It Might Just Take a Partnership . . .

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Introduction

"It takes a village to raise a child" is an African proverb that is centuries old. Modern interpretations of this proverb include: "A child does not grow up only in a single home"; "A child belongs not to one parent or home"; and "A child's upbringing, regardless of his/her biology, belongs to the community" ("It takes a village," 2012). This proverb has particular meaning for children raised in the poorest or most rural communities, who attend some of the lowest achieving schools (Anyon, 1997; hooks, 2000; Kozol, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2005).

Within communities of poverty come varying challenges, including educational difficulties to recruit and retain effective teachers, construct sufficient facilities, and provide exposure to new technologies and practices, all of which affect the ability of students to learn (Anyon, 1997; Berliner, 2010; Biddle, 2001; Eaton, 2007; hooks, 2000; Katz, 1989; Kozol, 1991, 1995, 2000, 2005; Nieto & Bode, 2008). Further, less-advantaged and, in effect, often less-powerful families have little influence over what occurs in low-achieving schools. As such, they often "take at face value the legitimacy of the educational opportunities dealt" their children (Delany, 1991, p. 203).

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Educational Context in Arizona

Arizona is the eighth most urban state in the United States, the sixth largest state in terms of area, and the 18th largest state in terms of total population (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2005). The state's population grew by 28.6% from 2000 to 2009, while the nation's population grew 9.1% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). The state's educational system continues to serve the second fastest growing population of students, next to that of the state of Nevada (Arizona Education Association [AEA], 2008). Arizona has the largest population of Native American students of any state (5.4%), with the remainder of students at 44.5% Caucasian and 41.6% Latino (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2009). Arizona has the 11th highest poverty rate in the country (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2010), with 37.9% of its students eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program (NCES, 2009).

The children who reside in the state's highest-poverty households live in the urban centers of the greater metropolitan areas of Tucson and Phoenix, the latter being the fifth most populated city in the country (Discover Phoenix, 2008) and the most rural parts of the state, in which approximately 10% of the entire state's population reside (Rural Assistance Center, 2010). These high-poverty areas include the state's northeastern counties, populated largely by the Hopi, Navajo, and Apache Native American tribes, and the state's southern counties, near the Mexican border, populated by the Tohono O'odham tribe and large numbers of Latinos. Students who live in these communities are also the lowest achieving in the state and perform the worst on Arizona's standardized tests, with Native American students' being the state's lowest-achieving subgroup (Arizona Department of Education [ADE], 2009).

Further, since the 1960s, Republican-dominated Arizona has held to the kind of conservatism that has historically devalued education and other public and community-based programs and affairs (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, 2005). This has perpetuated the state's difficult educational situation, including its habitually poor national rankings. In addition, the majority of its citizens believe that Arizona is among the worst states in the union in terms of education and the welfare of Arizona's children (Morrison Institute of Public Policy, 2005).

Recently, however, voters overwhelmingly approved a three-year, one-cent, temporary sales tax increase to prevent further educational funding losses to education. Arizona's Governor Jan Brewer, who supported the tax increase, stated, "Doing the right thing almost always means doing the hard thing, and today, [voters] did the hard thing" (Archibold, 2010, p. 3).

Approximately four months earlier, Arizona's largest university was awarded one of the largest federal grants ever given to a public college of teacher education. A total of $34.8 million was awarded to the university to partner with some of the state's highest-needs districts and schools, located in the aforementioned highest-needs areas and communities. While the college had developed cross-institutional ties, a culture of collaboration, and a governing structure through a prior professional development school (PDS) program, this grant extended the college's work to expand the offerings delivered.

