whose work I cited several times in chapter two, one is a professor of higher education who has been involved with teacher-led schools for over two decades, and three work currently for education advocacy

groups. Of the eighteen selected interview subjects, all but three currently live in Minnesota.

Interview Questions. Questions were divided into four categories: *General Information; Reviewing Traditional Models of Teacher Preparation; Describing Successful Teachers; and, Training Teachers for a Teacher-Led School Setting.*

Interview Questions (also listed in Appendix A)

General Information

1. Name
2. Title/Position
3. Experience with teacher led schools

Reviewing Traditional Models of Teacher Preparation:

For current or former teachers only:

4. How did you first obtain your license?
5. What was the most valuable aspect of your own teacher preparation experience?
6. What was the least valuable aspect of your own teacher preparation experience?
7. What was the biggest challenge you found teaching in a teacher-led school setting?
8. For which aspect of your work did you feel least prepared? Why? How did you receive the necessary training or knowledge to overcome this deficit?

For all participants:

9. In your experience, what is the biggest difference for a teacher working in a teacher-led school?
10. In your experience, what are some of the biggest struggles new teachers face in a

teacher-led school?

Describing Successful Teachers:

11. What are the most important personal traits a teacher must possess in order to be successful in a teacher-led school? Why are these traits important?
12. What are the most important skills a teacher must possess in order to be successful in a teacher-led school? Why are these skills important?
13. What knowledge-base must teachers possess to be successful in a teacher-led school, outside of their own content area? Why is this knowledge-base important?

Training Teachers for a Teacher-Led School Setting

14. Overall, what would be the biggest change an initial licensure program would have to incorporate to prepare candidates for a teacher-led school setting?
15. What should all new teachers entering a teacher-led school know?
16. What should an initial licensure program designed for a teacher-led setting prioritize? Please rank the following categories accordingly. Comments or explanations are encouraged in the following question.

(Highest priority to lowest priority)

- Content knowledge
- Pedagogical knowledge
- School governance/education policy knowledge
- Short site visits (tours or one day observational placements) in a variety of settings
- Practicums or short student teaching experiences (one day to two weeks) in a

variety of settings

- Extended student teaching experience (9-16 weeks)
- Residential programs (one semester to a year)

17. Comments or Explanations:

18. What percentage would you assign each category in terms of overall emphasis in an initial licensure program designed for a teacher-led school setting?

(List Percentages, totaling 100%)

- Content knowledge
- Pedagogical knowledge
- School governance/Education policy knowledge
- Short term experiences in a variety of settings (short)
- Extended experience in a single, continuous setting

19. Comments or Explanations:

20. Which aspects of school governance are most important for a newly hired teacher to understand in order to be successful in a teacher-led school setting? Some examples include, but are not limited to, school and district budgets, state compliance, funding, special education law, student privacy, board policies)?

21. Which aspects of school governance are least important for a newly hired teacher to understand in order to be successful in a teacher-led school setting? Why?

22. What type of practicum experience would be most valuable for teachers entering a teacher-led school setting? Please rank the following categories accordingly.

- Short, guided site visits or shadow experiences in a variety of settings throughout program

- Short school placements (up to two weeks) in a variety of settings throughout the program.
- Student teaching placement (9-16 weeks) at a single site.
- Residential-type placement (a full school-year), while completing coursework concurrently

The interviews were conducted both in person and via email. While consistency is desirable, not all participants were able to meet in person, and email allowed asynchronous responses that were easily comparable. It was possible to do all interviews via email and gain consistency, but, when available, a face-to-face interview provided greater depth and insight. Mills (2007) notes that interviews can be used as an effective way to further investigate questions. Additionally, an interview allows me to benefit from the expertise of the subjects. While the same set of questions were used in each interview, there was also time for a more casual back and forth after the formal interview ended. Having a consistent set of questions allowed comparison among the results, and the post-interview discussion provided time for follow-up questions. Mills (2007) points out that interviews, like questionnaires, need to be constructed carefully to avoid any inherent bias in the questions and warns researchers to pilot the questions first in a test group to help draw out any potential hazard. Additionally, he advises that researchers “phrase questions in such a way that they elicit the information [the researcher] really wants” (2007, p. 64).

Once the interviews were completed, I reviewed the transcripts, highlighting any consistent themes throughout the study. I then synthesized these findings into a broad sketch of a teacher preparation program designed for a teacher-led school setting. In

order to further refine my program, I next sought specific feedback from the focus group.

Focus Group

Having used the general interview data to formulate some basic ideas for a teacher preparation program, I needed to receive more specific feedback. To get such feedback, I explained my program ideas, along with a summary of the findings from the literature review, to several small focus groups. While initially my plan was to conduct one formal meeting, due to time and availability these focus groups were smaller and less formal, acting more as a series of follow-up interviews. As such, they provided wonderful feedback, as was the original intention. The task of these groups was to help take the initial, broad ideas I had developed from the interviews and help transform them into a more refined version of the teacher preparation program's components and design. These small focus groups consisted mostly of teacher-leaders who have related experience, several of whom have been involved in the creation, development, and support of many teacher-led schools across the state of Minnesota and beyond. They were drawn from the same pool of subjects as the interviews.

These small follow-up sessions typically met after school over the course of two months. Meetings took place at my school, as all participants are employees there, and typically lasted about thirty minutes. To begin each session, I explained each component within the initial outline of the program and the researched need each one filled. Next, the program was discussed within the context of the recommendations from chapter two. Finally, each session concluded with time for back and forth discussion, feedback, and evaluation.

As Creswell, quoted in Mills, discusses, focus groups can be used to effectively

“collect shared understanding from several individuals as well as to get views from specific people” (2007, p. 65). It is this “shared understanding” that is the object of the research. Combining the results from the interviews with their own experiences and research in the field, the focus group helped to determine which essential skills and knowledge sets are essential for a teacher to possess to be successful in a teacher-led school setting. Next, the group provided essential feedback and evaluation of the program’s initial sketch, helping to remove unnecessary components and identify aspects that were missing.

Data Analysis

Major analysis occurred at three different times. First, once the interviews were completed, the answers were reviewed and analyzed for common themes and major findings. These findings were used to begin construction of the teacher preparation program. Once a draft of the program was completed, the focus group was used to provide a second round of feedback and analysis. The feedback from the focus group was used to refine and improve the teacher preparation program. Finally, the proposed program was evaluated against the recommendations developed in chapter two, seeking places where the program concurs or conflicts with the criteria other researchers have developed. Those findings are presented in chapter four, along with an outline and description of the alternative licensure program itself.

Conclusion

Chapter three describes the qualitative methods I employed in order to gather sufficient data to outline an alternative licensure program designed to prepare effective teachers for a teacher-led school setting. First, a series of interviews with various

stakeholders was conducted to determine both what a teacher in a teacher-led school setting actually does on a daily basis and what specific skills and knowledge are required to perform those tasks effectively. Interview subjects included teachers at teacher-led schools, researchers from organizations that support and consult such schools, and education researchers with extensive experience with teacher-led schools. The information was synthesized into an initial draft of the teacher preparation program. Next, a series of small focus groups were conducted to continue exploring the topic, providing specific and necessary feedback and helping to refine the initial draft into a final product.

Chapter four presents the data obtained through the two qualitative methods described and provides a description and outline of the alternative licensure program. This outline is evaluated against current research on effective teacher education programs. Finally, in this capstone's conclusion, chapter five provides some reflection on learning outcomes and the research process in general.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Chapter four details the results of the research outlined in chapter three. It begins with a detailed examination of the interview results, organized by question. It summarizes the major pieces of feedback received from the focus group, and shows how those insights affected the development of the design of the initial licensure program. Finally, it presents the answer to this capstone's primary research question: What are the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school?

Interviews

In February of 2015, the following interview questions were sent via email to eighteen teacher-leaders, education researchers, and higher education professionals. Twelve of those responded. Additionally, I conducted three interviews, consisting of the same questions, in person. Questions were divided into four categories: *General Information; Reviewing Traditional Models of Teacher Preparation; Describing Successful Teachers; and, Training Teachers for a Teacher-Led School Setting.*

Interview results. This section will review survey responses in the order that questions appeared on the survey. Each analysis will consist of three parts: a general summary of responses; useful or insightful takeaways; and, key or representative quotes from the responses.

General Information

1. Name

2. *Title/Position*

3. *Experience with teacher led schools*

The respondents represented a wide spectrum of the education field: a professor, several teachers, a policy director for an education firm, two school directors, two published education researchers, and an education consultant. Represented in the sample was over one-hundred years of related experience in the field of teacher-led schools.

