

**A Study of
Teacher Preparation in Kansas City**

Prepared for the
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation by the
Missouri Schools of Education Research Project,
Teachers College, Columbia University

KAUFFMAN
Foundation

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INTRODUCTION

The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation asked the Schools of Education Research Project (SERP), based at Teachers College at Columbia University to study the preparation of teachers in the Kansas City, Kansas (KCKSD) and Kansas City, Missouri (KCMSD) school districts. SERP, which is headed by Dr. Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College, was already engaged in a national study of education schools that included site visits to more than two dozen institutions and surveys of a number of constituencies involved in education.

Like the national study, the regional project used a combination of quantitative and qualitative research strategies. The quantitative component consisted of surveys of principals and teachers in KCKSD and KCMSD. The surveys were conducted in 2003 and early 2004 using lists of names provided by the two school districts. The principals' survey was sent to all principals currently working in the two school districts. The teachers' survey was limited to those who began teaching in either of the districts between the 1998–99 and the 2002–03 school years. It was felt that they were likely to be new to teaching and, therefore, more recently involved with an education school program.

SERP partnered with ORC Macro, a nationally recognized research firm, in developing and disseminating the surveys and analyzing the results. The surveys drew, in part, on the instruments used in the national study. That project included surveys of a random national sample of principals and of recent alumni of 111 colleges and universities who were teachers. Comparisons are made in this report between the Kansas City and the national data.

The project's qualitative component involved site visits to education schools in Missouri (largely those in the central and western side of the state). The schools were chosen primarily on the basis of whether they produce a significant number of teachers hired by KCMSD. An unpublished study prepared for the Kauffman Foundation by researchers at the University of Missouri at Columbia, "A Statistical Profile of the KCMSD Teaching Workforce," helped in identifying the schools from which newly hired KCMSD teachers had obtained baccalaureate degrees.

Originally, the project was scheduled to visit education schools in Kansas as well. However, Kansas' education schools declined to participate. In all, the project visited eight education schools and the Kansas City Teaching Fellows (KCTF) Program. The participating institutions were: Central Missouri State University, Lincoln University, Missouri Western State College, Northwest Missouri State University, Park University, Southwest Missouri State University, the University of Missouri at

Columbia, and the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Each education school received a \$5,000 grant from the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation for participating in the study.

As with any research study, this one had limitations. Some eligible teachers would not have received surveys if their names were omitted from the lists provided by the two school districts and the KCTF Program. Of those who received the surveys, about half did not return them, so the analysis is based on the answers of only those who responded. The qualitative component of the survey, the site visits, was limited by the relative brevity of each visit (two to three days) and the amount of data available on each campus.

The Missouri Schools of Education Research Project (MSERP) report that follows is divided into four sections:

- Key findings from the survey of teachers
- Key findings from the survey of principals
- Key findings from the site visits
- Conclusions

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF TEACHERS

Overview

Working from the lists provided by KCKSD and KCMSD, MSERP, in conjunction with ORC Macro, surveyed 1,352 teachers identified as having started teaching in the districts between the 1998–99 and 2002–03 school years. Those in the KCTF Program who began teaching in the 2003–04 school year were also included. Charter school teachers were not surveyed. After ineligible respondents—those who reported that they had been teaching in Kansas City for more than seven years—were removed, there were a total of 1,310 eligible respondents. Six hundred twenty-three, or 47.6 percent, answered the survey either by mail or on-line. The response rate was 53.8 percent for KCMSD and 45.0 percent for KCKSD. Incentives in the form of \$15 gift certificates to Office Depot were offered to respondents.

The eight-page survey asked teachers for such information as: years teaching; general preparedness for teaching in Kansas City; preparation in specific areas; general attitude toward education schools, education issues and professional development; and age, race/ethnicity, and gender. The survey included several open-ended questions, primarily dealing with preparation.

ORC Macro segmented the results in a number of ways. Where the segmentation provided useful insights and seemed meaningful (this was a census and not a sample so there is an element of judgment involved in determining what is meaningful), the results were included among the key findings. If no differentiation by segment is made, then it means that any differences were not considered meaningful.

While some data were analyzed based on the institution at which responding teachers earned or were earning their degree or certification, the number of respondents per education school was often relatively small and so that breakdown was not included in the report. Where such information was compiled for a specific education school, it can be made available to that institution by contacting the Project Director, Alvin Sanoff, who can be reached at apsanoff@erols.com.

Profile of Respondents

Fifty-five percent of the respondents were elementary school teachers, 25 percent were middle school teachers and 21 percent were high school teachers. Sixty

percent of the KCMSD respondents as compared to 52 percent of KCKSD respondents taught at the elementary level.

Fifty-seven percent of the teachers were between 24 and 36 years of age, 25 percent were between 37 and 51, and the remaining 18 percent were age 52 and above. Seventy-seven percent were female. Eighty-one percent were white/Caucasian, 12 percent were African-American (18 percent in Missouri and 7 percent in Kansas) and 2 percent were American Indian/Alaskan Native. Five percent were of Hispanic origin. The rest either refused to provide the information or fell into other categories.

Forty-five percent of the teachers said that they had another career prior to teaching. This was more common among KCMSD (52 percent) than KCKSD teachers (39 percent).

Eight-six percent of the teachers said they were currently certified in the main subject they taught. It should be noted, however, that the survey did not ask whether the certification was provisional/temporary. A slightly higher proportion in KCMSD than in KCKSD (15 percent versus 12 percent) was not certified in the subject they taught.

Nineteen percent of the respondents said that they were “currently enrolled” in a teacher preparation program. More KCMSD (25 percent) than KCKSD teachers (15 percent) said they were currently enrolled in such a program.

Teachers described their teacher preparation program as follows:

- 48 percent said a four-year undergraduate degree in education
- 23 percent said an alternative program that may or may not require prior teacher preparation coursework
- 17 percent said a five-year bachelor’s and master’s program combining teacher preparation with a liberal arts major
- 11 percent said a four-year undergraduate degree with an academic major and a minor in education

Teachers with two years experience or less were more likely to select the alternative program. When asked what was the highest degree they held, 60 percent said bachelor’s, while 37 percent said master’s. One percent said doctorate and one percent said another type of degree.

Perception of Preparation

The survey also assessed how well prepared teachers were to teach in KCMSD and KCKSD. When asked about their general preparation, a substantial majority (71 percent) of teachers felt that they were reasonably well prepared:

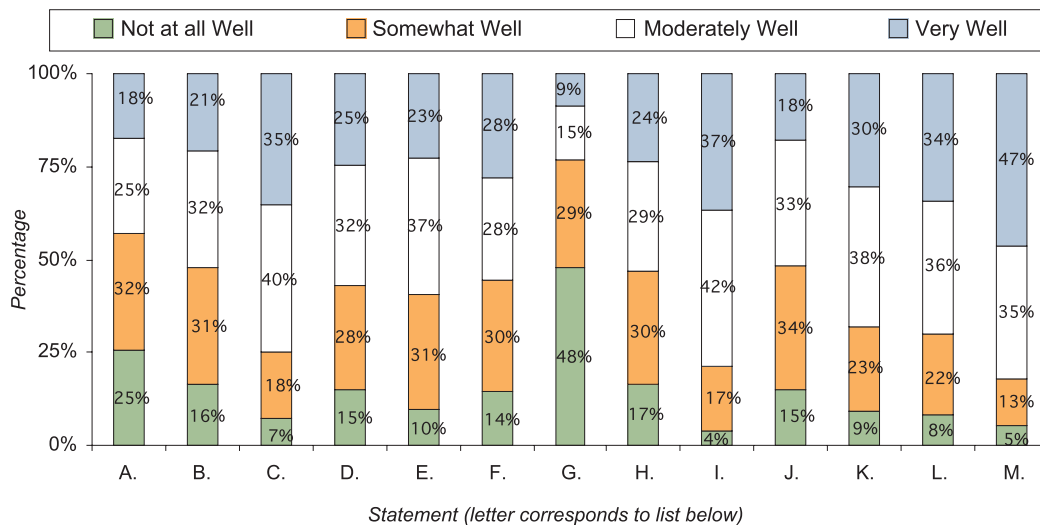
- Very well prepared—31 percent
- Moderately well prepared—40 percent
- Somewhat well prepared—22 percent
- Not at all well prepared—7 percent

When the data was broken down by district the differences were slight. Seventy-three percent of KCKSD teachers as compared to 69 percent of KCMUSD teachers said that they were very or moderately well prepared.

However, the picture became much less positive when the teachers were asked about their preparation in thirteen specific areas. These areas, with only minor modifications, were the same ones included in SERP’s national survey. Only a minority or a small majority of teachers described themselves as either very or moderately well prepared in eight of the areas, with large numbers of teachers saying that they were only somewhat or not at all well prepared. It is important to note that teachers reported themselves as far less prepared to perform specific parts of their job than the job in general.

As the following chart makes clear, there was not one area in which a majority of teachers said that they were very well prepared.

How well did the education you received prepare you to...?



- A. Integrate technology into the grade level or subject taught
- B. Maintain order and discipline in the classroom
- C. Implement new methods of teaching (e.g. cooperative learning)
- D. Implement state or district curriculum and performance standards
- E. Use student performance assessment techniques
- F. Address the needs of students with disabilities
- G. Address the needs of students with limited English proficiency
- H. Address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds
- I. Understand how students learn
- J. Work with parents
- K. Utilize different pedagogical approaches
- L. Work well with colleagues
- M. Teach the academic subject(s) in which you were trained

There were eight areas in which no more than 60 percent of teachers said they were very or moderately well prepared:

- Addressing the needs of students with limited English proficiency
- Integrating technology into the grade level or subject taught
- Working with parents
- Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom
- Addressing the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Addressing the needs of students with disabilities
- Implementing state or district curriculum performance standards
- Using student performance assessment techniques

On a more positive note, there were five areas in which at least 68 percent of teachers said they were very or moderately well prepared:

- Teaching the academic subject(s) in which they were trained
- Understanding how students learn
- Implementing new methods of teaching
- Working well with colleagues
- Utilizing different pedagogical approaches

Teachers who identified themselves as prepared in an alternative certification program were more likely to report that they were very or moderately well prepared to address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (68 percent versus 48 percent for all other teachers). At the same time, they were less likely to report that their education programs prepared them very or moderately well to teach the academic subject(s) in which they were trained (56 percent versus 89 percent for all other teachers).

