



Feature Article

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## Teacher Candidates as the Teacher of Record Assists Partner School Districts with the Teacher Shortage

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### Abstract

This research essay examined a growing trend in a rural area of the Midwest where PK–12 school districts are partnering with a local university to hire teacher candidates (TCs) as the Teachers of Record (TORs). Many rural school districts are challenged to address the teacher shortage. As a result, many school districts are hiring TCs as the TOR during the TC's student-teaching experience. Due to the limited research on the topic, this paper aimed to determine if appointing the TC as the TOR was perceived as an effective practice. The researchers used three data sources to gauge the perceptions of the TC, the TC's mentor, and the TC's administrator. Specifically, the researchers started with TC interviews. Next surveys were sent to TCs, the TC's mentor, and the TC's administration. Finally, follow-up phone interviews were conducted with randomly selected TCs. Meeting the needs of partnering districts and providing quality placements for TCs engaged in the culminating field experience can be mutually beneficial for teacher candidates, the school district, and the university.

### Introduction

A recent and growing phenomenon at Northwest Missouri State University is requests from regional PK–12 school districts to hire a teacher candidate as a contracted employee and teacher of record while the teacher candidate completes the degree requirements for student teaching. Northwest Missouri State University is located in Maryville, MO, with a population of approximately 12,000 people in a rural area of the state. Northwest Missouri State University has approximately 7,000 students including undergraduate and graduate. Approximately 100 teacher candidates student teach each semester. During the 2015–2018

terms, 30 teacher candidates (of approximately 700 total placements) were employed as teachers of record during their student-teaching experiences.

Nationally, there has been a significant decline in the number of students enrolling in teacher education programs. Berry and Shields (2017) found enrollments in teacher preparation programs dropped 35% nationally between the years 2009 to 2016. In 2016, a report published by the Learning Policy Institute predicted that by 2020 an estimated 300,000 new teachers would be needed each year. In addition, the report also predicted that by 2018, annual teacher shortages

could exceed 112,000 positions left unfilled.

This national teacher shortage is also evident in the Northwest region of Missouri. Many regional school districts are experiencing teacher shortages. Some school districts, especially rural school districts, have significant turnover and are challenged to hire effective educators to serve in their classrooms. During the 2015–2018 school years, 88% of the total number of teacher candidates hired as teachers of record were placed in rural districts; the remaining 12% were placed in urban settings; none were placed in suburban areas. Some rural schools are challenged to hire highly qualified teachers and, thus, face teacher-recruiting obstacles (Aragon, 2016). These PK–12 school districts frequently consider hiring a teacher candidate to be the teacher of record while simultaneously completing degree requirements and pursuing initial state certification.

Northwest Missouri State University's department of education allows school districts to use teacher candidates as the teacher of record with two possible options. In using the first option, the state can issue the teacher candidate a substitute certification. The requirements for a substitute certificate are transcript documentation of a minimum of 60 credit hours and successful completion of a rigorous background check. The second option is a provisional certificate, which is good for two years. The teacher candidate must be employed in a public school or private school and be within 12 credit hours of completing an accredited degree program. The hiring school district has discretion about which option it prefers or meets their needs (Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education, 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Three theoretical constructs influenced this work: 1) teacher development not as linear development through identified stages, but as processes arising from and developed as members of a professional community; 2) the belief systems the teacher candidates themselves bring to the experience

matter, and 3) support provided to novice teachers makes a difference,

A theory of teacher development views teacher learning as linear, lockstep stages that teacher candidates proceed through in their growth from novice teachers to expert teachers. Stage development espoused the notion that teacher development occurred in identifiable stages with the initial focus on the teacher themselves simply needing to first survive in the classroom, second learn and practice basic management skills and content delivery and then being able to focus on student learning (Fuller & Bown, 1975; Katz, n.d.) The construct that undergirds this work is one where learning communities in university classrooms, in field experiences, and in student teaching allows teacher candidates to construct a vision of good practice that is not stage dependent (Grossman, 1992; Hammerness et al., 2005; Conway & Clark, 2003). A framework of fluid learning exercising the teacher candidate's understanding of content, pedagogy, the students whom they are teaching, as well as the contexts of the community where they teach, the ability to practice effective instructional practices as well as tools of the trade. Dispositions or habits of thinking a teacher candidate brings to the learning also is a factor in teacher candidate learning. Teacher candidates learn, practice, and reflect on each of the components of the framework throughout their university experiences and during their experiences as student teachers and as teachers (Hammerness et. al., 2005).