Specifically, the grant, which contained three objectives, was funded to more than double the number of district partners. Included were nine new partner districts, including 220 schools, 9,239 teachers, and over 147,000 high-needs students. The first objective was to measurably increase the rigor of a set of reformed courses to be completed by future educators in English/language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts during their general education curriculum (freshman and sophomore years at the university or a local community college). The second objective was to reframe the entire PDS teacher education program around the Teacher Advancement Program (TAP™), a proven model of classroom instruction[1] supported by the National Institute of Excellence in Teaching. The third objective was to provide comprehensive school reform services, including teacher induction, mentoring/coaching, teacher and leadership professional development, and teacher evaluation services to partnering districts. University research, evaluation, and data services and support also were to be provided so that practitioners could better know how to access, analyze, and use local data to inform change. This grant is putting forth an educational partnership approach, in keeping with Teitel's (2003) framework for partnerships that are transformative, equity based, beneficial for all partners, and based on relationships.

Literature Review

School-university partnerships in education have existed for at least two decades, and the research has focused primarily on what collaborations look like and how they work (Breault & Breault, 2010; Butcher, Bezzina, & Moran, 2011; Domina & Ruzek, 2012; Leonard, 2011; Martin, Snow, & Franklin Torrez, 2011; McLaughlin & Black-Hawkins, 2007). Additionally, an increasing number of partnerships are being organized, with university proponents' claiming that such partnerships have the ability to transform education. But whether such partnerships result in their purported goals of increased student learning, teacher retention,

teacher effectiveness, principal quality, district and school functioning, and increased graduation rates, among others, still warrants research (Breault & Breault, 2010; Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Butcher et al., 2011; Domina & Ruzek, 2012; Douglas, 2012; McLaughlin & Black-Hawkins, 2007; McWilliams, Maldonado-Mancebo, Szczepaniak, & Jones, 2011).

Examples of such partnerships include university-based service-learning projects, student-centered program offerings, school-improvement initiatives, consulting enterprises, and the like. Most school-university partnerships have consisted of pre-service teacher education partnerships, by which colleges of teacher education team up with schools to train future teachers. Proponents of these partnerships claim that they have the ability to transform education (Breault & Breault, 2010; Butcher et al., 2011) through networks of teachers and faculty who are passionate about educational change and have come together to cause it (Hargreaves, 2003; Martin et al., 2011; McWilliams et al., 2011).

One partnership model in the area of teacher preparation proposes to stimulate education renewal via PDSs. PDSs are developed to promote school-university collaborations and to bring together educational resources, interests, authority, and power to create systems that are more pragmatically and ecologically focused, compared to preparation programs that are more theoretical (Burton & Greher, 2007; Leonard, 2011; Teitel, 2003). Researchers suggest that pre-service teachers who participate in such partnership schools be given additional opportunities for focused field experiences and receive additional direction and feedback, which should provide them with an extensive range of effective instructional, assessment, and classroom management skills (Castle, Fox, & Souder, 2006). In addition, researchers suggested that in-service teachers are more likely to improve their teaching practices if they are involved in partnerships characterized by shared responsibility between teachers, interns, and university faculty (Butcher et al., 2011; Breault & Breault, 2010; Crocco, Faithfull, & Schwartz, 2003; Douglas, 2012). University faculty members also seem to benefit from such partnerships as their participation helps them to better understand the need for applied learning as well as recognize the real-life challenges that pre-service and in-service teachers confront (Beck & Kosnick, 2002; Leonard, 2011; Martin et al., 2011).

However, a growing body of research presents the challenges involved in collaborative partnerships between schools and universities (Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Butcher et al., 2011; Dallmer, 2004; Domina & Ruzek, 2012; Leonard, 2011; Martin et al., 2011; McWilliams et al., 2011; Ravid & Handler, 2001; Stephens & Boldt, 2004; Teitel, 2003). Stephens and Boldt noted that such partnerships can be difficult because, until

collaboration has begun and problems inevitably unfold, partners have no way of knowing what particular challenges they will face. Further, there are fundamental differences between the nature of the organizations involved and the roles of teachers and academics within them that limit successful collaboration (Breault & Breault, 2010; Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Martin et al., 2011; McLaughlin & Black-Hawkins, 2007; McWilliams et al., 2011).

