



How We're Working Together to Improve Teacher Preparation

For many new teachers, the first-year in the classroom can feel like being thrown into the deep end of the pool. New teachers have to manage classrooms, develop daily lesson plans, master instructional techniques, form deep and meaningful relationships with students and families and address myriad administrative demands. But it doesn't have to be this way – first-year teachers can be prepared to have an immediate impact on student achievement. The urgency behind this effort is real: Right now, new teachers are more likely to be assigned to students of color and students living in poverty, and new teachers are generally less effective than their more veteran peers.¹

We are five networks of teacher preparation programs, or *Centers*, that have created a community of practice (CoP) and are working together to transform the way teachers are prepared for the classroom. In this learning series, we will share our lessons, resources and stories.



“Interaction with other Centers has continually pushed our thinking about what is possible in teacher preparation.”


Meagan Comb
MA ESE

◆ Who we are

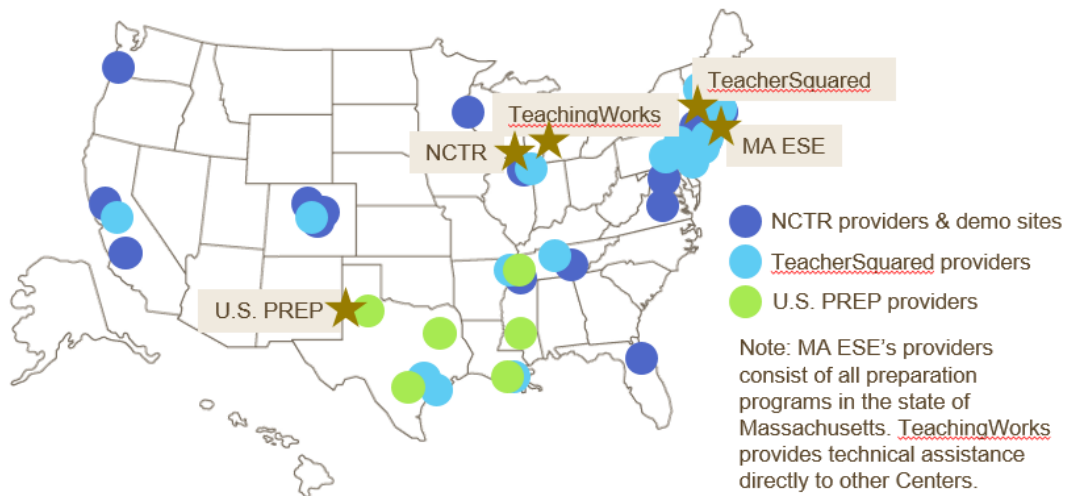
The five Centers in the CoP--[Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education \(ESE\)](#), [National Center for Teacher Residencies \(NCTR\)](#), [TeacherSquared](#), [TeachingWorks](#) and [U.S. PREP](#) (see the table on the next page)—each work with a network of teacher preparation programs to sustainably implement quality programming. The strength of our collaboration comes from the varying perspectives that we represent. Centers and their programs offer teacher candidates a range of pathways into the teaching profession: U.S. PREP, for example, partners with traditional institutions of higher education to train teachers, while many TeacherSquared programs offer in-service and residency pathways. NCTR collaborates with both institutions of higher education and school districts to prepare teachers, and ESE—a state education agency—works with all providers in the state.

Watch an introductory video about us and our work at this [link!](#)