A second theoretical underpinning of our work are belief systems the teacher candidates bring to the role of teacher of record. Growth mindset, as defined by Dweck (2006), include thriving on stretching beyond the understood and the status quo for the individual, being comfortable with making mistakes and learning from them, and putting in the effort to create a reality. Successful teacher candidates serving as teachers of record bring personal characteristics of goal commitment as defined need for achievement, and desire to control the outcome (Hollenbeck et al., 1989).

Indeed successful teacher candidates as teachers of record bring grit to the position with an “approach that achievement is a marathon: his or her advantage is stamina” (Duckworth et al., 2007).

A third theoretical construction is the importance of support systems surrounding the teacher candidate. Grossman (1992) argues new teachers have the potential to make great strides toward expertise even as they are novices with the right kind of support. Mentors who connect with the novice teachers by building strong relationships with them support the learning of the teacher candidates helping them to reflect on practices they observe and they themselves implement. The support of peers providing teaching resources has been found to reduce the emotional exhaustion of the first year teacher (Voss & Kunter, 2020). The critical support can come from various sources “supervisors, teacher candidate education instructors, cooperating teachers, other veteran teachers, and even fellow candidates” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005).

### **Purpose of the Study**

In reviewing the data for three school years, the number of regional PK–12 school districts that have hired a teacher candidate as a teacher of record to fill a classroom need continues to grow. The purpose of this study was to determine if the practice of having teacher candidates while student teaching is perceived as an effective practice based on the perceptions of both the teacher candidate and of the school personnel, to identify the characteristics of the teacher candidate that lead to their success as teacher of record, and is there a difference in the perceptions of the teacher candidate and of the administrator who work with them.

### *Research Questions*

1. Is there a difference between the teacher candidates’ and administrators’ perception of the teacher candidate serving as teacher of record an effective practice?
2. What characteristics of the candidate were perceived to support their success?

3. Is there a difference in the perceptions of success of the teacher candidate between the candidate and their administrator?

### *Decline in Number of Completers in Traditional Teacher Preparation Programs*

Between 2009 and 2014, enrollments in teacher-preparation programs dropped 35% nationwide (Berry & Shields, 2017). A 2016 report published by the Learning Policy Institute predicted that by 2020 an estimated 300,000 new teachers would be needed each year. The report also predicted that by 2018, annual teacher shortages could exceed 112,000 positions left unfilled.

Lisette Partelow (2019) posted “nationally, there were more than one-third fewer students enrolling in teacher preparation programs in 2018 than in 2010” (p. 5). In some instances, states have responded to the growing shortage of certificated teachers by “letting any person with any college degree take charge of a classroom” (Green, 2019, p. 2). Garcia and Weiss (2019) write, “teacher shortage is real, large, and growing, and worse than we thought” (p. 1).

Nearly every state in the nation has experienced declining enrollment in teacher preparation. According to Paul Katnik (2019) Assistant Commissioner in the Missouri Department of Education in a presentation to the State Board of Education regarding the number of teacher candidates, the total number of completers between 2015-2016 and 2017-2018 in Missouri has declined by 21.7% while total enrollment in educator preparation programs has declined by .6%.

### *Alternative Education Programs*

Nationally as of the 2015-16 school year, 8.8% of K-12 teachers in the country were not fully certified, 31.5% of teachers did not have an educational background in their subject of main assignment, and 17.1% did not graduate from Educator Preparation Programs (Garcia & Weiss, 2019). The numbers of teachers in classrooms who were alternatively certified increased or stayed

constant between the 2011-12 and 2015-16 school years according to the National Center for Education Statistics (Garcia & Weiss, 2019).