Teachers in KCMSD reported themselves better prepared to use student performance assessment techniques than teachers in KCKSD (71 percent versus 57 percent) and to work with parents (57 percent versus 47 percent). But teachers in KCKSD reported themselves better prepared to maintain order and discipline in the classroom (57 percent versus 48 percent). In all other areas, the differences between the teachers in the two school systems were not significant.

When the MSERP survey results were compared to the results of the national survey (SERP) of teachers, the findings were quite comparable. Generally, Kansas City teachers did not perceive themselves as being as well prepared as teachers in the national survey, but the differences tended to be very small.

To provide additional insight, teachers were asked an open-ended question—"In what ways did your education program not prepare you well to teach in the Kansas City schools?" These were some typical comments:

In Their Own Words

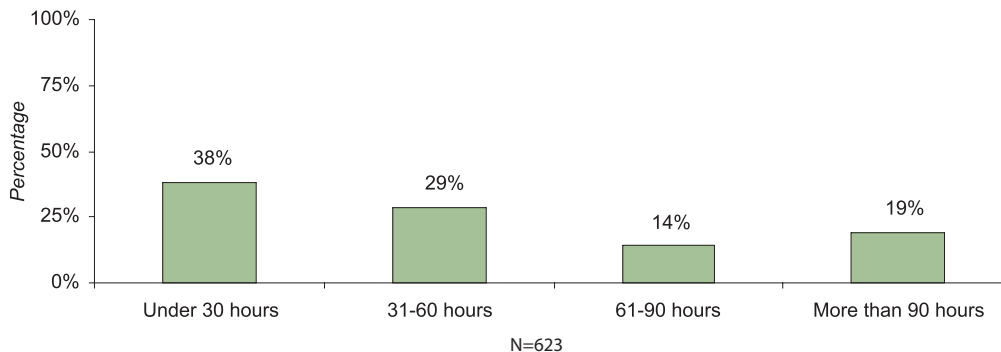
- *“I did not learn much about students with limited English or living in poverty.”*
- *“(Did not learn) how to handle parents/students from impoverished backgrounds, how to find/implement a classroom management plan, how to implement state performance standards.”*
- *“My education program did not provide adequate practice and focus on classroom management and individual student assessment.”*
- *“I had no idea what to do to deal with serious behaviors I encountered in my classroom. Student teaching should take place in a more realistic inner-city setting.”*
- *“Not one of the classes I took prepared me for the diverse needs of inner city children. The classes that I took focused very little on finding different ways to teach these children who obviously have very different needs than children from wealthier families. My education also never prepared me to deal with parents who either do not speak English or who could care less about their children’s education.”*
- *“I knew absolutely nothing about ESL students!”*
- *“Pedagogy was stressed, but diversity and urban issues were never discussed.”*
- *“While my education program prepared me to teach in the average classroom, it did not prepare me to teach in urban schools. We failed to discuss the obstacles faced by urban learners, but more importantly we did not learn how to help our students (and ourselves) address and overcome these obstacles. Some examples of these obstacles are discipline/behavior problems, language/cultural differences, limited knowledge about the world outside their neighborhood, language deficiencies/delays.”*
- *“There were no courses regarding urban education or diversity. A lot of adjunct teachers came from suburban and parochial schools. They were great instructors but came from different realities.”*
- *“None of my education program dealt with kids in an urban setting living the lives my students live. My classes all dealt with well behaved kids in good environments, with surprisingly little on classroom management.”*

Fieldwork and Student Teaching

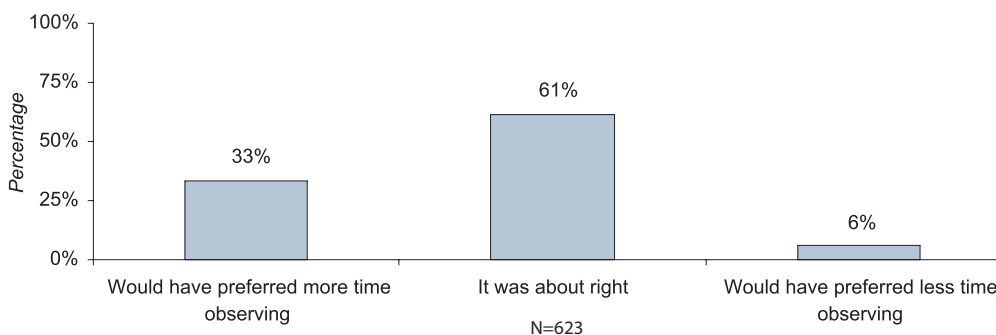
Both observational fieldwork and student teaching are important components of teacher preparation. While a large majority of Kansas City teachers said they were satisfied with the amount of time they spent in both fieldwork and student teaching, a significant number would have preferred to spend more time in the schools.

Teachers were first asked how much time they had spent observing teachers in the field prior to student teaching and if they felt the amount of time was about right, or would they have preferred more time or less time.

How much time did you spend observing teachers in the field prior to student teaching?



How do you feel about the amount of time you spent observing teachers in the field prior to student teaching?

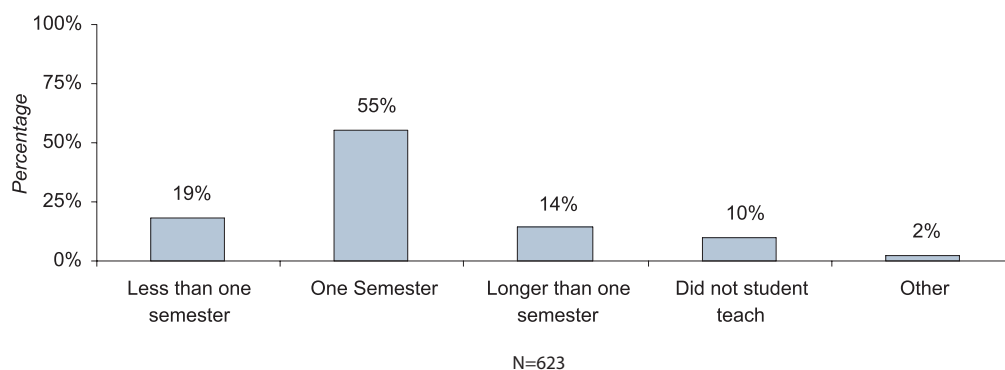


While 61 percent said that the time spent observing was about right, 33 percent would have preferred more time. Elementary school teachers were more likely than middle and high school teachers to have said they would have preferred more time observing. Those in the KCKTF Program were also more likely to have held that view.

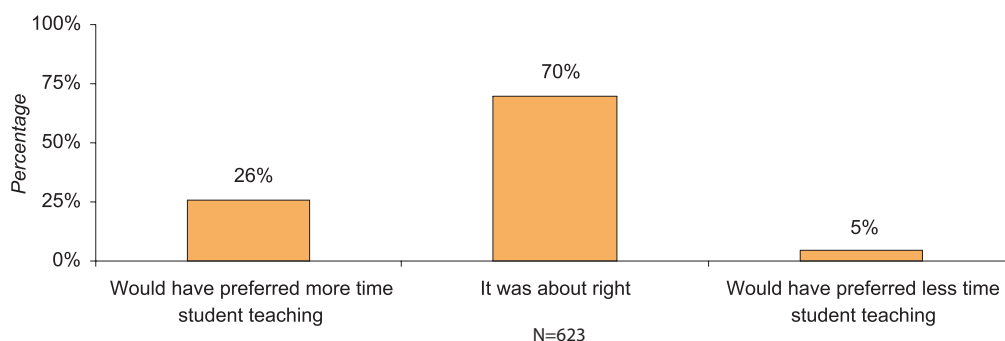
Teachers who spent less than thirty hours observing were much more likely to have said they would have preferred more time to observe. Teachers who were employed in KCMSD and KCKSD two years or less, middle and high school teachers, and those in the KCTF Program were more likely than the group as a whole to have spent under thirty hours observing.

Teachers were then asked how much time they had spent student teaching and if they felt the amount of time was about right, or would they have preferred more time or less time.

How long did your student teaching last?



How do you feel about the amount of time you spent student teaching?



While 70 percent of responding teachers said the amount of time spent was about right, 26 percent would have preferred more time student teaching. Elementary school teachers were more likely than middle and high school teachers to have said they would have preferred more time student teaching.

The proportion of teachers (55 percent) who said that their student teaching lasted one semester was comparable to the national study, as was the proportion (14 percent) that said that their student teaching lasted longer than a semester. The proportion (19 percent) that said that their student teaching lasted less than a semester was slightly higher than in the national survey. Most strikingly, the proportion (10 percent) that said that they did not student teach at all was more than double the number reported in the national study.

High school teachers were more likely than middle or elementary school teachers not to have student taught. Of all those who did no student teaching, 79 percent received their preparation in an alternative program of some kind. Of those who spent less than one semester student teaching, 42 percent would have preferred more time student teaching.

The more student teaching experience teachers had the more likely they were to feel well prepared. Half of all teachers with more than one semester of student teaching said that their education program prepared them very well to teach in the Kansas City schools, while only 28 percent of teachers with less student teaching experience than that said they were very well prepared.

Teachers with more than one semester of student teaching were also much more likely to have said that they were very or moderately well prepared to: use student performance assessment techniques; understand how students learn; work with parents; and teach the academic subject(s) in which they were trained.

Closer examination of the student teaching data showed that there were notable differences in the experiences of KCMSD and KCKSD teachers:

- Seventeen percent of KCMSD teachers did not student teach as compared to 5 percent of KCKSD teachers
- Thirty-two percent of KCMSD teachers would have preferred more time student teaching as compared to 21 percent of KCKSD teachers
- Seventy-six percent of teachers in KCKSD said that they student taught for at least one semester as compared to 62 percent in KCMSD

It is worth noting that a higher proportion of KCKSD than KCMSD teachers responding to the survey were in the KCTF Program, so the above differences cannot be attributed to that program.