For a university to collaborate well with a school requires a shared, recursive process, one that is of mutual benefit, during which a group of egalitarian partners works continuously together to meet a set of intellectual goals (Butcher et al., 2011). Yet, in many cases, schools and universities have different motivations and cultures (Leonard, 2011; McWilliams et al., 2011). Schools may not see the immediate value of or need for research, for example, which can obstruct what should be a set of common agendas, languages, tasks, and shared values (Douglas, 2012; Leonard, 2011; Martin et al., 2011; Teitel, 2003).

What is known is that partnerships are much more effective and viable in the long run if there is a climate of mutual respect and trust (Breault & Breault, 2010; Butcher et al., 2011; Matoba, Shibata, & Sarkar Arani, 2007; McWilliams et al., 2011). In addition, for quality partnerships to develop, they must center on a clearly established purpose that is relevant for both the school and university (Douglas, 2012; Lefever-Davis, Johnson, & Pearman, 2007; Leonard, 2011; McWilliams et al., 2011; Teitel, 2003). That said, an important step in creating successful partnerships is allowing university and school personnel to sit side-by-side in the construction of partnership goals and objectives. Such a side-by-side approach challenges the ideological disconnection between those training teachers and those hiring teachers or "between the 'ivory tower' of the university and the 'trenches' of the public school" (Rakow & Robinson, 1997, p. 64). For reform to be genuine and effective, school personnel must be empowered to articulate their vision and help structure their own reform (Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Butcher et al., 2011; Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995; Douglas, 2012).

In keeping with literature on university-district partnerships, in which universities help partnering districts articulate their vision and help them structure their reform (Breault & Breault, 2010; Douglas, 2012; Leonard, 2011; Martin et al., 2011; McWilliams et al., 2011), the university in the current project expanded how it defined its school-university partnerships. The university's college of teacher education brokered additional relationships and built additional partnerships to offer partners individualized and tailored research-based services from which their partners would be able to choose and be more empowered to

help articulate, negotiate, customize, and structure. To ensure that each partnership was of mutual benefit and to ensure that each offering could be tailored to meet the unique and articulated needs and characteristics of each partner district involved (Breault & Breault, 2010; Browne-Ferrigno, 2011; Butcher et al., 2011; Leonard, 2011), the college conducted a needs assessment.

Methods

Needs Assessment Instrument

Conducting needs assessments involves methodically identifying a set of needs, ranking those needs by priority, and taking action to address each prioritized need systematically (Kaufman, 1994; Popham, 1972; Triner, Greenberry, & Watkins, 1996; Witkin, 1975). With the input and help of all involved with the grant (e.g., the Principal Investigator, Co-Principal Investigators, Program Directors), the authors developed an online needs assessment instrument (see Appendix), which was based on Teitel's (2003) framework partnerships that are transformative, equity based, beneficial for all partners, and based on relationships.

The instrument included introductory material that included a statement that it was the college's intent to be innovative and responsive to partner districts' individualized needs. The authors also included a section on the partner districts' demographics. This was followed by six sections that captured partners' individualized needs as they pertained to the (a) teacher induction, (b) teacher professional development, (c) administrator professional development, (d) research and evaluation, and (e) teacher evaluation services to be offered. Included within each of these sections were 5-point Likert-scaled (4=strongly agree to 0=strongly disagree) and open-ended questions. Each of the six sections was aligned with the second and third grant objectives. The first objective, reforming pre-teacher preparation curriculum requirements and course offerings, concerns how teachers are trained before they enter the profession, which is not directly related to the operations and procedures of the districts in which those future teachers will work.

Data Collection

Researchers invited the superintendents of each of the 13 partnering districts included in the grant to participate in the needs assessment by email. Although superintendents were targeted directly, they also were invited to solicit other district-level personnel who might best capture the needs of the districts. Responding teams were encouraged to construct the districts' responses collectively, but they were requested to submit

their responses once, providing no more than one response per district. All superintendents and their chosen representatives responded, yielding a 100% response rate; however, the authors were unable to discern how many superintendents responded individually compared to those who responded with additional team members, which allowed for anonymity of the respondents.

