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A Practical Guide
to Challenges and
Opportunities in
Student Teaching:
A School District's
Perspective

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A Practical Guide to Challenges and Opportunities in Student Teaching: A School District's Perspective

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Abstract

PURPOSE: A burgeoning literature investigates the importance of student teaching placements for teacher candidate development, but an important perspective that is largely missing from the existing literature is that of the school districts that host student teachers. In this paper, we describe the student teaching process from the perspective of Spokane Public Schools (SPS), highlighting the challenges associated with the student teacher placement process and several initiatives SPS has undertaken to improve student teaching experiences for teacher candidates. To our knowledge, this is the first systematic effort by a school district to improve the student teaching process and study the effects on teacher candidate outcomes.

CONCEPTUAL ARGUMENT: Teacher education programs and school districts have a mutual interest in creating high-quality student teaching experiences. A fundamental challenge in efforts to improve student teaching is that teacher education programs have no authority over what happens to student teachers in the classrooms of public school districts. The initiatives undertaken by SPS illustrate the potential for districts to take a leadership role in defining the student teaching process and highlight some of the challenges inherent in hosting student teachers.

IMPLICATIONS: The extent to which other districts have taken an active role in defining the student teaching process is unclear, but the experience of SPS thus far suggests that playing an active role can be a positive step toward improving the training received by the teacher candidates who are likely to be staffing their schools in the future.

KEY WORDS: Student teaching, teacher education, teacher evaluation, teacher professional development, teacher hiring

1. Introduction

Teachers can have profound effects on students. This is intuitively obvious, but it is also buttressed by a large amount of empirical research demonstrating teachers' influence on academic achievement and longer-term life outcomes, such as college-going behavior and labor market earnings.¹ Although evidence indicates that teachers tend to become more skilled with additional experience, particularly early in their careers (Rivkin et al., 2005; Rockoff, 2004), much of a teacher's ability appears to be predicted by their initial effectiveness when they enter the profession.² This points to the importance of understanding the processes affecting the preservice development of teacher candidates. An important component of traditional (college- and university-based) preservice teacher training, and the focus of this paper, is the student teaching process.

Student teaching is widely regarded by teachers, teacher education practitioners, and researchers as the key formative experience that preservice teachers have before entering the teacher labor market (Anderson & Stillman, 2013). The quantitative studies that connect student teaching experiences to teachers' in-service outcomes show that various aspects of those experiences do seem to matter.³ For example, Boyd et al. (2009) found that the degree of oversight exercised by teacher education programs (TEPs) over field experiences is positively associated

¹ See, for instance, Aaronson, Barrow, and Sander (2007); Goldhaber and Hansen (2013); and Hanushek and Rivkin (2010) for estimates of the effects of teachers on student test scores, and Chamberlain (2013) and Chetty, Friedman, & Rockoff (2013) on the long-term impact of teachers.

² Atteberry, Loeb, and Wyckoff (2013), for instance, found that differences in teacher effectiveness observable in teachers' first year of service tend to persist; the lowest performing novice teachers do not tend to "catch up" with their peers. Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005) found that following the initial years of service, teacher experience is unrelated to teacher effectiveness.

³ Numerous qualitative studies (e.g., Clarke et al., 2014; Ganser, 2002; Graham, 2006; Hoffman et al., 2015; National Research Council, 2010; Zeichner, 2009) also document the importance of cooperating teachers and student teaching placements for teacher candidate development.

with teacher value added during the first year of service.⁴ Ronfeldt (2012, 2015) found that placing student teachers in higher functioning schools leads to better outcomes for those student teachers who enter the teaching profession in terms of retention and student achievement. Goldhaber, Krieg, and Theobald (2017) found that teachers tend to be more effective when their school's demographics are similar to those of the school where they completed their student teaching.

Recent evidence suggests that the person who serves as the mentor, or “cooperating teacher,” also matters. For example, Matsko et al. (2018) found that teacher candidates feel better prepared when their cooperating teachers received better in-service performance ratings. Ronfeldt, Matsko, Nolan, and Reininger (2018) noted a relationship between cooperating teachers’ observational ratings and their student teachers’ observational ratings as first-year teachers. Finally, Ronfeldt, Brockman, and Campbell (2018) found that both the observational ratings and value added of cooperating teachers predicts these same measures for student teachers who go on to teach themselves. It is possible that these findings reflect correlational, rather than causal, relationships. More competent teacher candidates, for instance, might obtain placements with more competent cooperating teachers. But in a recent randomized controlled trial, Ronfeldt et al. (2018) provided some evidence that these relationships are indeed causal: teacher candidates randomly assigned to higher quality cooperating teachers reported receiving more and higher quality coaching during their student teaching internships.

