

Handout I: University-District Partnership Agreement

SREB has collected many sample agreements between universities and school districts that address the selection and preparation of aspiring leaders. Each agreement tends to be written specific to the context and needs of its partners. Some are called a memorandum (MOA) or letter of agreement (LOA). Some have a more formal or legalistic approach, somewhat like a contract between the partners. Others include the student or candidate as a partner in the agreement.

The SREB sample agreements are provided as a starting point for discussion by your partnership. Common elements of an agreement are:

Part I. Description of partners

- Is the university, college or department the partnering entity?
- Is the district, its board of control, or its schools the partnering entity?
- Is any other entity involved? Business? Foundations? Others?

Part II. Description of partnership

- What is the purpose of partnering? What will occur as a result? What, if any, parameters or limitations need to be stated at the outset? What are “non-negotiables”?
- What is the shared vision and/or beliefs of the partners? How can you both achieve your missions better through the partnership? What benefits will occur by partnering? Some benefits might include:
 - Benefit to the University – the opportunity to collaborate on and assess an innovative leadership program delivered in the school district when schools are in operation and can serve as a clinical setting
 - Benefit to the School District – a leadership program designed to meet district needs by advancing its own teacher leaders into administration
- What will be the decision-making structure of the partnership? Who will be the representatives of each partnering organization? How will membership on committees be balanced between the partnering organization? Who must be on committees because of their formal role in the organization?
- What are the responsibilities of the partnership? The partners? The members who serve in specific functions of the partnership? Some topics to consider are:
 - Identification and recruitment of potential educational leadership students
 - Joint interviews of program candidates
 - Field-based curricular experiences
 - Selection, preparation, and support of mentors
- What resources will each partner contribute? How will resources be shared? Who controls resources? What will occur if resources aren’t provided?

Part III. Description of the Agreement

- What is the timeline or timeframe for the agreement? When can changes to the agreement occur? When can partners opt out of the agreement?
- What additional conditions are necessary to commit to during the agreement process?
- Who can sign the agreement on behalf of the partnering organizations?

SAMPLE
University-District Partnership Agreement

Southern Regional University and the Clark County School District

Purpose

The purpose of the partnership between Southern Regional University and the Clark County School District is to jointly prepare and support new school leaders to improve curriculum, instruction and student achievement in our region's local schools. We agree to work together to improve the selection of candidates, curriculum of the preparation program, learning opportunities in field-based experiences, evaluation process for certification decisions, and ongoing support of new leaders.

This partnership agreement codifies the partners' collaborative decision-making process and clarifies the actions needed for shared responsibility and accountability for the quality of leaders certified through Southern Regional University and employed in the Clark County School District.

Partnership Vision

Leaders of our region's local schools will be able to effectively manage personnel and resources, lead improvement initiatives, and engage stakeholders to effect change that will significantly benefit student learning and development.

Two paramount goals are at the heart of this work:

We want the best educated and motivated students possible.

We want the best prepared and committed new leaders – leaders who can ensure the academic success of all students.

Belief Statements

- It is both possible and desirable to improve the current state of leadership preparation.
- The preparation of school leaders is the responsibility of the entire profession, both K-12 educators and those in higher education, to serve district's leadership needs.
- A collaborative approach to working with aspiring leaders is more effective than the approach now employed.
- In order for the partnership arrangement to be a true partnership, responsibilities, resources and accountability must be shared.
- It is important for the district partners to understand the goals of the university and its leadership preparation program, and it is important for the university partners to understand the goals of the district and its schools.

Benefits

- Southern Regional University and Clark County School District are mutually invested in this effort because they believe it benefits their respective missions.
- Clark County School District schools will benefit from the presence of "emerging leaders" who can provide additional attention to the student achievement and professional

- development needs of the school.
- Southern Regional University benefits from having school sites, mentored by experienced and excellent school leaders who are knowledgeable about leadership preparation and are skilled in school improvement, where candidates can problem-solve and learn in real-world settings.
- The profession benefits from new leaders who have been prepared and nurtured in an environment where leadership standards, ethical professional practice, commitment to the improvement of all students' learning, and organizational excellence are associated with the entire range of their preparation experiences.