In Their Own Words

Responses to open-ended questions demonstrate the importance many teachers placed on spending as much time as possible observing and student teaching in urban schools. When teachers were asked, “Are there any other types of (education) programs—other than the program(s) you participated in—that would have better prepared you to teach in the Kansas City schools,” these were some typical responses:

- *“The more a student can be in a classroom interacting with the kids the better.”*
- *“A program with much more observation and study of urban culture.”*
- *“I think a PDS (Professional Development School) program that would have allowed me to be in the schools longer would have helped.”*
- *“One semester of student teaching in the inner city.”*
- *“I think if student teaching was a paid position for one year in an inner-city classroom with a mentor whose job was to train three or four new teachers and nothing else I would have been far more prepared.”*

- *“I would have been better off student teaching for all four years, that is where I learned the most.”*
- *“Any program based in real life situations and strategies (not theory!) for helping ESL children and children with behavior issues would have been helpful.”*

There were many similar comments. The teachers also made the point that observation and student teaching in rural or suburban schools cannot substitute for urban experiences:

- *“The schools that I taught at during my education were all suburban schools. I think visiting urban schools as well may have better prepared me for teaching at KC schools.”*
- *“More exposure to urban school districts would have helped.”*
- *“A required urban school observation would be good for all education programs.”*
- *“I would have liked to have been in a more diverse cultural setting during my practicum, and my student teaching. I student taught in a very middle class district and then went to work in Kansas City. It was a bit of a culture shock even though I felt my school did a good job of making sure we had at least partially prepared for a more diverse cultural setting.”*

In answering the question “In what ways did your education program prepare you well to teach in the Kansas City schools?” many teachers cited hands-on experience as well as specific coursework:

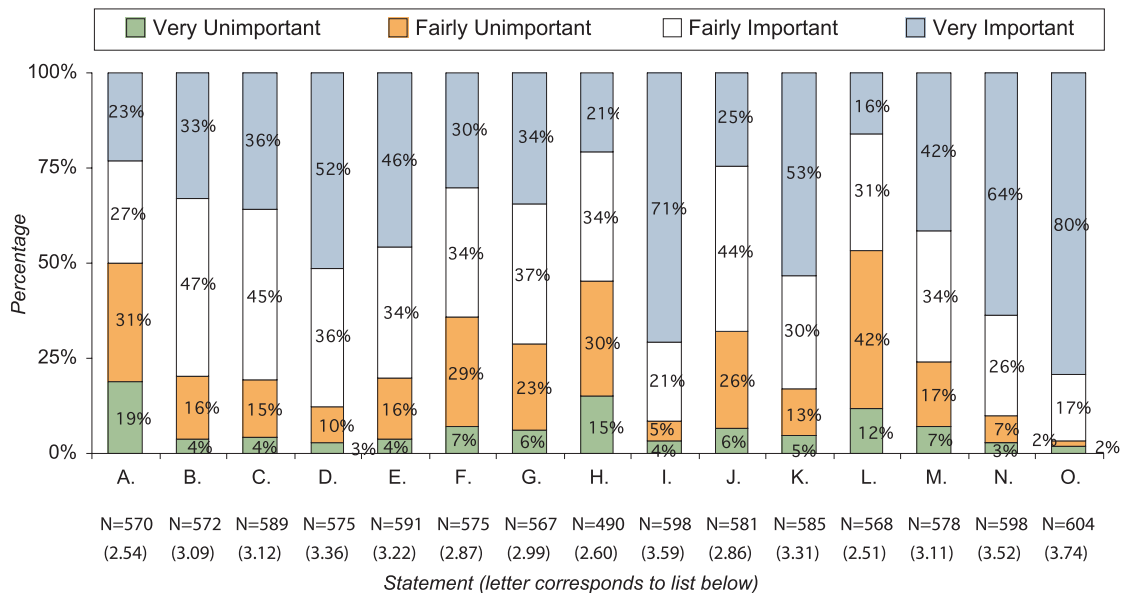
- *“(My program) required numerous classes in cultural diversity and working with the disabled.”*
- *“(My program) taught me to work well with a diverse group of students and offered and required multicultural classes.”*
- *“The student teaching experience was the most helpful.”*
- *“They made us do half of our student teaching in an inner-city school. We also had to do thirty-plus hours of observation in an urban setting.”*
- *“I participated in several multicultural education classes which definitely helped me with the diverse population found in Kansas City.”*
- *“They prepared me for classroom management.”*
- *“We were given many different methods to teach each of the main subject areas.”*

It is clear that teachers wanted as much hands-on experience as they could get, and the more relevant that experience was to urban schools the better.

Improving Preparation

In the survey, teachers were presented with fifteen different ways that schools of education could better prepare aspiring teachers and were asked whether they thought each option was very important, fairly important, fairly unimportant or very unimportant.

How important would you consider each of the following?



- Require a major in an academic subject other than education at the undergraduate level
- Increase mastery of pedagogical practice
- Raise academic standards
- Recruit higher quality faculty
- Provide more observational field experience prior to student teaching
- Require student teaching of longer duration
- Provide closer supervision of student teaching
- Divide faculty into research faculty and clinical faculty (as medical schools do) rather than have faculty do both research and teaching
- Mentor all new teachers
- Raise standards for admission to teacher education programs
- Require education school faculty to spend more time in the schools
- Utilize more rigorous textbooks and other materials
- Utilize more up-to-date textbooks and other materials
- Assure that all teachers are capable of teaching reading
- Provide more instruction in classroom management

As the preceding chart shows, more than half the teachers singled out five of the options as very important:

- Providing more instruction in classroom management
- Having education schools mentor all new teachers
- Assuring that all teachers are capable of teaching reading
- Requiring education school faculty to spend more time in the schools
- Recruiting higher quality faculty

Elementary school teachers, teachers in KCMSD and female teachers were more likely to hold the view of having education schools mentor all new teachers. Elementary school teachers were more likely to hold the view of assuring that all teachers are capable of teaching reading.

Most of the surveyed teachers did not feel that schools of education do a good job of providing professional development. When asked to choose whether schools of education, the school system in which the teacher works or some other institution does the best job of providing professional development for teachers, 73 percent chose their school system, while just 21 percent selected schools of education.

When asked to what extent they used a variety of different resources to keep up with their field, just 17 percent said they used professional development at a school of education to a great extent. They were much more likely to rely on informal communication with colleagues or professional development within the school system.

Why Teachers Might Leave

Teachers were asked to select three from a list of ten possible reasons that would be most likely to cause them to leave Kansas City schools. (See table in principals' section for comparison of teacher and principal responses.) The top three reasons cited were: Demands of the job that lead to burnout (67 percent); low pay/benefits (51 percent); and culture of the school in which you work (46 percent).

The segmentation of the data surfaced these differences: Teachers from KCKSD (59 percent) were more likely than KCMSD teachers (42 percent) to have cited low pay/benefits; teachers from KCMSD (54 percent) were more likely than those from KCKSD (40 percent) to have cited the culture of their school.

Eighty-three percent of respondents said that if they were to leave the Kansas City schools they would remain in teaching. But when asked if they "could start over again, what is the likelihood that you would become a teacher," 58 percent said very likely and 22 percent said moderately likely. The remaining 20 percent said somewhat or not at all likely.

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF PRINCIPALS

Overview

The project surveyed 114 principals in KCMSD and KCKSD from lists provided by the two districts. Fifty-eight responded through the mail or on-line resulting in a response rate of 51 percent. The response rate was almost identical for the two districts. Fifty-nine percent of the responding principals were from KCMSD and 41 percent from KCKSD. Responding principals were offered an incentive in the form of a \$25 gift certificate to Office Depot.

Profile of Respondents

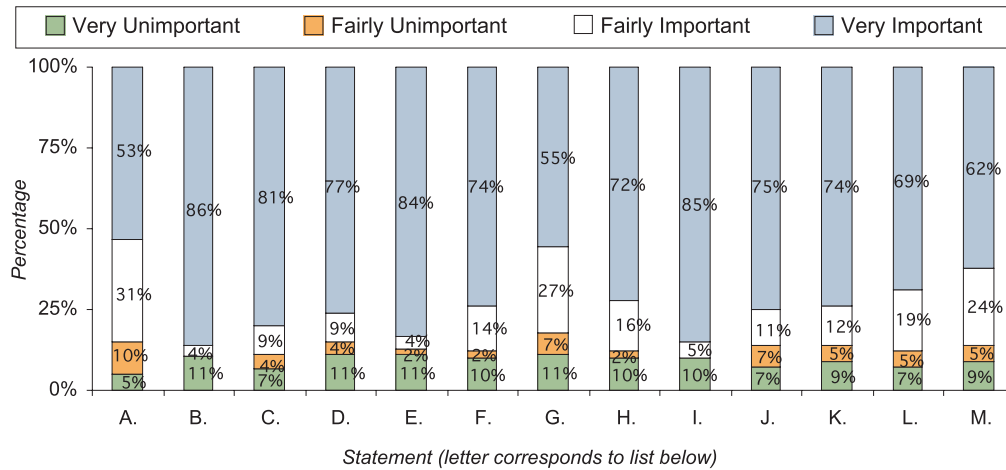
Of the respondents, 55 percent had been principals for six or more years. However, 57 percent had been at their current school for no more than three years. Sixty-two percent were primary school principals and 31 percent headed secondary schools, with the remainder heading schools they described as “other.” Sixty percent were age 50 and above.

Sixty-eight percent of the principals were female. Forty-seven percent were African-American, 44 percent white/Caucasian and two percent were American Indian/Alaskan Native. Two percent were of Hispanic origin. The remainder either refused to provide the information or fell into some other category.

Preparation of Teachers

Principals were asked “How important is it that schools of education prepare the teachers you hire to be able to perform . . . ?” in thirteen different areas. These were the same areas teachers were asked about when they were questioned about their level of preparation. All thirteen were considered very important by a majority of the principals.