Reviewing Traditional Models of Teacher Preparation:

For current or former teachers only:

4. *How did you first obtain your license?*

While not all of the respondents were teachers, eleven had obtained a teaching license at some point. Five were from a traditional undergraduate program, five were from a traditional graduate program, and one from a program described as “alternate.”

5. *What was the most valuable aspect of your own teacher preparation experience?*

The overwhelming theme in this answer was that experiences, more than anything and of any variety, mattered the most – and the longer the better. This included concurrent (and independent) work experience in schools. Similarly, several mentioned their learning groups or “cohorts” as vital in the learning process, and only a few mentioned pedagogical training or content-related support. Respondents enjoyed programs that can create cohorts can enhance support, peer feedback, and community.

Key quotes: “My teaching experience was the most valuable part of obtaining my license” (#7), and “lot of observing” (#6).

6. *What was the least valuable aspect of your own teacher preparation experience?*

While more than one respondent explicitly said that all parts of their training program were valuable, many mentioned coursework that was unrelated, irrelevant, and disconnected to a real classroom setting. Many also commented on an unnecessarily long list of requirements, especially related to content standards. Consistently, subjects mentioned that some facets would have been useful had they been more directly connected to real students, classrooms, and schools, rather than in isolated higher education programs. The takeaway from question six was certainly obvious: If coursework is not connected to real world, it loses relevance - daily application is necessary.

Key Quotes: “The busy work. So many portfolios! I have not used the hundreds of pages I produced yet (#12), and, “I remember my Methods of Teaching Social Studies being a complete waste of time. We spent most of the time talking about ambiguous scenarios” (#6).

7. *What was the biggest challenge you found teaching in a teacher-led school setting?*

Of the twelve that answered this question, only one explicitly mentioned teaching, while one other mentioned “lack of experience” (#2). All other challenges were related to governance in some way: creating school-wide systems, understanding and developing power structures, leading others, and being accountable.

The take away here was certainly that experience is essential as many of these

topics are not easy to teach effectively in a direct setting; rather, they require critically analyzing systems and structures currently in place. Additionally, while only a few mentioned issues related directly to teaching, this could be because this was one aspect for which they were adequately prepared. As a new program is designed to address the common struggles these subjects identified, it cannot ignore the areas that have been affective.

Key Quotes: “Being accountable for all of the aspects of running a school. Also, creating systems/protocols for decision making, meetings, etc...as we expanded to include more staff” (#7), and “soft power since no one had a position of authority. Learning where power resided and how to use that power to accomplish my and the school's goals” (#5).

8. *For which aspect of your work did you feel least prepared? Why? How did you receive the necessary training or knowledge to overcome this deficit?*

This question elicited a diverse array of responses, including governance and compliance issues, balance and time management, student discipline, and understanding school-wide systems. Although these struggles varied so greatly, most subjects seemed to find similar ways to overcome the obstacle: effective communication, guidance from mentors, or simply gaining experience.

While some struggles could be prevented with better preparation, the answers reveal the breadth of issues that come up in a given school year. This showed me that in my program, covering every possible topic in a scripted seminar setting would be impossible; only direct, prolonged experience, coupled with a strong mentor, would give

teacher-candidates the exposure necessary.

Key quotes: “Governance; trial and error first then intentionality through personal and collaborative dialogue” (#4); “I think I had to get a thicker skin” (#5); “Using the expertise of another experienced teacher-led school” (#7); “Student discipline issues that would lead to suspension and expulsion and the legal requirements that follow” (#8); and “How to hire/fire employees, how to arrange transportation, how to create a budget...I had never learned about any of that type of thing. We overcame it by doing it, by reaching out to other schools who were doing it, and by asking a lot of questions” (#9).

For all participants:

9. *In your experience, what is the biggest difference for a teacher working in a teacher-led school?*

Of all the challenges subjects listed, only once was actually teaching content mentioned. Far more present were issues related to leadership, accountability, and general problem solving. Relatedly, many of the respondents again pointed to lack of direction or guidance for new teachers in a teacher-led setting. Instead of being told what to do, teachers had to decide what to do themselves, and then be accountable to the consequences.

These struggles point to more than lack of knowledge: it is an entire change in mindset. The guidance and support new teachers need can only be found in experience and real-world application. From this, I knew that I had to find some way for participants in my program to authentically and genuinely practice the skills needed to run a school.

Key quotes: “From our research, I'd say it's adjusting to being in charge, being

responsible for everything, having that feeling of being accountable for results becoming real” (#3); “Many teachers new to [our school] keep looking for a manual” (#4); and “Budgeting time and understanding/creating systems to run the school” (#5).

10. In your experience, what are some of the biggest struggles new teachers face in a teacher-led school?

The overwhelming theme of this response was again adapting a change in mindset. Teachers at a teacher-led school must understand that they are truly leaders of the school. As such, these teachers must be willing to speak directly and have difficult conversations, act as agents of change, and accept the accountability that stems from ownership.

Creating a change in mindset would prove nearly impossible in a classroom setting independent of the real world, and this is a theme that continues to surface. Genuine feelings of empowerment and ownership can only be cultivated if teachers actually have the ability to make change. Therefore, teacher-candidates must be actual stakeholders of an institution, not simply outside observers. Because of this, I wanted to make sure teacher-candidates would remain within the same institution throughout the whole year.

Key quotes: “The profound sense of being a true professional -- being in charge of your work and having actual influence over the total enterprise” (#3); “Ownership. You really can't shirk responsibility in a teacher-led school” (#6); and “If I want to change something, I have a chance and a voice to try” (#12).

Describing Successful Teachers:

11. What are the most important personal traits a teacher must possess in order to be successful in a teacher-led school? Why are these traits important?

When responding to question #11, subjects overwhelmingly highlighted characteristics related to problem-solving abilities, communication, and initiative. With increased stake in the outcomes of a school, effective teachers are those that are creative, are willing to try new things (and fail), and are critical thinkers.

The key here is that any potential program for teachers in a teacher-led setting must help students practice creative problem solving and effective communication. This insight made me think of ways that teacher-candidates could authentically practice these problem solving and communication skills, while also not actually ruining the school. From this, I first began to think about how a case study method could be utilized in my program.

Key quotes: “Organization and initiative ... because so much of what happens is not what teachers were trained for” (#2); “Self-directed, demonstrates initiative, and gets along well with others” (#7); and “Reflective” (#12).

12. What are the most important skills a teacher must possess in order to be successful in a teacher-led school? Why are these skills important?

Several respondents saw little difference between “traits” in the previous question and “skills” in this one, and that was probably a design flaw of the survey. While traits and skills certainly are similar, the survey was attempting to distinguish between the two. As such, respondents answered in very similar ways to the two prompts, once again

highlighting the necessity of effective communication, strong decision making, and an overall willingness to learn new things. Effective teachers must be willing to take action, work collaboratively with others, and continuously try new approaches.

Once again, to practice these skills, teacher-candidates need an environment in which they are allowed to struggle, problem solve, and, in some cases, fail. Strong support systems, both from mentors and a cohort, would prove important.

Key quotes: “comfortable in an environment in which professionals are using their autonomy constructively and are unafraid about accountability” (#2); and #7: “A teacher in a teacher-led school should have effective communication and collaboration skills. Although specific teachers may specialize in different areas, teacher in a teacher-led school need to learn about the broader aspects of running a school such as, human Resources, school law, data/assessment, curriculum, etc...” (#7).

13. What knowledge-base must teachers possess to be successful in a teacher-led school, outside of their own content area? Why is this knowledge-base important?

While a few respondents listed some specific governance or compliance components, many acknowledged that it would be difficult to cover every possible piece of knowledge needed to effectively run a school. Rather, these subjects mentioned that while a general understanding is important, the knowledge of how to find the answer is much more important.

While direct experience would allow a wide-breadth of exposure, a class could be developed to ensure a few of the most common issues described. Again, the case study

method could be effective: A series of scenarios (drawn from real experience) could be presented to a cohort without correct answers, and teacher-candidates could practice the most important aspect together: developing solutions collaboratively.

Key quotes: “There is likely no set knowledge-base; it's more a matter of attitude and aspiration” (#3); “Understanding of democratic principles and history” (#4); “School finance, administrative duties including discipline, enrollment, state reporting, and teacher hiring” (#8).

Training Teachers for a Teacher-Led School Setting

14. Overall, what would be the biggest change an initial licensure program would have to incorporate to prepare candidates for a teacher-led school setting?