Structure and Membership

The Partnership is organized as follows:

Educational Leadership Program Steering Committee: Members will include an equal number of representatives each from the university (college dean or department chairperson) and the district (superintendent or designee), including at least one staff member with partnership coordination or liaison responsibilities.

Field-based Experiences Committee: Members will include an equal number of representatives each from the university and the district, including at least one staff member with internship responsibilities.

Leadership Curriculum Design Committee: Members will include an equal number of representatives each from the university and the district, including staff members with responsibilities for the university's leadership curriculum and the district's leadership development (e.g. recruitment, professional development, and evaluation).

Responsibilities

1. Each of the partners agrees to these essential duties to fulfill the purpose of the partnership.
 - Collaborate in the recruitment and selection from the pool of potential school leaders.
 - Collaborate in the design of a field-based curriculum and curricular experiences, including content, instruction, and assessments.
 - Collaborate in the teaching and co-teaching of course content.
 - Select and train mentors from the school district to assist with the delivery of the field-based experiences.
 - Collaborate in the writing of proposals to third parties to help assume some of the costs of the program.
 - Participate in the approval process of the new program and its on-going evaluation.
 - Help support and educate candidates in the program and assess performance of graduates in their new roles as school leaders.
2. The Educational Leadership Program Steering Committee: The ELP Steering Committee will be the partnership decision-making body and is responsible first and foremost for establishing vision and goals based on district-level data and needs. The committee will develop an action plan for collaboration and for ensuring successful implementation. This committee will assign all responsibilities to other committees it creates, including the Field-based Experiences Committee and Leadership Curriculum Design Committee. All committees are accountable to the ELP Steering Committee.
3. The ELP Steering Committee will develop and plan for evaluation of the partnership.

Assessment and evaluation should serve the dual purposes of continuous improvement and reporting to the partners' administration and boards of control. The Southern Regional University partnership coordinator and the Clark County School District partnership coordinator, plus one-two persons from each partnering organization who are not directly involved in the partnership will constitute the ad-hoc evaluation team.

4. Southern Regional University and Clark County School District will jointly select program candidates and determine field-based experiences. It is the goal to have multiple field-based experiences in diverse settings for candidates to observe and participate in leadership decisions and actions, and to lead teams of teachers in a school improvement initiative.
5. Southern Regional University will provide a partnership coordinator that will assist in any policy-oriented problems or cases that involve unusual difficulties. This individual will be responsible for maintaining communication with the university's members of the ELP Steering Committee, university field-based supervisors and the District Internship Program Coordinator.
6. Clark County School District will provide an internship program coordinator that will work jointly with the University Partnership Coordinator to resolve any policy-oriented problems or cases that involve unusual difficulties. This individual will be responsible for maintaining communication with mentors and the district's members of the ELP Steering Committee. Additional responsibilities of the District Internship Program Coordinator are:
 - Recruit and select mentors.
 - Assist with matching mentors with interns.
 - Provide a formal entrance to and exit from the program.
 - Help the intern form relationships with people in the district and gain an understanding of central office functions that support leadership of student achievement.
 - Provide mentor training, support and evaluation of performance.
 - Ensure mentors and interns have time allocated to complete internship responsibilities.
 - Make sure the intern's learning plan addresses district strategic goals.
 - Observe the intern as he or she moves through the internship program.
 - Assist interns in gaining entry to settings that provide opportunities to work with diverse students, teachers, parents and communities.
 - Create a pool of leader candidates based on evaluations of interns' strengths and weaknesses.
 - Provide time for mentors to carry out their responsibilities.
7. Southern Regional University will provide university supervisors during each candidate's field-based experiences. The responsibilities of the university supervisor are:
 - Meet with interns prior to their internships to identify needs, contemplate appropriate placement, explain internship procedures and help set expectations.
 - Assist with matching mentors with interns.
 - Provide materials that define the expectations, processes and schedule of the internship to the intern, mentor and district internship program coordinator.

