

PRESS ROOM

PRESS RELEASES AND STATEMENTS

Gates Foundation Awards over \$34 Million in Grants to Help Improve Teacher Preparation Programs

Five Transformation Centers will develop and scale practices that prepare new teachers to help students succeed

SEATTLE (November 18, 2015) – The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation today announced it will commit \$34.7 million over three years to five newly-formed Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers that will bring together higher education institutions, teacher-preparation providers and K-12 school systems to share data, knowledge and best practices. These cooperatives will develop, pilot and scale effective teacher-preparation practices to help ensure that more teacher-candidates graduate ready to improve student outcomes in K-12 public schools.

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The five Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers are:

- Elevate Preparation, Impact Children (EPIC), led by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education;
- National Center for Teacher Residencies (NCTR);
- 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 Texas Tech University.

"We know that having an excellent teacher is critical to a student's success, but there is still much to learn about how to best prepare teacher-candidates to be successful in the classroom," said Vicki Phillips, director of College Ready Education at the Gates Foundation. "We're excited to fund these new Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers so that together, we can better understand which practices are the most effective in preparing new teachers."

The announcement represents the foundation's first investment as part of its teacher preparation strategy, which launched in April 2015 and is focused on supporting programs that:

- Give candidates authentic opportunities to build and refine their skills;

- Commit to continuous improvement and accountability;
- Ensure that those who prepare new teachers are effective; and
- Are shaped by K-12 systems and the communities they serve.

In addition to the Transformation Centers, the foundation is awarding a grant to the Teacher Preparation Inspectorate, US, which will provide feedback to Transformation Centers and their member providers.

While the Transformation Centers will be guided by a common set of indicators and outcomes, they will test different approaches in unique contexts to better understand which practices are most effective.

- **EPIC** will engage all 71 initial teacher preparation providers in the state of Massachusetts to deepen quality of field-based experiences, support data-driven analysis, 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 D. Chester, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, which is leading EPIC.

- **NCTR** will focus on transforming teacher preparation through the adoption and expansion of teacher residencies and clinically-based programming.

“The residency model has the power to transform teacher preparation and NCTR will utilize the Gates Foundation Transformation Center Initiative to continue to propel this important movement in teacher preparation. NCTR is excited to be a part of this exciting work to advance teacher residencies and clinical preparation,” said Anissa Listak, Founder and Executive Director of the National Center for Teacher Residencies.

- **TeacherSquared** will work with a group of innovative 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

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

- **TeachingWorks** 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 Dr. Deborah Loewenberg Ball, director of TeachingWorks.

- **The U.S.PREP National Center** include six universities committed to transforming their practices in partnership with K12 school systems.

According to Sarah Beal, who will co-lead the U.S.PREP National Center, “Sharing, collaborating and learning from one another not only shows that we are models of learning, but also that we are taking responsibility and holding ourselves accountable for preparing classroom-ready teachers.”

"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 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."

To learn more about the Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers initiative and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's education strategy, please visit: collegeready.gatesfoundation.org.

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