

Texas Partnerships to Train New Teachers

2017

Partnership of NIET, Texas Tech University and High-Need Texas School Districts

"Candidates are much better prepared to step into a classroom at the end and be a teacher all by themselves, more than someone who goes through a traditional program. Having talked to new teachers in our system who completed the program, they feel they were well-prepared and there were really no surprises when they became teachers."

- Trina Persson, Director of Recruitment and Retention, New Caney Independent School District

Creating a Pipeline of New Teachers Using a "Grow Your Own" Model

Rural school districts in Texas face significant teacher shortages, resulting in far too many classrooms staffed with a teacher who is not prepared in the subject he or she teaches, or lacks the skills to deliver effective instruction. The National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) partnered with Texas Tech University (TTU) and high-need school districts across Texas to solve this problem. **The approach was to create a "grow your own" model that enables districts to recruit local students who have completed their two-year associates degree and provide them with a full year of intensive teacher preparation combined with classroom experience that results in a Bachelor of Arts degree and a certification to teach.** Through this program, new teacher candidates are prepared to be effective or highly effective on day one as illustrated in the chart below.

Partnership Teacher Candidates Demonstrate Proficiency



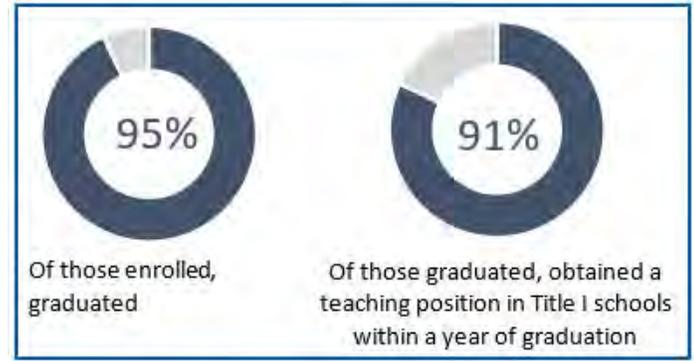
"Teacher candidates know about teaching, they know how to plan a lesson, they know how to assess student learning and they can manage student behavior. Our teacher candidates come out more like a second-year teacher than a first-year teacher. If that's not a revolution in education, what is?"

- D. Gale Stocks, Site Coordinator, Texas Tech's TechTeach Program



Increasing the Number of Highly Effective Teachers in High-Need Schools

The partnership has worked to increase equitable access to highly effective teachers. **Among teacher candidates graduating from the program, 95% obtained a teaching position upon graduation and 91% of those are teaching in Title I schools.**



Improving Student Performance

"Before we partnered with TTU, one of the observation measures that I used was walking through, sitting in a classroom and watching student behaviors. I noticed that our students weren't asking questions. Now, teachers are learning how to use higher-level questioning and more engaging instructional strategies in the classroom. As a result, our students are engaged. They are thinking and problem-solving, so I know they're going to do well on our state tests." - Julee Becker, Superintendent, Slaton Independent School District

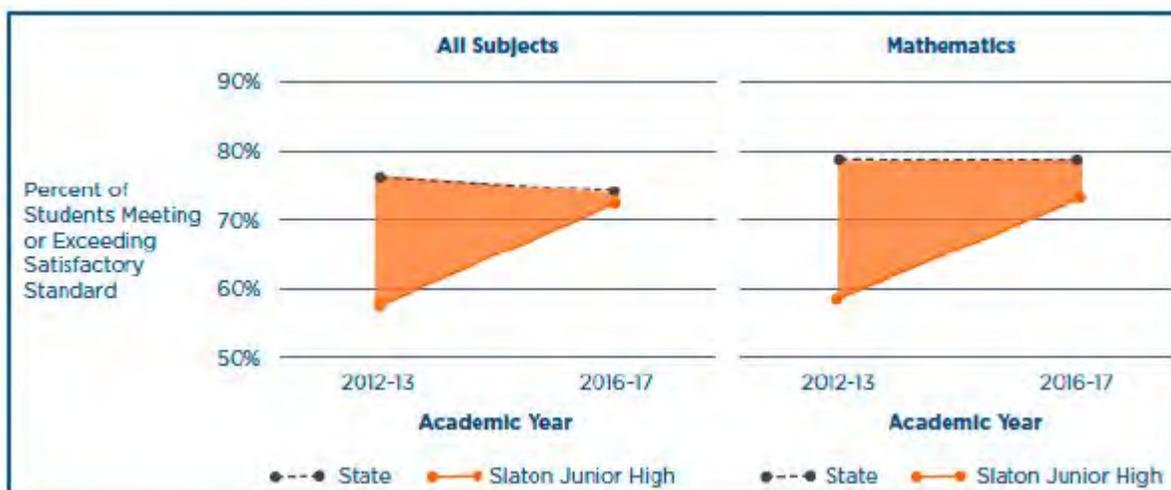
Slaton Junior High, one of the schools benefiting from the partnership in Slaton Independent School District, exemplifies the impact on student achievement in a high-need school.



