State-wide Collaborative Efforts for Recruitment, Preparation, Induction and Retention of Teachers for High-Need Schools
Our Mission

- To develop a qualified and effective workforce consisting of degreed and non-degreed personnel in the fields of early intervention, education and human services.

- To enhance education and services for ALL children and youth (from birth through 21 years), especially those at risk, through policy creation, professional development and research with regards to roles and responsibilities, coaching and mentoring and career ladders for personnel.
About us: The PAR²A Center

- A 100% grant and contract funded research and training center
- Part of the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado Denver
- Four types of projects:
  - Training Projects (e.g., CO-TOP – Train the Trainer Model)
  - Program Improvement Projects
  - Career Ladder Projects – pathways and pipelines
  - Research Projects

Visit us at: www.paracenter.edu
Session Goals

- Describe the features of the projects’ activities and services (recruitment, preparation, placement and retention) that are based on carefully identified needs of the rural schools.

- Describe how the Collaboration between the Dept. of Education, the University, and the Project Partners took place to create a sustainable Consortium for years to come.

- Share the results of the evaluation of the project activities that were part of the Retention Study of over 200 teachers.
Transition to Teaching Grants

- TOP-SET*ALP – Transition of Paraprofessionals to Special Education Teachers through Alternative Licensure Program (2007-2013)

- Teacher PREP – Teacher Preparation, Retention and Empowerment Project (2009-2014)

Funded by the TTT program, Office of Innovation and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education
Overall Project’s Goals

- To transition paraprofessionals, recent college graduates and mid-career professionals to teaching positions in **high-need** charter schools and LEAs for **high need** subjects (i.e. Special Education, Linguistically Diverse Education, Math and Science) through an alternative licensure program.

- To empower the candidates to remain in teaching positions and effectively address the academic and social needs of K-12 students in high-need schools.

- The two projects prepared a total of 259 teachers, recruited in cohorts of 30-40 each year, between 2007-2015.
To recruit qualified paraprofessionals, mid-career professionals, recent graduates and unlicensed teachers as future teachers for hard to fill teacher positions in high-need schools and LEAs.

To provide a smooth transition for candidates to become licensed teachers fulfilling the requirements of the Colorado Department of Education through partner alternative licensure programs.

To provide a rigorous training in conjunction with academic and social supports that ensure candidates’ growth and retention as professionals as well as prepare them to meet the needs and challenges of high-need schools.

To implement a full array of financial incentives for the candidates.

To coordinate project objectives and activities through a consortium of LEAs, IHEs, alternative licensure programs and the CDE that share the mission of creating systems that will sustain beyond the grant period.
Colorado’s rural school districts

- **Revised Rural Definition:**
  A Colorado school district is determined to be *rural* based on the size of the district, the distance from the nearest large urban/urbanized area, and having a student enrollment of approximately 6,500 students or fewer. *Small rural districts* are those districts meeting these same criteria and having a student population of fewer than 1,000 students (the Rural Education Council, January 2013)

- **A snapshot:** 148 of 178 Colorado school districts are rural
  - 20% of state’s total population
  - 110 of 178 are small rural school districts (<250 students)
  - 85 school districts (<500 students)
  - 60 school districts have one K-12 site or one K-12 building
Rural/Remote School District Issues

- Poverty
- Greater difficulty in recruitment and retention due to:
  - Inability to offer competitive salaries
  - Geographic isolation - 90 minute round trip for groceries!
  - Housing
- Small rural districts isolation from other districts, towns, universities limits opportunities to collaborate or partner.
- Fewer personnel
  - Multiple hats
  - Additional challenges in providing professional development opportunities
Overview of educator preparation and development in Colorado:

A snapshot: 40 preparation entities (traditional and alternative)

- 22 IHEs (9 are designated alternative licensure agencies)
- 27 designated agencies (9 BOCES, 7 schools / districts; 9 IHEs, 2 non-profits)

2014-2015

- <6% traditional preparation completers
- >42% alternative preparation completers

http://highered.colorado.gov/Publications/Reports/Legislative/TED/201602_TED_toGGA.pdf
Recruitment

- Recruitment, Networking and Community Outreach Specialist
- Leveraging existing relationships
- Face-to-face outreach to rural area school administrators
- Strategic selection - “grow your own”, focus on local talent
i) Pedagogical instruction including action research – seminars, classes, online modules

ii) Classroom teaching experience (the candidate must be a full time teacher of record)

iii) Development of a reflective and research-oriented competency-based portfolio - teacher quality and performance based standards
University of Colorado Denver: ASPIRE to Teach:

- On-line curriculum modules
  - Aligned to state teacher quality standards
- Video coaching
- Ongoing enrollment

http://aspiretoteach.org/
Research-based Supports

- Advising
  - From recruitment through retention
- Financial Supports
- Tuition for coursework
- Book stipends
- Conference attendance
Research-based Supports

• Mentoring and Mentor Training Curriculum

• Induction Support
Accomplishments: State-Wide collaborative Efforts for High-Need Schools

- Partnerships with 124 high-need districts that have proven difficulties in recruitment, placement and retention of highly qualified teachers of which 93 were rural districts.
- Placement of over 300 homegrown teachers through several funded projects.
- 90% retention rate
- Provided Mentor Training for 97 Master Teachers in high need school districts
Teacher Recruitment and Retention Model

- **Strategic Recruitment**
  - Selection of indigenous candidates in collaboration with the local school districts.