Alternative education programs have been seen as ways the numbers of classroom teachers in Missouri classrooms can be increased. Alternative programs in Missouri require a candidate have first earned a bachelor's degree in a related field and be hired by a school district while earning credit through a university. Another avenue toward certification in the state for those holding a bachelor's degree is the successful passage the state content assessment known as the Missouri Content Assessment or MOCA in the area of instruction. Neither of these programs require student teaching prior to becoming the teacher of record. In the state, Katnik (2019) explained, alternative education of teachers in Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) has increased by 8.7% while alternative education of teachers in non-IHE has decreased by 5.7%.

Darling-Hammond is critical of alternative education programs because the success rate of such teachers is less than teachers who graduated from teacher education programs and completed student teaching. Darling-Hammond explained that "graduates of teacher education programs felt significantly better prepared and more efficacious,...than did those entering through alternative routes or with no training" (2003, p. 11). Another concern cited by Garcia & Weiss (2019) is based on the report of NCE is new teachers without adequate preparation to become teachers leave the profession at higher rates than those who have student taught.

#### *Partnerships between the School District and the University*

Developing the partnership between the school district and university allows both institutions to meet their needs (Reischl et al., 2017). In this case, the school district needs a teacher of record in the classroom while the university needs authentic placements for their teacher candidates. Partnerships between school districts and

educator-preparation programs provide opportunities for districts to recruit educators and for beginning teachers to learn to more about the district and acclimate to the culture of the district (Berman, 2004; Education First, 2016).

The guiding principles of American Association of Colleges of Teacher education (2018) emphasizes the importance of mutually beneficial partnerships with school districts where both the district and the university support each other in learning. In fact, those partnerships are expected by school of education national accreditors (Association for Advancing Quality in Education Preparation, 2019; Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation, 2019)

This is evidence of a true partnership between the university and the school districts. The desire to meet the needs of the partner districts has resulted in Northwest Missouri State University School of Education constructing mutually beneficial PK-12 experiences to help meet all stakeholders' needs (Council for the Accreditation of Education Preparation, 2019). Administrators who have hired a teacher candidate as the teacher of record in their school value Northwest Missouri State University's School of Education partnership. The Northwest Missouri State University School of Education works collaboratively with school districts to provide strong support for teacher candidates serving as teachers of record.

Northwest Missouri State University's School of Education partners with many rural PK-12 school districts in the Northwest portion of the state. Although Table 1 is not a comprehensive list of all of the school districts that have hired teacher candidates as the teacher of record, many of these PK-12 Partner School Districts have utilized the Teacher Candidate as the Teacher of Record practice and do represent a similar demographic in the Northwest Region of the State.

Table 1 depicts the socioeconomic status of partner districts based on the percentage of students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, the racial demographics of

the districts, and the total district enrollment.

**Table 1**  
*Demographics of Northwest Missouri State University PK12 Partners*

District	% F/R	Race % White	% non-White	Total
Maryville	33.2	91.9	*	1,401
Jefferson	32.2	*	*	125
NE Nodaway	45.8	*	*	205
W Nodaway	54.4	*	*	232
Nodaway Holt	46.3	*	*	199
S Nodaway	47.9	*	*	175
N Nodaway	45.4	*	*	205
Albany	59.3	*	*	398
Savannah	32.2	94.1	*	2,306
N Andrew	39.5	*	*	356

\* Indicates the number/percent has been suppressed due to a potential small sample size.

*Quality of the Preparation Program*

The university education program provides a strong foundation in pedagogy and content knowledge, and has been recognized twice as a recipient of the Christa McAuliffe Excellence in Teacher Education Award bestowed by the American Association of State College and Universities (AASCU). Northwest Missouri State University earned the McAuliffe Award in 2006 and 2018, making it just the third institution in the nation to receive the award two times since its inception in 2002 (Northwest Missouri State University). The Educator Preparation Program has been continuously nationally accredited since

1954.

The state measure of the Missouri Education Effectiveness System (MEES) indicate the candidates meet the standards at a higher rate than students from other institutions in the state. The state survey data of the teacher candidates and of the reporting of principals during the first year of employment also document the strength of training in the department. Support during the time when candidates serve as teacher of record is provided by the mentor teacher, the university supervisor, and many times by the building administrator of the superintendent of schools.