How important is it that schools of education prepare teachers you hire to be able to . . . ?



- A. Integrate technology into the grade level or subject taught
- B. Maintain order and discipline in the classroom
- C. Implement new methods of teaching (e.g., cooperative learning)
- D. Implement state or district curriculum and performance standards
- E. Use student performance assessment techniques
- F. Address the needs of students with disabilities
- G. Address the needs of students with limited English proficiency
- H. Address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds
- I. Understand how students learn
- J. Work with parents
- K. Utilize different pedagogical approaches
- L. Work well with colleagues
- M. Teach the academic subject(s) in which they were trained

As the chart shows, four of the areas were considered very important by 80 percent or more of the principals:

- Maintain order and discipline
- Understand how students learn
- Use student performance assessment techniques
- Implement new methods of teaching

Five of the areas were considered very important by 70 to 79 percent of the principals:

- Implement state or district curriculum and performance standards
- Work with parents
- Address the needs of students with disabilities
- Utilize different pedagogical approaches
- Address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds

Four areas were considered very important by fewer than 70 percent of the principals:

- Work well with colleagues
- Teach the academic subject(s) in which they (teachers) were trained
- Address the needs of students with limited English proficiency
- Integrate technology into the grade level or subject taught

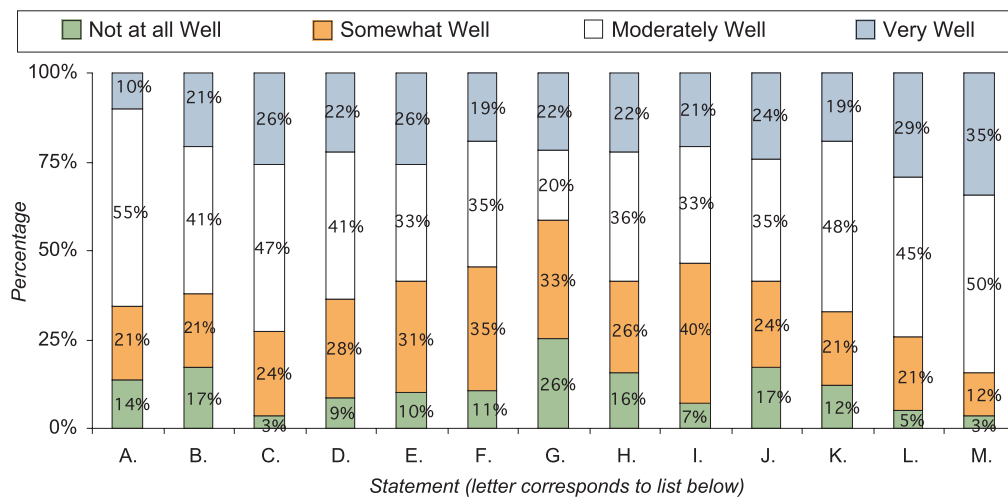
There were significant differences in the perspectives of principals in KCKSD and KCMSD.

- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said it is very important that teachers be prepared to implement new methods of teaching (91 versus 74 percent). There was also a notable difference between primary and secondary school principals (80 versus 94 percent).
- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said it is very important that teachers be prepared to implement state or district curriculum and performance standards (91 versus 68 percent). There was also a notable difference between female and male principals (82 versus 63 percent) as well as between primary and secondary school principals (86 versus 67 percent).
- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said it is very important that teachers be prepared to use student performance assessment techniques (91 versus 79 percent).
- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said it is very important that teachers be prepared to address the needs of students with disabilities (92 versus 62 percent). There was also a notable difference between female and male principals (82 versus 59 percent). KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said it is very important that teachers be prepared to address the needs of students with limited English proficiency (65 versus 48 percent). There was also a notable difference between African-American and white principals (63 versus 49 percent).
- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said it is very important that teachers be prepared to address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (88 versus 62 percent). There was also a notable difference between primary and secondary school principals (69 versus 89 percent).
- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said it is very important that teachers be prepared to work well with colleagues (83 versus 59 percent). There was also a notable difference between female and male principals (77 versus 47 percent) as well as between primary and secondary school principals (78 versus 56 percent).

There were also differences based on length of tenure as principal. Those with six or more years of experience were significantly more likely than principals with less experience to have said that preparation in the following six areas was very important: maintaining order and discipline; using student performance assessment techniques; addressing the needs of students with limited English proficiency; understanding how students learn; utilizing different pedagogical approaches; and working well with colleagues.

Principals were then given the thirteen areas and asked “How well do you think your new teachers are prepared . . . ?” in each area. These were the same areas of preparation that teachers were asked about.

How well do you think your new teachers are prepared to . . . ?



- A. Integrate technology into the grade level or subject taught
- B. Maintain order and discipline in the classroom
- C. Implement new methods of teaching (e.g., cooperative learning)
- D. Implement state or district curriculum and performance standards
- E. Use student performance assessment techniques
- F. Address the needs of students with disabilities
- G. Address the needs of students with limited English proficiency
- H. Address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds
- I. Understand how students learn
- J. Work with parents
- K. Utilize different pedagogical approaches
- L. Work well with colleagues
- M. Teach the academic subject(s) in which they were trained

As the chart shows, there were no areas in which a majority of the principals said that their new teachers were very well prepared, which is consistent with the responses of the teachers. It is noteworthy, however, that in many areas the principals felt that the teachers were better prepared than the teachers themselves did. (See table in Conclusions section of the report that compares the responses of teachers and principals.)

Even when the very and moderately well prepared responses were combined, only three areas of teacher preparation got high grades from more than 70 percent of the principals:

- Teaching the academic subject(s) in which they were trained
- Working well with colleagues
- Implementing new methods of teaching

In four areas, between 60 and 69 percent of principals said their new teachers were very or moderately well prepared:

- Utilizing different pedagogical approaches
- Integrating technology into the grade level or subject taught
- Implementing state or district curriculum performance standards
- Maintaining order and discipline in the classroom

There were six areas in which no more than 59 percent of the principals said their new teachers were very or moderately well prepared:

- Working with parents
- Using student performance assessment techniques
- Addressing the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Addressing the needs of students with disabilities
- Understanding how students learn
- Addressing the needs of students with limited English proficiency

Again, there were substantial differences in the perspectives of KCKSD and KCMSD principals.

- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said new teachers are very or moderately well prepared to integrate technology into the grade level or subject taught (79 versus 56 percent). There was also a notable difference between primary and secondary school principals (58 versus 72 percent).
- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said new teachers are very or moderately well prepared to maintain order and discipline in the classroom (75 versus 53 percent). There were also notable differences between primary and secondary school principals (58 versus 72 percent) and between female and male principals (66 versus 53 percent).
- KCKSD principals were more likely than KCMSD principals to have said new teachers are very or moderately well prepared to work well with colleagues (83 versus 68 percent). There were also notable differences between principals with six or more years of experience and those with five years experience or less (82 versus 65 percent).

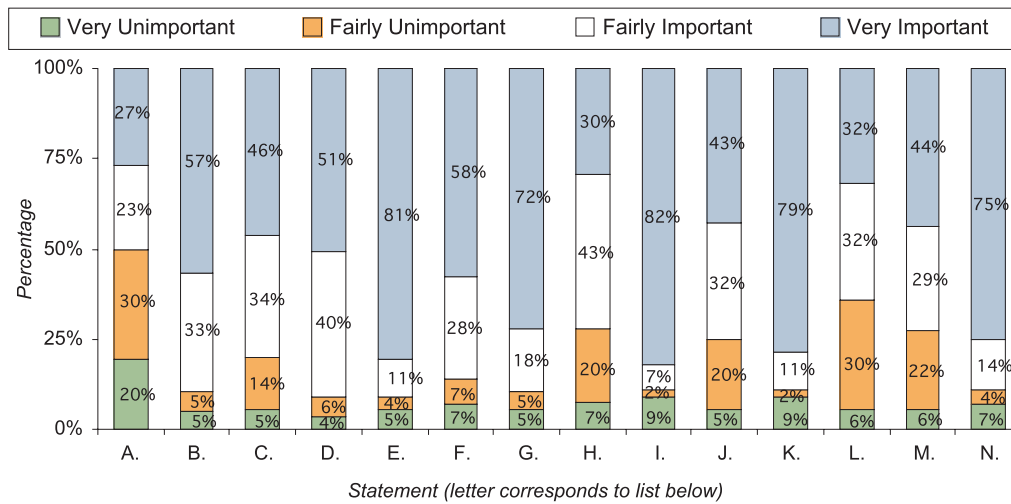
- KCKSD principals were less likely than KCMSD principals to have said new teachers are very or moderately well prepared to address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds (50 versus 65 percent).
- KCKSD principals were less likely than KCMSD principals to have said new teachers are very or moderately well prepared to work with parents (50 versus 65 percent).

Segmentation of the data surfaced a few other meaningful differences. Sixty-one percent of primary school principals versus 78 percent of secondary principals said new teachers were very or moderately well prepared to utilize different pedagogical approaches. Fifty-nine percent of female principals versus 41 percent of male principals said new teachers were very or moderately well prepared to understand how students learn.

The questions in the national survey of principals were framed slightly differently than in the MSERP study, although the options provided to principals were generally the same. For the most part, principals in the national study were even more dissatisfied with the preparation of teachers.

Kansas City principals were presented with a list of fourteen different ways that schools of education could better prepare aspiring teachers and were asked whether they thought each option was very important, fairly important, fairly unimportant or very unimportant. The list in the chart shown on page 20 differed in one significant way from the list provided teachers: it did not include the option of providing more instruction in “classroom management.” The omission had to do with timing. The principals’ survey was conducted before the teachers’ survey. Once it was clear from the response of the principals that classroom management was a major issue, the option on classroom management was added to the teachers’ survey.

How important would you consider each of the following?



