

MEETING THE NEEDS OF DIVERSE URBAN SCHOOLS

A PROPOSAL SUBMITTED TO THE TEACHERS FOR A NEW ERA PROJECT

TNE Study Group on Meeting the Needs of Diverse Urban Students

Executive Summary

The Study Group on Meeting the Needs of Diverse Urban Students – otherwise known as the Urban Study Group – was formed as a key element of Teachers for a New Era (TNE) project. It was charged with the task of reviewing the Teacher Education Program (TEP) in the College of Education at the University of Washington.

The Urban Study Group's principal observation is that the TEP faculty, staff, and students are highly committed to the principles of democratic and inclusive education. Like all of us who work in the field of education, the TEP is challenged to respond to the rapidly changing conditions, backgrounds, and needs of students in public school classrooms. We offer critical recommendations that will enable a diversity of teachers to effectively teach a diversity of curricula to a diversity of urban schools students.

Our recommendations to TEP are as follows:

1. **Vision.** The TEP leadership should vigorously address the current climate of the learning community within the program by developing a clear and coherent vision and mission statement and by sustaining open and constructive communication among faculty, staff, students, and the public schools communities.
2. **Climate.** Based on a review of exit surveys of TEP graduates, school district data for diverse populations, course descriptions and syllabi, and the percentage of TEP graduates placed in Seattle and surrounding urban areas, TEP must work towards a clear and coherent program that will result in graduates prepared for the diverse and urban schools in which they will be working. To accomplish and sustain such a program, there must be open, constructive, collaborative and on-going communication among faculty, staff, students, and the public school communities. Such collaboration will lead to focusing on and strengthening those

areas that are most difficult for new teachers, ensuring that their first experience will be successful.

3. **Inclusive Pedagogy.** It is a goal of the TEP to recruit and retain TEP students of color. The TEP program also values teacher preparation for racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse students. Drawing on TEP students of color videos, Gay (2000) and Valenzuela (1999) the following two principles emerge: All of the TEP instructors should practice inclusive pedagogy to retain a diverse group of TEP students. Faculty, field supervisors, and cooperating teachers should help TEP students understand and apply inclusive pedagogical, curricular, and assessment practices with their students.
4. **Integration of Course Work and Field Work Experiences.** The TEP faculty should integrate course work and field experience more tightly. It must efficiently utilize its resources to enable an earlier and more streamlined credentializing process, to facilitate an effective field supervision mechanism, and to develop a practicum instrument protocol.
5. **Regularized Systems, Sustained Conversations, and Diversity Audit.** The TEP leadership should perform sustained conversations and reflections on the program. It must incorporate within its annual evaluation procedures accountability measures to make the process of program transformation ongoing. It must also regularize a system of improving the integration of diversity within the program.

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