Many respondents were almost overwhelmed by the size of the changes that must occur if a program were designed to prepare teachers for a teacher-led setting. Of those that could articulate some specifics, the most common answers were related to experience: subjects said gaining direct experience is even more important than when preparing for a traditional model. Several also mentioned that governance, school law, and budgeting would have to be added to the content of a traditional program, as those topics are almost never covered.

These answers again point to the potential benefit of a case study format working in a small cohort, coupled with direct experience. The answers also highlight that while every possible topic could not be covered, there may be a few aspects of governance that must be included, and this finding is reflected in the final program.

Key quotes: “Licensure programs are largely policy dinosaurs awaiting a proper

meteor. They cannot change themselves” (#3); “Longer apprenticeship; greater understanding of human development/history, personally and collectively” (#4); “More exposure to administrative work for running a school -- knowing the law, budgeting, personnel, policies, and so on” (#5); and, “Exposure” (#6).

15. What should all new teachers entering a teacher-led school know?

Overwhelmingly, the most important piece of knowledge all candidates should have is that in a teacher-led school, they are an owner. This underlines everything they will do. That, and that mistakes are inevitable (and ok).

This group of answers shows that experience remains crucial. However, these responses also introduce the idea that not all experiences are equal: teacher-candidates must have real say in the operation of the school if they are to fully internalize the role of teacher as owner. Suggested changes must be real, as well as the accompanied accountability.

Key quotes: “They are in charge of everything that matters for student and school success” (#3); “That democracy is an idea, a way of being, not a thing” (#4); “That you will never know everything. That it's ok to be wrong. That you have to be able to ask good questions” (#9); “You are an owner” (#12).

16. What should an initial licensure program designed for a teacher-led setting prioritize? Please rank the following categories accordingly. Comments or explanations are encouraged in the following question.

Compiling the results show a relatively balanced response. While the outside

experience was ranked highest overall, it was followed in close succession by Pedagogy, Content, and School Governance. This is surprising in that earlier answers often pointed to the need for a better understanding of governance and compliance issues. However, the earlier question may have simply highlighted the areas for which teachers had been least prepared, not necessarily the areas deemed most important. Additionally, this question forced subjects to rank all four categories, without the option of a tie. Many interviewees noted that in practice, the categories could have more equal weighting.

The biggest take away here seems to be that all components are necessary, though governance, content, and pedagogy all need to be applied to be relevant: experience can provide the context for everything else. These categories become weighted nearly equally in the final design.

Key quotes: “It would be most valuable for a teacher to experience first hand how a teacher led school operates and functions” (#7); “Even though school governance is extremely important in teacher-led settings, it is still below the overall teaching preparation” (#8); “If able I would rank Content/Subject, Pedagogy, and School Governance as second with Practicum Experiences as first” (#6); and “I don't know if it is that cut and dry. I think maybe all four of those things should be given equal billing, not necessarily one above the other” (#9).

17. What percentage would you assign each category in terms of overall emphasis in an initial licensure program designed for a teacher-led school setting?

This question also produced a relatively balanced response: on average, subjects said Pedagogy should be roughly 40% of the program, with both Content and

Governance at roughly 30% each. Many respondents acknowledged that while compliance, leadership, and content mastery are all important topics, a school is only as effective as its teachers. In this setting, pedagogy referred both to direct instruction by an individual and school-wide curricular approaches.

While the interviews have focused mostly on issues specific to teacher-led school settings, responses to this question serve as an important reminder: above all else, a teacher-candidate must know how to effectively teach students. This is a refreshing response and points to the one of the strengths of teacher-led schools: students remain at the center.

Key quotes: “While School Governance/Education Policy is extremely important, effective teachers is who know how to teach is equally important. A teacher led school requires great practitioners” (#7); “Knowing how to teach is much [more] important than what to teach and overall education policy” (#8); and “This again was hard. Feeling confident in my subject area (or advising) made me a better overall co-op member” (#12).

18. Which aspects of school governance are most important for a newly hired teacher to understand in order to be successful in a teacher-led school setting? Some examples include, but are not limited to, school and district budgets, state compliance, funding, special education law, student privacy, board policies)?

Responses here echoed earlier ideas: while there are a few key pieces, understanding how to answer these questions as they arise is the most important. Specifically, several mentioned funding and the budget as vital facets of governance,

especially as a place to start for new teachers. A few mentioned privacy and the hiring and firing process as important.

Of all the myriad topics encountered over the course of a year, a few prove initially vital: budgeting, school funding, and state compliance. While there are other important aspects, my program will start with these so teacher-candidates can practice finding and processing the necessary information to make informed decisions.

Key quotes: “A deep sense of collective responsibility. A willingness to grow, learn (#3); “I think the staff member needs to understand how school runs in the most literal sense (where does the money go) and in the more nuanced sense (who makes the decisions and how)” (#5); and “Knowing where to find these things is most important” (#6).

19. Which aspects of school governance are least important for a newly hired teacher to understand in order to be successful in a teacher-led school setting? Why?

Many respondents here mentioned that while a broad picture is important, often the specifics are not initially necessary. Similarly, many mentioned that not all teachers must master in detail every aspect of running a school: collaboration is key. Specifically, several mentioned some state compliance components. Interestingly, budgeting and board structure were mentioned in both this answer (as the least important) and the previous one (as the most important).

To summarize some big picture gleanings: Teacher-candidates should start with big picture topics (funding, budget, general aspects of compliance) and move to specific policies and practices later, and this is reflected in my design.

20. What type of practicum experience would be most valuable for teachers entering a teacher-led school setting? Please rank the following categories accordingly.

Whenever feasible, respondents agreed that a residency-type program was the most effective form of experience, though a few mentioned the difficulties in completing such a program (time and cost constraints, specifically). Types of experience were generally valued more the longer the experience was set to last (the shortest two received no top priority votes). While residencies were the most highly rated, many also recognized that in addition to a longer placement, short visits to other schools would be a valuable experience.

Year-long residencies would prove most valuable, but the program must remain accessible and feasible for all candidates, echoing some of the warnings discussed in Chapter Two. One insight here is that if candidates were grouped in cohorts but placed in different schools, the program could easily incorporate short-term visits to see different models – an idea incorporated in the final design. With some guidance, candidates could prepare a tour and lead a discussion of major practices, policies, and structures their own school has in place. This activity would allow increased exposure, while forcing the host to form a deeper understanding of his or her own building.

Key quotes: “Immersing yourself in a program for a year with the express purpose of learning how the school worked would be very useful in helping a student be able to abstract the principles that drive and sustain the work” (#5); “While I would like to replace typical student teaching with a full year residential program I firmly believe shorter visits and placements are hugely important. Shorter at the very beginning as an

introduction” (#6); “Although a full year placement would be the best option, I know this is burdensome for the student teacher” (#7); and “Even outside of teacher-led programs, I am a proponent of residential-type placements, with strong mentoring” (#8).

Interview’s impact on program development. The interview portion of the research proved invaluable. Taking a step back from the individual responses, several big picture lessons can be gleaned and must be incorporated into the design of a teacher preparation program designed for a teacher-led school setting.

The first is that experience, in any setting, is vital, but especially in a teacher-led school setting. There are simply too many pieces of institutional knowledge to be covered in a traditional, university class setting. Similarly, because there are so many pieces to be covered, the process to find the answers becomes more important than the answers themselves. Teacher-candidates will need time to practice these skills to become effective contributors. This practice could come through participating in the decision making process of the placement school itself, but it could also – and perhaps in addition – come in the form of structured case studies. This idea becomes a major component of the final design.

Additionally, while practicing the democratic problem-solving process is perhaps the most important, a few specific pieces of knowledge still stand out. Respondents specifically mentioned broad understandings of school budgets, funding, and compliance issues as important.

Finally, the importance of various placements was emphasized time and time again. This led to the idea of a cohort of student teachers – all placed in different schools – that could work together. This would allow wonderful opportunities for site

visits, for various voices and models to be heard, and for the case study model to be used effectively.

Initial Draft

Once the interviews were completed, I worked to mold the summarized data into a rough sketch of my program. While the final version is discussed in more detail later, the rough draft served as the foundation. From the interviews, I determined that if a program were to adequately address the myriad of topics and skills successful teachers in a teacher-led school setting would need, the program must have three separate components: a year long placement with a strong mentor; a traditional higher education component where information is delivered by a professor; and a space where teacher-candidates could work together through case studies designed to replicate issues frequently encountered in a teacher-led school setting. While seemingly independent, the curricula would be choreographed across all three.