**Methodology**

The researchers used three qualitative data sources to determine if the teacher candidate as the teacher of record was perceived as a mutually beneficial practice for partner school districts and university teacher candidates. The first qualitative data source was the initial interview questions for approximately 30 teacher candidates who had served or were serving as teacher of record (see Appendix A). Next, the researchers sent a SurveyMonkey link to approximately 30 teacher candidates, 30 mentors, and 30 administrators (see Appendix B). The researchers received approximately a 32% response rate to the survey. To triangulate the data, the researchers randomly selected six teacher candidates to participate in follow-up interviews.

**Qualitative Findings**

*Northwest Missouri State University Supports the Practice*

Due to a recent redesign of the School of Education, Northwest Missouri State University's teacher candidates are actively engaged in clinical field experiences early and often during their course work. Specifically, teacher candidates engage in authentic teaching and learning in a partner PK-12 school in the first 7 weeks they are on campus completing their coursework. As a result, many school administrators have the opportunity to work with teacher candidates early in their development as a teacher candidate.

Northwest Missouri State University partners with many local and regional rural PK–12 school districts to facilitate numerous teacher candidates' clinical field experiences. Northwest Missouri State University is grateful for the numerous PK–12 school-district partnerships that allow teacher candidates to have these. As a result, Northwest Missouri State University focuses on a mutually beneficial partnership (CAEP, 2019) and wants to help meet a critical teacher shortage with local and regional PK–12 school districts.

Survey and interview data indicate local and regional PK–12 partner school districts are regularly vetting Northwest Missouri State University teacher candidates during a variety of opportunities, but specifically during clinical field experiences. In addition, partner school district and building administrators are frequently on the Northwest Missouri State University campus for a variety of activities like Career Day, Education Expo, and Mock Interview Day. Administrators indicated these are opportunities during which they can continue to vet teacher candidates for job opportunities that are open or may arise.

As a result of the evolving increase in hiring teacher candidates as teachers of record, Northwest Missouri State University established a process to determine if the teacher candidate was prepared to be the teacher of record during the student-teaching experience, documented in Northwest Missouri State University's Student Teaching Handbook (Student Teaching Handbook, p. 6). First, the teacher candidate should notify the Director of Field Experiences or Assistant Coordinator of Field Experiences that an offer has been made. Second, The Team (building principal, advisor, faculty member, certification officer, assistant coordinator of field experiences, and director of field experiences) meet to determine if the opportunity is a good fit for the teacher candidate, which may include grade level, content, certification areas, and other. The team makes the decision. The Director and the Assistant Coordinator of Field Experiences meet with the teacher candidate to share the team's decision.

Finally, should the team support the teacher candidate's placement, they will sign and file an agreement (Student Teaching Employment Agreement Form). Should teacher candidates disagree with the team's decision, they may appeal to the Teacher Education Guidance Committee. All decisions are made on a case-by-case basis focused on meeting the needs of both the teacher candidate and the school district.

#### *Administrators and Mentors Support the Practice*

When analyzing the administrators' and mentor teachers' survey data, the researchers identified several themes. One theme was the significance of the teacher candidate's disposition. Administrators and mentors believed the teacher candidate's disposition played a crucial role in the outcome. For example, one administrator responded, "I believe that our success has everything to do with who we hired; she was exceptional." Inexperienced teacher candidates must have the proper disposition to handle the situation in which they will be placed. In addition to the administrators' opinions regarding the importance of the teacher candidates' disposition as the teacher of record, administrators carefully vetted the teacher candidate through an interview process. The administrators' survey data reflected the importance of extensive discussions with the teacher candidate and personnel at the Northwest Missouri State University School of Education.

The administrators' vetting processes were crucial for the success of the teacher candidate as the teacher of record. Choosing the correct candidate to complete this experience was of the utmost importance and, with an extensive vetting process, including collaboration between partner PK–12 schools and Northwest Missouri State University, survey data showed 100% of the administrators and mentors believed teacher candidates as teachers of record were adequately prepared for this experience. One administrator commented, "I would not have hired either of my teacher candidates as I did without thoroughly checking out references and being very confident they were going to be strong."

