



Teacher Preparation

Teacher Prep Gets Major Funding from Gates Foundation

- By Dian Schaffhauser
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The **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation** has committed grants of \$34.7 million over three years to help set up five teacher preparation transformation centers across the country that will bring together people from universities, teacher-preparation providers and K-12 school systems to share data, knowledge and best practices. These demonstration sites will work on the development, piloting and scaling of those teacher-preparation practices that prove effective in helping new teachers improve student outcomes in K-12.

The teacher preparation strategy was first announced in April 2015 to develop new ways of giving teacher candidates "authentic opportunities" to build and refine their skills and make sure they're effective in the classroom.

The five centers are:

- Elevate Preparation, Impact Children (EPIC), run by the **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**;
- **National Center for Teacher Residencies**;
- Teacher2 (TeacherSquared), led by the **Relay Graduate School of Education**;
- **TeachingWorks** at the **University of Michigan**; and
- University-School Partnerships for the Renewal of Educator Preparation (U.S.PREP) National Center, based at the **College of Education** at **Texas Tech University**.

In addition to the transformation centers, the foundation has given a \$3.2 million grant to Florida-

based Teacher Preparation Inspectorate, to handle inspections and give feedback to the centers and their member providers.

Each center will have a unique focus, but all will be guided by a "common set of indicators and outcomes," the Gates Foundation said in a press release. For example, every organization will put an emphasis on the collection and use of data to improve program design.

EPIC will also use its funding to add capacity to its team and work with teacher preparation providers in the state to deepen the quality of field-based experiences and integrate the efforts of providers and partners to meet the increasing demands for teacher talent in the pre-K-12 sector.

"Given that improvement in teacher performance is steepest at the beginning of an educator's career, advancing individual teacher readiness prior to entry into the profession holds great promise for long-term impact with students," said Mitchell Chester, commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Working with the [American Institutes for Research](#), the National Center for Teacher Residencies expects to adopt and expand teacher residencies and clinically used programming.

Teacher2 will work with a group of teacher preparation programs to share knowledge, create communities of inquiry, define the skill sets of teacher educators and analyze data from which the field can learn. The center plans to create a searchable resource bank, standards and templates for data analysis, a set of national teacher educator institutes and other activities to support participating institutions. The organization hopes to strengthen the capacity of teacher education providers at 20 sites in 10 or more states — to produce an annual pipeline of at least 2,500 "effective, diverse novice teachers" by 2019.

"For far too long, programs dedicated to training novice teachers have worked mostly by themselves to make their programs great," said Brent Maddin, who will lead Teacher U. "We aim to increase sharing among these programs and to challenge, inspire and support them to reach even higher levels of greatness."

TeachingWorks, recipient of \$6.8 million, will offer direct professional support to staff members in the other transformation centers, lead the development of practice-based assessments for novice teachers and help the centers disseminate their "learnings" through a digital resource center.

"It will take a wide variety of partners and teacher preparation programs serving diverse communities and students to ensure that all new teachers are well prepared, and that all students

receive excellent instruction," said Director Deborah Loewenberg Ball.

The U.S.PREP National Center will create a coalition of universities and schools districts to share, collaborate and learn from each other.

"For too long, teacher preparation providers have not supplied the teachers students deserve," said Tom Stritikus, deputy director of innovation on the College Ready team at the Gates Foundation. "We're excited to work with these programs to learn how we can better prepare teachers to help students succeed, and we look forward to sharing our findings with the entire field."

About the Author

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