- Provide periodic seminars for interns to share what they are learning, critique each others' observations and activities, discuss alternative courses of action, and get feedback from university faculty.
 - Allocate time for frequent, regular contacts with the intern.
 - Provide feedback and support to the intern.
 - Review the learning plan and help the intern stay on track with expected competency demonstrations.
 - Consult with the mentor and provide constructive feedback.
 - Assist the intern in developing a portfolio demonstrating mastery of performance tasks.
 - Evaluate interns and assign grades with input from their mentors.
 - Maintain records and understand all university, district and state requirements for interns.
8. Clark County School District will provide mentors during each candidate's field-based experiences. The responsibilities of the mentor are:
- Welcome interns to the district.
 - Orient the intern to the community and school culture.
 - Help the intern decide on the sequence of developmental activities most appropriate for the internship (creating a learning plan), given the intern's needs and the district's and school's needs.
 - Provide coaching for skills development.
 - Facilitate/design opportunities for completion of internship activities.
 - Allocate time for frequent, regular contacts with the intern.
 - Model leadership competencies and make one's leadership choices explicit to the intern.
 - Encourage and involve the intern in identifying and solving problems.
 - Guide the intern in planning and implementation of a school improvement project.
 - Track the intern's progress against standards.
 - Encourage reflection and self-assessment; provide feedback on the intern's performance in the experience.
 - Assess progress on the mastery of specific competencies; suggest additional opportunities to experience each competency during the internship.
 - Consult with the intern's university supervisor.
 - Assist intern in developing his or her portfolio.
 - Make sure that the intern gets a thorough picture of the duties of the principal.
 - Evaluate interns' performance on standards using valid measurement procedures.
9. Clark County school and district leaders interested in becoming mentors of candidates during field-based experiences will agree to participate in training that will prepare them to assume the responsibility of mentoring aspiring leaders. University and school district staff will cooperatively provide the instruction for the training through the university's Department of Educational Leadership and the district's Leadership Development Program. It is the desire of the partners for mentors to receive this professional development prior to having candidates selected and field-based experiences commenced.

Resource Sharing

Southern Regional University will:

- provide sufficient faculty resources to supervise the learning experience both on campus and in the district.
- assist in providing professional development for the school based faculty according to a plan worked out by the school administration and ELPT. The experience will carry with it graduate credit at no/reduced expense to the school-based faculty member.
- empower its ELPT representatives to allocate the resources described above.

Clark County School District will:

- allow the candidate to participate in internships, mentoring, and classes that are held during normal school hours, and to release the candidate from the duties regularly assigned for an amount of time not to exceed 50% of their working time.
- provide mentors with the release time that might be necessary to work with university supervisors and interns.
- consider eligible program graduates for open administrative positions within the school district.
- empower its ELPT representatives to allocate the resources described above.

Timeline

This partnership agreement is effective upon completion of the signatures below and is to be renewed annually by February 15. Renewal addendums shall be attached to this agreement and forwarded to each organization's respective signatories and program liaisons or coordinators. This agreement may be terminated or altered at any time upon mutual agreement of both parties.

Note

This agreement has attempted to anticipate, as much as possible, needs and questions associated with this partnership. During the initial year, there will be an ongoing evaluation of the partnership process by the ELPT in order to determine if the responsibilities and resources as identified here are appropriate. Two paramount goals will always be at the heart of our partnership evaluation:

We want the best educated and motivated students possible.

We want the best prepared and committed new leaders – leaders who can ensure the academic success of all students.

Signatures of Agreement

Clark County School District

Signature

Name

Title

Date

Southern Regional University

Signature

Name

Title

Date

