

Building Partnerships across Educator Preparation and K-12 Districts: Commonalities and Differences in the Roles of Supervising Practitioners and Mentors

Strong partnerships between education preparation programs and school districts is key to aligning expectations and supports across educators' preparation and employment experiences. In November 2015, ESE brought together 200 educators from Massachusetts preparation programs and districts through five regional meetings. The meetings focused on the teacher leaders both groups select, train, and trust with providing high-quality professional support to novice teachers—supervising practitioners who support pre-service teacher candidates and mentors who support teachers in their first three years of practice. The following information includes highlights from participants' discussions. Preparation programs and districts are encouraged to use this resource to catalyze further collaboration about commonalities and interests that can be the basis of mutually beneficial partnerships.

Comparing and Contrasting Supervising Practitioner & Mentor Roles

<u>Supervising Practitioners (SP)</u>	<u>Both</u>	<u>Mentors</u>
<p>Selection and Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to be rated Proficient or higher on evaluation • Prep providers typically drive selection, varying levels of school/district involvement • Ed prep programs responsible for training • Ed prep programs often provide incentives including PDPs or vouchers for graduate courses (varies by program) • May be only support for candidate in the school • May be only SP in the school (not part of a cohort) <p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluative role, 300 hour commitment, feels “higher stakes” because connected to candidates’ program completion requirements • Common responsibilities across all SP’s based on requirements of Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP), including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted focus on the 6 Essential Elements ○ Collecting evidence to support ratings of teacher candidates ○ Completing 5-Step Cycle with candidate ○ Calibrating ratings and feedback with program supervisors <p>Relationship with Candidate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessor • Working together on a more regular basis • Share students in one classroom, opportunities for “in the moment” feedback • Turnover classroom teaching responsibilities, potential concerns w/ student outcomes if candidate is not strong • Candidate is a visitor in the building rather than a colleague/peer (longer term district investment) 	<p>Selection and Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 years of experience • Required to be trained • Teacher leader roles • Similar skill sets: effective with students and adults, reflective, successful in providing feedback/coaching to adults, knowledgeable in content and pedagogy, positive and passionate, problem solvers, models of effective practice • Receive incentives for their roles, including PDPs <p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct observations • Provide feedback and model effective practice • Work aligned to same Standards (Professional Standards for Teaching/Standards for Effective Teaching Practice) • Responsibilities are usually on top of full-time teaching roles • May set professional practice goals about their roles for their own evaluations, use as evidence of modeling behaviors (Exemplary rating) <p>Relationship with Candidates/Mentees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Win-win, both parties improve practice • Serve as a resource • Paying it forward/invested in future of profession 	<p>Selection and Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraged to be rated Proficient or higher on evaluation • Districts responsible for selection and training • Most local collective bargaining agreements set expectations for time commitment and incentives (stipends) • Part of a collective system of supports for beginning teacher (along with support team, administration, grade level team, etc.) • Usually part of a cohort of mentors and have opportunities to come together with them (training, planning, etc.) <p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Topics and focus of work with mentee set by individual districts and sometimes individual mentors • Trending toward a greater focus on instructional supports and coaching (rather than primary focus on emotional support) • Often responsible for documenting time/topics discussed with mentees <p>Relationship with Mentee</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-evaluative, working with a peer • Confidential relationship • Mentees may choose to share components of their evaluation with mentors • Often working together before or after school • Responsible for different students, often giving feedback before/after a lesson rather than “in the moment” • Knowledgeable about building culture, in’s and out’s of district/school • Working with a colleague (strong district investment in success of mentee, sense of urgency)

Incentives and Opportunities for Supervising Practitioners and Mentors

Preparation programs and districts often provide additional benefits to teacher leaders serving as supervising practitioners and mentors to acknowledge the value of their time and to demonstrate an appreciation for the investment in pre-service and beginning teachers. The incentives and opportunities provided vary by preparation program and district. The following list includes current practices in some districts and/or preparation programs, as well as suggested ideas that may or may not be common practice. Additionally, some of these are more frequently provided to supervising practitioners (*i.e.*, vouchers for graduate courses) or mentors (*i.e.*, stipends). Given the commonalities across these roles, suggestions have been combined. Preparation programs and districts may use this list to consider expanding the incentives and opportunities currently provided and generate ideas for further collaboration.

Leadership Opportunities

- Serve on advisory councils
- Entry to “teacher leader” program/opportunities
- Opportunities to have a voice in educator preparation programs/professional development and opportunities to share feedback

Ongoing Learning Opportunities

- Voucher for graduate courses
- Opportunities to work with prep professors
- Evidence toward Exemplary rating in educator evaluation
- Group meetings/support opportunities with other teacher leaders
- Free attendance to Professional Development conferences (NCTE, ASCD)

Additional Rewards

- Release time
- Extra personal day
- Credits toward salary steps
- Release from school duty schedule (bus, cafeteria, etc.)
- Reduced class schedules to support activities with candidates/mentees
- Gift cards/resources for classroom
- Free access to university resources (gym, parking, library, faculty expertise)
- Public recognition
- Professional Development Points (PDPs)
- Stipends/monetary compensation

Reflection Questions

As educator preparation programs and districts identify opportunities for partnerships and collaboration more attention should be paid to the educators serving as supervising practitioners and mentors and their roles in supporting novice teachers. The similarities in skill sets, responsibilities, and incentives required of these educators can help both preparation programs and districts reduce the duplication of efforts, build capacity, and provide more cohesive supports to pre-service and beginning teachers.

- Do these similarities and differences in these roles ring true for your preparation program or district?
- Are these distinctions in roles necessary? How can these roles be better aligned?
- What are the benefits and risks to aligning these roles?
- How can stronger partnerships between educator preparation and districts increase the effectiveness of novice teachers and ensure they are receiving targeted and timely supports that benefit students?
- How can the Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP) and induction and mentoring programs be leveraged as starting points for partnerships that are beneficial to both preparation programs and districts?