In sum, the reports by student teachers along with the existing evidence linking student teaching and outcomes for in-service teachers demonstrate that where and with whom student

⁴ Three aspects of TEP oversight are included in this measure: whether cooperating teachers are required to have a minimum level of teaching experience, whether the TEP picks the cooperating teacher (as opposed to the K–12 school or the student teacher), and whether a TEP supervisor observes the student teacher at least five times. The average summative score on this measure (ranging between 0 and 3) reported by Boyd et al. (2009) is 0.95 (SD = 1.07).

teaching occurs likely matters a great deal for the development of teacher candidate competencies. Less evidence is available regarding the relationship between *how* student teaching is conducted and in-service outcomes. Darling-Hammond (2014) discussed the practices of seven exemplary TEPs, identifying “extensive and intensely supervised clinical work—tightly integrated with coursework—that allows candidates to learn from expert practice in schools that serve diverse students” (p. 550) as being critically important to effective teacher education. However, she also acknowledged that although “developing sites where state-of-the-art practice is the norm is a critical element of strong teacher education...it has been one of the most difficult” (p. 554).

One reason it is difficult to develop high-quality student teaching experiences is that TEPs have limited control over the student teaching process. Typically, TEPs define the duration of the practicum and clinical experience and have some influence over with whom student teachers are placed (Greenberg, Pomerance, & Walsh, 2011). But TEPs are constrained by the willingness of school districts and in-service teachers to take on the responsibility of mentoring a novice teacher. In a literature review on the participation of cooperating teachers in teacher education, Clarke, Triggs, and Nielsen (2014) noted that, “University and school-based selection policies for the most part do not include robust options for choosing the best possible mentors for student teachers,” and that, “Attempts to make suitable matches become logistically challenging with very large numbers of student teachers who need to be placed annually” (p. 191). To the extent that TEPs have only limited control over the *where* and *with whom* aspects of student teaching, they are likely to have even less control over the *how* aspects of student teaching.

A qualitative study from Washington State illustrates how some of these challenges play out during the student teaching placement process (St. John, Goldhaber, Krieg, & Theobald, 2018). Specifically, this study documents considerable information asymmetries between TEPs and the

districts and schools in which they place student teachers. For example, many programs do not know how specific cooperating teachers are selected by districts and schools, while districts and schools often feel as though they are not provided adequate information to make thoughtful matches between candidates and cooperating teachers.

Overall, the capacity of TEPs to improve student teaching is likely to be limited without the development of new kinds of relationships with the districts and cooperating teachers that host their teacher candidates (Darling-Hammond, 2014). It is remarkable, then, that the perspective of school districts has received relatively little attention in the literature. This is a significant gap given that school districts are (1) uniquely positioned to influence what the student teaching process looks like, and (2) have an interest in teacher candidates receiving the best possible training, while limiting the costs associated with their role in providing an important piece of that training.⁵

In this paper, we describe the student teaching process from the perspective of Spokane Public Schools (SPS), highlighting the challenges associated with the student teacher placement process and several initiatives SPS has undertaken to improve student teaching experiences for teacher candidates. To our knowledge, this is the first systematic effort *by a school district* to create a more purposeful structure around student teaching and to study the effects.

⁵ These interests are magnified by the fact that many teachers are hired into the district in which they completed their student teaching. In an analysis of Washington State, Krieg, Theobald, and Goldhaber (2016) found that roughly 40% of teachers were hired by the school district where they were student teachers.

2. The student teaching process in Spokane Public Schools: then and now

The process prior to SPS reforms

In SPS, as recently as the 2013–14 school year, the student teaching process was fairly ad-hoc and generally dictated by actions initiated by TEPs. The matching of student teachers to cooperating teachers was a decentralized process that revolved around school- and teacher-level connections to TEPs. For example, a TEP field placement coordinator might contact a school principal (or other administrator) he or she had worked with in the past to arrange for cooperating teachers to host one or several student teachers at the principal's school. A student teacher's placement would be finalized by notifying central administration and by the student teacher submitting a basic application to the district and clearing a background check. At the district level, SPS did not systematically track student teacher placements, seek to influence the placement and mentorship process, or take steps to assess the performance of its cooperating teachers.