Another theme from the administrators' data documented teacher candidates as the teachers of record often experienced feelings of being overwhelmed. Even though administrators indicated they believed teacher candidates as teachers of record were prepared for most content, some teacher candidates believed they were not well prepared for what it was like to be in a classroom all day every day. This uncomfortable feeling often caused stress for teacher candidates as teachers of record. The amount of time required to be successful, including grading, parent communication, colleague communication, and lesson preparation was a surprise to most teacher candidates. One administrator stated, "Our teacher candidate as the teacher of record is wonderful, but she didn't realize the extra effort it took beyond the teaching aspect." Combined with a feeling of culture shock from not understanding all facets entailed in performing as a successful teacher, administrators and mentors believed teacher candidates' intrapersonal skills improved. After a few weeks, the self-worth of teacher candidates as teachers of record's increased.

Self-reflection and assessing student success became a daily occurrence, which was a new phenomenon to teacher candidates as teachers of record. "On the job" learning carried a sharp learning curve than might have been encountered during a traditional student-teaching experience. Although it was not a negative trend, it was a difficult transition. Administrators and mentors understood teacher-candidate success was due to the amount of personal stamina of the candidate when addressing adversities and challenges. Bandura (1977) wrote, self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their ability to attain success, was a better predictor of success than previous experiences in similar situations. Survey results indicated 100% of the administrative and mentor respondents perceived the teacher of record was a hard worker who did not give up, thereby exhibiting self-efficacy.

The amount of guidance extended by the administration and mentor teacher was also a

theme these two subgroups believed was important. Results showed the mentor assigned had a vital role in the teacher candidate's positive experience. One teacher candidate commented, "My mentor made a huge difference. She was always there for me and I knew that." Schools pay mentors during this process to help ensure they give extraordinary attention to the teacher of record. The daily support, genuine caring for success, and the feeling that the teacher of record could turn to the mentor for any reason, played a major role in the success of teacher candidates.

Administrators also believed the only way this process would be extremely successful was if teacher candidates had a good mentor teacher. Survey data showed 100% of administrators and mentor teachers perceived teacher candidates were supported by their mentors with 71% responding strongly agree and 29% agreeing. Administrative knowledge of their teachers ranked high so pairings of teacher candidate and mentor were successful. It would be detrimental if a mentor who did not understand the importance of mentoring or did not have sufficient experience was assigned to teacher candidates. These new teachers need guidance and support.

Lastly, administrators and mentor teachers believed classroom management, depth of knowledge, interpersonal skills/grit, and flexibility were all essential traits for success. In addition, they believed it was dually important if the mentor teacher or administrator believed the teacher of record struggled in any of these areas; it was the mentor's and administrator's job to step in and help. As noted by a partner school district superintendent:

Administrators and mentors must be willing to help these new teachers more than usual; such help may require providing more guidance than they would give a traditional first-year teacher. Administration and mentors must be willing to help, support, and stand up for teacher candidates as teachers of record if questioned about their abilities to be in a classroom full time before they have graduated

### *Teacher Candidates Support the Practice*

The researchers conducted follow-up interviews with six randomly selected teacher candidates who served as teacher candidates as teachers of record. The responses fell into five themes: (a) support they received while student teaching, (b) the amount of time required to prepare and grade, (c) they had areas in which they were well prepared, (d) they had areas in which they were not prepared, and (e) they were glad they “did it.”

Teacher candidates received support from a variety of individuals: mentor teachers, other teachers who teach in the same content area, principals, university supervisors, and content professors. In some instances, mentor teachers checked in daily with teacher candidates; others checked in with the building principal “a lot.” Teacher candidates were unafraid to ask questions and did not seem threatened by the building administrator’s interest in them and their teaching. One candidate stated, “The building administrator made me feel like I was in the right place, doing the right thing, and they were happy I was there.”

The survey data indicated that 81% of teacher candidates believed they were supported by the mentor teacher and 100% of administrators and mentors indicated they felt mentor teachers supported the teacher candidates. Interestingly, 88% of the teacher candidates felt supported by others than mentor teachers or administrators. Of teacher candidates, 81% perceived support from building administrators whereas 100% of administrators and mentor teachers indicated they felt support for teacher candidates.