Participating Districts

Over half of the respondents represented public unified districts (53.8%, n=7), followed by public elementary districts (30.8%, n=4), one public secondary district (7.7%, n=1), and one public charter district (7.7%, n=1). Equal numbers of respondents were located in urban (46.2%, n=6) and rural (46.2%, n=6) areas of the state. The charter district was suburban (7.7%, n=1). The plurality of districts were located in Phoenix's Maricopa County (46.2%, n=6), followed by Arizona's rural counties, including Apache County (23.1%, n=3), Cochise County (7.7%, n=1), Gila County (7.7%, n=1), and Yuma County (7.7%, n=1). One partner district came from Tucson's Pima County (7.7%, n=1). All participating districts posted demographic and student achievement statistics below state averages across indicators used to define district and school quality.

Data Analysis

Researchers analyzed the needs assessment instrument for within-section and overall levels of reliability, using Cronbach's alpha. An alpha level of .70 (Nunnally, 1978) was used here to determine whether the instrument yielded reliable results. Overall, the respondents answered the questions consistently (α=.81) and responded consistently across the four subsections: (a) teacher induction (α=n/a), (b) teacher professional development (α= n/a), (c) administrator professional development (α=.95), (d) research and evaluation (α=.75), and (e) teacher evaluation services (α=.74).

The authors calculated descriptive statistics, using respondents' numerical responses to the sets of Likert-type items. Sample means and standard deviations were calculated for summative purposes. The qualitative data were analyzed, using the concepts and methods of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1995), and the authors engaged in three rounds of "constant comparison" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and used a code-calculation spreadsheet to quantify the data for data reduction and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). They then collapsed the code clusters into a series of major and minor results.

Results

Teacher Induction

Respondents agreed that additional research-based training and support would be valuable for the induction of their district's first- and second-year teachers (*M*=3.3, *SD*=1.1) and for the teacher mentors and instructional coaches (*M*=3.2, *SD*=1.1). The plurality of responses indicated the need for more collaboration, planning, and release time (26.3%). Others noted a need for assistance with using research-based practices and programs, specifically in core content areas and classroom management (23.7%) and specialized assistance, given their districts' unique climates, organizational structures, rural locations, or student populations served (23.7%). Rural district respondents specifically stated that they needed support in training teachers with diverse content area expertise to cover multiple courses and content areas and to cope with high levels of teacher mobility.

Respondents also mentioned the barriers that inhibit them from engaging in a teacher induction partnership with the college. The majority (52.9%) expressed concerns about how the college, as an external partner, might align its teacher induction offerings, and not clash with the district programs and initiatives already in play. They also expressed general concerns about the effectiveness of the services that were being offered.

Teacher Professional Development

Respondents agreed that additional research-based training and support would be of value to their teachers (*M*=3.1, *SD*=1.0) but were neutral overall in regard to whether the professional development being offered in their districts was meeting their districts' needs (*M*=2.4, *SD*=1.2). Most respondents (26.1%) indicated that they needed professional development to help them develop and use assessments, align assessments with state standards, analyze and use assessment data for formative purposes, and, in general, promote a culture of data collection, comprehension, and use. They also indicated that they needed professional development in best instructional practices (23.9%), specifically to engage and motivate students, differentiate instruction, manage classrooms, work with parents, and more effectively teach English Language Learners (ELLs) and special education (SPED) students.

Respondents also mentioned the barriers that they believed might inhibit them from engaging in a teacher professional development partnership with the college. Again, the plurality (31.0%) responded that they were concerned about whether such partnerships would align with the pedagogical, language, and cultural issues and needs of the schools.

Respondents also wrote of their concerns about teacher reluctance, teachers' prior experiences with professional development (e.g., negative or inconsistent), and professional culture issues (20.7%). Respondents were concerned about teachers' time, their loss of instructional time, the requirement of teachers to commit after-hours time, and the substitute coverage needed to support professional development (17.2%); about promoting professional development, given the external controls and constraints (e.g., federal and state mandates and requirements, Title 1, average yearly progress) that constrict their capacities to grow via professional development (13.8%); and about resources to support and promote professional development (6.9%).