SPS's (formerly) hands-off approach to student teaching does appear to be fairly typical. As reported in St. John et al. (2018), in Washington State, districts differ in terms of whether the process is coordinated at the district level by a human resources staff member or at the school level by a principal. Each TEP contacted by the authors reported encountering both types of arrangements, indicating that district-level and school-level student teacher placement procedures are commonplace.

Drawbacks of a decentralized placement process

One consequence of a decentralized placement process is that it places school principals at the center of the decision making process. Principals are in a good position to know which teachers have the capacity to host a student teacher, both in terms of their mentoring skills and existing

personal obligations. The downside is that principals are tasked with fielding calls from TEPs' field placement officers. In a district like SPS, which hosts a large number of student teachers from multiple TEPs, the administrative burden can become onerous. Prior to reforms, principals expressed their frustration to district administrators about serving as a primary point of contact to TEPs, the amount of correspondence that entailed, and lacking the time to manage student teaching placements in a satisfactory manner.

Having principals serve as the primary point of contact with TEPs also meant that SPS relied on them to serve as gatekeepers regarding the identification of suitable mentors. Because the district did not collect information on student teacher placements, it was not in a good position to assess how well its principals understood their gatekeeper role. There was a perception within SPS, however, that the gatekeeping process did not always perform well.⁶ For example, the district was aware of instances where student teachers experienced more of an assistant role in the classroom than that of a mentee.

Under a decentralized placement process, the district also relied on principals to serve as gatekeepers regarding the number of student teachers hosted in a school. Here, too, the gatekeeping process appeared to break down in some cases. One SPS administrator expressed frustration with the fact that her child's school hosted such a large number of student teachers—so many, in fact, that her child had a student teacher in the classroom during every year of elementary school.

⁶ There was also a perception that in some cases, TEPs were just happy to get "a body" because it was so challenging for placement officers to identify enough teachers willing to serve as mentors in local school districts.

Reforms to the student teacher placement process

Starting in 2014–15, SPS took steps to centralize the placement process, partly in response to frustrations communicated by principals about serving as the primary point of contact for TEPs seeking placements. The district obtained lists of student teacher candidates from each TEP rather than allowing arrangements to be made directly with principals and teachers. The lists typically included suggestions or requests from TEPs for specific schools or teachers. When no placement suggestion was provided by the TEP, the district advertised the placement request to principals and teachers who fit the endorsement area and grade-level preferences of the student teacher.

The district's interest in improving student teaching grew when research on its hiring process found that, although 47% of the teachers hired by SPS had done their student teaching in the district, the predictive validity of its hiring rubrics did not perform any better for applicants who had done their student teaching in SPS (Goldhaber, Grout, & Huntington-Klein, 2017). The fact that SPS hires many of its former student teachers highlighted the importance of cultivating high-quality student teaching experiences within SPS. In addition, the lack of differential predictive validity for internal versus external student teacher applicants suggested that SPS might benefit from learning more about student teachers during their time with the district.

With these interests in mind, the district further centralized the placement process ahead of the 2016–17 school year by creating a list of teachers eligible to serve as cooperating teachers based on years of experience, demonstrated proficiency in high-leverage teaching competencies, and approval by the building principal. Cooperating teachers were recruited from this list of teachers. As described below, SPS also developed a student teacher evaluation rubric (STER) to help it learn more about the strengths and growth areas of its student teachers, and to provide a tool with which cooperating teachers could provide structured feedback to student teachers. The

STER was pilot tested with a subset of student teacher placements during the 2016–17 and 2017–18 school years.

3. Challenges associated with reform implementation

In this section, we discuss the challenges faced by SPS associated with centralizing its student teacher placement process. To a large extent, these challenges were logistical. Placing student teachers requires a great deal of coordination between TEPs and school districts—entities that tend to lack any formal administrative relationship.⁷ Such logistical challenges are magnified in SPS, which hosts a large number of student teachers from multiple programs and historically, has attempted to satisfy every placement request. Looking at student teacher placements in the 2015–16 and 2016–17 school years in **Table 1**, we see that SPS hosted student teachers from more than six institutions. In 2016–17, the 188 student teachers hosted by SPS translated to roughly one student teacher for every nine classroom teachers, which is more than three times the rate of the average district in the state.⁸

Table 1. Student teacher placements by TEP, school level

	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18
Teacher Education Program			
Eastern Washington	30	63	51
Gonzaga	54	49	36
Western Governors	2	7	17
Whitworth	45	59	50
Washington State	13	4	12
Other	4	6	11
School Level			
Elementary	103	136	105

⁷ State code stipulates that all Washington TEPs maintain a field placement agreement with each school district in which student teachers are placed, but these agreements tend to address liability, not the student teaching process.

