

Philadelphia Education★ Fund

Developing Great Teachers to Drive Exceptional Outcomes
for all Students: The Ed Fund's Strategic Vision

NOVEMBER 2014

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Authors: Daniel Schiff and Carolyn Rulli

Philadelphia's schools continue to face daunting obstacles to obtaining the resources and supports needed for students to succeed. Despite these challenges, educators are working on the front lines every day to teach our students.

As a longstanding partner to Philadelphia's education community, the Philadelphia Education Fund (Ed Fund) understands the relationship between teacher practice and student achievement. Our mission is to drive exceptional outcomes for all students by developing great teachers and building paths to college and career success. Through our own and others' research and practice, we know that great teachers lead to exceptional student outcomes.

In an era when significant policy change, financial uncertainty, and teacher turnover are the norm, supporting the development of great teachers requires a comprehensive approach to teacher preparation. Teacher preparation institutions, both traditional and non-traditional, must work in concert with local school operators to employ proven and agreed upon frameworks in educational practice.

The Ed Fund's program and policy efforts encompass the continuum of teacher learning from pre-service and induction through in-service professional development. Based on our work with institutions of higher education, non-traditional certifiers, teachers, and principals, as well as findings from research and practice, **we believe that realizing exceptional student outcomes requires the following:**

1. **Selecting teacher candidates with both the skills and dispositions to thrive in a high-need urban school setting;**
2. **Preparing candidates to become exceptional teachers through content-specific learning, inquiry-based scholarship, and extensive fieldwork; and**
3. **Building ongoing efforts to further develop teachers post-certification.**

These three strategies drive our work and define how we engage with partners to accomplish the common vision of a public school system that delivers exceptional outcomes for all students. Below we define these strategies.

Core Strategies for Strengthening the Continuum of Teacher Preparation and Learning

Strategy 1: Select teacher candidates with both the skills and dispositions to thrive in a high-need urban school setting - The selection of high-quality, committed teacher candidates should incorporate diverse skill and content related factors, including:

- Superior and diverse knowledge of content – earning or pursuing a degree in their content area(s) and building a deep and connected understanding of that content.
- Resilience and self-efficacy in the face of challenges – demonstrating creativity and persistence in problem solving, realistic understanding of the challenges teachers face in high-need environments, and a commitment to teaching in high-need urban settings.
- Capacity to take an inquiry stance towards their own teaching – being able to critically analyze and reflect on one’s own and others’ instructional practice, an openness to receive and the ability to provide feedback, and a willingness to learn from obstacles and adapt to change.
- Ability to focus on students and their individual learning needs – having the skills to recognize and adapt to individual needs and make content accessible to diverse learners.

Strategy 2: Prepare candidates to become exceptional teachers through content-specific learning, inquiry-based scholarship, and extensive fieldwork - Teacher preparation programs need to build on existing best practices that clearly align with the public education system’s workforce needs. These include:

- Providing extended opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in student teaching with a classroom mentor or external coach, such as provided in the Residency model. And integrating pre-service teachers’ university coursework and abstract theory with daily practice through that fieldwork
- Expanding coursework and fieldwork to highlight content-specific pedagogy as well as pedagogy specific to diverse learners such as Special Education and English Language Learners
- Emphasizing understanding of diverse socio-economic and cultural contexts in which learning occurs to enable appropriate classroom management and differentiation of instruction
- Using multiple methods of data to inform instruction and assessment
- Aligning with current and anticipated instructional standards and evaluation frameworks such as the Common Core and Danielson Evaluation Framework
- Requiring demonstration of instructional competence prior to certification

Strategy 3: Provide ongoing support for teachers focused on building their instructional, content-related, and leadership skills. Effective strategies include:

- Establishing a continuum of professional growth for teachers through induction, coaching, and individualized professional development
- Building pathways for teacher leadership to enhance teacher expertise and persistence
- Creating resources and spaces for teacher collaboration and networks to build and sustain professional learning in and between schools
- Capturing appropriate data to learn from these efforts

The Philadelphia Education Fund is committed to working with the region’s traditional and non-traditional teacher certifying programs to provide exceptional preparation and support for Philadelphia’s teachers. Teachers are critical change agents for creating the education environment that our students deserve; the

elements outlined above are essential to achieving this goal. We are energized to be working with a growing number of partners toward this end.

Updated By:
Daniel Schiff
Michael Carr
June 2017

Get Involved:

Philadelphia Education Fund
1709 Benjamin Franklin Parkway, Suite 700, Philadelphia, PA 19103
Tel: 215-665-1400; Fax: 215-864-2494
www.philaedfund.org