Administrator Professional Development

Respondents consistently agreed that their school leaders discuss student performance data to identify student needs (M=3.5, SD=0.5). Respondents agreed least, however, that their school leaders were comfortable with confronting teachers in regard to the quality of their instruction (M=1.7, SD=1.5) and engaging with teachers in professional learning communities to discuss student performance data, student work, and instructional strategies (M=2.8, SD=1.0). Respondents also were less certain about whether school leaders were implementing research-based interventions for struggling students (M=2.2, SD=1.3).

All but one district expressed a need for assistance with recruiting, supporting, training, and retaining high-quality leaders (31.7%), especially given the remote locations of some of the partner districts. Respondents stated they needed help with developing good instructional leaders, versus just managers, who were knowledgeable about best instructional practices (19.5%), and help with enabling their administrators to become more knowledgeable about best administrative practices (14.6%). In terms of the administrators' relationships with teachers, respondents noted that their administrators needed help with nurturing stronger, professional communities (14.6%); using data to diagnose and analyze problems to change and improve (9.8%); developing professional learning communities (4.9%); and constructing/using better teacher evaluation systems (4.9%).

Respondents also mentioned the barriers that they believed might inhibit them from engaging in an administrator professional development partnership with the college. Again, a plurality mentioned concerns about alignment, specifically about how the college might be able to tailor the programs offered, given the distinct characteristics of the districts, schools, teachers, and students within (42.3%).

Research and Evaluation

Respondents were relatively neutral in regard to whether their research and evaluation needs were being met (M=2.5, SD=0.5). They disagreed that internal district personnel could meet their research and evaluation needs, although more variation was evident here (M=1.6, SD=1.6). Respondents agreed that access to external researchers and evaluators would be of service to their districts (M=3.3, SD=1.1) and that entering into a research and evaluation partnership with the college would help them to better meet their needs in this area (M=2.8, SD=1.7).

All districts reported a need for research and evaluation, and most reported a need for program evaluation services, including assistance with developing the capacity to do research within personnel who might conduct research and evaluation internally (24.2%). Otherwise, 21.2% indicated that they needed help with the validity, reliability, and alignment of their district assessments, specifically with state tests and standards; 18.2% requested help with monitoring, tracking, and analyzing data for the immediate and continuous examinations of their programs and initiatives; and 15.2% noted that they needed more personnel and a system in place to support and sustain internal research and evaluation efforts.

Respondents also mentioned the barriers that might inhibit them from engaging in a research and evaluation partnership with the college. Again, as consistent with their other concerns, they expressed apprehension about engaging in a partnership that would require large-scale cultural change and would, for example, require personnel to understand how to measure effectiveness well and use data from such measures to inform change (37.5%).

Teacher Evaluation

Respondents were neutral in regard to whether their current teacher evaluation systems were effective at providing regular, consistent feedback to teachers (M=2.7, SD=1.6). While a large majority (75.0%) conducted two formal evaluations of teachers per year, only one district had in place a teacher evaluation system linked to teacher pay. Others (37.5%) expressed deep-seated concerns about whether this should even be a goal. Given that this was one of the main goals of the grant, as aligned with current trends (Ramirez, 2011; Sawchuck, 2010), these background data were to be used to tailor the teacher evaluation systems as much as possible, based on their desires and concerns.

The plurality of respondents, again, noted worries about alignment with ongoing reforms, programs, and initiatives at the districts (38.9%). Many also noted specific concerns about variations in teacher quality, classroom dynamics, teacher and student mobility, and student attendance

issues (27.8%), while others requested help with teacher resistance and teachers who might not be on board with a proposed reform (16.7%).