Teacher Preparation Transformation Centers

Center	Description	Reach
<p>MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education</p> 	<p>ESE's Elevate Preparation: Impact Children (EPIC) initiative is a statewide strategy of eleven projects that deepen and extend the state's support to its teacher preparation programs. EPIC projects also inform the state's expectations, guidance materials and accountability measures.</p>	<p>Annually, 65 educator prep programs train over 6,500 teachers. More than 4,500 of these new teachers are employed in Massachusetts public schools the following year.</p>
<p>National Center for Teacher Residencies</p> 	<p>NCTR supports the transformation of teacher preparation through the adoption and expansion of teacher residencies and clinically-based programming.</p>	<p>NCTR partners with 30 teacher residency programs that support 4,100 residents and graduates, teaching in more than 50 high-need districts in 17 states.</p>
<p>TeacherSquared</p> 	<p>TeacherSquared supports a network of residency and in-service programs who collaboratively create and test promising innovations in novice teacher education.</p>	<p>TeacherSquared partners with 20 preparation programs in 14 states. These programs will credential approximately 1,700 teachers annually.</p>
<p>TeachingWorks</p> 	<p>TeachingWorks articulates high-leverage practices and content knowledge for teaching, and collaborates with other Centers to implement the quality drivers.</p>	<p>TeachingWorks provides professional learning experiences and resources about high-leverage practices and content knowledge for teaching. TeachingWorks facilitates collaboration across Centers to define the practices, pedagogies and knowledge central to teaching how to teach.</p>
<p>University School Partnerships for the Renewal of Educator Preparation</p> 	<p>U.S. PREP's approach features a university-school partnership model with a year-long residency, a full-time, school-based faculty member, performance assessments that include pre- and post-observation conferences, carefully selected and trained mentors, and a focus on partnering with universities that are committed to preparing effective candidates who teach in our most vulnerable communities.</p>	<p>U.S. PREP partners with six preparation programs in four states that train 1,622 teachers annually.</p>

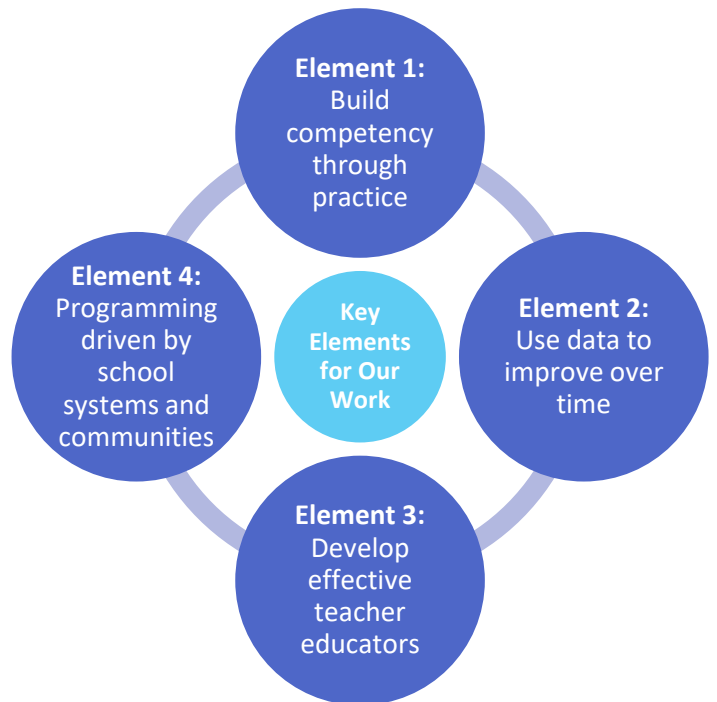
◆ Where we work



◆ How are we transforming teacher preparation?

For the past year, the CoP has met to grapple with the most vexing challenges facing our preparation programs, such as how to define the practices of teacher educators, how to use data across different contexts to drive change, and how to forge strong partnerships that strengthen preparation programs and communities. We ground our work in a shared vision for *teacher preparation transformation* that is organized by four key elements:

- **ELEMENT 1: Develop programming that builds competency through practice.** Practice-based preparation is the core of our vision for transforming teacher preparation. Teacher candidates need frequent opportunities to practice teaching and receive feedback on their performance. TeacherSquared uses a [Lab Playbook](#), a structured protocol that helps programs co-create tools and resources that provide teachers with practice-based opportunities to learn. For example, TeacherSquared programs used the Lab Playbook to collaboratively develop resources related to eliciting and interpreting student thinking (EIST), including a resource bank of activities to help candidates hone their listening skills and a rubric for measuring EIST in practice.