⁸ In the state of Washington, Goldhaber, Krieg, and Theobald (2018) report that 3.1% of teachers host a student teacher in a typical school year.

Middle	15	9	25
High	30	43	39
Total	148	188	177

In its efforts to satisfy all placement requests, a perennial challenge for SPS has been simply finding enough cooperating teachers. There is little direct incentive to host a student teacher because cooperating teachers tend to receive little in the way of compensation from TEPs, and mentoring, when done properly, demands a substantial commitment of one’s time and effort. Because teachers appropriately view their *own* students as their primary obligation, it is not surprising that many are reluctant to introduce a novice instructor into their classrooms. When teachers do agree to mentor a student teacher, it is often out of a sense of service to the profession and knowing that someone once did the same for them.

Coordinating the placement of student teachers has also proven to be challenging. As noted above, SPS centralized the student teacher placement process in part due to complaints from school principals weary of fielding calls from TEPs. Hence, the burden of managing the placement process has shifted to the district’s central office, which now serves as a hub of communication between the TEPs’ field placement officers and principals and teachers from across the district. For SPS, this role now occupies the majority of senior-level employee’s time. In other words, it is costly.

There are several aspects of the student teacher placement process that exacerbate the difficulty of handling a large number of requests. One is that each TEP operates on a different schedule. Sources of schedule variation include various academic calendars (e.g., quarters vs. semesters) and various definitions of when, how long, and with whom student teacher practicums and clinical experiences are to occur. For instance, some TEP programs require that practicums be

completed with multiple cooperating teachers and the clinical experience with still a different cooperating teacher. Others require that the practicum and clinical experience be conducted with the same cooperating teacher. Depending on the program, practicums and clinical experiences may last anywhere between 6 and 12 weeks and may begin or end during either the fall, winter, or spring quarter. These factors may vary *within* TEPs, many of which operate both bachelor's and master's degree programs and accept new cohorts of students quarterly (rather than annually). This variation makes the *ex-ante* identification of teachers who might be willing to accept a student teacher in the coming school year more difficult because saying "yes" exposes a teacher to a wide variety of outcomes.

A second aspect that contributes to the challenge of placing student teachers is that there is no structure that has been formally agreed upon by SPS and the TEPs it works with regarding when and how placement requests will be submitted and processed. One consequence of this is that SPS receives a wide range of nonstandardized placement requests. For instance, the time of year when placement requests are submitted varies across TEPs and the requests for subject areas and grade levels are often far more specific than the range of positions in which a teacher will ultimately earn an endorsement (e.g., "Grade 2" vs "Elementary Education" or "Biology" vs "Science").

More troubling, the lack of structure results in many student teacher placements falling through. For example, finding a cooperating teacher willing to host a student teacher often requires a week or more of e-mailing between the district-level coordinator and principals and teachers at the school level. In the meantime, a TEP is likely to be looking elsewhere in case a placement with SPS cannot be secured. It is not unusual for SPS to arrange a student teacher placement only to find that the TEP has already placed the student teacher in a different district.

Overall, the volume of student teacher placement requests fielded, the unstandardized nature of those requests, and unclear expectations about how requests will be handled all conspire to make the effective management of the student teaching process challenging. St. John et al. (2018) document similar frustrations with the placement process expressed by TEPs throughout the state.

4. Opportunities to improve the student teaching process

When SPS took steps to centralize its student teacher placement process, it did so with the broader intention of ultimately creating a more purposeful structure around student teaching. The centralized placement process has allowed SPS to collect better information about where student teachers are from, with whom they are placed, and whether they subsequently apply for a position and are hired by the district. This put SPS in a position to think about how to improve the placement process and the experiences of both cooperating teachers and student teachers once a student teacher enters the classroom. Here we describe some initiatives SPS is considering to improve student teaching, including some that it has already begun to pursue.

Streamlining the student teacher placement process

The challenges associated with managing the student teaching placement process identified above are related to: (1) the number of placement requests; (2) recruiting cooperating teachers; (3) the nonstandardized nature of placement requests; and (4) the lack of an agreed-upon structure between SPS and the TEPs for how placement requests will be processed.