Teacher candidates prepared to build appropriate relationships with students, the content knowledge, and classroom management; however, they also indicated lesson planning was different in the “real classroom” when they needed to meet the instructional needs of the student rather than preparing an isolated plan. Although feeling confident in their abilities to manage a classroom, teacher candidates indicated the process differed when they managed the classroom on their own.

Practicum experiences and working in summer camps provided good experiences for one candidate. Parent communication and planning for a lesson on a day-to-day basis with the appropriate content was difficult.

Teacher candidates who were interviewed expressed it was a good experience to “just jump in and do it.” They learned about themselves and continued to grow. One candidate stated, “Experience helped me grow as I continued to try hard though I perceived many failures every day. By the end of year one I felt confident in what not to do.” One needs to be well organized and able to handle a great deal of pressure. Teacher candidates credited the positive experience to principals, other staff members, mentors, and university advisors. Being willing to communicate when one felt overwhelmed and to ask questions also emerged as important.

The success of teacher candidates serving as teachers of record appeared to support published literature regarding teacher-preparation programs. Mutually beneficial partnerships were created that benefitted teacher candidates and the school district (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2018; Reischl et al., 2017). Teacher candidates were earning a salary and the district had a teacher for their students.

Teacher candidates themselves demonstrated grit, as defined by Duckworth et al. (2007). Candidates exhibited the capacity to sustain effort and interest in projects that took months to complete. The survey data showed that teacher candidates displayed self-efficacy (see Bandura 1977) in believing they had the skills they needed to teach, even though they had not completed student teaching (Survey Data).

### **Quantitative Findings**

In addition to the qualitative data, an analyses of quantitative data provided several results (Table 2). We performed a chi square analysis to determine whether a significant difference existed between participants who identified as mentors and administrators and those who identified as



teachers of record. We performed analyses on several survey items to determine if significant differences existed between groups. The only significant difference that appeared, using an  $\alpha = .05$ , was found when comparing responses on the item, "was prepared for the demands of the job beyond the class content on his or her time." Results were significant  $\chi^2 (1, N = 29) = 4.91$ ,  $p < .05$ . Teacher candidates were less likely to agree they were "prepared for the demands of the job beyond the class content of his or her time" than were administrators and mentors.

Participants responded on a Likert-type scale, organized and transformed in Excel based on "agreement" or "disagreement." We coded responses of strongly agree/agree coded as "1" and responses of disagree/strongly disagree as "0." We identified the discrepancy between the responses of teacher candidates and the responses of building administrators and mentor teachers. The chi-square results indicated 100% of administrators believed teacher candidates were prepared for the demands beyond the classroom, while 69% of the teacher agreed. The statistical finding was validated by the follow-up survey which indicated that the majority of candidates were surprised by the amount of time they had to put into teaching, including preparation and grading. One candidate indicated spending 70–80 hours per week and two specifically indicated they had to learn to balance their home life with their professional life "while still giving ample time to both."

Although not statistically significant, only 56% of teacher candidates believed they were prepared to collaborate with parents to support student learning; in contrast, 85% of administrators and mentors believed teacher candidates were prepared to collaborate with parents. Skills to work in partnership with parents is an area that should be incorporated into the preparation program for teacher candidates.

With 29 responses to the question "I have found the process of teacher candidates serving as a teacher of records as an effective practice," 28

respondents answered "yes." In response to the question "was a hard worker who never gave up," all respondents indicated agreement.

## Conclusions

Despite limited research on the topic of using a teacher candidate as a teacher of record, evidence does exist showing the teacher shortage is real. This study is important because many rural school districts in the Northwest region of the state are experiencing significant teacher shortage. The state's substitute certification requirements align well to the teacher candidate as the teacher of record practice. As a result, a growing number of regional rural school districts are using teacher candidates as the teacher of record to address the educator shortage.

This study has several implications, including the need for further research regarding the practice of the Teacher Candidate as the Teacher of Record. The three most significant takeaways from this study are: 1) the TCs as TORs had habits of thinking, dispositional tendencies, contributing to their success, 2) the TCs were, 2) the TCs were adequately prepared by the university, and 3) the TCs as TORs had strong support by both the university and the school personnel.