- A. Require a major in an academic subject other than education at the undergraduate level
- B. Increase mastery of pedagogical practice
- C. Raise academic standards
- D. Recruit higher quality faculty
- E. Provide more observational field experience prior to student teaching
- F. Require student teaching of longer duration
- G. Provide closer supervision of student teaching
- H. Divide faculty into research faculty and clinical faculty (as medical schools do) rather than have faculty do both research and teaching
- I. Mentor all new teachers
- J. Raise standards for admission to teacher education programs
- K. Require education school faculty to spend more time in the schools
- L. Utilize more rigorous textbooks and other materials
- M. Utilize more up-to-date textbooks and other materials
- N. Assure that all teachers are capable of teaching reading

As the chart shows, more than 70 percent of the principals singled out five of the options as very important:

- Mentoring all new teachers
- Providing more observational field experience prior to student teaching
- Requiring faculty to spend more time in the schools
- Assuring that all teachers are capable of teaching reading
- Providing closer supervision of student teaching

Three other options were regarded as very important by more than half the principals:

- Requiring student teaching of longer duration
- Increasing mastery of pedagogical practice
- Recruiting higher quality faculty

The segmentation of the data showed that KCMUSD principals were more likely than KCKSD principals to have said that it is very important to:

- Provide more observational field experience (91 versus 65 percent)
- Provide closer supervision of student teaching (82 versus 58 percent)
- Recruit higher quality faculty (61 versus 36 percent)

The priorities of principals in the national study were quite similar to those of principals in the Kansas City districts. Both the national and Kansas City groups put mentoring new teachers at the top of their list of ways to improve teacher preparation. Similarly, both Kansas City principals and those in the national survey agreed that teachers were least prepared to address the needs of students with limited English proficiency.

In Their Own Words

When principals were given the opportunity to answer open-ended questions, they often stressed the same points teachers did. When asked, “In what ways could schools of education better prepare your new teachers?” They said:

- *“Providing more opportunities for hands-on experiences. Training in developing and maintaining school/home relationships, and inclusion of diversity and/or cultural appreciation experiences.”*
- *“If they are going to teach in an urban setting, new teachers must be prepared to differentiate instruction as well as have a strong background in classroom management.”*
- *“Teachers preparing to work in urban schools need more training with diversity issues. Teachers still need more preparation in assessing and addressing individual needs of students.”*
- *“Most teachers do not know how to manage students or teach reading.”*
- *“Students interested in teaching should have practicum in (both) suburban and inner-city schools. Often students opt to student teach in suburbia and, after graduation, are unable to get a job in a suburban district and they apply to an urban district and many are unable to adapt or survive.”*
- *“More time with students at an earlier time in their educational studies so they catch the flavor of dealing with students in the different areas of the school; more intensive work in the student teaching process—allow them to be more responsible for planning lessons and curriculum objectives.”*
- *“More field experience and longer student teaching.”*
- *“Give them more time in the classroom during their internships. They need to understand how to address the needs of urban learners from poverty*

backgrounds. Classes on how to creatively deal with discipline problems in the classroom would also be helpful.”

- *“Behavior or classroom management is an area that needs to be addressed to help meet teacher and student needs. Generally, new teachers do not understand students and become frustrated when their management plan doesn’t work out according to what was discussed in the college prep class.”*
- *“Increase the number and variety of field experience, quality of supervision, and maintain higher expectations for performance. Furthermore, colleges, in conjunction with the school sites, need to train, set standards, and monitor the efforts of on-site cooperating teachers.”*

When principals were asked, “In what ways are schools of education currently preparing new teachers very well,” they said:

- *“New teachers are strong in subject areas and in some cases well informed regarding pedagogy.”*
- *“The new teachers know the pedagogy, but they are unable to apply it to the classroom.”*
- *“Schools of education are addressing more the diversity of learners and the importance of individualized instruction.”*
- *“Schools of education currently prepare teachers well in the area of textbook knowledge. In reality, quite a few of the techniques learned while in college have no real impact when the teacher gets into the real world of work.”*
- *“I feel new teachers are better classroom managers. They seem to relate well to the students and there are fewer discipline problems with new teachers.”*
- *“New teachers are comfortable using technology. They are knowledgeable about alternative assessment and are ready to learn about district initiatives.”*

It is clear that principals put a high priority on providing students with as much exposure to urban schools as possible through both fieldwork and student teaching.

Hiring Teachers

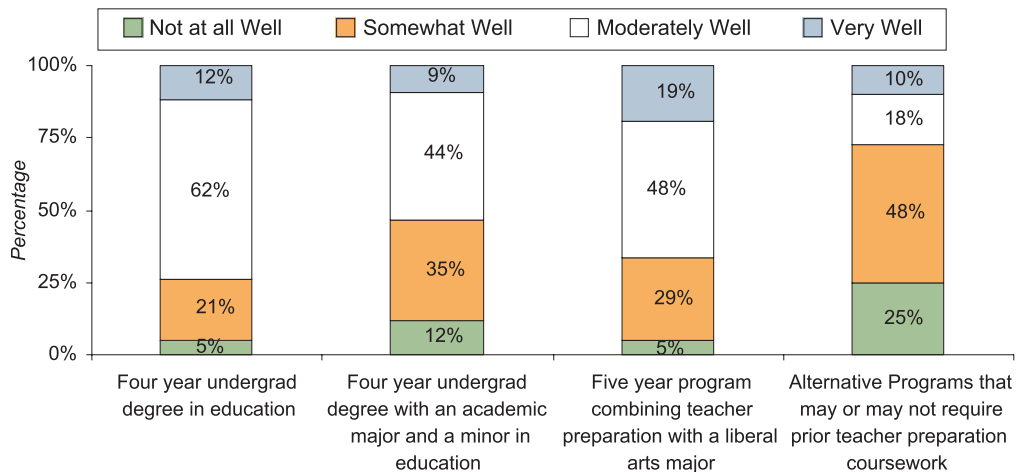
Principals were asked what types of preparation programs they had hired teachers from in the past twelve months:

- 88 percent said a four-year undergraduate degree in education
- 59 percent said an alternative program. Secondary school principals were more likely to have done so than primary school principals (72 versus 53 percent)
- 36 percent said a four-year undergraduate degree in an academic major and a minor in education

- 35 percent said a five-year bachelor’s and master’s program combining teacher preparation with a liberal arts major. KCKSD principals were more likely to have done hiring from this type of program than KCMSD principals (58 versus 18 percent), probably a reflection of the fact that the University of Kansas has a five-year program

Principals were then asked how well these various programs prepare new teachers at their school.

How well do the following programs prepare new teachers for working at your school?



When the very and moderately well prepared responses were combined, 74 percent of the principals selected a four-year undergraduate degree in education as the best preparation. This was followed by: a five-year combined program (67 percent); a four-year undergraduate degree with an academic major and a minor in education (53 percent); and an alternative program (28 percent). The latter had, by far, the highest proportion of negative responses from principals. Forty-eight percent said it prepared new teachers only somewhat well and 25 percent said not at all well.

When the responses were segmented, KCKSD principals were more positive than KCMSD principals about teachers from alternative certification programs, with 36 percent of Kansas principals saying they were very or moderately well prepared as compared to 24 percent of Missouri principals. Similarly, only nine percent of the Kansas principals said not at all well prepared, in contrast to 31 percent of the Missouri principals.

Principals who had hired teachers from any kind of alternative certification program were asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of such programs:

- *“In general, the teachers have experiences working in the private sector. They have more refined communications skills and professionalism. They are*

lacking in the area of organizing instruction, monitoring student progress, and classroom management.”

- *“These teachers are more willing to learn the art of good teaching. They are excited about their career change and are willing to do whatever it takes to make students successful.”*
- *“Strengths—usually highly motivated and aggressive in utilizing resources. Weakness—they are usually not prepared for the wide range of students’ educational and emotional needs.”*
- *“The teaching fellows that I have had the privilege of working with are among the best teachers in the building. They have some real experience prior to being placed in a classroom.”*
- *“The strength is the determination of these new teachers to do their best with students. The weaknesses are that the new teachers lack a background in educational courses, instructional strategies and how students actually learn.”*

Why Teachers Might Leave

Principals were asked to pick from a list of ten reasons the three they considered most likely to explain why Kansas City teachers leave the profession. (See table below.) The list was the same one used in the survey of teachers, although the question was framed slightly differently.

Reasons cited for why teachers are most likely to leave		
	Principals	Teachers
Lack of intellectual stimulation	0%	9%
Low prestige of the teaching profession	7%	13%
Inadequate academic preparation	10%	2%
Personal or family issues (e.g., child care)	19%	35%
Inadequate mentoring or induction after beginning teaching	22%	8%
Culture of the school in which the teacher works	35%	46%
Low pay/benefits	48%	51%
Demands of the job that lead to burnout	62%	67%
Inadequate preparation for the realities of the classroom	86%	10%

The principals and teachers agreed on two of the three most likely reasons—“demands of the job that lead to burnout” and “low pay/benefits.” But the primary reason cited by principals ranked much lower on the teachers’ list. Eight-six percent of principals cited “inadequate preparation for the realities of the classroom” as compared to only 10 percent of the teachers. Principals with five years or less experience were more likely to have cited this than principals with six or more years of experience (96 versus 78 percent)

On two items that were not among the top three, there was a notable difference between Kansas and Missouri principals. Forty-four percent of KCMSD principals but only 21 percent of KCKSD principals cited “culture of the school in which the teacher works.” Twenty-nine percent of KCMSD principals but only 13 percent of KCKSD principals cited “inadequate mentoring or induction after beginning teaching.”

The Principals’ Own Preparation

Ninety-seven percent of principals held an advanced degree or certificate and in most cases (91 percent) it was in educational administration/leadership.

Most principals said their advanced education had prepared them either very (32 percent) or moderately well (52 percent) for their job. However, when presented with descriptions of two other types of programs and asked to choose whether these would have better prepared them, they overwhelmingly preferred an alternative to a traditional program:

- Eighty percent said that “a paid apprenticeship program of one to two years that combines coursework and working with an experienced principal” would have provided better preparation than a traditional educational administration program.
- Twenty percent said that “a joint program of one to two years between a school of education and a business school” would have better prepared them.