Capping the number of placement requests: To date, SPS has attempted to satisfy all placement requests by TEPs. Moving forward, the district is considering capping the number of student teachers it will host each year. The cap could be determined by the number of cooperating

teachers recruited ahead of the coming school year or a fixed threshold chosen by the district. SPS could also seek to distribute placements across grade levels and subject areas to better align with anticipated hiring needs; for example, districts in Washington have historically faced much greater demand for math, science, and special education teachers than the number of teachers in these areas produced by in-state TEPs (Goldhaber, Krieg, Theobald, & Brown, 2015). In the specific case of SPS, this would likely mean accepting fewer student teachers in Grade K–6 positions. A potential source of contention in capping the number of placements is that TEPs submit placement requests at different times of year, which could disadvantage student teachers from certain programs.

Recruiting cooperating teachers: In addition to the challenge of recruiting enough cooperating teachers, the logistics of communicating with teachers about their willingness to mentor a student teacher have proven difficult and time consuming. SPS is developing a survey that will be sent to all teachers at the end of each school year. It will ask teachers if they hosted a student teacher during the past school year and if so, who they hosted and what were the positive and negative aspects of that experience. The survey will also ask teachers if they would be willing to host a student teacher in the coming school year. If so, the survey will collect information to facilitate placements that are less likely to fall through. If not, the survey will collect information to help the district understand why.

Adding structure to the placement process: SPS is developing a more formal process for receiving and processing placement requests that clarifies expectations for both SPS and TEPs. When submitting a request, TEPs will be asked to refrain from searching for a placement elsewhere. In return, SPS will agree to find a placement, or indicate to the TEP that it was unable to do so, within a specified time frame. To process placement requests, SPS has developed forms

in Survey Monkey through which TEPs will be asked to submit placement requests. The survey forms take advantage of checkbox menus to force standardized responses for each student teacher's desired grade levels and subject areas. This will generate sets of placement request information that are identical in structure across TEPs and can be exported into a single spreadsheet.

Enhancing interactions between cooperating teachers and student teachers

Many of the teachers hired by SPS did their student teaching in the district and therefore, SPS has a stake in providing student teachers with a high-quality experience. As part of its effort to establish a more purposeful structure around the student teaching process, SPS developed a modified version of its Marzano-based Teacher/Principal Evaluation Program (TPEP) evaluation rubric for cooperating teachers to use in evaluating and providing structured feedback to their student teachers.⁹ The subset of evaluation criteria included on the Student Teacher Evaluation Rubric (STER) were chosen based on their relevance to the potential success of a novice teacher.¹⁰ The scoring form for the full set of evaluation criteria on the STER is presented in **Appendix A**.

During the 2016–17 and 2017–18 school years, the STER was pilot tested by a subset of cooperating teachers. These cooperating teachers attended a training session aimed at preparing them to mentor a student teacher and to use the evaluation process to give clear, consistent feedback through focused conversation designed to facilitate professional growth. An important component of the training focused on how to score student teachers' performance. In evaluating student teachers, SPS is using the STER in a manner that is consistent with its use in TPEP

⁹ Washington state code (RCW 28A.405.100) requires public educators to be evaluated using the state's TPEP system, which scores teachers on 8 criteria on a scale of 1 to 4 (SPS uses a Marzano-based rubric).

¹⁰ Excluded, for instance, were criteria such as "Organizing the Physical Layout of the Classroom," "Planning and Preparing for the Needs of All Students," and criteria related to promoting positive interactions with parents.

evaluations. Because the scoring methodology is oriented around professional growth, SPS communicated to cooperating teachers that it is expected that the student teachers will likely receive scores of 1 (*Beginning*) and 2 (*Developing*) because they are novices.

It is important to SPS that the use of its TPEP and the STER be consistent with one another; using them differently would be confusing to both cooperating teachers and student teachers, many of whom will enter the teacher workforce in Washington State and be evaluated on similar rubrics as in-service teachers. Consistency in the use of the TPEP and STER rubrics is also important for giving student teachers a sense of the professional growth trajectory they will be expected to achieve over their careers and indoctrinating them into the district's (and the state's) evaluation framework. SPS has found that its first-year teachers are often worried about observations and evaluations because they don't know what they look like; this cohort of student teachers will enter their first year of teaching already familiar with the process and many of the TPEP evaluation criteria.

