Voices from the Field:
Understanding Oregon's Cooperating Teachers
Motivations and Recommendations

A First Draft Proposal for a Study
Presented to the OEIB Best Practices and Student Transitions Subcommittee

January 13, 2014

Background:
Staff from the Oregon Secretary of State reported on results of an Audit on Teacher Preparation at the October 8, 2013 subcommittee meeting and recommended improved training, support, and incentives for cooperating teachers. Specifically, the report suggested that:

- Student teachers should have trained, qualified teaching college staff and coaching teachers.
- Teaching colleges should work with school districts to develop new rewards/incentives for coaching teachers and teaching college staff.

At the October 31st meeting, Pooja Bhatt reported that the Chalkboard Distinguished Teachers Council (DEC) identified the topic of Cooperating Teachers as a priority focus this year. Specifically, the DEC is interested in:

- Strengthening the clinical teaching experience with high-quality cooperating teachers
- Studying Oregon state policy on standards and training for cooperating teachers
- Researching promising practices from other states to see what they require (ex. training, min. number of years teaching experience, etc.).
- Concluding with recommendations to ensure high-quality cooperating teachers for possible regulatory or legislative action.

At the December 10th meeting, Mark Mulvihill recommended that the Subcommittee look at incentives for cooperating teachers in light of SB 290. It was agreed that potential work include surveys and focus groups to determine what incentives really make a difference for teachers to take on this role with an eye to better resourcing of student teaching.

Although each year well over 2000 student teachers from public and private educator preparation programs require the assignment of one or more cooperating teachers to oversee, support, and help evaluate their clinical teaching during the last stage of their preparation program, very little is known about the motivations and experiences of teachers who serve in the role or who decline the opportunity.

Proposed Approach:

Staff at OEIB would form a small planning group to design and oversee an online survey of teachers on this topic. The groups would include a member from the Best Practices and Student Transitions Subcommittee, a member of the Distinguished Educators Council, and a representative from Teacher Standards and Practices Commission, the Chalkboard Project, the Oregon Education Association, and the Oregon Association of Teacher Educators. The group would review best practices, develop potential survey questions, help identify how to target the survey effectively, review the results and provide a draft summary and recommendations for the Subcommittee.

Survey respondents would include Oregon public school teachers and would provide insights from several groups: those who have frequently, occasionally, or never served as a "Cooperating Teacher" as well as those who have been approached but declined to accept a student teacher. Potential areas of the survey could address:

- Reasons and motivations for accepting or declining a student teacher
- Concerns and issues that affect a decision to accept a student teacher
- Levels of satisfaction and suggested areas for improvement regarding:
    - Preparation provided to work with a student teacher
    - Support provided by the educator preparation program
    - Support provided by the school or school district
    - Required roles and responsibilities
    - Fieldwork reports and evaluations required
    - Additional value provided by the assigned supervisor
    - Compensation and incentives provided
    - Overall experience and inclination to repeat the experience

<u>Suggested Timeline:</u>

- Jan and Feb 2014—workgroup planning and review of literature compiled
- Jan and Feb 2014—OEIB identifies an intern to coordinate survey and results
- March 2014—draft survey and process shared with Subcommittee
- April 2014—survey issued
- April – May 2014—survey results analyzed and reviewed by workgroup
- May 2014—draft of report presented to OEIB subcommittee
- June 2014—recommendations forwarded to the OEIB