The Mountain Academy: The Story of a Mandated Partnership and the Need to Examine Power, Teacher Leadership, and Teacher Identity

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ABSTRACT: The North Carolina legislature has mandated establishing school/university partnership lab schools. Partnership schools may help to drive school improvement efforts; however, educators have been forced to adopt multiple initiatives aimed at the improvement of K-12 education and teacher preparation. The likelihood of teachers and professors yet again accepting a top-down non-educator initiative, is questionable. Further, universities still tend to drive partnership direction and activity, with little shift in power and control towards schools. The challenge of developing and sustaining a true partnership may be difficult enough when mutual ownership and voice has grown organically. Addressing this challenge as mandated is far more problematic. A lack of attention to cultural power and boundaries, teacher leadership, and teacher role and identity may limit the impact of such initiatives. The story of a mandated lab school allows us to further understand such issues through the lenses of its participants, beginning with the teachers.

NAPDS Essentials addressed: *Essential One: A Comprehensive Mission. A professional development school (PDS) is a learning community guided by a comprehensive, articulated mission that is broader than the goals of any single partner, and that aims to advance equity, antiracism, and social justice within and among schools, colleges/universities, and their respective community and professional partners.; Essential Three: Professional Leading and Learning. A professional development school (PDS) is a learning community guided by a comprehensive, articulated mission that is broader than the goals of any single partner, and that aims to advance equity, antiracism, and social justice within and among schools, colleges/universities, and their respective community and professional partners.; Essential Seven: Shared Governance. A PDS is built upon shared, sustainable governance structures that promote collaboration, foster reflection, and honor and value all participants' voices.; Essential Eight: Boundary Spanning Roles. A PDS creates space for, advocates for, and supports college/university and P–12 faculty to operate in well-defined, boundary-spanning roles that transcend institutional settings.*

In 2016, the state of North Carolina legislature mandated the establishment of partner lab schools within the state. The UNC system (2020) states, "The UNC System Lab School initiative aims to provide enhanced educational programming to students in low-performing schools and to plan demonstration sites for the preparation of future teachers and school administrators." What happens when a state mandates school improvement through requiring colleges of education to rescue underperforming urban schools? How does such an approach meet desired goals to improve education in at-risk communities, improve teacher preparation, and build a better understanding of how to develop quality, successful schools? The story of the Mountain Academy lab school may help us to explore these questions.

The Literature

It may help to examine the concept of a school/university partnership through the lens of professional development schools. Although professional development school school/university partnerships have been in existence since the Holmes group (1983), recently, according to Tsui et al. (2009), criticism related to the quality of teacher education has led to increased implementation of professional development schools with the aim of improving teacher preparation and in turn teaching practices in P-12 schools. This was the impetus for these partnerships that the state of North Carolina refers to as lab schools. Theories of how such partnerships work include notions ranging from "complementary," or mutually beneficial to both institutions (Goodlad, 1988), to collaborative, where the partnership school is jointly owned and developed (Edwards et al., 2009). Beyond collaboration, Weick (2001) has established key factors of a successful partnership namely, trust, honesty, and self-respect. These factors support the school/university partnership in becoming a community of invested professional educators who work together across institutional boundaries. This community should be framed by collaborative approaches that value practicing teachers' implicit, contextualized, expert, and professional knowledge (Chalies et al., 2004). However, a

challenge to cultivating such a professional community is the existence of boundaries, which prescribe "different enterprises, different ways of engaging with one another, different histories, repertoires, ways of communicating, and capabilities" (Wenger, 2003, p. 84). Examining these multiple ways of knowing and exploring how to cross these boundaries is the ongoing work of many partnership schools. This challenge may be difficult enough when mutual ownership and voice has grown organically within the partnership school, addressing this challenge within a mandated framework is far more problematic. Professional educators have been forced to adopt multiple initiatives claiming to be aimed at the reform and improvement of K-12 education through improving approaches to teacher preparation and ongoing professional development for educators. The likelihood of teachers and university professors yet again accepting a top-down, non-educator initiative, given the perceived mis-implementation and limited success of many such mandates, is questionable.