As demonstrated in the figure below, the percentage of students at Slaton Junior High who met the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) performance standard in all subjects increased steadily from 2013 to 2017, closing the gap between these high-need students and the state average.

In Mathematics, the percentage of Slaton Junior High students who met the STAAR performance standard improved from 2013 to 2017, closing the gap between a high-need student population and the state average.

Closing Performance Gap Between Students in Partner School and the State Average



Building Capacity to Support Teachers

In addition to strengthening the preparation of teacher candidates, NIET's partnership with TTU provides existing teachers with the ability to take on leadership roles and increase their skills.

Advanced certification provides teacher leaders with training in literacy, STEM and leadership, enabling them to build their capacity to support teachers with job-embedded, school-based professional learning.

By embedding higher education faculty members in the work of the district, the partnership is making their contribution more relevant, meaningful and impactful for classroom teachers and teacher leaders.



Investing in Teacher Growth Advances District and School Goals

"Strengthening our partnerships with teacher preparation programs enables us to be part of growing our own leaders."

- Pat Lewis, Deputy Superintendent, Grand Prairie Independent School District

The high-need K-12 Texas school districts participating in the partnership are also finding that their investments in teacher instructional skills are helping to advance other district initiatives. For example, Grand Prairie Independent School District (GPISD) has improved the impact of strategies including collaborative learning structures, relationship and community building, and creating schools of choice that provide new options for students and families. **Great classroom teaching provides the foundation for a range of investments and initiatives to succeed, as teachers are supported in delivering personalized and highly effective teaching across a range of grade levels, subject areas and approaches to learning.**



GPISD Programs of Choice

The high-quality training and support structures put in place through the partnership support GPISD's new initiative, which enables students to dive deep into selected content areas including:

- Environmental Science & Technology
- Aerospace Academy
- Construction Management & Technology
- Registered Nursing Academy
- The Center for Sports Medicine
- Veterinary Studies

Using Technology to Extend and Sustain Learning

The partnership has developed and piloted a range of technology resources to extend and sustain teacher professional learning.

This approach, which integrates video, on-site support, phone calls, online forums and dashboards, as well as several tools for providing synchronous and asynchronous support, demonstrates how a balance of in-person support, online and distance support can help districts deliver high-quality support for every teacher at a lower cost.



Bilingual Teachers Bridge the Gap

"There's a difference between a bilingual teacher and a quality bilingual teacher. Quality teachers are hard to find. TTU teacher candidates have the advantage of being versed in the best practices."

- Monica McCann, TTU Site Coordinator, New Caney Independent School District

Driven by hands-on experience and performance-based assessments, each teacher candidate is assigned to a participating school during the day to student-teach alongside the faculty. These future teachers receive layers of support throughout the process. They are paired with mentors in the school buildings as well as a district TTU site coordinator. The coordinator meets with the candidates weekly as a group to address their instructional needs and provide feedback to take into the classroom. In addition to receiving their certification at the end of the year, they have the opportunity to be hired by the district for a full-time teaching position.

Strengthening the talent pipeline is particularly important to high-need districts such as New Caney Independent School District (NCISD). At a time when many states are facing teacher shortages, NCISD has an added challenge to find bilingual teachers. **TTU teacher candidates can bridge the gap and help districts serve their growing number of bilingual students.**

"I am at the best place where I can be at this moment, remembering what it was like as a kid struggling to learn another language."

- Raul Briones, Fourth-Grade Dual Language Teacher, New Caney ISD



To read more: <http://www.niet.org/assets/Publications/tap-in-focus-grow-your-own-new-caney-texas-tech-teacher-preparation.pdf>.