In Their Own Words

When asked in an open-ended question about the strengths and weaknesses of the education program that prepared them for their job, many principals cited the need for more hands-on experience:

- *“The content of how an administrator is to act and lead was wonderful. I would like to see much more of a paid internship though.”*
- *“Strength—practical experience. Weakness—too much research-based information, not enough practical usage.”*
- *“Strengths included the emphasis on working cooperatively with administrators from areas other than urban, providing different perspectives, and looking at teacher preparation programs to determine the deficits that new teachers bring. The weakness is that graduate programs are often based in theory and there are not enough experiences in real schools.”*
- *“There needs to be more opportunities to shadow veteran principals and reflections on what they observed.”*

- *“As with teacher preparation, there was not enough practical experience and application. I was ill prepared to deal with the budget.”*
- *“The strengths of the program were the research and theory-based classes. The weakness was that the classes were not immersed within a school setting. This is where an apprenticeship-type schooling would have been helpful.”*

KEY FINDINGS FROM EDUCATION SCHOOL SITE VISITS

Overview

The project conducted nine site visits, eight to different institutions in Missouri and one to the KCTF Program. The visits took place between January and April of 2004.

Generally, teams of three—current and former faculty members at education schools outside the region and writer/consultants with experience in education—spent two to three days on a campus. The following faculty members and administrators were members of site teams: Steven Bossert, professor of education at Syracuse University who has since become dean of the Graduate School of Education at the University of California–Riverside; Richard Clark, retired dean of the Graduate College of Education at the University of Massachusetts–Boston; Jean Krasnow, associate professor of education at Northeastern University in Boston; Gail Schneider, professor and chair of the Department of Administrative Leadership at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee; Clement Seldin, professor of education at the University of Massachusetts–Amherst.

They were joined by the following writer/consultants: Alicia Abell, a former teacher who holds a master's degree from the Harvard Graduate School of Education; Leila Fiester, who has worked on projects for the U.S. Department of Education; Douglas Lederman, former managing editor of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*; Robert Rothman, principal associate at the Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University; Rochelle Stanfield, who has worked on projects for the Educational Testing Service and the Annie E. Casey Foundation; Stanley Wellborn, a former executive at both the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Brookings Institution; and the project director, Alvin Sanoff, who also directed the national study. All team members participated as individuals, not as representatives of any institution.

During the campus visits, the teams met with faculty, students and administrators. Team members also visited K–12 schools where teacher education students were student teaching and talked with the student teachers, principals and supervising teachers. Team members visited a few programs in KCMSD in which schools of education were involved, such as the Residential Internship Program. In that program, a small number of students spend their senior year teaching in KCMSD schools. Participants are given their own class, but are closely supervised by mentor teachers.

The visits were usually followed by phone calls to gather additional information. Draft reports of the findings of each team were e-mailed to participating schools, which were asked to provide feedback and correct errors of fact. Their responses

were integrated into a final report sent to each school. The full reports are confidential and have not been shared with the Kauffman Foundation or any organization or individual other than the dean at the school of education that was visited.

Based on the sites visits, we believe that several education schools have limited interest in and commitment to preparing teachers for urban and inner-suburban school systems. While it would be logical to assume that the closer an institution is to Kansas City, the greater the interest in urban education, that is not necessarily the case. Some institutions that are relatively distant, such as Northwest Missouri State University, have shown a great deal of interest and are engaged with KCMUSD, while others that are closer to the metropolitan area displayed less enthusiasm.

The level of interest seemed to correlate with the leadership of the education school/program. Those institutions that are most engaged tend to have deans or others in a leadership position who see urban education as a priority. In some cases, these leaders have had only modest success in getting their faculty involved, but they seem determined to continue working at it.

Many of the institutions we visited draw undergraduate students primarily from suburban and/or rural areas. Faculty and administrators told us that generally these students have little interest in teaching in Kansas City or its inner suburbs. That was confirmed in student interviews, although some students did seem to have open minds. In many cases, the information students get about the Kansas City area comes primarily from the mass media. That gives rise to stereotyping that can be shattered only by actual experience.

Some institutions with a high proportion of suburban and/or rural undergraduates try to expose students to urban schools by having a required urban practicum. Other institutions seemed content to go along with their students' priorities. The sum total of their students' exposure to urban education might be limited to a one-day trip to schools in KCMUSD.

Without extensive exposure, it is impossible to change student attitudes. While exposure does not guarantee a change in attitude toward teaching in Kansas City, we encountered students and recent graduates who said that it was their extensive exposure to Kansas City schools through practica and/or student teaching that persuaded them to seek jobs there. One recent graduate of Park University told the site team: "I would never have picked to come (into the city) to teach. It was only because of the urban requirement." Park students must do a practicum in either an urban or rural school, and most choose the former. This student did her practicum at a KCMUSD elementary school and said she "loved it. It totally blew me away. The school was great. I'm glad they gave me that nudge."

Faculty

Most schools strive to hire faculty with experience in K–12 education for their teacher education programs. But once faculty members are hired, they do not necessarily engage with public schools on a regular basis.

When faculty members have little or no sustained exposure to K–12 classrooms that can pose a problem for their students. Courses can become outdated, producing a disconnect between what students learn and what they will eventually encounter in their own classrooms. Many students and recent graduates cited this as a concern.

On some campuses, faculty seemed disinclined to make ongoing K–12 involvement a priority. Since such involvement was neither rewarded nor considered essential for promotion, there was no incentive to change established habits.

One campus administrator told us that “you cannot lose sight of what’s happening in the field if you want to be effective in your own classroom.” Yet at that very institution, getting faculty engaged in the schools was proving to be a major challenge.

Even on a campus where faculty are evaluated, in part, on the basis of how much time they spend in the schools, we learned that their involvement was sometimes limited to professional development workshops or a modest amount of volunteer time.

Diversity

With a few exceptions, such as the University of Missouri at Kansas City and the University of Missouri at Columbia, the lack of diversity among the full-time faculty at education schools was striking. It was not unusual to find only one minority full-time faculty member in education.

At the student level as well, minorities generally were underrepresented in education. One factor cited to help explain disproportionately low minority enrollment was standardized tests—C-BASE and Praxis II—that Missouri education students must take. Since minority students typically do not score well on such tests, we were told that some decide to pursue majors that do not require passage of standardized tests.

It is our impression, based on faculty and administrator interviews, that some minority students enrolled in introductory education courses, but when it came time to choose a major they looked elsewhere. If that impression is accurate, education schools might want to undertake a survey of students who decide against continuing with the study of education to find out the reasons for their decision.

Preparation

During our visits, we heard a wide range of views on how best to prepare urban teachers. One view could be summarized as: Teaching is teaching and the preparation should be the same for all aspiring teachers. A more commonly held view was that most students, even those who aspire to teach in an affluent, predominantly white, school district, need some appreciation and understanding of diversity in all forms, including learning styles, race and class, and that could best be gained through a combination of courses and field experiences.

In terms of the coursework, we found that education programs generally addressed the subject of diverse learning styles, but there was less consistency in handling issues of race, class and culture. Some institutions relegated the issues to a single course. In at least one case, that course seemed to lack intellectual coherence. The content depended on which instructor a student happened to get—a history professor dealt with the subject matter very differently than a sociologist. Whether students found the course worthwhile and relevant depended almost entirely on which faculty member they had.

On a few campuses, diversity was defined primarily in terms of class. As a result, we felt that important issues such as race and culture were slighted. Sometimes, even when schools said they addressed issues of diversity in courses, students and some faculty said the subject was barely touched on.

Some institutions eschew the one course approach to diversity in favor of threading the subject through the curriculum, so that diversity in its many manifestations is continually present rather than being dealt with in one course, which can lead to its being intellectually isolated.

Perhaps the most ambitious new effort to inject diversity into the curriculum is underway at Northwest Missouri State University, where an optional 21-credit multicultural studies concentration is being developed for elementary and secondary students. The concentration would include a requirement that students engage in sustained field experiences in urban schools.

Another interesting effort was in the planning stages at Park University. It calls for outstanding teachers from KCKSD to serve as instructors in courses on at-risk students and urban-related issues. The idea is to draw on the expertise of successful teachers who have actually been on the front lines, rather than having courses taught by those with little or no urban classroom experience.

Fieldwork

The amount of time students spent doing observational fieldwork seemed to range from under 60 to more than 150 hours. At Missouri Western State College, students begin doing observational fieldwork in their introductory course sequence, spending four hours a week for seven weeks in St. Joseph classrooms while writing about what they observe. More typically, in-depth observational fieldwork did not begin until students were well along in their program, either in their junior year or the first semester of senior year.

The fieldwork generally takes place at schools that are in relative proximity to the campus. Central Missouri State University combines a block of courses with hands-on experience in nearby Professional Development Schools with which the university has formal relationships. The arrangement, explained one faculty member, “gives us a connection to the schools.” Several other education programs have similar arrangements with school systems in their region.

Overall, there seemed to be unevenness in field experiences. On some campuses, much of the observation is done in campus laboratory schools, which are hardly typical of K–12 education. Some lab schools seemed akin to private schools. On one campus, the tuition for the lab school was about the same as in-state tuition for the university.

With some exceptions, such as the University of Missouri at Kansas City and Park University, there was no specific requirement for sustained urban fieldwork. Some schools try to expose students to diversity in whatever form it exists in their region, which can mean using income rather than race as the operating definition.

Admittedly, there are logistical problems in setting up sustained urban field observations for schools that are distant from Kansas City or other urban areas. But it was clear that some institutions had not even explored the idea.

At the same time, those schools that sought to place students in an urban situation for either fieldwork or student teaching faced practical obstacles. We were told, for example, that while finding quality field placements and internships in KCMSD was not a problem at the elementary level, it was at the secondary level. One education program that has placed students in a KCMSD high school acknowledged that the placements have left a great deal to be desired. “I learned more what not to do,” said a student who had taught at the high school. At the middle school level, the same education program could not find an acceptable situation in which to place students.

Even those schools of education that seemed committed to urban education expressed frustration at dealing with the KCMSD central office. We were told of phone calls that went unreturned and an attitude that was less than cooperative.

