

Training and Retaining Teachers Through a University and School District
Partnership Presentation
Dr. Susan Williams
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Testimony:

My name is Dr. Susan Williams and I am the Director of the TAMUC/MISD Partnership. This job is a 50/50 position. The university provides the insurance options.

My roles include:

- I train preservice teachers (EC-6 and 4-8) who choose Mesquite as their placement for the year-long student teacher program. Student teacher are interns their first semester and residents for clinical teaching during the second semester.
- When the year is complete, it is my job to recruit them to stay in Mesquite ISD.
- I give principals details of candidates from the program that I think would be successful at their campus. I have the trust of principals, so they feel comfortable with my suggestions.
- I visit my first year teachers in their classroom and set up times to meet once a month. This is in addition to what the district provides for all first year teachers. I also visit any first year teacher from TAMUC.
- Principals can add me to teacher's growth plan to help a struggling first year teacher.
- I continue to support them after their first year of teaching if needed.
- I attend all professional learning for principals so I can know what the district is providing them and anything new I might need to know to help me train preservice teachers and support first year teachers.
- I teach classes for the university. I teach two classes in the fall, two classes in the spring, and two classes in the summer.
- I attend all required meetings at the university. I serve on committees at both the university and the district.

Success Stories:

- First year teachers from the program in Mesquite are very successful.
- Teachers feel they have support during their first year and beyond.
- Twenty percent of new hires for MISD last year attended one of the TAMUC programs.
- Principals have a "go to" person when they need a teacher.
- Students are in Mesquite for a year and principals treat them as part of the campus. If they have an opening, their preservice teacher is considered first for the position if they have done a good job throughout the year. Success rate when this happens is 100% over the past 8 years.

- Teachers who are in this program have a better retention rate overall in our district.
- Over 200 preservice teachers have gone through the EC-6 and 4-8 Mesquite programs in the last 8 years and over half are still in Mesquite and just a handful of them are not teaching anymore.
- Teachers from the program are now mentor teachers in the district for TAMUC.

Other programs have now been created such as:

- ETIP (Excellence in Teaching Incentive Program) – this program is designed in partnership with the university to keep teachers in their classroom and a way to get their master’s degree in Curriculum and Instruction.
- Administrative Year Long Intern Program.
- Counseling Center for families of Mesquite ISD. This provides opportunities for teachers seeking their counseling degree to get their observation hours.

My testimony tells the story of one position created that has major impact on training preservice teachers and then supporting them during their first year of teaching and beyond. I am dedicated to the district and the university, which is very unique. Other partnerships are strong, but they deal with multiple districts. I want to support new teachers in every way possible.