Reflecting on the findings from the interview, I decided the program must have an equal emphasis on content, pedagogy, and governance, and each component must have a real world application to be meaningful. Similarly, embedded throughout would have to be the skills so frequently mentioned: problem solving, communication, and leadership. With a broad system in mind, I looked back at the data to list specific topics that should be covered, and began grouping them into general case studies. The case studies then became scenarios (real and imagined) that are presented to the cohort. Together, the teacher-candidates will work through each problem and develop a solution. After, teacher-candidates would get a chance to reflect on both their process and their decided solution with their mentors. Case study scenarios included funding and budgeting issues,

legality and privacy questions, student discipline (within both regular and special education), peer evaluation, hiring and firing, and drafting new school policies. With this rough outline in place, I used the focus group sessions to get feedback on my program design.

Focus Groups

As described in Chapter Three, my initial plan was to do one formal focus-group meeting. However, due to time and availability issues, these focus groups were in reality smaller and less formal. In this sense, they served more as a series of follow-up interviews. As such, they provided wonderful feedback on my program design, as was the original intention. The task of these groups was to review both the interview findings and the draft of my program, and then provide feedback on the program's components and design. Three different follow-up interviews were held, all with experienced teachers who have been involved in the creation, development, and support of many teacher-led schools across the state of Minnesota and beyond.

Focus group results. Walking each participant through my program outline and initial ideas, these focus groups provided wonderful guidance and feedback. While it is difficult to detail these wide-ranging and slightly informal conversations as we reflected on the program draft, several big-picture learnings can be summarized.

First, the case study method was well received overall. All involved thought that it could provide a unique way for teacher-candidates to practice the communication and problem solving skills necessary in a teacher-led school setting. One participant pointed out that while teacher-candidates ideally should be participating in the real-world governance of their host school, they may not feel comfortable doing so, especially acting

as leaders or disagreeing with experienced staff. Instead, using invented scenarios would provide teacher-candidates with an opportunity to practice those same skills in a safe environment with their peers. The focus groups also helped brainstorm and flush out several of the case study scenarios outlined in the final plan.

Second, the focus groups wanted more attention paid to pedagogy than was outlined in the first draft of the program. This led to discussions of a possible summer term before the school year began, and this idea was included in the final plan.

Third, in the first draft of the program, the role of the teacher-candidate mirrored a traditional teacher preparation program, with candidates gradually assuming the role of their mentors. However, this only allowed for a limited experience for the teacher-candidate. To broaden the experience of the candidate, one of the focus group participants suggested the role change throughout the year. This idea is reflected in the final plan, as this component now includes several distinct roles. First, candidates will work as an Educational Assistant, working first with the general population and later within the special education department. From there, the role assumes a more traditional approach, as candidates begin to assume more responsibility from their mentor. Finally, a break was added in December, as candidates are forced to play the role of school researcher and present their findings to their cohort. This idea was also the result of insightful feedback.

Final Results

Included below are the program details, described first in a narrative format. That narrative description is then followed by several charts which broadly map out the year.

Combining recommendations from the literature review, findings from the

interviews, and feedback gleaned from the series of small focus groups, I identified the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school. The year-long program has three major concurrent components: a practicum experience, a cohort experience, and a classroom experience. While the three experiences are broken into distinctive parts, the topics, roles, and assignments are interdependent: each is coordinated carefully to support and enhance the other. The program begins in June and runs through the following school year.

The Practicum Experience. The program's main component is the practicum experience. Here, candidates work at a single site under the supervision of a trained mentor. Candidates are fully immersed in the host school and, while their role changes throughout the year, are expected to contribute as any full-time staff member. Work begins as a general education assistant. With less initial responsibility, candidates are free to make observations, ask questions, and build relationships with the students, the school staff, and the community.

In November, the candidates spend a month working as an educational assistant within the school's special education department. Switching roles, candidates use this time to familiarize themselves with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), attend IEP meetings, follow a student along the evaluation path, and understand how Special Education staff track progress on individual student goals. This time also allows candidates to gain experience working with students with disabilities and adapting curriculum to a diverse array of student needs, abilities, and interests.

For the month of December, candidates shift away from direct instruction.

Playing the role of school and education researchers, candidates work their mentor to answer a series of guiding questions regarding the operation and governance of their host school. This research concludes as candidates play host to their cohort for a half-day immersion. Candidates will deliver a short presentation and field questions from their cohort regarding the various systems and structures the host school utilizes.

Finally, candidates return from winter break and act as a full time teacher under the guidance of their mentor, sharing all expected duties of all staff. This should include both direct instruction and administrative duties., including teaching, leading staff or professional development meetings, and performing any assigned administrative tasks. Candidates continue this role through the end of the school year.

The Cohort Experience. Cohort groups consist of ten to fifteen candidates, with each candidate hosted at a separate site. Cohort meetings occur twice a month: once with the cohort as a whole, and once individually with their mentor. Cohort meetings will utilize the case study model. Candidates are given a scenario in advance each month and come ready to discuss a solution. Meeting with their cohort, the group works to develop a solution, mimicking the process used by a teaching staff in a teacher-led school. While the cohort is led by a Program Facilitator, he/she provides only rough guidance and feedback. After meeting with their cohorts, candidates meet with their mentor to review and reflect on the month's case study scenario, including the group's solution. Mentors provide additional feedback and insight. This meeting can occur anytime after the cohort meeting and before the next one.

There are eight case study scenarios:

1. Case Study One: Exploring School Policy.

Case Study One presents the cohort with a series of brief scenarios regarding various school policies. Each candidate must work to determine what is his/her own school's policy regarding each situation. After sharing, the group will dissect the differences identified. This allows candidates to familiarize themselves with their own school and provides topics to be discussed with the mentor.

2. Case Study Two: Budget Shortfall

Case Study Two presents the cohort with a school staring at a projected budget shortfall. Candidates must propose solutions to balance the budget. This allows the candidates to continue modeling the decision process of a teacher-led school while providing them with a broad introduction to important concepts of school budgets and funding, two topics covered the previous week in their weekly classes.

3. Case Study Three: Was It Legal?

Case Study Three presents the cohort with a series of situations in which the fictitious school already made and executed a decision. The team works to determine if each decision was, in fact, legal. This provides an application of the education law concepts covered in their class that week.

4. Case Study Four: Curriculum

Case Study Four presents the cohort with several different curricula. The cohort must analyze each with attention to the best practices outlined in their classwork the week before.

5. Case Study Five: Privilege and Systemic Racism

Case Study Five provides the Cohort with several scenarios common to many schools with regard to race, racism, and whiteness. The candidates must work first to

identify any evidence of institutional racism at the school, district, and state level, specifically with regard to education. Cohort will then work to develop strategies to combat instances they identified. This vital but difficult topic provides the candidates a chance to process and practice the material covered in their classes the weeks prior.

6. Case Study Six: Teachers as Leaders

Case Study Six includes several scenarios vital within Teacher-Led Schools: diverse communication styles, giving/receiving peer feedback, and working with Personnel Committee, including the hiring and firing of staff members. In the weeks that follow, candidates will then practice this vital skill with each other, as they review recorded lessons.

7. Case Study Seven: Assessment

Case Study Seven presents the cohort with several sets of data from various state and district level exams. Candidates must work to decipher the data and present an action plan for the following year based on the results.

The Classroom Experience. The final component of the teacher preparation program consists of weekly classes attended at night. This portion most resembles the university portion of traditional preparation program. Topics are divided into several major parts: Pedagogy, Compliance and Governance, Racial Justice, and Leadership. These topics were developed directly from the literature review and the action research outlined in chapter three.

Preparing Teachers for Success in a Teacher-Led School Setting

The charts that begin on the following page broadly map the program, described above, in a more visual format. The charts are organized horizontally by month.

Vertically, each chart shows the program's three concurrent strands: the practicum experience, the cohort experience, and the classroom experience. The teacher preparation program also appears in its entirety in Appendix B.