To date, feedback from those participating in the STER pilot testing has been positive. Cooperating teachers indicated that, in conversations with their student teachers, it helped them link feedback to instructional best practices, as opposed to reviewing performance in an isolated manner. They also found that it helped their student teachers to reflect on their own practice. One unanticipated outcome was that cooperating teachers found that the experience of using the STER to evaluate another's teaching helped them understand their own evaluations on a deeper level. Moving forward, SPS intends to expand the use of its STER.

Supporting cooperating teachers and student teachers

In addition to the training provided to cooperating teachers regarding the use of the STER, SPS is developing training initiatives that will ultimately be available to all student teachers and

cooperating teachers. The training provided to student teachers will consist of three sessions. The first session will lay out expectations for what the student teachers will experience during their time with the SPS and the standards they will be expected to adhere to. A second session, which will be run by the Student Services department, will provide training on restorative practices, an area of practice SPS has identified as underdeveloped among novice teachers. The final training session will focus on the process of entering the workforce, including discussion of résumé preparation and interviewing.

Cooperating teachers will be given a 6-hour training session defining the districts' expectations for student teachers and cooperating teachers and covering topics identified by SPS as key to student teacher growth and success. These topics will include benefits and strategies for collaboration and co-teaching, how to conduct observations and provide meaningful feedback, and how to write an effective letter of recommendation. All cooperating teachers are given an SPS Cooperating Teachers' Handbook containing materials from the training and any forms and templates that will be used in interacting with their student teacher.

Assessing student teacher experiences

As part of the district's broader effort to track student teacher placements, SPS is developing a survey tool to assess student teacher experiences. The survey will be administered at the conclusion of a student teacher's clinical experience and will collect information about what worked well, what could be improved, and what their intentions are moving forward in terms of entering the teacher workforce. These survey data will help SPS better understand which cooperating teacher-student pairings tend to be most successful and design initiatives to continue improving the student teaching experience moving forward.

5. Conclusion

As hosts and future employers of student teachers, school districts have a clear stake in the student teaching process. Yet, in spite of the important role they play, the perspective of school districts has largely been missing from the literature around student teaching. In this paper, we addressed this gap in the literature by discussing challenges and opportunities in student teaching from the perspective of Spokane Public Schools.

The challenges identified by SPS center on the difficulty of recruiting enough qualified cooperating teachers and nonstandardized placement procedures that result in a cumbersome matching process. These challenges mirror those described by TEPs in the literature (see, for instance, Clarke et al., 2014; St. John et al., 2018), suggesting that both school districts and TEPs would benefit from better-designed placement procedures. For its part, SPS is considering capping the number of student teachers it will place each year and is developing online survey tools to facilitate the recruitment of cooperating teachers. SPS is also thinking about how to create more structure around the placement process to align expectations held by SPS and TEPs and streamline the handling of requests.

SPS also saw an opportunity to improve student teaching experiences by providing more support to the mentoring process in the form of mentorship training for cooperating teachers and using a student teacher evaluation rubric to provide structured feedback to student teachers. Training has been extended to student teachers as well regarding expectations, progression into the workforce, and understanding the evaluation rubric (which was derived from the same type of rubric used to evaluate in-service teachers across the state). SPS hopes that these efforts will not only improve student teaching experiences but raise the profile of what it means to serve as a cooperating teacher.

The ultimate impact of the district’s mentoring initiatives remains to be seen, but initial feedback has been promising. Moreover, recent evidence from Lafferty (2018)—who identifies the lack of preparation and training provided to cooperating teachers as a persistent weakness in the training of teacher candidates—suggests that cooperating teachers who received *some* form of training for their role as a mentor provided higher-quality student teaching experiences than cooperating teachers who had not received any training.

A fundamental challenge in efforts to improve student teaching is that TEPs have no authority over what happens in the classrooms of public school districts. To achieve meaningful improvements in the quality of student teaching experiences, it may be necessary for school districts to provide more leadership in defining the student teaching experience. The extent to which other districts have taken an active role defining the student teaching process is unclear, but for SPS thus far, the efforts to improve student teaching described above have been seen by district leadership as a positive step toward improving the development of teacher candidates.