A study examined the influence of four variables on teachers' ratings of acceptability of state-mandated school reform initiatives. The study revealed that pedagogical beliefs congruent with the mandated change, self-efficacy, and professional development were the main contributors to teachers' levels of acceptability of the change (Gettinger, 2015). Lasky (2005) found factors impacting teacher acceptance of mandates included: teacher identity related the current reform, and both political and social contexts. Findings indicated teacher acceptance was challenged by a disjuncture between teacher identity and expectations of the new reform mandates. Partnership schools may help to bridge the gaps between teachers and school improvement efforts. However, despite often good intentions, universities still tend to drive partnership direction and activity, with only some movement to shift in power and control towards the schools (Graham et al., 2014). A lack of attention to factors such as cultural power and boundaries, teacher leadership, and teacher role and identity may limit the sustainability of an initiative, such as the mandated partnership described in this study.

Cultural Power and Boundaries

The goal of "all voices to be heard" is one of the most common features of school/university partnerships. However, the perception of power and control as to who drives the partnership continues to be university dominated (Graham et al., 2014). Having parody within a school/university partnership requires challenging knowledge hierarchies, embracing multiple kinds of knowledge and expertise, and calling for a more participatory and inclusive stance by university faculty, who must refuse to go into schools as authorities who may neglect the equal importance of teacher-generated knowledge and expertise. Challenging these normative hierarchies may be viewed as radical and run counter to the cultural norms of the university and the school (Arhar et al., 2013, p. 233). Institutional regulations, policies, beliefs, boundaries, and histories all come into play in forging the partnership. Challenging cultural norms is necessary to all voices being heard in the development of a partnership culture that is grounded in sharing and valuing differences (Baumfield, 2001; Taylor, 2008). "While external stakeholders play a role in the development of policies and regulations that affect educator preparation and licensure, educators themselves must take the lead to guide, shape, and define the parameters and renewal of their profession" (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2018, p. 42). The multiple and sometimes contradictory interests of two institutions merging within a partnership is often complicated with personal interests on the part of those involved, requiring partnership leaders who are cognizant of and address the need for teachers' voices. If the goal of school university partnership is to transform education, then transformational leaders who encourage followers to relinquish personal interest and invest in hybrid solutions for teaching and reaching K-12 students, and preparing teachers who are able to do so, are foundational (Zeichner et al., 2015). Inherent institutionalized differences in power, voice, and role must be identified and overcome to fully embrace the opportunity for transformational practices to be at the heart of the partnership. This not only means transforming teaching practices in the school and within teacher preparation but also transforming each institutional structure to support teacher voice and to embrace a true collaborative and shared decision-making culture that results in a new vision of schooling.

Teacher Leadership

The top-down bureaucracy of public schools presents challenges to developing the capacity for teacher leadership (Greenlee, 2007). School/university partnerships provide nontraditional opportunities to cultivate teacher leadership with teachers who are uniquely postured to engage in a powerful relationship between learning and leading (Roselle & Hands, 2020). Teacher leadership embodies the very constructs of democratic professional communities and change. Leadership is a crucial component in creating a professional community through democratic school-university partnerships (Firestone & Fisler, 2002; Goodlad, et al., 2004; Hess et al., 2014) and teacher leadership is a critical component of both establishing and sustaining these partnerships (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2018). Due to their unique positioning within the school, teacher leaders can become agents of transformational change if provided opportunities and needed support. Rutter and Leon (2018) state that "layering the concept of teacher leadership onto a professional development school (PDS) model elicits many possibilities to enrich student learning, future teacher learning, teacher learning, and a generally richer profession" (p. 217). Partnerships need to address the culture of the school to support the development of teacher leaders. Teacher leader development is dependent on the interaction between individual teachers and the responsiveness of their work setting in helping to cultivate their roles as leaders as well as

helping them to cultivate leadership in others (Poekert et al., 2016). Principals play a key role in building teacher leadership capacity. They must establish a culture of trust, honesty, and professionalism, while facilitating opportunities for teacher leadership (Mullens & Jones, 2008). Belief systems and assumptions about teaching within both the school and university related to teacher leadership and teaching as a profession must be addressed. Smulyan (2006) states that teacher leadership is grounded in three assumptions: a) teaching is a profession, b) teaching is a political act, and c) teaching is a collaborative process. Tackling courageous conversations to address these assumptions and develop a clear vision of what it means to teach is central to the work of the partnership in creating new roles for teacher leaders and bringing the discussion and potential value of teacher leaders to the fore.