Calendar		June		July		August		Calendar	
Overall Focus		Governance		Pedagogy				Overall Focus	
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE	Placement	Summer School (traditional curriculum)				Host School		Placement	
	Role	General EA / Teacher's Assistant				Candidates will pair with Mentors		Role	
	Overall Description	Work to support classroom teacher in traditional model.				Initial Conferences to discuss upcoming year.		Overall Description	
	Detail Description	Work to support classroom teacher in traditional model. Candidates will use this experience to help guide their evening coursework discussions. Assignments there will often ask candidates to analyze the practices of their cooperating teacher. Note: this is not their mentor teacher, nor their permanent placement.				Candidates and Mentors will discuss various aspects of the upcoming school year, answer questions, set expectations, tour the school, and build relationships. In late August, Candidates will also begin any preservice meetings required by the Host School.		Detail Description	
COHORT EXP.	Cohort	No Meetings				Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	
	Focus					Intro: Case Study Method		Focus	
	Details	Cohort Meetings will occur twice a month: once with the cohort as a whole, and once individually with their mentor. Cohort Meetings will utilize the case study model. Candidates will be given the month's scenario in advance, and come ready to discuss a solution. Meeting with their cohort, the group will work to develop a solution, mimicking the process used by a teaching staff in a teacher-led school. While the cohort is led by a Program Facilitator, he/she provides only rough guidance and feedback. After meeting with their cohorts, candidates will go over month's Case Study and the group's solution with their Mentor, receiving additional feedback. This meeting can occur anytime after the cohort meeting and before the next one.				Cohorts will meet first in mid-August. The purpose of this meeting is twofold: first, for the candidates to meet their cohort members, and second, to introduce the case study method to be employed.		Details	
CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE	Course	Public Schools 101		Teaching and Learning 1		No Class		Course	
	Topic	Intro to the Public Schools	School Governance	Education Psychology	Content Pedagogy		No Class		Topic
	Description	Course will cover some broad history of public education; Differentiate between types of schools (Traditional, Charter, Magnet, Private); Discuss roles of various educational structures (Federal, State, District, School, Classroom)	Intro to Teacher-Led Schools, including basic school governance, examples of various governance models and leadership structures, as well as basic role and structure of the school board.	Course will offer overview of education psychology and child development.	Course will cover basic pedagogical strategies and theories within specific disciplines. This will include curriculum planning, assessment, active teaching strategies, and classroom management. Will involve analyzing summer school curriculum.		No Class		Description
	Time	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks		No Class		Time
	Overall Focus	Governance		Pedagogy				Overall Focus	
Calendar		June		July		August		Calendar	

Calendar		September		October		November		Calendar	
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE	Overall Focus	Governance		Pedagogy	Compliance	Governance		Overall Focus	
	Placement	Host School		Host School		Host School		Placement	
	Role	General Educational Assistant		General Educational Assistant		Special Education Assistant		Role	
	Overall Description	Work alongside mentor to observe and offer support.		Work alongside mentor to observe and offer support.		Switching roles, Candidates will work within the Special Education department.		Overall Description	
	Detail Description	This is an important time as the Candidate begins to understand his/her school. Without much initial responsibility, candidates are free to make observations, ask questions, and build relationships with the students, the school staff, and the community.		As school year progresses, Candidates will continue working directly with Mentors in an assistant role, observing and asking questions. In addition, in October, Candidates will determine an area in which they would like to participate in school governance.		Switching roles, candidates will use this time to familiarize themselves with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), attend IEP meetings, follow a student along the evaluation path, and understand how Special Education staff track progress on individual student goals.		Detail Description	
COHORT EXP.	Cohort	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	
	Focus	Case Study One: Exploring School Policy		Case Study Two: Budget Shortfall		Case Study Three: Was it legal?		Focus	
	Details	Case Study One will present the Cohort with a series of brief scenarios regarding various school policies. Each candidate must work to determine what is his/her own school's policy regarding each situation. After sharing, the group will dissect the differences identified.		Case Study Two will present the Cohort with a school staring at a projected budget shortfall. Candidates must propose solutions to balance the budget.		Case Study Three will present the cohort with a series of situations in which the fictitious school already made and executed a decision. The team will work to determine if each decision was, in fact, legal.		Details	
CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE	Course	Money!		Technology	Education Law	Governance		Course	
	Topic	Funding	Budgeting	Technology	Education Law	Structures and Systems	School Policy	Topic	
	Description	This course will introduce candidates to basic forms of school funding, including at the Federal, State, District, and School levels. It will also cover other sources of revenue provided, while exploring the differences between charter, traditional, and private schools.	This course will introduce Candidates to a school budget, providing a basic overview of its structure.	This brief course will include two sessions on current educational technology.	This course will overview state laws regulating public schools, including both traditional and charter. While not exhaustive, Candidates should be able to familiarize themselves with the law in general and, more importantly, where to find (and how to read) each law or statute.	The first part of the Governance course will cover various structures and systems within a school, including the role and structure of the board and various committees, while exploring various decision-making processes.	The second part of the Governance course will cover school policy. While the Cohort was asked to explore their own school's policies earlier, this course will show Candidates how those policies are developed.	Description	
	Time	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	Time	
	Overall Focus	Governance		Pedagogy	Compliance	Governance		Overall Focus	
Calendar	September		October		November		Calendar		
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE		PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE		COHORT EXP.		COHORT EXP.		CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE	

Calendar		December		January		February		Calendar				
Overall Focus		Pedagogy		Racial Justice			Pedagogy		Overall Focus			
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE	Placement	Host School	Various Schools	Host School		Host School		Placement				
	Role	School Researcher	School Tours	Teacher		Teacher		Role				
	Overall Description	Candidates will analyze their host schools.	Candidates will participate in (and host) school tours led by the cohort members.	Candidates return to Host School.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Overall Description				
	Detail Description	Candidates will work with their mentor as they prepare to host their cohort. Candidates will be expected to answer a series of guiding questions regarding operation and governance of the Host School.	Candidates will prepare a guided tour for their fellow cohort members, describing and analyzing various systems and structures the school has in place.	Candidates will now share the teaching and administrative duties of the Mentors, including teaching, leading staff or professional development meetings, and performing any assigned administrative tasks.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Detail Description				
	Cohort		Mentor	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort			
Focus		School Tour		Case Study Four: Curriculum		Case Study Five: Privilege and Systemic Racism		Focus				
Details		This month, the cohort will take a break from their case studies. Instead, Candidates will work with their mentors as they prepares to host a tour of their school. Candidates will be expected to describe several aspects of the school, analyzing its power and governance structure, curriculum, and several specific policies.		Case Study Four will present the cohort with several different curricula. The cohort must analyze each with attention to		Case Study Five will provide the Cohort with several scenarios common to many schools with regard to race, racism, and whiteness. The Cohort will be work first to identify any evidence of institutional racism at the school, district, and state level, specifically with regard to education. Cohort will then work to develop strategies to combat instances they identified.		Details				
CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE	Course	Teaching and Learning 2		Race/Racism/Whiteness		Human Resources	Teaching and Learning 3	Course				
	Topic	Curriculum Development	Assessment - Individual	History	Contemporary	Human Resources	Gifted and Talented / Special Needs	Topic				
	Description	This class will revisit and further develop several topics covered in Teaching and Learning 1. This course will help Candidates develop the curriculum they plan to implement in January at their Host Schools.	Candidates will explore various forms of assessment, including formal and informal. Course will also cover using data derived from standardized test results to support individual students	The course will provide a history of race, racism, and white privilege in the United States.	Continuing to explore concepts related to race, racism, and white privilege in the United States, this course will shift focus to more contemporary ways institutional racism affects students and schools.	This course will explore the role, structure, and legal practices of a school's Human Resource department or Personnel Committee, including the hiring and firing process.	This section will focus on differentiating classroom content and teaching styles to meet the needs of all students.	Description				
	Time	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	Time				
	Overall Focus		Pedagogy		Racial Justice			Pedagogy		Overall Focus		
Calendar		December		January		February		Calendar				
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE		December		January		February		Calendar				
		Overall Focus		Pedagogy		Racial Justice			Pedagogy		Overall Focus	
		Placement		Host School	Various Schools	Host School		Host School		Placement		
		Role		School Researcher	School Tours	Teacher		Teacher		Role		
		Overall Description		Candidates will analyze their host schools.	Candidates will participate in (and host) school tours led by the cohort members.	Candidates return to Host School.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Overall Description		
Detail Description		Candidates will work with their mentor as they prepare to host their cohort. Candidates will be expected to answer a series of guiding questions regarding operation and governance of the Host School.	Candidates will prepare a guided tour for their fellow cohort members, describing and analyzing various systems and structures the school has in place.	Candidates will now share the teaching and administrative duties of the Mentors, including teaching, leading staff or professional development meetings, and performing any assigned administrative tasks.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Detail Description				
COHORT EXP.		Cohort		Mentor	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort		
		Focus		School Tour		Case Study Four: Curriculum		Case Study Five: Privilege and Systemic Racism		Focus		
		Details		This month, the cohort will take a break from their case studies. Instead, Candidates will work with their mentors as they prepares to host a tour of their school. Candidates will be expected to describe several aspects of the school, analyzing its power and governance structure, curriculum, and several specific policies.		Case Study Four will present the cohort with several different curricula. The cohort must analyze each with attention to		Case Study Five will provide the Cohort with several scenarios common to many schools with regard to race, racism, and whiteness. The Cohort will be work first to identify any evidence of institutional racism at the school, district, and state level, specifically with regard to education. Cohort will then work to develop strategies to combat instances they identified.		Details		
		Course		Teaching and Learning 2		Race/Racism/Whiteness		Human Resources	Teaching and Learning 3	Course		
		Topic		Curriculum Development	Assessment - Individual	History	Contemporary	Human Resources	Gifted and Talented / Special Needs	Topic		
Description		This class will revisit and further develop several topics covered in Teaching and Learning 1. This course will help Candidates develop the curriculum they plan to implement in January at their Host Schools.	Candidates will explore various forms of assessment, including formal and informal. Course will also cover using data derived from standardized test results to support individual students	The course will provide a history of race, racism, and white privilege in the United States.	Continuing to explore concepts related to race, racism, and white privilege in the United States, this course will shift focus to more contemporary ways institutional racism affects students and schools.	This course will explore the role, structure, and legal practices of a school's Human Resource department or Personnel Committee, including the hiring and firing process.	This section will focus on differentiating classroom content and teaching styles to meet the needs of all students.	Description				
Time		2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	Time				
Overall Focus		Pedagogy		Racial Justice			Pedagogy		Overall Focus			
Calendar		December		January		February		Calendar				
CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE		December		January		February		Calendar				
		Overall Focus		Pedagogy		Racial Justice			Pedagogy		Overall Focus	
		Placement		Host School	Various Schools	Host School		Host School		Placement		
		Role		School Researcher	School Tours	Teacher		Teacher		Role		
		Overall Description		Candidates will analyze their host schools.	Candidates will participate in (and host) school tours led by the cohort members.	Candidates return to Host School.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Overall Description		
Detail Description		Candidates will work with their mentor as they prepare to host their cohort. Candidates will be expected to answer a series of guiding questions regarding operation and governance of the Host School.	Candidates will prepare a guided tour for their fellow cohort members, describing and analyzing various systems and structures the school has in place.	Candidates will now share the teaching and administrative duties of the Mentors, including teaching, leading staff or professional development meetings, and performing any assigned administrative tasks.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Detail Description				

