

# Employer Focus Group June 30, 2022

Eight principals and supervisors who employ NJCU initial-license program completers attended.

## Programs Represented:

- PK-3rd Grade Programs
- Elementary Education Programs
- Secondary Education Programs—ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies certifications

## Districts Represented:

- Bayonne School District
- Jersey City Public Schools
- West New York School District

# Standards #1 & 2: Learner Development and Difference

- Inclusivity is a problem in education, but this is a real strength at NJCU.
- NJCU does a great job recruiting and supporting teacher candidates of diverse backgrounds and circumstances.
- Three of the best special education teachers I've worked with were graduates of NJCU, and I was impressed with their instruction based on the IEP's.
- Differentiation is still a struggle for new teachers, especially in urban districts.

# Standard #3 Learning Environments

- NJCU students are good about understanding the culture and climate and are willing to learn through buddying and peer learning. They understand the culture of schools through the experience of student teaching.
- NJCU completers adjust well. NJCU teachers don't have a clinical distance, unlike some completers from other programs.
- Engagement is a strength of NJCU students, and NJCU completers have a high level of empathy with children.
- Candidates are positive with students and comfortable in collaborative environments.

# Standards #4 and 5: Knowledge and Application of Content

- Generally, with NJCU candidates, content mastery is a strength.
- NJCU students could improve their conceptual understanding, particularly with math. Sometimes the core knowledge is not as developed as we would like.
- Content is always evolving, but teachers also need to be generalists. Teachers may have to teach outside of their content area, so they need to be prepared for this.
- Teachers should be prepared so that they can make an interdisciplinary connections where math is intertwined in ELA, social studies, the arts, etc.

# Standard #6: Assessment

- New teachers struggle with assessment a lot. Schools are using more and more data now. You can't teach enough about how to use formative assessments. The more instruction they get, the better!
- Data-driven instruction comes with experience. They'll learn how to figure out what students needs based on the data. Data-driven assessments are also helpful.
- Candidates need support creating rubrics, writing good questions, and being deliberate and intentional with questions. Candidates need to view assessment as a measure of growth, and not for the purpose of issuing a grade.
- Student teachers have theoretical knowledge of assessment, but don't always understand how to put it in place. They need to be exposed at the novice level.

# Standards #7 and 8: Planning and Instruction

- Candidate's lesson planning is very thorough.
- A strength for new teachers is that their using technology in innovative ways (TikTok, IG, YouTube). There's so much media content available that new teachers use.
- Candidates need support using data to inform/improve instruction, pacing themselves, and pivoting when technology fails.
- Student teachers come prepared with lesson plans, but they need to conceptually frame what their students need to know at the end of a lesson. Student teachers come in with four-page lesson plans, but then they learn how to put it into a box.

# Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

- Confidentiality and communication can't be emphasized enough! I think NJCU does a great job with this, it's just something we need more help with this in the profession.
- NJCU completers have a high level of empathy and professionalism.
- School law, DYFS—teachers can be intimidated by these. They need to feel more competent in IDEA, NJ law, HIBS, bullying, and social media.
- Technology and digital citizenship are paramount. Teachers need to think about what they post, what websites they use, and what you should consider with cybersecurity.

# Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration

- Teacher candidates don't always take initiative, but when we see it, we give them a nudge, along with guidance and support
- NJCU should increase group assignments where leadership roles are assigned and should encourage candidates to approach school leaders while in their field placements.
- We need to develop the pipeline to supervisory roles. Teachers should be asked how can you serve as a leader in the classroom and where do you fit in? Where are your strengths and how can you develop them?
- Families can be intimidating to new teachers. The more exposure candidates get, the better.