Teacher Role and Identity

School/university partnerships provide a unique opportunity to redefine roles within both the school and university and to push the boundaries of roles that exist in the education profession. At a basic level, engaging in a partnership can provide new approaches to teaching and learning at both the university and the school sites, as well as cultivating shared inquiry and establishing effective field experiences and on-site classes for teacher candidates. Beyond this lies the opportunity for partnerships to be transformational. Teacher identity and role lie at the heart of transformation. New identity formation includes boundary spanning as teachers seek to find new ways to "be" an educator. New identities may include being a mentor or a coach for peers or preservice teachers, being a teacher leader, taking part in once traditional administrative responsibilities, being a teacher scholar or researcher, and having a voice in political processes through engagement with various governing bodies or professional communities within education. Teacher identity may be thought of as constantly becoming in a context embedded in power relations, ideology, and culture (Handscomb et al., 2014). When teachers take on a lead teacher role within a partnership, it positively impacts their perceptions of themselves both as educational leaders and agents of change and ultimately impacts P-12 student learning (Roselle & Hands, 2020). New teacher identities may require teachers to view themselves as boundary spanners or blended professionals who work within and across institutional and community boundaries to influence and support the work of the partnership. To cultivate and encourage boundary spanning roles, the partnership needs to officially recognize and support these new positions, especially those taken on by teachers. Firestone and Fisler (2002) state "people in formal boundary spanning roles have special potential" (p. 451) and often begin as leaders at the interface between the two institutions, who then acquire the expertise needed to truly act in new roles. Boundary spanning leadership is effective because it "participates in a sophisticated dance between those in organizational power in each of the partner organizations and those who only had informal power within these same institutions" (Goldring & Sims, 2005, p. 234). This leads to the necessary benefits of flexibility and autonomy not found in traditional institutional roles as new roles are forged.

Teachers may become liaisons or building coordinators that make connections between the school and university sites. The building liaison role of teacher leader may encompass acting as a professional developer, facilitator, or critical friend (Rutter et al., 2020). Coordinators engage collaboratively with an identified a university-based faculty partner with whom they work to plan and guide next steps in the partnership, and to communicate with administrators and other constituencies. A teacher may teach half-time in their own classroom and spend the rest of the school day coaching and mentoring or providing on-site embedded professional development for peers and preservice teachers who may be at the school. Teachers may flex part of their time to be an action researcher or to write or contribute to the professional field as a teacher scholar. They may alternately teach classes for the university or lead professional development sessions across multiple school sites. One identified role for teachers within a partnership is that of clinical educator, which may encompass all of the descriptions above. Straddling institutional identities and boundaries may pose challenges for the institution in terms of salary, workload, professional evaluation and other potential barriers. Despite this, the existence and importance of boundary spanner roles within the partnership should not be overlooked.

To be a boundary spanner within a partnership requires acting and living in a third space, belonging completely to neither institution but at the same time to both. Boundary spanners must tolerate a degree of ambiguity as precise experiences and outcomes cannot always be predicted (Baumfield, 2001). A boundary spanner may have a sense of uncertainty and risk in being outside of one's comfort zone, but at the same time spanners find a vibrant, creative space which may offer up potentially great dividends (Roselle & Hands, 2020). It is not only the teacher leaders or boundary spanners are who live in this precarious balance between institutions, but the partnership school itself lives within this third space, belonging completely within the confines of neither institution, but instead defining its own space and existence. Miller (2001) writes that partnerships exist in an environment of mutuality starting that "A school/university partnership is a precarious organisation. Bridging two cultures, it remains marginal to each. This marginalisation, though difficult to manage, is essential for survival" (Miller, 2001, p.116). Forging its own identity and culture is an essential part of a partnership school being transformational to the field of education. It is necessary for partnerships to create this third space outside of any institutional parameters in order to have its own identity and to thrive. This allows the partnership to meet its goals of having the freedom to share ideas, knowledge and resources, by developing flexible, innovative approaches to address institutionally entrenched issues (Higher Education Academy, 2012, p. 9). The story of a mandated lab school, the Mountain Academy,

allows us to further understand such issues through the lenses of its participants, beginning with the teachers.

The Study

The first phase of this study was designed as a mixed methods sequential approach to understanding the perceptions and experiences of the teachers involved in the Mountain Academy. Prior to this study most inquiry by involved professors focused on instruction, assessment, and pedagogical changes within the school and how this affected student learning. This study's focus on teachers' experiences, perceptions, and needs was framed by literature related to partnerships and professional development schools and teacher leadership within school cultural change.