	Calendar	March		April		Calendar	
	Overall Focus		Leadership			Overall Focus	
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE	Placement	Host School		Host School		Placement	PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE
	Role	Teacher		Teacher		Role	
	Overall Description	Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Overall Description	
	Detail Description	Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Detail Description	
COHORT EXP.	Cohort	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Cohort	Cohort	COHORT EXP.
	Focus	Case Study Six: Teachers as Leaders		Video Feedback		Focus	
	Details	Case Study Six will present several scenarios common to Teacher-Led Schools: diverse communication styles, giving/receiving peer feedback, and working with Personnel Committee, including the hiring and firing of staff members.		Candidates will provide peer feedback to other members of the Cohort		Details	
CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE	Course		Leadership			Course	CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE
	Topic	Literacy	Peer Coaching	Communication		Topic	
	Description	This section will focus on developing literacy among students, highlighting best practices.	This section in the Leadership course will focus on observing and evaluating peers. It will coincide with work done the following weeks with their cohorts.	Continuing to work as peer coaches, this section will help candidates understand interpersonal issues, including various communication styles and methods as they continue practicing giving and peer feedback, using videos of their peers.		Description	
	Time	2 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks		Time	
	Overall Focus		Leadership			Overall Focus	
	Calendar	March		April		Calendar	

		Calendar	May	June	Calendar		
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE	Overall Focus			Reflection			Overall Focus
	Placement	Host School		Host School		Placement	
	Role	Teacher		Teacher		Role	
	Overall Description	Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Candidates continues as full-time staff member.	Candidates complete term at Host School.	Overall Description	
	Detail Description	Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		As school year ends, Candidates will work to complete their final requirements for their cohort and classwork, including processing final feedback from Mentor and writing a program reflection. Additionally, candidates will work to complete final state license requirements.		Detail Description	
COHORT EXP.	Cohort	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort		Cohort	
	Focus	Case Study Seven: Assessment		Review, Reflect, Assess		Focus	
	Details	Case Study Seven will provide sets of data from various state and district level exams. Candidates must work to decipher the data and present an action plan for the following year based on the results.		As school year ends, Candidates will work to complete their final requirements for their cohort and classwork, including processing final feedback from Mentor and writing a program reflection. Additionally, candidates will work to complete final state license requirements.		Details	
CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE	Course			Review, Reflect, Assess		Course	
	Topic	Assesment - School Wide	Goal-Setting			Topic	
	Description	This course will provide background into current state compliance requirements, as well as basic concepts regarding data use.	This course will help candidates read, decipher, write, and evaluate school goals, as required by the state, an authorizer, or district authority.	As school year ends, Candidates will work to complete their final requirements for their cohort and classwork, including processing final feedback from Mentor and writing a program reflection. Additionally, candidates will work to complete final state license requirements.		Description	
	Time	2 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks		Time	
	Overall Focus			Reflection		Overall Focus	
		Calendar		May	June	Calendar	

Conclusion

The essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school were developed by combining the synthesized research reviewed in chapter two with the results of the action research outlined in chapter three. The result is a program divided into three main strands. First and most importantly, candidates work directly with a single mentor at a host school for the duration of the school year. Second, candidates with cohort of fellow candidates to address and respond to monthly case studies. The case studies were designed to provide the cohort with two related opportunities. First, candidates can practice the problem solving and communication skills deemed so vital by the interview subjects and do so in a safe setting that mimics the governance model found in many teacher-led schools. Second, through the case study model, candidates can apply otherwise unconnected learning covered in their classroom experience. In addition to the practicum and cohort strands, candidates will also participate in a direct-instruction classroom setting. This third and final strand will resemble a more traditional university setting, where information is delivered by an instructor. Overarching topics include pedagogy, governance, racial justice, and leadership.

By dividing the program into three interdependent strands, the program attempts to strike the delicate balance between real world application and experience while still providing the most important knowledge needed to be successful in such a unique setting.

Having presented the findings of the capstone, chapter five presents some major learnings gleaned over the whole capstone process, including implications of the study and limitations of its reach.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

The intent of this capstone was to answer one single question: What are the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school? To successfully answer this question, one must first understand the context and history of the subject. Exploring the evolution of teacher preparation in the United States led to one striking – and simple – conclusion: often, teachers know best. Though the call for higher standards was at times warranted, it often dictated a step away from teacher control of the profession. This forced central agencies to develop standard practices, which often left teachers prepared only for the most generic situations. The response to this problem was the same time and time again: a call to return teacher preparation back to the teachers themselves, often through residencies or apprenticeship models.

Similarly, the solution to the current education crisis is the same. This time, it is not just the preparation that needs to be returned, but rather the entire operation: schools run by teachers. However, to develop the professional class of teachers that level of autonomy requires, a new program must be developed. That was the work of this capstone: to identify the essential components of an alternative licensure program designed to best prepare teachers for success in a teacher-led school.

Major Learnings

Having completed the capstone research project, one major piece of learning stands out. Beyond all the details of the research findings and the literature review is a simple idea: teachers, on the whole, are incredibly thoughtful, hardworking, and

passionate people. Whether prepared in a traditional program or not, licensed or certified, working in an urban charter, a traditional suburban giant, or a rural one-room schoolhouse, teachers want – above all else – for students to succeed. The same can be said by those that research teachers, education, and policy. While often drawing opposite conclusions from identical data, as demonstrated in chapter two, researchers and education advocates are simply trying to promote an agenda they think will serve students best. This makes me wonder if, in some ways, we have dramatically overthought the problem of teacher preparation. Instead of designing a full-proof, one-size-fits-all program with just-high-enough standards and the perfect mix of requirements that also do not serve as unnecessary roadblocks to the profession, we should let teachers and their schools hire candidates they deem qualified. How should they judge? They should hire them first as an assistant or apprentice, pair them with experienced mentors, and decide for themselves after enough time has passed to know. If those schools continuously produce teachers that are not satisfactory, my guess is that they will change their practices until they attract, train, and retain ones that are.

This, of course, is a solution set forth in an ideal world. The world, however, often fails to match such a vision. To control for the variances in this real world, standards for teacher preparation had to be developed. Those, in turn, had to be researched, and that research had to be refuted. Stunningly, here, too, teachers proved overwhelmingly insightful. Without hours of research and data analysis, the teachers I interviewed and met with often reached the same conclusions as the professionals.

For instance, Linda Darling-Hammond (2010), among others, concluded that when experience is connected to thoughtfully designed courses, there is a significant shift

in teacher efficacy. Similarly, Interview Subject #6 complained about spending too much time “talking about ambiguous scenarios” not connected to the real world. These similar conclusions occurred time and time again. In fact, all the recommendations that came after synthesizing the research in chapter two were echoed directly by the interview subjects.

