
Program Recruitment and Retention (PR²)

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Problem Addressed and General Approach

It is well established that Program Recruitment and Retention (PR²) are complex issues. As highlighted in the chapter on recruitment and retention in *The Mathematics Teacher Education Partnership: The Power of a Networked Improvement Community to Transform Secondary Mathematics Teacher Preparation*, both recruitment and retention are “a complicated and multifaceted problem with responsibilities and expectations that cross various stakeholder groups” (Dickey et al., 2020, p. 309). PR² has spent the last several years trying to study methods for increasing the number of well-prepared, diverse students entering into a teacher preparation program. Despite multiple attempts at Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycles, the RAC continually found several confounding issues: (a) our programs and institutions across the nation vary widely, (b) state and institutional policies impact each program differently, and (c) recruitment is often an “extra duty” of faculty—dedicated recruitment specialists most likely are at the college or university level, not the program level. The RAC acknowledges that these challenges must be overcome. Both qualitative and quantitative research needs to be conducted to understand how we attract and retain students in a secondary mathematics teacher education program.

Current Progress

The RAC is currently developing a white paper that captures the challenges and barriers of recruitment and program retention. The goal of this white paper is to raise the awareness of how difficult it is to recruit students to secondary mathematics teacher education—much less to education or even to a traditional college or university. Concurrently, we are developing a grant submission to study how state and federal policies impact a program’s ability to recruit and retain students. Our study will investigate four research questions: (1) what state, institution, or program policies lead to improved teacher candidate persistence and retention; (2) what state, institution, or program policies hinder teacher candidate persistence and retention, (3) what state, institution, or program policies negatively impact equity and diversity in programs; and (4) how do variance in these policies due to COVID-19 impact teacher candidate persistence and retention? It is our hope that this research will inform the field by highlighting the impact (both positively and negatively) that state, institutional, and program policies have on students. Further, we hope to leverage the relaxing of policies due to the COVID-19 pandemic to demonstrate that many of the current policies are overbearing and potentially not necessary. Our research methodology will include program-level case studies as well as policy analysis that highlights themes and trends in policy enactment.

Resources

The work of this RAC draws heavily on the work that is accomplished at our own institutions. Understanding how other institutions engage in recruitment has been very beneficial as we borrow and replicate ideas. For an outline of work at RAC member institutions, we encourage referencing Section IV: Opportunities for Recruitment and Retention in *The Mathematics Teacher Education Partnership: The Power of a Networked*

Improvement Community to Transform Secondary Mathematics Teacher Preparation (Martin, Lawler, Lischka, & Smith, 2020).

Opportunities for Engagement

Once the white paper on *Issues and Barriers of Recruitment and Retention* is complete, it will be available for referencing. We will share it with the larger MTE-Partnership membership. Additionally, MTE-Partnership members will have the opportunity to participate in the upcoming grant submission. Information will be shared with members as the grant development and submission progresses.

References

- Dickey, E., Pomykal Franz, D., Fernandez, M. L., & Oliver, B. (2020). Recruitment and retention in secondary mathematics teacher preparation. In W. G. Martin, A. E. Lischka, W. M. Smith, & B. R. Lawler (Eds.), *The Mathematics Teacher Education Partnership: The power of a networked improvement community to transform secondary mathematics teacher preparation*, (pp. 295–317). Volume 4 in B. Benken (Ed.), Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators Professional Book Series. Information Age Publishing.
- Martin, W. G., Lischka, A. E., Smith, W. M., & Lawler, B. R. (Eds.) (2020). *The Mathematics Teacher Education Partnership: The power of a networked improvement community to transform secondary mathematics teacher preparation*. Volume 4 in B. Benken (Ed.), Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators Professional Book Series. Information Age Publishing.