- **Quality Preparation**
  - Context-specific teacher reparation through a high-quality alternative licensure program that includes current state standards-based coursework delivered through face-to-face and online instruction.
  - Individualized advising and support to the candidates before, after and beyond.

- **Coaching and Mentoring**
  - Mentoring from trained Master Teachers.
  - Mentoring beyond licensure during induction.

- **Professional Learning Communities**
  - Collective reflective teamwork among school leaders and teachers to ensure continued professional growth and student learning.
Our Model Builds Capacity!

- **Internal Capacity of Districts** by:
  - Providing “home grown” teachers who will stay in the profession as a result of their deep roots in the community.
  - Identifying and training mentor teachers who support future generations of “home grown” teachers.

- **Capacity of Partner Licensure Programs** by:
  - Providing resources and supports that contribute to the rigor of the program.
  - Enhancing the quality of teacher preparation.

- **Capacity in the State** by:
  - Maintaining and enhancing existing partnerships
  - Addressing problems of practice:
    - Advancement of career development systems
    - Progression of effective alternative licensure routes to teaching
    - Increased on-line capabilities of partner alternative licensure programs to meet the personnel needs of high-need remote rural districts

- **Capacity of the Field** by providing data to others who would build similar programs.
The Vital Feature: Our Partners and Relationships!

- TTT Program, U.S. Department of Education
- Colorado Department of Education
- Local school districts – 124, all across the state including rural and remote districts
- Boards of Cooperative Education Services
- State designated alternative licensure programs
- Alternative schools and agencies for at risk youth

Overall, like-minded people with the same mission and goal within and outside of our organization!
Retention Study
Retention Study Questions

1. How many TTT-prepared teachers have been retained?

2. What factors emerge as supporting teacher persistence?

3. What factors emerge as challenges to teacher persistence?
Exhibit 9: The majority of survey respondents reported they continued as teachers (n = 99, 86%) or in other education roles (n = 11, 10%) for a combined total of 110 individuals, 96% of respondents.
94% of teaching candidates rated the effectiveness of having a mentor as good to excellent

- Knowledgeable / Subject Matter Experts
- Willing to share knowledge/experience
- Exceedingly supportive

**Issue**
- Wanted more time with mentor
## What factors support teacher persistence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My skills and attitudes are a good match for my role as a teacher.</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I make a difference with my students.</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have the potential to continue to grow as a professional teacher/educator.</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching gives me a sense of accomplishment.</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am committed to serving youth</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching provides me with an income.</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel well prepared for my role as a teacher.</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am connected to this community.</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is a career that is respected by my family and friends.</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers are needed in my community.</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My duties as a teacher are compatible with my home life and schedule.</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I receive ongoing support and guidance from my school/district administrator.</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have the opportunity to participate in professional learning communities with my colleagues.</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Reasons for Leaving (N = 5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Frequency (N)</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I decided teaching was not the best career for me.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons –</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I was working 16 hours a day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I had been pushing career for a long time...I needed some time with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a healthy work/life balance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I wanted to do more for the student population I was serving.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I went to law school to earn my JD and become a to rep my students in</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>court</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**What are the challenges to teacher persistence?**

Challenging Factors Identified by 12 survey respondents (who are continuing in the profession).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics of the school/district</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Lack of PD, lack of resources, schedules, low-income families, constant change in leadership, lack of clear direction form leadership)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student behavior/classroom management concerns</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload excessive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching is challenging</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork concerns</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial concerns</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of preparation (from one specific grant partner)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*4/11/2016*
And the work continues....

T-PREP (*Teacher Preparation for Rural Education Partnership*) component of the our NxTEGN Teacher Preparation project, a Teacher Quality Partnership grant funded by the Office of Innovation and Improvement builds upon the success of our TTT projects!
Questions/Comments
Contact Information

The PAR²A Center - [www.paracenter.org](http://www.paracenter.org)
School of Education and Human Development
University of Colorado Denver

**Ritu Chopra**
Project Director, PAR²A Center Executive Director
Ritu.chopra@ucdenver.edu  303-315-6361

**Mike Gallegos**
Recruitment, Networking, Community Outreach Specialist, PAR²A Center

**Karen Lowenstein-Martinez**
Senior Consultant/Educator Preparation Office of Professional Services and Educator Licensing, Colorado Dept. of Education
Martinez_K@cde.state.co.us