A second recommendation, made by several including Kate Walsh ((ECS, 2005; Walsh, 2001, 2007; Wilson, 2001), observed that placements were more effective when the duration was longer and when candidates were placed with strong mentors. This idea immersed time and time again among interview subjects both as they recalled their own teacher preparation (“My teaching experience was the most valuable part of obtaining my license” [#7]), and when they envisioned one of their own design (“Even outside of teacher-led programs, I am a proponent of residential-type placements, with strong mentoring” [#8]).

Finally, nearly all the research emphasized the importance of some training in pedagogy and best practices (see Darling-Hammond 20010; Wilson, 2001, for two examples). Even though the interview questions, upon review, may actually have been biased against the importance of pedagogical instruction, the interview subjects emphasized it just the same. Interview Subject #7 wisely responded by saying, “While School Governance/Education Policy is extremely important, effective teachers who know how to teach is equally important. A teacher led school requires great practitioners.” Similarly, Interview Subject #8 knew that even in a teacher-led school where teachers must perform all sorts of varied and diverse administrative tasks, it was the teaching that mattered above all else: “Knowing how to teach is much [more]

important than what to teach and overall education policy.”

Implications

As teacher-led schools continue to increase in both influence and importance, it will be vital to properly train new teachers to enter those schools. However, despite the growing demand, almost no program exists to do so. Hopefully, this capstone can serve as the groundwork for the development of such a program. While it would not be necessary to adopt the program in its entirety, it could still be useful as a collection of ideas to be reviewed, discussed, or adapted. In fact, one interview subject that participated in this capstone has been given that exact task currently: to design an experience to better prepare teachers for teacher-led school settings. Similarly, the school from which many of the subjects came has included training other teachers and promoting teacher-led schools in their most recent strategic plan. The findings documented in this capstone will be shared with both parties, and both are free to use that information as they see fit.

Limitations

While many of the subjects interviewed for this capstone project are among the most knowledgeable and experienced educators and researchers in the country with regard to teacher-led schools (I cited several in chapter two), the research could always include more voices. More respondents can offer greater insight, offer contrary opinions, or even solidify current understanding. As it was, the scope of the research only included a dozen or so participants. More eyes, voices, and opinions could also have proven useful once the program itself was written. While the focus groups and follow-up interviews did elicit wonderful feedback, they did so after only the first draft. Having

used that insight to create a more detailed teacher preparation program draft, a second round of critiques could have further refined the capstone's outcome.

Through a different lens, one limitation of the program itself that was not discussed here is the cost of the program. As discussed in chapter two, it is important that potential barriers be removed so candidates are not discouraged from entering the field; rather, we need to make joining the profession as attractive as possible. These barriers include many factors, including both time and money. The program was designed to be completed in one calendar year to directly address the first barrier. The second, however, was simply outside the scope of the capstone. The best approach to the latter would be making sure candidates incur no costs at all: in fact, they should be paid. This pay does not have to match their full-time colleagues, but does need to cover the cost of living and tuition. The program could also include other benefits – loan forgiveness is a popular enticement for AmeriCorps volunteers. Finally, there are many foundations designed to support innovative educational practices, and it is not difficult to imagine a grant that could cover the cost of participation.

Future Research

The need for continued and future research is great. Beyond the limitations already considered, the program constructed for this capstone has simply never been used. Before it could be implemented, the program's requirements must be reviewed and revised by a greater number of experts. Second, if implemented, candidates must be involved in the further development of the program, both during their participation and after completion. It would be important for the institution charged with program to understand its successes and failures. Did candidates enter teacher-led schools? Did they

remain there? How were they rated by the local authorities? What were their strengths and weaknesses? What type of candidates were applying for the program? Were all the components absolutely necessary? Monitoring the candidates as they progress would ensure the program improves.

Growth of the Author

Completing this capstone has been a long process, and has required the support and involvement of many generous and brilliant people. Initially, I was hesitant about the action research component required; I was convinced that I could simply conduct a thorough review of the literature and create the program from there. I was skeptical that any research I conducted would be too limited, too unprofessional, or too shallow to produce results that mattered. As I was reaching out to potential interview subjects, a few responded enthusiastically, mentioning how important the work was and asking to meet so we could discuss my research findings so far. I could not understand this desire: what insight could my simple research produce that would be worth sharing? But I did meet with them and very much enjoyed our conversations, and their thoughtful feedback helped craft my own ideas. Further, as I reflect on the work now, I am surprised by the extent to which my own research findings directed the program's development. The answers to those simple interview questions, combined with the feedback from the follow-up sessions, truly provided the entire framework.

This capstone has made me look at myself and my role in education differently. I can affect policy, cause change, and offer insight. I can be an expert. These ideas – autonomy, local impact, empowerment - resonate directly with all the best effects of a teacher-led school. Moving forward, the challenge now becomes accepting for myself

the contract that teacher-led schools eagerly embrace every day: owning the accountability inherent in the autonomy.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

General Information

1. Name
2. Title/Position
3. Experience with teacher led schools

Reviewing Traditional Models of Teacher Preparation:

For current or former teachers only:

4. How did you first obtain your license?
5. What was the most valuable aspect of your own teacher preparation experience?
6. What was the least valuable aspect of your own teacher preparation experience?
7. What was the biggest challenge you found teaching in a teacher-led school setting?
8. For which aspect of your work did you feel least prepared? Why? How did you receive the necessary training or knowledge to overcome this deficit?

For all participants:

9. In your experience, what is the biggest difference for a teacher working in a teacher-led school?
10. In your experience, what are some of the biggest struggles new teachers face in a teacher-led school?

Describing Successful Teachers:

11. What are the most important personal traits a teacher must possess in order to be successful in a teacher-led school? Why are these traits important?
12. What are the most important skills a teacher must possess in order to be

successful in a teacher-led school? Why are these skills important?

13. What knowledge-base must teachers possess to be successful in a teacher-led school, outside of their own content area? Why is this knowledge-base important?

Training Teachers for a Teacher-Led School Setting

14. Overall, what would be the biggest change an initial licensure program would have to incorporate to prepare candidates for a teacher-led school setting?
15. What should all new teachers entering a teacher-led school know?
16. What should an initial licensure program designed for a teacher-led setting prioritize? Please rank the following categories accordingly. Comments or explanations are encouraged in the following question.

(Highest priority to lowest priority)

-Content knowledge

-Pedagogical knowledge

-School governance/education policy knowledge

-Short site visits (tours or one day observational placements) in a variety of settings

-Practicums or short student teaching experiences (one day to two weeks) in a variety of settings

-Extended student teaching experience (9-16 weeks)

-Residential programs (one semester to a year)

17. Comments or Explanations:

18. What percentage would you assign each category in terms of overall emphasis in an initial licensure program designed for a teacher-led school setting?

(List Percentages, totaling 100%)

- Content knowledge
- Pedagogical knowledge
- School governance/Education policy knowledge
- Short term experiences in a variety of settings (short)
- Extended experience in a single, continuous setting

19. Comments or Explanations:

20. Which aspects of school governance are most important for a newly hired teacher to understand in order to be successful in a teacher-led school setting? Some examples include, but are not limited to, school and district budgets, state compliance, funding, special education law, student privacy, board policies)?

21. Which aspects of school governance are least important for a newly hired teacher to understand in order to be successful in a teacher-led school setting? Why?

22. What type of practicum experience would be most valuable for teachers entering a teacher-led school setting? Please rank the following categories accordingly.