Findings and Implications

Respondents agreed that all of the services to be offered were needed and would be appreciated (M=3.3, SD=1.3). More valuable, however, were respondents' responses to the open-ended items included in the needs assessment. In general, all respondents agreed that there is a need for assistance with integrating research-based practices at all levels, from content-area instruction to administrator development and so on. They also frequently expressed concerns about whether such research-based practices would help them to meet external federal and state mandates or, more specifically, help students to learn the state standards in core content areas and pass or make gains on high-stakes tests. District partners were concerned about whether the "products" they were being sold, albeit research based, would actually yield gains in student achievement. Further, because all of the districts were under external pressures to show that their students were meeting standards (Duffrin, 2011; Newton, Darling-Hammond, Haertel, & Ewart, 2010; Papay, 2011), partners were concerned that, if anything, these offerings might be distracting, given the high-stakes environments in which they were currently operating. This will be one of the college's greatest challenges, and greatest risks, as it will require those involved to test themselves or, more specifically, test whether what they have researched and believe will help to turn around some of the state's lowest-achieving schools and will translate into greater student learning and achievement.

Respondents also requested help with transforming the cultures of their districts and schools to be both data wise and information rich. Specifically, respondents requested professional development to help district personnel at all levels analyze, understand, and use data to diagnose and inform change, and they requested help with this over time to facilitate the continuous examination of the effectiveness of their programs and initiatives (Lujan, 2010; Monpas-Huber, 2010). Because data requests were constant across respondents, the college established a partnership with its state department of education (ADE) to put in place a robust longitudinal data system, initially for the 13 districts involved and, eventually, for the state. The system will permit partner districts to supplement state data with data from their districts (e.g., district benchmarks) to support more holistic analyses of student-level-data.

This system will help support a more holistic teacher evaluation system on which merit pay decisions may be made, in line with national

policy trends (Ramirez, 2011; Sawchuck, 2010). Instead of relying solely on standardized test scores to determine teacher worth and rewards, the system will help the 13 districts involved, and eventually the state, support a more holistic and valid teacher evaluation and merit pay system. In this system, data drawn from supervisor evaluations, teacher professional development activity reports, student work samples, indicators of service, and the like will be included. Teachers will be able to be rewarded for being effective teachers, and these awards will be based on data beyond those derived from just state test scores and value-added gains (Duffrin, 2011; Newton et al., 2010; Papay, 2011).

Although some respondents requested specific assistance with developing these systems for their districts, the college has helped make this a state priority (Amrein-Beardsley, 2011). Because many respondents expressed deep-seated concerns about this and noted that teacher resistance would likely be an issue, especially if teacher unions agree to such a new system and, in particular, the consequences attached to data output, the college positioned itself to help the state build the system to ensure that it would work in the ways theorized.

Otherwise, respondents articulated strong reservations and reasonable apprehensions about the college's surmounting roles within the districts. Respondents expressed primary concerns about whether the specialized assistance that the college was prepared to offer might trump or clash with current district initiatives and programs and would align with the pedagogical, language, and cultural needs of the districts. Partners also were concerned that the offerings were not in themselves aligned, suggesting that selecting products from "off the shelf" would not help them promote student learning in a unified, consistent way.

In response, the college developed a series of district agreements based on each district's individual responses to the needs assessment. While some needs were expressed across districts, each district also expressed unique wants and desires. To help the college meet these distinct requests, the college hired more research, evaluation, and data specialists to help with districts' research, evaluation, and data needs; master teachers to help lead the implementation of the TAP program and assist with teacher training and professional development; staff to help reform the teacher education, PDS components of the grant; and business management, technology, and media service personnel.

Plans and resources also were put in place to involve more college faculty to further help individualize the services provided if, for example, a faculty member's areas of research expertise aligned with a district's exclusive needs. One district located on a reservation, for example, wanted support to help district teachers support their Diné, or native

language speakers. The college called on the appropriate faculty to help serve the district's unique need and supported faculty's efforts financially via specialized contracts. Thus, while district partners were not entirely confident that what the university was offering would help them in the individualized ways that they needed, the college turned around and offered them even more individualized, specialized services.

