
Urban Immersion Field Experiences for Pre-service Teachers from a Non-urban University

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Abstract

Texas A&M University is located approximately 90 miles from the nearest urban area and is situated between two non-urban school districts. As such, aggieTEACH pre-service teachers typically fulfill their 120-hour field experience requirement in a non-urban setting. This type of experience does not necessarily mirror the urban-type of setting in which many of these students will teach during their induction years. Preparing teachers to thrive in an urban district requires training for a specialized skill set. aggieTEACH pre-service teachers need the opportunity for high-impact learning by interacting with diverse groups of students from urban areas. This includes working with students from different cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds and learning how to successfully educate these students holistically. Preparing pre-service teachers to meet the diverse learning needs of students and use culturally relevant teaching strategies, aggieTEACH partnered with Dallas ISD to design an urban immersion field experience. In addition to 40 hours of classroom experience, pre-service teachers in the program visited and toured community resources, participated in a Public Transportation Scavenger Hunt, and experienced life in an urban setting. The goal of this project was to give aggieTEACH students a high-impact learning opportunity in urban schools by working side-by-side with highly effective STEM teachers and exposing them to the successes and challenges of teaching students who live in urban areas.