One education school official said, “It is easier to work with suburban districts. They call you back. They want our students and they facilitate the process.” Even when a student is placed in KCMSD, we were told that sometimes teachers were so busy that they had little time to provide the student with feedback and mentoring.

Student Teaching

As was the case with fieldwork, there seemed to be unevenness in the student teaching placements. Some education schools worked hard to place students in settings where they would be under the guidance of skilled mentors. Others tended to let students select the schools where they student taught, with minimal regard for quality control. Faculty members were often uninvolved in the placement process and in the supervision of student teachers. Some schools seemed to have well trained supervisors who regularly visited with and observed student teachers; at others the process seemed less carefully structured and the supervisors less carefully chosen and trained.

On one campus, if a placement proved unsatisfactory the college took the specific school off its placement list. It could be argued that even a poor placement can have some benefit if students have an opportunity for reflection and feedback during the course of their internship. However, some programs were not structured to provide an opportunity for serious reflection and detailed feedback.

Student teaching lasted anywhere from ten to sixteen weeks, with secondary placements usually shorter. Some schools attempted to expose students to more than one situation. Southwest Missouri State University, for example, typically places elementary education interns in two different schools or in two different grades within the same school for a total of sixteen weeks.

The University of Missouri at Columbia has what is perhaps the most ambitious and innovative approach: the Senior Year on Site Program (SYOSP) for elementary education students. Interns in groups of two to five are placed in a school for a full year. The schools are selected based on exemplary practices.

Even before the school year begins, SYOSP students participate in teacher planning, faculty meetings, retreats and the like. Once the school year starts, they spend the first semester rotating through all grades and classes in the building, which helps them decide at what grade level they want to teach. Their student teaching takes place in the second semester. During the year, students combine time in class with coursework that is taught on site by university faculty in collaboration with site-based clinical faculty. The students meet with their peers at other sites via teleconference.

This approach has a number of virtues. Students get to know the children and the curriculum well, become an integral part of the school community and gain a deeper understanding of what it takes to build classroom cohesiveness. They also see how teachers prepare to meet a new class and, like the teachers, they get to see the students from day one. Students who enter a school for the first time in the second semester of their senior year to student teach encounter a situation in which teacher perceptions of students are already fixed and classroom routines are in place, yet they likely have no idea what lies behind those perceptions and routines.

Residential Internship Program

Another innovative approach, one that could be said to redefine the concept of student teaching, is the Residential Internship Program, which is the brainchild of Northwest Missouri State University Dean Max Ruhl, who worked closely with Lincoln University's Patrick Henry in developing the program. The program is open to all institutions that are members of the Higher Education Partnership, a consortium that brings together many Missouri education schools and KCMUSD. The internship program is administered by Northwest Missouri State University and Lincoln University and has received substantial support from the Hall Family Foundation and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. Northwest Missouri State University also contributes to the program.

Under the program, college seniors from Missouri education schools come to Kansas City to teach their very own class for a year under the supervision of a mentor teacher. There is one mentor teacher for every two interns, which is critical to the program's success. By paying students a modest stipend—they receive 50 percent of a starting teacher's salary—to teach a regular class, KCMUSD can afford to pay for the mentors. Hiring one mentor and two interns is the economic equivalent of hiring two classroom teachers.

The program, which started in 2002 with 10 interns, has now expanded to approximately 25. But recruitment has been slow. Students receive free housing, partial to full tuition reimbursement and the stipend. At least once a week supervisors from the students' universities observe their classroom performance and provide criticism and feedback in cooperation with the mentor teachers.

Feedback on the program from KCMUSD officials, from participating education schools and from the interns themselves was very positive, although many interns felt that their formal education had not prepared them particularly well to meet the challenges they face. The interns said that the mentoring they received was critical to their ability to do their job.

The interns commit to teach at least one more year in KCMUSD after their internship ends. It is too soon to know whether most of the interns will remain in the district

after their commitment is up, although we were told that retention is a challenge. If they do not remain, then the program will prove to be only a stopgap, albeit a successful one.

The Residential Internship Program is not considered an alternative program because students go through the regular certification process. However, it certainly offers an alternative approach to teacher preparation, even if done within a traditional certification framework.

Although the residential interns have more course work under their belts than alternatively certified teachers, it could be argued that both groups face baptism by fire.

Alternative Programs

Many educators we spoke with disliked the concept of alternative certification, even though there are a number of such programs on the campuses we visited. Educators generally felt that teachers who went through traditional education programs were better prepared. But whether traditional teacher preparation translates into better outcomes for students is a matter of heated debate. There is little hard data on the subject, so opinion and anecdote prevail. It is fair to say, however, that the alternative programs we visited and heard about seemed to be something of a hodge-podge. They were the product of a variety of often-uncoordinated initiatives designed to fill a need for teachers, especially at the secondary level.

In our judgment, based on site visits for both this study and the national study, when alternative programs screen entrants carefully and select the best qualified, and those entrants are then provided with quality ongoing mentoring, they can become successful teachers. All too often, however, such mentoring is lacking. In the Kansas City area, neither KCMSD nor the higher education institutions that provide coursework for alternative certification programs seemed to do much mentoring.

In fact, higher education institutions often agree to participate in alternative certification programs not because they want to but because they fear that if they do not do so a competitor will, and thus they will lose potential tuition revenue. That may be a pragmatic judgment, but institutions that undertake programs to which they have minimal commitment tend not to put significant resources into the programs. If the programs are low to mediocre in quality and produce poor to mediocre results, the education schools tend to blame the participants and not themselves. While some of the education schools we visited seemed genuinely supportive of their alternative certification programs, others seemed disdainful of some of the very programs that they were offering.

As for the KCTF Program specifically, retention has been very good. Through October of 2003, the overall retention rate for the first cohort, which at the time was in its third year of teaching, was 72 percent in KCMSD and 80 percent in KCKSD; retention for the second cohort was 71 percent in KCMSD and 88 percent in KCKSD. The overall retention rates, especially in KCKSD, were quite impressive, since five-year retention rates in urban school systems are about 50 percent.

Although many of the Fellows lacked knowledge of teaching fundamentals, and their summer coursework and limited summer teaching hardly qualified as sufficient preparation, they had a high level of commitment and enthusiasm. They are intelligent enough to master the fundamentals given enough time.

Alternative programs may not be the ideal way to prepare teachers, but they can provide capable, committed individuals, many of them career-changers, to fill a real need in the schools. If participants in alternative certification programs were to receive the same level of mentoring and support as students in the Residential Internship Program and were able to obtain more preparation before entering the classroom, many of them would be far better prepared to succeed.

CONCLUSIONS

Teacher Preparation

It is clear from the results of the surveys that both teachers and principals felt that newly hired teachers were not adequately prepared in a number of significant areas. To be sure, there were positives. Both teachers and principals said that teachers were prepared to teach the academic subject(s) in which they were trained, to work well with colleagues and to implement new methods of teaching. However, that is where the good news seems to end.

There were eight areas in which a high proportion of teachers, 39 percent or more, felt somewhat or not at all well prepared: addressing the needs of students with limited English proficiency; integrating technology into the grade level or subject taught; working with parents; maintaining order and discipline in the classroom; addressing the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds; addressing the needs of students with disabilities; implementing state or district curriculum performance standards; and using student performance assessment techniques.

There were six areas in which a high proportion of principals, 39 percent or more, felt that teachers were somewhat or not at all well prepared as compared to eight areas on the teachers' list. Five of the areas cited by the teachers—dealing with students who have limited English proficiency, working with parents, addressing needs of students from diverse cultures, addressing the needs of students with disabilities and using student performance assessment techniques—were also on the principals' list. Further down on the principals' list, but still ranked poorly, were: integrating technology into the grade level or subject taught and maintaining order and discipline in the classroom. Again, it is worth noting that in a number of areas teachers felt less prepared than the principals thought they were. (See table on page 37.) Perhaps, and this is only speculation, teachers have higher expectations of themselves than principals do.

Teacher Preparation

	Principals Said "Very or Moderately Well"	Teachers Said "Very or Moderately Well"
Address the needs of students with limited English proficiency	41%	23%
Address the needs of students with disabilities	54%	56%
Understand how students learn	54%	79%
Address the needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds	59%	53%
Use student performance assessment techniques	59%	59%
Work with parents	59%	52%
Maintain order and discipline in the classroom	62%	52%
Implement state or district curriculum and performance standards	64%	57%
Integrate technology into the grade level or subject taught	66%	43%
Utilize different pedagogical approaches	67%	68%
Implement new methods of teaching	73%	75%
Work well with colleagues	74%	70%
Teach the academic subject(s) in which they were trained	85%	82%

**Any differences in percent between the table and the report are due to rounding*

One item stood out as something of an anomaly: teachers' preparation for understanding how students learn. As shown in the table, 79 percent of teachers felt very or moderately well prepared in this area, but only 54 percent of principals agreed. The results in the national study were comparable.

The areas in which a substantial proportion of both teachers and principals agreed that preparation of teachers was not adequate provides important insights into how to better prepare teachers.

The responses to another question offer additional insights on how best to proceed. More than 50 percent of the teachers identified five areas that they thought were very important to better preparing aspiring teachers: more instruction in classroom management; mentor all new teachers; assure that all teachers are capable of teaching reading; require education faculty to spend more time in the schools; and recruit higher quality faculty. More than half the principals concurred that every one

of those items was very important, except for the item on classroom management, which was not an option in the principals' survey. (See table below.)

In addition to these items, more than half the principals identified several other areas as very important: provide more observational field experience prior to student teaching; provide closer supervision of student teaching; require student teaching of longer duration; and increase mastery of pedagogical practice. Principals put a higher priority on hands-on experience than the teachers did, although a significant minority of teachers did say they would have preferred both more observational fieldwork and more student teaching experience.