- **ELEMENT 2: Using data to improve over time.** To get better, program leaders need to know what to do differently. We work with our programs to collect data about their offerings, teacher educators and teacher candidates to identify strengths, gaps and trends. And we develop routines for sharing data with school district partners, which help schools and programs work together to strengthen candidate preparation. For example, EPIC uses [stakeholder surveys](#) to collect and report data on the quality of teacher preparation programs across the state of Massachusetts. NCTR’s [Teacher Preparation Data Hub](#) includes tools that allow program leaders to run more robust data analyses in-house, compare their data to NCTR peer programs and allocate their resources to areas in greatest need of improvement.
- **ELEMENT 3: Develop effective teacher educators.** If we want excellent teachers, we need excellent instructors training them. Effective teacher educators use high-leverage practices and pedagogies to support novice teachers in their journeys to become excellent teachers. TeachingWorks helps providers



“We are a diverse group of preparation programs, yet can reach consensus around the purpose and vision of our work. It is a strength of our community.”

Jill Pitner
NCTR



“We have become really close colleagues where we value one another’s ideas and feel safe to be transparent, which has resulted in the sharing of materials, resources, and ideas freely.”

Sarah Beal
U.S. PREP

across three Centers to successfully use pedagogies that support novice teachers, such as [designing and enacting rehearsals](#) protocols, and designing and assessing practices of new teachers. These pedagogies enable teacher educators to provide candidates with opportunities to practice and receive structured feedback in purposeful, discipline-specific ways.

- **ELEMENT 4: Develop programming driven by K-12 systems and the communities they serve.** Teacher preparation programs cannot live in isolation. Well beyond placing student teachers in local schools, our programs deeply engage, understand and support our surrounding communities and school systems. U.S. PREP developed a [toolkit](#) with resources and strategies to help programs build strong partnerships with the school districts where many of their graduates will teach. Among other helpful resources, the toolkit includes sample meeting agendas, a video of a meeting between a program and its district partner, and a protocol that outlines expectations and guidelines for the meeting.

We believe that if we can support teacher preparation programs to successfully improve on each of these elements, and collaborate to build our own capacity as technical assistance providers, then more children, particularly those who are the most vulnerable, will have

access to the highly-effective teachers they need to learn, improve and thrive in the classroom. Collaboration is an essential part of our work--collaboration across Centers, and between Centers and programs—and it enables us to transform teacher preparation better than when we work alone.

◆ Stay connected

In many ways, our work is just beginning. Transforming teacher preparation in our country will take time, and we're in it for the long haul. At the same time, we've learned a lot after a year, and we're excited to start sharing with others in the teacher preparation field. Over the coming months, we will release a series of briefs about the lessons we've learned, the challenges we've faced, the stories of our providers and the resources we've developed. Next up: This fall we will share how Centers promote data-sharing in ways that strengthen both Center- and program-level work. We'll also share how we're developing a common set of teacher educator practices and aligned set of assessments, training modules and resources to support teacher educator development.

We'll release more of these briefs as we continue our work together over the next 15 months. We hope that by doing so our stories may inspire you and our tools may be of use to you. And we hope to learn from you as well: We're planning a public convening in fall 2018 to engage with more of you about our joint work to transform teacher preparation. In the meantime, we hope you will [sign up for our distribution list](#) to receive



“The ability to share a common language and measurement tools allows us to collaborate in new ways.”

Brent Maddin
TeacherSquared

future issue briefs and stay informed about our work. Onward!

◆ Learn more about our work! View an introductory video [here](#).



“We brought faculty together across Centers to work together on designing practice-based experiences for their candidates – it's really groundbreaking.”

Anita Ravi
TeachingWorks

ⁱ Douglas Gagnon and Marybeth J. Mattingly, “Beginning Teachers Are More Common in Rural, High-Poverty and Racially Diverse School,” Issue Brief 53 (Durham, NH: Carsey Institute, University of New Hampshire, 2012).