Additionally, respondents expressed the most angst about systemic issues. How their organizational structures could support the collabora-tion, planning, and release time needed to invoke change was of issue. Respondents also articulated concerns about the time, monies, and re-sources needed (e.g., professional development, instructional time lost, administrator time lost, substitute coverage, after-hours time required, support of course releases) during the grant period, especially given the extra duties and responsibilities of those involved. This required the college to think judiciously and creatively and to wisely distribute grant resources to ensure that offerings are integrative and not exclusively ad-ditive. Respondents also articulated concerns about how the services that the college prepared itself to offer would be sustained over time. They did not want the college to swoop in and start great things only to desert the districts once grant funding ran out. This has forced the college to reframe its thinking from the use of external providers in this area to external providers who might offer such services for minimal fees in the future to sustain this model over time, once grant funding is gone.

Conclusions

In *Teacher Education and the American Future*, Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) discussed the present-day educational "best and worst of times." It is the best of times because it is well understood that education is a priority and that social stratification and injustice is still very much a part of the educational landscape. It is the worst of times because little progress has been made to rectify these stratification and injustice issues. Further, all the while, other countries' students continue to outperform our students, who are increasingly faced with competing in an international job market (Darling-Hammond, 2009).

For too long, educational reform has not taken into consideration Teitel's (2003) framework for partnerships that are transformative, equity based, beneficial for all partners, and based on relationships. The time has come for colleges of teacher education to understand the reality of today's school issues and to develop educational partnerships based on the unique needs of each school and, most importantly, on a foundation of shared goals and trust.

Notes

[1] While some internal research indicates that TAP improves schools by raising teacher quality (Schacter & Thum, 2004; Solomon, White, Cohen, & Woo, 2007), and some external research supports TAP's elements (see http://www.tap-system.org/policyresearch.taf), a recent report released by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. found no measurable effects on teacher retention or student test scores in Chicago, two years post-implementation (Glazerman & Seifullah, 2010; Sawchuck, 2010).

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Appendix
Needs Assessment Instrument

The college is setting goals related to being innovative and responsive to the needs of leaders and educators in Arizona's PreK-12 districts and schools. We would like to understand grant partner districts' needs as they pertain to the teacher induction, teacher and administrator professional development, research and evaluation, comprehensive school reform, and technology support services we will offer.

Completion of this instrument will take 45-60 minutes. District superintendents and, if desired, other district-level personnel, or a combination of them who might best capture the needs of your district, are requested to collectively respond and answer as many questions as possible. In other words, those who know most about each district and its schools should submit this form once but may contribute to the answers collectively.

Please note: All individual responses will be kept confidential. Results and findings may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but only in aggregate form.

Section 1: Demographic Questions
What is your name? If there is more than one respondent, please list the information for the main contact here.
What is your title?
What is your work phone number?
What is your email address?
Which is your district?

If you chose "Other," please describe.

What is the profile of your district?
Public Elementary District
Public Secondary District
Public Unified District
Charter
Private
Other

If you chose "Other," please describe.

Is your district primarily located within a rural, suburban, or urban area?
Rural
Suburban
Urban

In what county within Arizona is your district located?
Apache
Cochise
Coconino
Gila

Graham
Greenlee
La Paz
Maricopa
Mohave
Navajo Pima
Pinal
Santa Cruz
Yavapai
Yuma

Section 2: Teacher Induction
To what extent do you agree:
      Strongly Agree   Agree   Unsure Disagree Strongly Disagree
      (4)   (3)   (2)   (1)   (0)

1. You would value additional research-based training and support for the induction of 1st and 2nd year teachers in your district.

2. You would value additional research-based training and support for the mentors and coaches in your district.

3. Do you have assigned mentors for your 1st and 2nd year teachers?
      Yes   No
If "Yes," please describe:
a. the mentors' responsibilities.
b. how much time they devote to their mentoring role(s).
c. what teachers are serviced (e.g., 1st year beginning teachers, 2nd year teachers, only those on improvement plans past year one).
d. compensation to mentors

4. Do you have instructional coaches that provide in-classroom observations and post-conferences for teachers in your school district?
      Yes   No
If "Yes," please describe:
a. how many coaches you have.
b. the coaches' responsibilities.
c. the amount of release time provided for the coaching role(s).
d. what teachers are serviced through this coaching role (e.g., 1st year beginning teachers, 2nd year teachers, all or selected veteran teachers, teachers on improvement plans).

