

## **REVITALIZING TEACHER PREPARATION: PARTNERING FOR CHANGE**

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Music teacher preparation has a responsibility to prepare, support, and nourish professional educators for all schools. Yet in general we have focused our energies on schools, student populations, communities, based on a narrow definition of 'school', one overlooking, among others, urban schools. A general question we should ask ourselves is do we have the willingness, the desire to prepare teachers for urban schools? A more important and significant question however, and a hint as to the answer to the question is, if we strove to address preparing teachers for urban schools, what might we learn which could serve to better teacher preparation for all schools?

Demographics indicate that urban centers are gaining in population. They are being renewed and revitalized. Among perceptions of urban education are, finding and retaining teachers is difficult, student socio-cultural differences assist in making instruction difficult, professional development for beginning and experienced teachers is limited or non-existent, funding and the availability of instructional resources is inadequate, and teachers are ill-prepared. At the same time urban centers are gaining population, an increasing number of non-urban communities are exhibiting more and more urban-like characteristics. Consequently these same perceptions, viewed as characteristic of urban schools are present to some degree in non-urban schools. Given this, and our need to broaden our base for teacher preparation to better meet our responsibility, how can we learn what urban schools have to offer for teacher preparation? Part of the answer rests in establishing and nurturing a meaningful partnership.

A partnership including urban education, higher education, and music publishers can make a significant contribution to urban education as well as change the scope and nature of current practices in teacher preparation. Some current limitations and concerns in teacher preparation include isolation of P-12 teachers and higher education faculty in their respective domains, limited opportunities for pre-service students to experience and/or sustain direct contact with instructional settings, and a lack of a relationship between academic learning and 'real life' learning. In addition, continuing to support for beginning teachers, understanding and valuing curriculum beyond that which one has experienced, nurturing experienced teachers, establishing and supporting relationships between public school students, teachers and administrators and pre-service and university faculty members influence the effectiveness of teacher preparation.

A partnership engaging these three constituents can serve to address these limitations. How and where can students develop confidence and professionalism? What collaborations can be established between urban schools, publishers, and university to ensure broader knowledge and understanding of the discipline of music education? How can music instruction transcend socio-cultural differences? What can be done to promote urban students choosing to become music educators? What steps need to be taken to establish a partnership of this nature? What might this partnership look like? These are the kind of issues and questions needing to be raised. The

answers can help better prepare music educators for all schools. We need to revitalize our profession by building a partnership.