Research Questions

- How can we cultivate teacher leadership within the Mountain Academy to set future direction and sustain authentic/organic professional development/inquiry and ownership of the academy?
- What are the incentives/motivation for teachers taking leadership in the academy, and how do we avoid saturation, burnout or disenfranchisement? What matters most to teachers in this endeavor?
- How can we increase and assure teacher voice when collaborating with school administrators, the university and meeting state mandates?
- How can we engage teacher leaders in researching their own questions and co-directing the inquiry based in the academy?
- How can we re-conceptualize teacher roles to become true institutional boundary spanners and cultivate new opportunities for teacher scholars?

Survey

An 18-item survey framed around the aforementioned bodies of knowledge was distributed to all members of the Mountain Academy teaching faculty. The response rate to the surveys was 92%. The last question on the survey asked if the respondent would be interested in participating in a follow-up one-on-one interview related to the emergent findings from the survey. Raw data was collected and analyzed in terms of frequency of responses using a four-point Likert scale for each item. After the survey responses were analyzed to determine to mean and mode, items receiving the average highest and lowest positive response and most frequent responses per item were determined. The survey results (Appendix A) indicated that support in meeting teachers' instructional needs to improve practice received the highest scores, as well as items focused on communication, trust and relationships. Areas receiving the lowest scores were those related to teacher voice, ownership and leadership, with the statement "Teachers are involved in the academy's decision-making" receiving the lowest score.

Interviews

Interviews of individual teachers followed the analysis of the survey results. One fourth of the teachers surveyed were interviewed. The follow-up teacher interviews acted not only as a member check for the survey, but allowed for in-depth exploration of the why behind survey results and a better understanding of teachers' perspectives with a focus on cultivating teacher voice and working toward future action plans. An interview guide constructed around the survey results was developed (Appendix B) .When the teacher interviews were completed, it was decided to conduct parallel interviews of professors/faculty from the college of education involved in the academy, and then administrators at both the school and university sites. The parallel university faculty and partnership administrator interviews would allow comparison across roles as related to findings from the teacher survey and emergent themes resulting from the teacher interviews. These multiple lenses allow for a deeper analysis and understanding of important themes across roles found in the academy. Data were coded and emergent themes identified within the interview data sets. Interestingly, the emergent themes were consistently evidenced across all of the role perspectives interviewed, lending face validity to the findings and an unintentional member-check of sorts. Areas that were reported or described as being strengths of the academy, across all three role-alike group data sets, were the relationships developed within and across school and university faculty and interactions with administrators in both sites. Relationships with students, their families, and the community, were also reported as positive and effective in helping to improve education and achieve the shared goal of meeting the needs of the students in the academy. Improvement in instruction, assessment, and management, especially in terms of being student-centered and focusing on the whole child, including social emotional learning, was consistently reported as a strength within the academy. However, these themes did all fall within the traditional constructs of teacher and university faculty roles and traditional structures of each institutional partner. Areas that were consistently described as needing improvement or lacking were teacher leadership, intentional inquiry/action research into practice, and preservice teacher development. Responses in these areas called attention to a need for role and boundary shifts to move the work of the partnership ahead. These themes are discussed and illustrated in the following paragraphs.

Context

The primary focus of this study is learning from teachers' voices as they are the ones on the front lines of schooling and as teacher leadership and ownership are key to success and sustainability of partnerships, such as lab schools. The purpose of the Mountain Academy partnership, according to university-based faculty and administrators, is multipronged. There is a focus on teacher preparation, while getting a school in need up

to standards, or in other words to "rescue a failing school." The state legislature mandated partnering with an underperforming, low income school to create a model lab school so colleges of education would, according to faculty "put their money where their mouth is to show the worthiness of teacher preparation." The state wanted proof that one could do what faculty teach candidates to do in classes at the university in a real school, in the real world. The goal according to one faculty member was,

> To show what I teach is applicable by forming a relationship with an underachieving school to conduct research for teacher training. The state pretty much said here's the school now fix it. But we have been able to give children opportunities they did not have before. These students were "forgotten." Our work is to change the opportunities for the students in the future.

The failing school needed support to turn itself around and partnering with the university to share best practices was viewed as the way to do this. A faculty member described visits to the Mountain Academy prior to the inception of the lab school,

> The existing school was chaotic. There were great difficulties connecting with the community. Discipline was mishandled. It was just a failing school. When the state mandated that we work with a lab school, we decided it was imperative to focus on building community, to help the school become school a part of the greater community.