5. What are your main needs related to teacher induction training and support?

6. What are your main needs related to training/supporting mentors and instructional coaches?

7. What are the barriers that might inhibit you from engaging in a teacher induction and mentoring partnership?

8. What else might you like us to know regarding your district's teacher induction and mentoring needs?

Section 3: Teacher Professional Development
To what extent do you agree:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Diagree
(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)

1. The professional development currently offered in your district meets your needs.

2. Your district would benefit from the research-based, effective professional development services offered.

3. What are your district's main professional development needs?

4. What are the barriers that might inhibit you from engaging in a professional development partnership?

5. What else might you like us to know regarding your district's professional development needs?

Section 4: Administrator Professional Development
To what extent do you agree:

Strongly Agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
(4)	(3)	(2)	(1)	(0)

1. Your school leaders discuss student performance data to identify student needs.

2. Your school leaders discuss student performance data to facilitate teacher improvement.

3. Your school leaders are comfortable with confronting teachers regarding the quality of their instruction.

4. Your school leaders are implementing research-based interventions for academically struggling students.

5. Your school leaders engage with teachers in Professional Learning Communities to discuss student performance data, student work, and instructional strategies.

6. Please describe the most pressing (e.g., important, challenging) leadership issues in your district.

7. What are the leadership development and support services that your district needs most?

8. What are the barriers that might inhibit you from engaging in an administrator professional development partnership?

9. What else might you like us to know about your district's leadership development needs?

10. Whom might we contact in your district to follow up in regard to your leadership development needs? Please include their titles and email addresses, if you have them.

Section 5: Research and Evaluation Services
To what extent do you agree:

Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Unsure (2)	Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (0)

1. Your district's research and evaluation needs are being met.

2. Internal district personnel can meet your research and evaluation needs.

3. Access to external researchers and program evaluators would be of service to your district.

4. Entering into a research-and-evaluation partnership would help you meet these needs.

5. Entering into a research-and-evaluation partnership would help you advance student learning.

6. What are the research and evaluation support services that your district needs most?

7. What are the barriers that might inhibit you from engaging in a research-and-evaluation partnership?

8. What else might you like us to know about your district's research and evaluation needs?

9. Whom might we contact in your district to follow-up regarding your research and evaluation needs? Please include their titles and email addresses, if you have them.

Section 6: Comprehensive School Reform
To what extent do you agree:

Strongly Agree (4)	Agree (3)	Unsure (2)	Disagree (1)	Strongly Disagree (0)

1. Common collaboration time is essential to increase teacher effectiveness and, ultimately, to student achievement.

2. Your district is able to retain quality teachers.

3. Arizona Proposition 301 funds are utilized effectively to reward teacher effectiveness.

4. Arizona Proposition 301 funds are linked to student achievement at the classroom and school level.

5. The current evaluation system is effective in providing regular, consistent feedback to teachers.

6. Is your current evaluation system linked to teacher pay?
          Yes   No
Please explain, if necessary.

7. How many teacher evaluations are required during the school year?

For the next questions, please respond in reference to the school that you intend to be your Comprehensive Reform School.

8. Is there common collaboration time during the school day for grade levels/content areas to meet?
          Yes   No
If "Yes," how much time is allotted daily/weekly?
And who leads the collaboration time?
If "No," what are the barriers to implementing common planning time during the school day?

9. What else would you like us to know about your district's comprehensive school reform needs?

10. Whom might we contact in your district to follow up regarding your comprehensive school reform needs? Please include their titles and email addresses, if you have them.

Section 7: Technology
1. Do you have an existing Video Conferencing Lab located in your school district?
          Yes   No

2. In which locations and via which media would your district be willing and able to engage with the college?

3. What are the barriers that might inhibit you from using technology for your partnership?

4. What else would you like us to know regarding your district's technology environment?

5. Whom might we contact in your district to follow up regarding your technology infrastructure? Please include their titles and email addresses, if you have them.

Thank you for your participation!