According to Hammerness et. al (2005), student dispositions or habits of thinking a teacher candidate brings to the learning also is a factor in teacher candidate learning. Teacher candidates learn, practice, and reflect throughout their university experiences and during their experiences as student teachers and as teachers. Truly, successful teacher candidates as teachers of record bring grit to the position with an "approach that achievement is a marathon: his or her advantage is stamina" (Duckworth et al., 2007). The researchers determined an important part of the TC as the TOR's success is because the TC was coachable and was a hard worker. Specifically, the survey data reflected a strong belief by the mentor teacher and the administrator the TC as TOR had personal "grit".

Another important finding is the belief that the

university adequately prepared teacher candidates to serve as the teacher of record. The concept that supports this work is one where learning communities in university classrooms, in field experiences, and in student teaching allow teacher candidates to construct a vision of good practice that is not stage dependent (Conway & Clark, 2003; Grossman, 1992; Hammerness et al., 2005). A structure of fluid learning exercising the teacher candidate's understanding of content, pedagogy, the students whom they are teaching, as well as the contexts of the community where they teach, the ability to practice effective instructional practices as well as tools of the trade. All three qualitative data sources collected by the researchers indicated the mentors and the administrators perceived the TCs as the TORs were well prepared by the university for the P-12 classroom.

Finally, the perceptions that mentor teachers, university supervisors, and school administrators provided strong support to the teacher candidates as the teacher of record helped to ensure overall success of the teacher candidate. It is important not to underestimate the importance of systemic support for the TC. Grossman (1992) argues new teachers have the potential to make great strides toward expertise even as they are novices with the right kind of support. Mentors who connect with the novice teachers by building strong relationships with them support the learning of the teacher candidates helping them to reflect on practices they observe and they themselves implement. The critical support can come from various sources "supervisors, teacher candidate education instructors, cooperating teachers, other veteran teachers, and even fellow candidates" (Darling-Hammond et al., 2005). The researchers found that not only did the mentors, university supervisors, and administrators strongly support the TCs as TORs, but the TCs were supported by other professionals in the building as well.

Some recommendations for future discussions include:

1. Does having a teacher candidate as the

teacher of record have an effect on student learning?

2. What specific kinds of support do teacher candidates serving as teachers of record need as compared to traditional beginning teachers?
3. What are the perceptions of other stakeholders like parents, patrons, and colleague teachers of the practice?
4. Educator Preparation Programs, as the teacher shortage continues, should continue to collect data regarding perceptions of the effectiveness, test score data of students in the classes, and retention data for those who served as teacher of record while student teaching.



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## Appendix A: Teacher of Record Initial Interview Questions

Principal/District –

1. Why did you employ a preservice teacher candidate?
2. How did having a Teacher Candidate as the teacher of record affect student academic achievement (MAP, EOC, etc.)?
3. In what ways is the Teacher Candidate as the Teacher of Record positive for the district of employment?
4. In what ways is the Teacher Candidate as the Teacher of Record negative for the district of employment?
5. How does the partnership reshape the culminating field experience from the district / university perspective?
6. Anything you want us to know?

## Appendix B: Survey Questions

### TEACHER CANDIDATES AS TEACHERS OF RECORD SURVEY

You are being asked to participate in a research study. This research is being conducted to investigate the experiences of district administration, mentor teachers, and teacher candidate who are serving or have served as the teacher of record regarding the preparation of the teacher candidates to serve as teachers of record and the support needed and/or provided by the university and the district. The effect of these experiences of the teacher candidate as a teacher of record will be collected from the district administration and teacher candidates who are or have served as teachers of record via questionnaires and follow-up phone interviews of randomly selected teacher candidates, mentor teachers, and administrators.