- Short, guided site visits or shadow experiences in a variety of settings throughout program
- Short school placements (up to two weeks) in a variety of settings throughout the year
- Student teaching placement (9-16 weeks) at a single site.
- Residential-type placement (a full school-year), while completing coursework concurrently

Appendix B: Teacher Preparation Program

	Calendar	June	July	August	September	October	November						
	Overall Focus	Governance	Pedagogy		Governance	Pedagogy	Compliance	103 Governance					
PRACTICUM EXPERIENCE	Placement	Summer School (traditional curriculum)		Host School	Host School	Host School		Host School					
	Role	General EA / Teacher's Assistant		Candidates will pair with Mentors	General Educational Assistant	General Educational Assistant		Special Education Assistant					
	Overall Description	Work to support classroom teacher in traditional model.		Initial Conferences to discuss upcoming year.	Work alongside mentor to observe and offer support.	Work alongside mentor to observe and offer support.		Switching roles, Candidates will work within the Special Education department.					
	Detail Description	Work to support classroom teacher in traditional model. Candidates will use this experience to help guide their evening coursework discussions. Assignments there will often ask candidates to analyze the practices of their cooperating teacher. Note: this is not their mentor teacher, nor their permanent placement.		Candidates and Mentors will discuss various aspects of the upcoming school year, answer questions, set expectations, tour the school, and build relationships. In late August, Candidates will also begin any preservice meetings required by the Host School.	This is an important time as the Candidate begins to understand his/her school. Without much initial responsibility, candidates are free to make observations, ask questions, and build relationships with the students, the school staff, and the community.	As school year progresses, Candidates will continue working directly with Mentors in an assistant role, observing and asking questions. In addition, in October, Candidates will determine an area in which they would like to participate in school governance.		Switching roles, candidates will use this time to familiarize themselves with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), attend IEP meetings, follow a student along the evaluation path, and understand how Special Education staff track progress on individual student goals.					
COHORT EXP.	Cohort	No Meetings		Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor				
	Focus			Intro: Case Study Method		Case Study One: Exploring School Policy		Case Study Two: Budget Shortfall		Case Study Three: Was it legal?			
	Details	Cohort Meetings will occur twice a month: once with the cohort as a whole, and once individually with their mentor. Cohort Meetings will utilize the case study model. Candidates will be given the month's scenario in advance, and come ready to discuss a solution. Meeting with their cohort, the group will work to develop a solution, mimicking the process used by a teaching staff in a teacher-led school. While the cohort is led by a Program Facilitator, he/she provides only rough guidance and feedback. After meeting with their cohorts, candidates will go over month's Case Study and the group's solution with their Mentor, receiving additional feedback. This meeting can occur anytime after the cohort meeting and before the next one.		Cohorts will meet first in mid-August. The purpose of this meeting is twofold: first, for the candidates to meet their cohort members, and second, to introduce the case study method to be employed.		Case Study One will present the Cohort with a series of brief scenarios regarding various school policies. Each candidate must work to determine what is his/her own school's policy regarding each situation. After sharing, the group will dissect the differences identified.		Case Study Two will present the Cohort with a school starting at a projected budget shortfall. Candidates must propose solutions to balance the budget.		Case Study Three will present the cohort with a series of situations in which the fictitious school already made and executed a decision. The team will work to determine if each decision was, in fact, legal.			
CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE	Course	Public Schools 101		Teaching and Learning 1		No Class		Money!		Technology	Education Law	Governance	
	Topic	Intro to the Public Schools	School Governance	Education Psychology	Content Pedagogy	No Class		Funding	Budgeting	Technology	Education Law	Structures and Systems	School Policy
	Description	Course will cover some broad history of public education; Differentiate between types of schools (Traditional, Charter, Magnet, Private); Discuss roles of various educational structures (Federal, State, District, School, Classroom)	Intro to Teacher-Led Schools, including basic school governance, examples of various governance models and leadership structures, as well as basic role and structure of the school board.	Course will offer overview of education psychology and child development.	Course will cover basic pedagogical strategies and theories within specific disciplines. This will include curriculum planning, assessment, active teaching strategies, and classroom management. Will involve analyzing summer school curriculum.	No Class		This course will introduce candidates to basic forms of school funding, including at the Federal, State, District, and School levels. It will also cover other sources of revenue provided, while exploring the differences between charter, traditional, and private schools.	This course will introduce Candidates to a school budget, providing a basic overview of its structure.	This brief course will include two sessions on current educational technology.	This course will overview state laws regulating public schools, including both traditional and charter. While not exhaustive, Candidates should be able to familiarize themselves with the law in general and, more importantly, where to find (and how to read) each law or statute.	The first part of the Governance course will cover various structures and systems within a school, including the role and structure of the board and various committees, while exploring various decision-making processes.	The second part of the Governance course will cover school policy. While the Cohort was asked to explore their own school's policies earlier, this course will show Candidates how those policies are developed.
	Time	2 weeks	1 program.	2 weeks	4 weeks	No Class		2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks
	Overall Focus	Governance		Pedagogy		Governance		Pedagogy	Compliance	Governance			
	Calendar	June	July	August	September	October		November					

December		January		February		March		April		May		June	
Pedagogy		Racial Justice			Pedagogy		Leadership					Reflection	
Host School	Various Schools	Host School		Host School		Host School		Host School		Host School		Host School	
School Researcher	School Tours	Teacher		Teacher		Teacher		Teacher		Teacher		Teacher	
Candidates will analyze their host schools.	Candidates will participate in (and host) school tours led by the cohort members.	Candidates return to Host School.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Candidates continue as full-time staff members.		Candidates continue as full-time staff member.	Candidates complete term at Host School.
Candidates will work with their mentor as they prepare to host their cohort. Candidates will be expected to answer a series of guiding questions regarding operation and governance of the Host School.	Candidates will prepare a guided tour for their fellow cohort members, describing and analyzing various systems and structures the school has in place.	Candidates will now share the teaching and administrative duties of the Mentors, including teaching, leading staff or professional development meetings, and performing any assigned administrative tasks.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		Candidates continue to work under the guidance of the Mentor, completing all duties expected of a full-time staff member, including those related to teaching, administration, leadership, and governance.		As school year ends, Candidates will work to complete their final requirements for their cohort and classwork, including processing final feedback from Mentor and writing a program reflection. Additionally, candidates will work to complete final state license requirements.	
Mentor	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	Cohort	Cohort	Mentor	Cohort	
School Tour		Case Study Four: Curriculum		Case Study Five: Privilege and Systemic Racism		Case Study Six: Teachers as Leaders		Video Feedback		Case Study Seven: Assessment		Review, Reflect, Assess	
This month, the cohort will take a break from their case studies. Instead, Candidates will work with their mentors as they prepares to host a tour of their school. Candidates will be expected to describe several aspects of the school, analyzing its power and governance structure, curriculum, and several specific policies.		Case Study Four will present the cohort with several different curricula. The cohort must analyze each with attention to		Case Study Five will provide the Cohort with several scenarios common to many schools with regard to race, racism, and whiteness. The Cohort will be work first to identify any evidence of institutional racism at the school, district, and state level, specifically with regard to education. Cohort will then work to develop strategies to combat instances they identified.		Case Study Six will present several scenarios common to Teacher-Led Schools: diverse communication styles, giving/receiving peer feedback, and working with Personnel Committee, including the hiring and firing of staff members.		Candidates will provide peer feedback to other members of the Cohort		Case Study Seven will provide sets of data from various state and district level exams. Candidates must work to decipher the data and present an action plan for the following year based on the results.		As school year ends, Candidates will work to complete their final requirements for their cohort and classwork, including processing final feedback from Mentor and writing a program reflection. Additionally, candidates will work to complete final state license requirements.	
Teaching and Learning 2		Race/Racism/Whiteness		Human Resources	Teaching and Learning 3		Leadership					Review, Reflect, Assess	
Curriculum Development	Assessment - Individual	History	Contemporary	Human Resources	Gifted and Talented / Special Needs	Literacy	Peer Coaching	Communication		Assesment - School Wide	Goal-Setting		
This class will revisit and further develop several topics covered in Teaching and Learning 1. This course will help Candidates develop the curriculum they plan to implement in January at their Host Schools.	Candidates will explore various forms of assessment, including formal and informal. Course will also cover using data derived from standardized test results to support individual students	The course will provide a history of race, racism, and white privilege in the United States.	Continuing to explore concepts related to race, racism, and white privilege in the United States, this course will shift focus to more contemporary ways institutional racism affects students and schools.	This course will explore the role, structure, and legal practices of a school's Human Resource department or Personnel Committee, including the hiring and firing process.	This section will focus on differentiating classroom content and teaching styles to meet the needs of all students.	This section will focus on developing literacy among students, highlighting best practices.	This section in the Leadership course will focus on observing and evaluating peers. It will coincide with work done the following weeks with their cohorts.	Continuing to work as peer coaches, this section will help candidates understand interpersonal issues, including various communication styles and methods as they continue practicing giving and peer feedback, using videos of their peers.		This course will provide background into current state compliance requirements, as well as basic concepts regarding data use.	This course will help candidates read, decipher, write, and evaluate school goals, as required by the state, an authorizer, or district authority.	As school year ends, Candidates will work to complete their final requirements for their cohort and classwork, including processing final feedback from Mentor and writing a program reflection. Additionally, candidates will work to complete final state license requirements.	
2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks		2 weeks	2 weeks	4 weeks	
Pedagogy		Racial Justice			Pedagogy		Leadership					Reflection	
December		January		February		March		April		May		June	