

Bridging the Professional Development Gap. A Synergistic Model for Training, Supporting, and Retaining Highly Qualified Teachers, Pre-service to In-service

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Organization: Wesley College

Address: 120 North State Street, Dover, DE 19901

Project Director: Patricia Sherblom

Phone: (302) 736-2575

Email: patricia.sherblom@wesley.edu

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Abstract: This project addresses all elements of Absolute Priority One and Competitive Preference Priority One- Promoting STEM education named in the TQP Grant for FY 2014.

The goal of the project is to develop a model for teacher preparation that bridges the professional development gap between preparation and practice for prospective, new, and practicing teachers in Delaware. The desired project outcome is to positively impact student learning progress in the state of Delaware by preparing greater numbers of highly qualified teachers and providing sustained support for reforms-based practice for new and experienced teachers in our LEA partner schools.

Project activities include two action goals. The first is to re-align Wesley's teacher education program to more closely match the teacher preparation criteria of CAEP and the INTASC standards learning progressions. A major program re-alignment activity will be to work collaboratively with three local LEA partners to restructure the clinical and field component of our pre-student teaching programs to include targeted experiences in high needs areas of early reading and math literacy, RTI/special education, standards-based pedagogical practices, and STEM. Evolving from the re-structured pre-student teaching preparation, Wesley will require a yearlong student teaching experience that is blended with the LEA induction for new teachers. LEAs and Wesley will jointly design this model and jointly participate in hiring and training highly qualified (CAEP criteria) clinical faculty dedicated to the project long term. Wesley will also provide graduate level training for LEA teachers on site, as part of our long term commitment to sustained support for teachers in the field.

The project's second action goal is to craft a sustainable model for training and induction that blends the two during student teaching, thus increasing the chances of success in a teacher's induction years and beyond. Wesley will continue to support our graduates through the induction years. Because our LEA partners will collaborate with us on student teaching placement, it is anticipated districts will hire our student teachers into the LEA, making a seamless entry from preparation to practice, increasing the likelihood of new teacher success and retention.

The college is targeting preparation of an estimated 300 highly qualified new teachers over the five years of the project and placement of at least 100 of them in local Delaware school districts. The grant partners include: Capital School District, Dover, DE; Laurel School District, Laurel, DE; MOT Charter High School, Middletown, DE; Delaware State University, Dover, Delaware; and the Wesley College STEM faculty.