When you are invited to participate in research, you have the right to be informed about the study procedures so that you can decide whether you want to consent to participation. This form may contain words that you do not know. Please ask the researcher to explain any words or information that you do not understand. You have the right to know what you will be asked to do so that you can decide whether or not to be in the study. Your participation is voluntary. You do not have to be in the study if you do not want to. You may refuse to be in the study and nothing will happen. If you do not want to continue to be in the study, you may stop at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

#### WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?

The purpose of this research is to investigate to investigate the experiences of district administration, mentor teachers, and teachers who are or have served as the teacher of record regarding the preparation of the teacher candidates to serve as teachers of record and the support needed and/or provided by the university and the district. In addition, participants will be asked if they view the practice of placing a teacher

candidate as the teacher of record an effective practice. The results of this survey will inform practice at the university in the assistance of partner school districts in employing teacher candidate as teachers of record.

#### HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE IN THE STUDY?

About 75 people will take part in this study of teacher candidates who are or have served as a teacher of record within the placement area of the university since 2016. WHAT AM I BEING ASKED TO DO? You will be asked to participate in a survey and perhaps a follow-up interview lasting no more than 10-15 minutes.

#### HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?

This study will take nine months approximately to complete. You can stop participating at any time without penalty.

#### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

Since this is a voluntary study, there is no direct benefit to you; however, the results of the study may shed light on the practice of placing teacher candidates as the teacher of record for the districts, educator preparation programs, and for the teacher candidates themselves.

#### WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

There is no risk involved in this study except your valuable time. Participation does not involve any experimental procedures.

#### WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF BEING IN THE STUDY?

There is no cost to you. The information provided by you will remain confidential. Nobody except the principal investigators will have access to it. Your name and identity will also not be disclosed at any time. Information produced by this study will be stored in the investigator's file and identified by a code number only. The code key connecting your name to specific information about you will be kept in a separate, secure location. The information contained in your records may not be given to anyone unaffiliated with the study in a form that could identify you without your written consent, except as required by law. To ensure

subject confidentiality, all data collected will be kept in a locked file and accessible only by the co-investigators. Electronic files will be password protected.

#### WILL I BE COMPENSATED FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY?

You will receive no payment for taking part in this study.

#### WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study. You will also be informed of any new information discovered during the course of this study that might influence your health, welfare, or willingness to be in this study.

#### CONFIDENTIALITY

#### WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research and/or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the Northwest Missouri State University Institutional Review Board (which is a group of people who review the research studies to protect participants' rights) at [IRBNWMS@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:IRBNWMS@nwmissouri.edu) or (660.562.1196). You may ask more questions about the study at any time. For questions about the study, contact Linda Gray Smith (641-234-2715) or at [lsmith@nwmissouri.edu](mailto:lsmith@nwmissouri.edu). A copy of this Informed Consent form will be given to you before you participate in the research.

#### AUTHORIZATION

I have read and understood this consent form, and I volunteer to participate in this research study. I understand that I will receive a copy of this form. I voluntarily choose to participate, but I understand that my consent does not take away any legal rights in the case of negligence or another legal fault of anyone who is involved in this study. I further understand that nothing in this consent

form is intended to replace any applicable Federal, state, or local laws.

### Survey

1. What was your role in the teacher candidates as teachers of record process?
  - I was the teacher of record
  - I was the administrator
  - I was the mentor teacher
2. What was the teacher candidate's teaching responsibility (Choose all that apply):
  - Elementary
  - Middle school (grade 5-8)
  - High school (grades 9-12)
  - Sped
  - K-12
3. Would you consider your placement?
  - Rural
  - Suburban
  - Urban
4. Please indicate your agreement level with the following statements.

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Not Observed

- Was supported by their mentor teacher
- Was supported by a building level administrator/administration
- Was supported by other professionals besides the mentor teacher or building level administrator/administration
- Was prepared to engage students in his or her content
- Was prepared to collaborate with colleagues to support student learning
- Was prepared by a professional education program that effectively prepared them to serve as teacher of record
- Was prepared to collaborate with parents to support student learning
- Was prepared for the demands of the job beyond the class content on his or her time

- Was prepared to implement instruction that resulted in high-level student learning in the classroom.
  - Found the community supportive of them serving as the teacher of record
  - Was coachable
  - Was a hard worker who never gave up
5. I have found the process of teacher candidates serving as a teacher of record as an effective Practice
    - Yes
    - No
  6. Anything else you would like to share regarding the experiences of the teacher candidate serving as the teacher of record?