Ways to better prepare new teachers		
	Principals Said "Very Important"	Teachers Said "Very Important"
Mentor all new teachers	82%	71%
Provide more observational field experience prior to student teaching	81%	46%
Require education school faculty to spend more time in the schools	79%	53%
Assure that all teachers are capable of teaching reading	75%	64%
Provide closer supervision of student teaching	72%	34%
Require student teaching of longer duration.	58%	30%
Increase mastery of pedagogical practice	57%	33%
Recruit higher quality faculty.	51%	52%
Raise requirements for academic performance (Question phrased as: "Raise academic standards" in teacher's survey)	46%	36%
Utilize more up-to-date textbooks and other materials	44%	42%
Raise standards for admission to teacher education programs	43%	25%
Utilize more rigorous textbooks and other materials.	32%	16%
Divide faculty into research faculty and clinical faculty (as medical schools do) rather than having faculty do both research and teaching	30%	21%
Require a major in an academic subject other than education at the undergraduate level	27%	23%

**Provide more instruction in classroom management was not included in the table because it appeared as an option only in the teachers' survey. Any differences in percent between the table and the report are due to rounding.*

Based on the survey responses and the site visits, it seems that many Kansas City teachers are being prepared to teach in a world populated primarily by middle and upper-class white students. Aspiring teachers are simply not being adequately

prepared to address the needs of students with limited English proficiency, students who come from diverse cultural backgrounds and students with disabilities. Large numbers of teachers and principals agreed that preparation fell short in all these areas. In addition, teachers clearly felt that they needed more preparation in how to meet the often-daunting challenges of managing a class and working with parents. There were other gaps in preparation, but these seemed to be among the most pressing.

Recommendation

To address the shortcomings in teacher preparation, we recommend that teacher education programs include a required class on behavior management, and that issues of diversity, in all forms, be threaded throughout the curriculum. Such coursework can provide an important foundation, especially if these courses include significant fieldwork. Integrating theory with practice is essential.

We would urge education schools to look at their curriculum anew to see whether they are giving these and other important subjects adequate attention. At many of the campuses visited in the course of the study, we think that the attention is not adequate.

We are not suggesting adding new courses since the course load is already substantial. We are suggesting that the curriculum be updated and that subjects that are neglected be integrated into the academic program.

Admittedly, not all gaps can be filled through courses. In fact, it can be argued that such skills as learning how to manage a class and how to work with parents are ultimately acquired through observation and experience. The same could be said of learning to work with students who have limited English proficiency and with students whose cultural background is different from that of the teacher. That is why sustained fieldwork and student teaching are so important.

Fieldwork and Student Teaching

Principals were far more likely than teachers to feel that additional fieldwork and student teaching are needed, but the issue may be one of quality as well as quantity.

Too often, fieldwork seemed to take place in plain vanilla settings rather than in diverse environments. As for student teaching, on some campuses there was almost a laissez faire attitude toward placements. The attitude seemed to be that student teaching offered a golden opportunity for students to line up a job in a school system in which they wanted to work, so students were given great leeway. Faculty involvement in student teaching on some campuses was minimal. How student teachers are placed and supervised says a lot about whether an education school

regards student teaching as a critical component of the education process, or simply pays lip service to the idea.

Recommendation

Field observation and student teaching are an integral part of the education process and should be treated that way. Some schools need to place a higher priority on placement quality. To improve placements, schools that do not have a full-time qualified staff person responsible for coordinating and monitoring placements should hire such a person.

There is also a need to foster greater faculty involvement in supervising student teachers. One way to encourage that is to make such involvement a component of faculty evaluations.

Urban Placements

During the site visits, we found that most teacher education programs did not require a sustained urban placement as part of fieldwork or student teaching. Yet, as is evident from the feedback from many teachers and principals, there is no substitute for such hands-on experience.

Recommendation

We recommend that an urban or inner-suburban placement be part of all teacher education programs.

There seems no better way to prepare teachers to manage a class and address the needs of students from diverse cultures than to provide them with sustained exposure to classrooms where these matters are continually being dealt with. Combining such exposure with coursework in which students talk about and think about what they are experiencing can provide powerful preparation. Again, the Residential Internship Program is a possible model. Another is the University of Missouri SYOSP program, although that is not an urban program. But it seems feasible to have a similar program in an urban school system.

Part of the apparent indifference on the part of education schools to urban placements is due to what might be called the hassle factor; some institutions are an hour or more away from a city and feel such placements are not practical. Part of the indifference is also attitudinal, a feeling on the part of faculty and students that such placements are not important. Nevertheless, America is changing. It is a more racially and ethnically diverse nation. Some of the issues affecting urban school systems are now also affecting suburban systems and even some rural ones. It is critical that students get hands-on experience in diverse schools, and urban or inner-suburban experience ought to be one component of that experience.

Arranging such placements may not always be easy. Finding quality placements in KCMSD, especially at the secondary level, has been difficult for education schools, and working out the details with the school system can be a challenge.

To facilitate the placement process, we recommend that the Higher Education Partnership become a clearinghouse for education schools seeking to place students in KCMSD and inner-suburban districts. The Partnership could be especially helpful to education schools located outside the metropolitan area. It might even be able to help arrange temporary housing for students. That would, of course, require adding staff as well as getting education schools and local school systems to buy into the arrangement.

If a campus is too distant for faculty members to commute to Kansas City a few times a week to meet with students doing fieldwork and internships, then perhaps institutions could share a group of clinical faculty members who would work with the students. Getting institutions to agree on hiring a group of shared faculty would be quite a challenge. But perhaps turf issues could be set aside for the greater good.

Induction

It has often been said that education is one of the few professions in which new entrants are expected to have complete mastery of their job from day one. Lawyers, doctors and many other professionals go through a learning process, working under the watchful eye of experienced professionals. In teaching, that does not happen often enough. Mentoring is often talked about, but that talk does not necessarily translate into action. Most school systems, and KCMSD is no exception, do not have an effective mentoring program in place. The Residential Internship Program is a notable exception, and shows what skilled and systematic mentoring can accomplish.

Schools of education generally leave mentoring to employers, which is not entirely unreasonable since that is the way it is typically done in other professions. But the site visits and the survey data showed that both teachers and principals would like education schools to shoulder some of the responsibility. A few of the education schools we visited, the University of Missouri at Columbia and Southwest Missouri State University, have established programs to provide their new graduates with support. However, they are the exception.

Recommendation

Education schools and school systems need to come together around mentoring and agree on a division of labor. Good mentoring can improve teacher retention. It can be a win-win proposition for school systems, education schools and their graduates.

The cost of a well-developed mentoring program is not insignificant. But having to constantly recruit new teachers because of high turnover has costs of its own that, while less apparent, are no less real.

Faculty

A related issue is the level of engagement of teacher education faculty with K–12 education. Based on both the site visits and on some of the survey responses, it seemed that some teacher education faculty members were minimally engaged with K–12 education. Many of the faculty members were once K–12 teachers and administrators, but some of them seemed to view the campus as a sanctuary from their past life rather than as an extension of it.

It is reasonable to conclude that faculty who are not engaged with K–12 education on an ongoing basis are out of touch and, therefore, are more likely to prepare their students for the public schools of the past than of the present. These faculty members are akin to professors who have taught a political science course the same way for 20 years, paying no attention to the changing political dynamics of the nation.

The teachers whom these faculty members inadequately prepare, we would argue, are more likely to end up frustrated and unhappy, and therefore are more likely to leave Kansas City, and possibly teaching in general. Remember that when principals were asked why Kansas City teachers were most likely to leave, an overwhelming 86 percent cited inadequate preparation for the realities of the classroom.

Recommendation

The only way to assure that faculty are seriously engaged with K–12 education is to make such engagement a major part of the tenure and promotion process. That is not the case at a number of the schools we visited. Even at some schools that said they placed weight on faculty involvement in the schools, it was clear that such involvement could be minimal.

Alternative Programs

Teachers who are alternatively certified are an important part of the KCMSD teaching force. While the data indicate that they fall short in education fundamentals, that is partially offset by the life experiences and commitment they bring to the classroom. Their shortcomings could be addressed, at least in part, if they had the benefit of significant exposure to the classroom before being left on their own to teach.

Recommendation

We suggest changing the timetable for those alternative certification programs in which teachers are almost immediately given their own class. To provide participants in such programs with classroom experience without the responsibility of running the class, the programs ought to begin in the spring. That would provide participants with the opportunity to combine observation and some student teaching with coursework rather than finding themselves thrust into a classroom in the fall with little prior classroom experience.

It is essential to provide skilled and sympathetic mentors for these teachers; interviews suggested that they would benefit from mentoring even more than traditionally certified teachers.

There are undoubtedly a number of logistical challenges involved in advancing the schedule for some alternative programs by a semester. But there seems no question that alternatively certified teachers will continue to flow into KCMSD, even if the KCTF Program is no longer on the scene. It is important that they enter the classroom as well prepared as possible. That is not currently the case.

In Closing

Like most urban school systems, KCMSD faces numerous challenges. To effectively meet those challenges it needs a cadre of well-prepared teachers. Although the teachers surveyed said they were well prepared in general, they were not well prepared in a number of crucial areas.

To help change that, many of the education schools visited in the course of this project need to reconsider their curriculum as well as place a higher priority on their engagement with urban education.

Education schools and KCMSD are partners in an enterprise whose success is crucial to the future of the state and region. The establishment of the Higher Education Partnership is recognition of that fact. The Partnership has already borne some fruit in the form of the Residential Internship Program, although whether the program is sustainable and produces teachers who remain in KCMSD remains to be seen.

Clearly, much remains to be done. Missouri education schools can work more effectively with KCMSD than they are now doing and KCMSD can be more open to working with the education schools. We envision any number of reasons that might be cited to explain why this is not possible. Economics, institutional priorities, and logistics are just a few of the objections that are likely to be raised. But maintaining the status quo is simply not good enough.

There has been a lot of talk nationally about teacher education, and most of it has been negative. There has been a lot of focus nationally on urban education, and most of it has been negative. In this environment, where there are relatively few positive examples, Missouri education schools and KCMSD have an opportunity to show what can be accomplished if they truly work together in a partnership that is more action than talk. This report is an effort to provide a blueprint for moving forward.