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Appendix A – Sample student Teacher Evaluation Rubric

Student Teacher Name:		Mentor Teacher Name:											
School and Assignment:		School Year:											
Student Teacher Observation Evaluation Form		Observation Dates										Final Comp. Score	Criterion Score
		1-Feb	13-Feb	22-Feb	6-Mar	12-Mar	15-Mar						
Criterion 1 - Expectations													
Element 1: Providing Clear Learning Goals and Scales (Rubrics) [WA.1.1]	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	
Element 37: Using Verbal and Nonverbal Behaviors that Indicate Affection for Students [WA.1.4]	3			3								3	
Element 39: Demonstrating Value and Respect for Low Expectancy Students [WA.1.4]		3	3						3		3	3	
Criterion 2 - Instruction													
WA Component 2.1: Interacting with New Knowledge													
Element 8: Previewing New Content [WA.2.1.3]	1				2	2	2	2			2	2	
Element 11: Elaborating on New Information [WA.2.1.6]	1				2	3	3				2	2	
Element 12: Recording and Representing Knowledge [WA.2.1.7]	1			3	2	2					2	2	
WA Component 2.2: Organizing Students to Practices and Deepen Knowledge													
Element 17: Examining Similarities and Differences [WA.2.2.4]		2							2	2	2	2	
Element 18: Examining Errors in Reasoning [WA.2.2.5]		1							2	2	2	2	
Element 20: Revising Knowledge [WA.2.2.7]		2							2	2	2	2	
Elements 21-23: Providing Students Resources, Guidance and Organizes Students to Engage in Cognitively Complex Tasks Involving Hypothesis Generation and Testing [WA.2.3]				2							2	2	
WA Component 2.6: Noticing When Students Are Not Engaged													
Element 24: Noticing when Students are not Engaged [WA.2.6.1]	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	
Element 26: Managing Response Rates [WA.2.6.3]	1	3	3	3	4				3	3	3	3	
Element 28: Maintaining a Lively Pace [WA.2.6.5]	1	2	3	3					3		3	3	
Element 29: Demonstrating Intensity and Enthusiasm [WA.2.6.6]	1	3	3	4					3	3	3	3	
Elements 50, 51 and 52: Evaluating the Effectiveness of Individual Lessons, Units, Specific Pedagogical Strategies and Behaviors [WA.2.8]	2				2						2	2	
Criterion 3 - Differentiation													
Elements 42 and 43: Effective Scaffolding of Information within Lessons & Lessons within Units [WA.3.1]													
	2		3						3		3	3	
Criterion 5 - Learning Environment													
Element 4: Establishing Classroom Routines [WA.5.2]	1	3	3	3					3	3	3	3	
Element 33: Demonstrating "Witiness" [WA.5.3]	1	2		3					3	3	3	3	
Element 34: Applying Consequences for Lack of Adherence to Rules and Procedures [WA.5.4]	2								3		3	3	
Element 35: Acknowledging Adherence to Rules and Procedures [WA.5.5]		2	3						3	3	3	3	
Criterion 6 - Assessment													
Element 2: Tracking Student Progress [WA.6.3]			2						2		2	2	
Criterion 8 - Professional Practice													
Element 55: Promoting Positive Interactions with Colleagues [WA.8.2]		4							4	4	4	4	
Element 60: Participating in District and School Initiatives [WA.8.3]									2		2	2	

Element 12: Recording and Representing Knowledge

Washington State Component 2.1.7 – The teacher engages students in activities that help them record their understanding of new content in linguistic ways and/or represent the content in nonlinguistic ways.

Possible Teacher Evidence		Possible Student Evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Asks students to summarize the information they have learned Asks students to generate notes that identify critical information in the content Asks students to create nonlinguistic representations for new content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graphic organizers Pictures Pictographs Flowcharts Asks students to create mnemonics that organize the content 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include critical content in their summaries and notes Include critical content or demonstrate understanding in their nonlinguistic representations Can explain main points of the lesson 	
Not Using/Beginning (1)	Developing (2)	Applying (3)	Innovating (4)
When the strategy is called for the teacher does not use it, or the teacher uses strategy incorrectly or with parts missing.	The teacher engages students in activities that help them record their understanding of new content in linguistic ways and/or in nonlinguistic ways BUT does not monitor the extent to which these activities enhance students' understanding.	The teacher engages students in activities that help them record their understanding of new content in linguistic ways and/or in nonlinguistic ways and monitors the extent to which this enhances students' understanding.	The teacher adapts and creates new strategies for unique student needs and situations.

**Highlight score in above rubric.

Specific example from the lesson:

Suggestion(s) for growth: