The Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline (CTEP): Recruiting Future Teachers Who Will Return to the City

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Background

In the late 1990s, the dean of the College of Education at Illinois State University (ISU) began to articulate a proposal for an Urban Teaching Park—a key component of the university’s plan to fulfill its statewide leadership-in-education role. In fact, the Illinois Board of Higher Education focus statement for ISU reads:

Founded in 1857 to prepare teachers, Illinois State University is the state's first public university. Illinois State is unique among public universities in that it provides statewide leadership in identifying the needs of Illinois schools and, through coordination with other colleges and universities, in developing and delivering programs tailored to meet them.

The Urban Teaching Park in the Chicago region would allow the university to develop graduate programs and expand technology-training programs offered to professional development school personnel. It would have direct access to teachers and schools educating the state's urban youth and will permit additional opportunities for innovative ways to serve students traditionally less able to access higher education. The Urban Teaching Park would also provide administrative support for professional development schools and other school/university partnerships, and would provide easier access for practicing teachers and school administrators to continue professional development. The Urban Teaching Park would encourage further partnership development between Chicago’s public schools and public universities.

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The Urban Teaching Park was envisioned as an actual site or building in the city from which ISU could offer various resources, including course work for both preservice and graduate programs as well as professional development for its school-partnership faculties. The intent was to administer several major grants from the Urban Teaching Park: a five-year grant to provide preservice and in-service for bilingual certification; a U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Enhancement grant to enhance teacher education through statewide partnerships between universities, school districts, and other education organizations; a MacArthur Foundation grant to support Chicago teachers as they prepare for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards examination; and a Gates Foundation grant to connect school administrators with community resources, best practices in assessment, and an infusion of greater technology into the schools.

**The Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline (CTEP)**

In the meantime, the notion of the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline (CTEP) evolved under the leadership of a new dean in the College of Education. Research suggests that teachers often return home to teach, so why not work with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to identify middle and high school students with an interest in teaching, introduce those students to ISU, and work with City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) on a “pipeline” project to prepare these individuals to return to their communities.

To continue pursuit of funding for such a project, the three pipeline partners began looking at what kinds of relationships were already in existence. It was discovered that in fall 2002, there were a total of 277 ISU graduates employed by CPS, 50 CPS graduates enrolled at ISU as teacher education majors, and 44 additional teacher education majors who had transferred credits from City Colleges of Chicago. The partners also identified multiple initiatives—including the TEAM (Teacher Education Access for Minorities) Project, the Multicultural Mentorship Project, and a dozen or so other activities—to encourage CPS students to consider teacher education as a major and ISU as the place to prepare. In addition, there were numerous partnership activities between CCC and CPS, as well as between CCC and ISU.

Concurrently, the state began the process of developing the Associate of Arts in Teaching (AAT) degree at community colleges. ISU faculty worked with CCC faculty on proposals for five courses: Introduction to Education, Child Growth and Development, Technology Literacy, Educational Psychology, and Exceptional Learners. Because of the collaboration on course development,
ISU felt confident accepting these transfer courses from city community colleges, something heretofore not practiced. The courses were all standards based and linked to the e-portfolio for performance-based assessment.

With this background, ISU sought federally earmarked funds for the pipeline project; on June 30, 2003, Representative Jesse Jackson Jr. held a press conference along with ISU president Al Bowman, CPS chief executive officer Arne Duncan, and CCC chancellor Wayne D. Watson to announce the funding, and the pipeline was launched with these specific purposes:

The Pipeline will provide the Chicago area with a continuous supply of well-trained multicultural teachers for their public schools and will provide the nation with an exemplary model for urban teacher recruitment, teacher education, and mentorship.... The process of recruitment will begin in the middle and high schools with identification of students with aspirations of becoming teachers.... Students will also be given the opportunity to interact with University faculty through visits to Illinois State's campus and faculty visits to Chicago high schools.... Recruitment and mentorship will continue as these future teachers proceed into their general education programs at either City Colleges of Chicago or directly to Illinois State.... As students advance through their professional education programs at Illinois State, support will continue with on-campus mentoring from faculty and peers. Students will return to Chicago Public Schools for their complete senior year where they will be fully immersed in the practice of teaching.... This project will address the problem of retention by developing mentorship programs in Chicago Public Schools, [specifically] to earn [National Board] certification. These individuals, by attaining this certificate, will become leaders and positive role models for new groups of students who aspire to become teachers.

The first order of business was selecting a director for the pipeline, someone based in Chicago to oversee ongoing activities as well as initiate new projects—in essence, someone to make sense of the relationships that already existed so that operations were no longer “silos” but rather efficient and effective networks. Although each of the aforementioned grants, as well as the federal earmark, were now exhausted, the dream for a facility stayed alive throughout implementation of CTEP. LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation), in collaboration with such agencies as the State Farm Companies Foundation, the university, and CPS, had identified various neighborhoods in the city with which it was currently working as possible locations. Following months of
intense study and collaboration with these funding entities, the university identified the Little Village neighborhood as an ideal setting from which to base operations. The criteria for a neighborhood worthy of selection included the following:

- Stable and improving schools with good leadership
- A diverse and stable neighborhood with involved parents
- A strong community development corporation willing to assist with housing and coordination of relationships
- Good transportation/accessibility
- Strong CPS involvement and support

The Little Village Partnership and facility will be used as a vehicle both to prepare students currently in ISU teacher preparation programs to live and work as teacher interns with the goal of preparing them for urban teaching careers, and to recruit young people from the neighborhood’s schools to ISU, hopefully to become teachers who would subsequently return to their neighborhood or to other Chicago neighborhoods to start their professional careers. At the heart of the model is a very simple concept: establishment of a community-based facility that provides comfortable and affordable living quarters for interns/student teachers; overnight lodging for ISU professors; classroom space for seminars and other instruction; a computer/Internet instructional laboratory; and space for groups with related missions to provide other services, such as after-school tutoring.

Research indicates that newly certified teachers are more likely to return home—or close by—to teach; therefore, recruiting teacher candidates from community high schools to the local university and returning them to the community is a promising strategy for creating a new and enduring population of teachers for the community. School/university partnerships work best when all parties gain: when students achieve, teacher candidates become strong, local teachers and schools experience new strategies and resources, university faculty learn from current school experiences, and the local community benefits. ISU has learned that teacher candidates whose internships run parallel with the school year are more likely than others to stay in the teaching profession.

Nothing like this partnership exists in the nation. It will leverage placement of teacher interns in Chicago’s public schools for senior-year experiences, integrating students’ university preparation with on-the-job learning. The partnership will involve school-based action research on teaching and learning,
focused professional development for teachers and administrators, and infusion
of best practice with university instruction. Interns will provide professional
assistance in classrooms as well as communications between school, home,
and community. At its best, the collaboration will result in improved student
achievement in local schools and renewal of the neighborhood’s quality
teaching community. At the same time, the university will learn from and
refine a powerful partnership that will inform and improve its urban teacher
preparation practices.

**Update on the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline Today**

Through the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline, ISU, CPS, and CCC are
working together to address the needs of Chicago schools for well-trained
teachers, with the special purpose of increasing the number of under-
represented minority populations. Over the years, CTEP will:

- Increase the number of Chicago high school graduates and CCC
  community college students who enter teacher education programs by
  expanding existing programs within the pipeline
- Increase the number of ISU teacher education graduates who are
  employed by CPS
- Improve the retention of ISU graduates who become effective teachers
  in Chicago

As CTEP was designed to increase the number of students who enter college
and pursue the teaching profession, the pipeline recruited and supported
Chicago middle and high school students with an expressed interest in teaching
and provided levels of sponsored activities, coordinating the efforts of ISU,
CPS, and CCC in addressing Chicago’s need for well-trained urban educators.
By concentrating efforts in specific regions within Chicago (e.g., Little Village,
Pilsen, Back of the Yards, and North Lawndale), CTEP is working to increase
the number of students from underrepresented minority populations who
enter teacher education programs and has established Future Educators
of America (FEA) chapters in local schools, offering tutoring/mentorship
training models for interested students as well as opportunities for these future
educators to practice their newly acquired skills in feeder elementary schools
within their own community. This approach ensures an early immersion into
teaching while instilling a feeling of community ownership into students who
develop vested interests and feel empowered about renewing their community,
ultimately resulting in their decision to remain in Chicago to teach after
graduation.
CTEP simultaneously provides opportunities for current ISU teacher education students to explore Chicago and its schools through both the Social Foundations Exploration Program and the CPS Summer Fellows Program—allowing students to consider Chicago as a viable option for their clinical experiences and subsequent professional careers. Once pipeline students return to Chicago for their student-teaching experience—fulfilling an important aspect related to “growing our own teachers”—the Student Teachers Educating Minority Students (STEMS) Program steps in to further support preservice teachers by providing a capacity-building structure in which they can practice and sharpen their pedagogical skills through small-group and individualized instruction. This program also serves to foster the development of quality relationships between preservice teachers and CPS students who need the additional academic support to prepare for high school graduation and postsecondary education.

Addressing the pipeline at each point of entry and exit was an important goal in year-one implementation so that as both CPS and CCC students entered the pipeline—whether into CCC or directly into ISU teacher preparation—there would exist systemic programs catering to and supporting their continuum-based progress and needs. These programs would be adaptive and provide real-world experiences that often get lost in translation within a sterile university classroom. As the next step for implementation, ISU and CPS have initiated the first professional development school (PDS) site at Eli Whitney Elementary School in Little Village. Currently, eight pipeline students are completing a full year of in-service residency in addition to senior-year methodology course work taught on-site, rather than the more traditional sixteen weeks of student teaching. CTEP believes that through this guided acculturation process into urban education, preservice teachers can be adequately supported and mentored by effective veteran teachers through a socialized induction that ameliorates teacher retention (Odell and Ferraro 1992; Shann 1998).

Yearlong residency programs at PDS sites provide students with rich opportunities to observe, reflect, and later deal with problems associated with establishing their own classrooms—such as putting into place management strategies, which do no translate well from text-based theory. Goe (2000) recommends this early immersion approach, suggesting that to strengthen the retention probability, teacher candidates should be exposed to the kinds of hard-to-staff classrooms and schools in which they will be teaching. Through CTEP, students completing their senior year in this residency program would thus be fully immersed and inducted systemically—gradually increasing the real-world experiences and responsibilities in actual classrooms, which
conceptualize the complexities of the teaching profession. While there generally remains much disagreement between local schools and universities on how best to train future teachers, collaborative efforts between ISU, CPS, and CCC work to bridge this divide, providing a collaborative partnership model for Illinois and the United States.

Ongoing Needs

In recent years, CPS, CCC, and ISU have separately initiated activities regarding student-teaching placements and job placements to address the need of Chicago’s schools for more and better qualified teachers, especially those that fill the critical areas of math, science, special education, and languages. Although each initiative has been moderately successful, these programs lack the coherence and coordination needed to maximize their impact. Recognition of the limited impact of the separate initiatives brought the three institutions to establish CTEP. Although the partnerships between universities that service and educate future teachers and the local schools that hire them have been historically weak, strengthening these bonds has been an integral component to CTEP, which, with its partnership institutions, is well-equipped to continue forward in this direction, having developed a collaborative process that enhances function and resources to systemically meet Chicago’s need.

CTEP Continuation Goals

Outcome 1: Increase the number of middle and high school students, particularly from underrepresented groups, who pursue teacher education programs at CCC and ISU.

Outcome 2: Increase the number of community college students, particularly from underrepresented groups, who transfer to ISU for enrollment in teacher education.

Outcome 3: Increase the number of junior/senior teacher education students at ISU completing clinical hours and student teaching in the Chicago public schools.

Outcome 4: Increase the number of teacher education students who elect to teach in Chicago schools.

Outcome 5: Increase retention of ISU graduates who begin teaching in Chicago schools.

Outcome 6: Increase awareness of opportunities for teaching in Chicago schools.
Research-Based Rationale

With the estimated challenge to recruit, train, and retain over 2.2 million teachers to fill our nation’s classrooms over the next ten years (NCES 1997), CTEP has developed a collaborative model between schools and universities to attract and properly train students for urban education and retain them in high-need areas (Resta 1996). Districts that work in collaboration with local universities for systematic support and assistance for new teachers have significant growth in teacher retention. Results indicate that after three years in the partnership program, retention of beginning teachers was 95 percent for both elementary and secondary teachers combined, whereas prior to the program, retention of new teachers was 76 percent for elementary and 81 percent for secondary after three consecutive years in the classroom (Colbert and Wolff 1992).

There are proven strategies for both involving middle and high school students in activities designed to acquaint them with opportunities for becoming teachers (Avery and Burling 1997; Opp 2001) and recruiting students enrolled in community college (Wood 2001). CTEP recognizes that teacher recruitment and subsequent preparation for urban schools require that prospective teachers learn more than just theoretical methods of how to teach but receive instruction and ongoing guidance from mentors at the local school level during the residency year. Through practice-based education, which provides robust opportunities for reflective growth, ongoing learning, and discussion in a community environment, new teachers are better equipped to deal with the orientation process. In this sense, acculturation is controlled and guided through site-based mentoring. Opportunities for preservice teachers to generate their own hypotheses about teaching, evaluate and test learned theories, and struggle with preconceived ideas about urban education, all the while interacting with mentors, supervisors, colleagues, students, and parents, have all been cited as critical exposures necessary for prospective teachers’ development and ultimate success in the urban classroom (Darling-Hammond 2000).

Future Expansion of the Pipeline

Illinois State University and the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline were recently awarded a three-year U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Enhancement grant that will be used as a vehicle to continue expansion of the pipeline. The Professional Articulation for Recruiting/Retaining Teachers for Neighborhood Engagement and Renewal (PARTNER) project will develop an efficient and effective system that articulates the work of schools, community
colleges, and universities—as well as community agencies and businesses—to recruit and retain quality teachers. The unique aspects of the PARTNER project include (1) obtaining community support for becoming both a teacher and a member of the local community; (2) linking recruitment and support services from all partner institutions; and (3) tracking individuals through the various levels. The PARTNER system will establish strategies and resources that can be sustained after the grant. Federal funds will support the design and evaluation of system components, the creation of staff and instructional development that addresses the needs of children in the partner schools, and the facilitation of consensus building on the criteria for candidate selection and assessment.

The PARTNER project is designed to develop an articulated system for teacher recruitment and retention. The project will increase the number of individuals from the Little Village community who enter teacher education programs and return to Chicago to teach, as well as develop community resources. The PARTNER project will also recruit current teacher education candidates at partner colleges and other institutions to explore Chicago, allowing candidates to consider Chicago a viable option for their clinical experiences, student teaching, and professional careers. The PARTNER project seeks to leverage and further enhance teacher education by meeting the critical needs of urban teachers, ultimately improving urban teacher retention.

The project will perform the following activities:

- Bring personnel from all partners together in working teams to design and implement reform strategies of the project
- Redesign preservice teacher preparation to include instruction that meets the needs of the partner schools
- Examine practices of the schools and the district to be able to identify quality candidates for positions in the district
- Develop support services for beginning teachers in the schools to enable them to become quality teachers
- Bring personnel from all partners to be active participants at each level of the teacher recruitment and retention system

The work of the PARTNER project will take place in work teams organized around each of the levels of the system. The teams will be formed around the following nine objectives: (1) pre-college recruitment; (2) lower division college recruitment; (3) upper division college recruitment; (4) program graduates’ recruitment and assistance; (5) effective hiring and employment practices; (6) support of new teachers; (7) scholarship and support; (8) assessment; and
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(9) project evaluation. Each work team will have a chairperson supported by the project and will include members from each of the partners as appropriate.

The Nine PARTNER Work Teams and Their Objectives

1. Pre-college Recruitment: This work team will focus on facilitating communication between pre-college students, their parents, and community members on teaching opportunities. These students may be in middle or high school, or may be high school graduates who have not yet entered college. Activities will include the following:
   • Developing materials, including a Spanish edition, that will provide information on scholarships and other support for college
   • Demonstrating how enrollment in a local community college can address issues of cost and convenience, and how part of the remaining two years can be spent back in the community through participation in the senior-year professional development school
   • Enhancing existing Future Educators of America chapters and initiating new chapters, especially in partner schools where Golden Apple graduates are teaching and can assist in this development process

2. Lower Division College Recruitment: This work team will focus on students enrolled in Daley and Truman City Colleges of Chicago, students enrolled at ISU, and members of the community who have earned some college credit. Within each subgroup, students may not yet be committed to teaching. To provide a coordinated approach to recruitment, this work team will engage in the following activities:
   • Developing or refining advisement procedures to recruit students for teaching in Chicago
   • Creating early field experiences in partner schools in teacher education courses
   • Promoting organizations for teacher candidates that have a focus on urban teaching
   • Providing scholarships to students from ISU, Golden Apple, Truman, and other sources

3. Upper Division College Recruitment: This work team will focus on those students already enrolled in teacher education programs at ISU as well as individuals and community members interested in teaching who have sufficient college credit to qualify as juniors or seniors. The activities promoted by this work team will include the following:
• Implementing yearlong residency programs at PDS sites to provide students with rich opportunities to observe, reflect, and later deal with problems associated with establishing their own classrooms
• Recruiting teacher education students to teach in Little Village or elsewhere in Chicago and providing clinical experiences in partner schools
• Implementing an approach to help teacher candidates focus on student learning (e.g., the Teacher Work Sample strategy)
• Providing mentoring to these upper division students through Golden Apple and National Board certified teacher coaches

4. Program Graduates’ Recruitment and Assistance: This work team will focus on recruiting graduates from ISU or other institutions, or any individual who previously completed a teacher education program, to seek employment in Little Village or other Chicago schools. The activities of this work team will include the following:
• Developing programs and materials that aggressively attract individuals to apply for Chicago teaching positions and that target the community’s support for beginning teachers
• Targeting Golden Apple Scholars who are completing programs in any Illinois higher education institution
• Assisting with the development of electronic portfolios that carefully document student and teacher success in Little Village classrooms

5. Effective Hiring and Employment Practices: This work team will examine hiring practices common to the CPS district and unique to the Little Village schools to assess their effectiveness in meeting the needs of these schools. The work team will evaluate the following:
• Employment practices (including teacher retention and attrition) in partner schools and their criteria for employment
• Follow through of possible candidates to ensure timely processing of information
• CPS’s provision of housing assistance, including up to $7,500 down-payment assistance for teachers who have taught at least one year and commit to five additional years of service in CPS

6. Support of New Teachers: This work team will focus on creating an effective and strong system of support within each school building. This localized mechanism will also require appropriate levels of support from administration and trained mentors. This team will collaborate with higher education personnel to provide specialized
support services to the school sites. The work team will facilitate this process through the following activities:

- Training mentors in local partnership schools and providing in-class coaching
- Offering masters-level courses tailored to the needs of beginning teachers and examining ways to provide specialized campus services in timely and cost-effective ways
- Using Golden Apple to provide mentoring services and work with schools to improve mentoring
- Working with the ISU Alumni Network to support ISU graduates currently teaching in Chicago

7. Scholarship and Support: This work team will have a special focus on using scholarship dollars to recruit and attract minorities into teacher education programs. Scholarships will be awarded both to students from the Little Village community who make a commitment to teacher education and to college students who make a commitment to seek employment in Little Village schools upon certification. The work team will facilitate this process by collaborating with the following institutions:

- Illinois State University
- The Golden Apple Foundation
- Truman College

In addition, a goal of the PARTNER project will be to work with the Little Village Community Development Corporation to identify other sources of scholarships for students.

8. Assessment: This work team will focus on the relationship of teacher quality to improved student learning. This assessment will supplement the teacher evaluation strategies used throughout the district. The information from the assessment of teachers and preservice teacher candidates will be used in the redesign of teacher education programs and teacher induction activities at the university level. The work team will facilitate this process through the following activities:

- Creating measurement tools to collect and analyze data
- Using state-mandated assessment instruments
- Working with and evaluating preservice teacher candidates
- Making data-driven decisions to improve student learning
9. Project Evaluation: This work team will be composed of an internal group of individuals who will objectively measure the outcomes associated with the overarching program goals.

References