The focus from the university as to how to turn this failing school around quickly became "meeting the needs of the children in the school and the community in which the school was situated." University faculty explained,

> This is a special school. It still has mostly the same students and we intentionally recruited the right teachers to meet their needs and build on who the students and families are as people. The teachers make the difference. We started by building a shared vision and commitment to these kids and their community.

As the state mandate came quickly, the academy was built on an existing opportunity as the college of education had been running a reading clinic situated in a nearby elementary school with similar demographics to the identified school in need. Consequently, the focus in the academy started with early literacy, with professors and school faculty addressing literacy deficits from a whole child perspective. The literature focused on life and learning within this particular urban demographic to build relevant curriculum. The literacy curriculum was based on the Bank Street urban literacy program in Chicago which included themes of Identity, Movement, Our World, and Changes.

Thus, the reading faculty were initially the only ones involved. An inventory of the school indicated that teachers had lots of equipment and packaged prescriptive curriculum they did not know how to or get to use. This became a starting point. "We came in to teach them how to use the good tools and provide the resources for them to use them in creative ways. Of course, there were non-negotiables on our part, like using a Readers Workshop approach and Informal Reading Inventories for assessment." The lab school was a literacy school, as one teacher put it, and teachers started with the university's practices and procedures. According to professors, "We did respect them as professionals in choosing to use different materials and differentiate to meet student needs." The hurried nature of the mandate, school matching, and need to build quickly, limited participation in and understanding by faculty outside of the reading department. But as the initiative unfolded, focus on other curricular areas and involvement of other university faculty became part of the daily work. Providing Mountain Academy teachers with curriculum and processes grounded in best practice research became a key part of the school's administrative role and contributions of the college of education faculty. Thus, the school's teachers initially accepted the mandated partnership as they were looking for ways to address low literacy test scores and help in dealing with a "challenging clientele."

From the beginning, this lab school partnership represented the theme "We are here to help you. What can we do to help?" The school was clearly the beneficiary of support, time, and gifts to help teachers teach better to meet the needs of their students and ultimately the community. The school gained support beyond the literacy focus to include core curricular areas such as Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. There was a call for interested teachers to be interviewed in a new hiring process. It was stated by university faculty and administration,

> We looked to hire progressive, autonomous, constructivist teachers to fit our needs. These are the kind of teachers we want, but we do not want to be prescriptive. We make space for teachers' judgment and for them to be critical thinkers to meet kids' needs and model that for kids.

But participants articulated the limitations to this desired autonomy, instead describing the largely transactional nature of relationships between the university and school lying within fairly traditional role boundaries. Terms such as "symbiotic relationship" and "shared bureaucracies" were used to describe the relationship between the university and the school. The teacher role was limited to developing relationships and trying new curricula and instructional approaches within traditional boundaries. Issues of power, culture, and teacher identity and agency were not addressed as part of the mandate or by the newly established partners.

Interview Findings

Teachers and Relationships

A recurring metaphor used to describe the relationships at the academy was "family." The nucleolus of the family was the students in the school, surrounded by their support systems within their own families and community. Meeting students' needs not only academically but also, socially, emotionally, and physically became the school family focus. Meeting the social and emotional needs for teachers as well as students was part of school support system. Support for families and community members took the form of ongoing education and communication with parents like curriculum nights, providing Christmas gifts for children and families at need in the community, building food pantries within the school, buying all fifth graders a school yearbook, and trying to provide opportunities for all beyond the school. The university faculty were also there to provide caring and supportive relationships, as faculty members worked alongside of teachers as their colleagues and often had dinner or golfed with them after school hours. The working relationship between university and school faculty was described "professional and respectful." Teachers stated that the university faculty was right there beside them willing to jump right in, get to know the kids, and to support addressing students' needs. One teacher stated,

> They check in on us, but trust that we "do the right thing" for kids and we can see it happening. They support us and trust us to try out what they share. They may greet you with a big hug, or just poke their head in the classroom to say "hi" when you are teaching. The relationship with the faculty is good. We are friendly and on a first name basis.

Within the lab school concept, teachers no longer dealt with district level supervision but instead had a supportive relationship with the university faculty,

> There is no one breathing down your neck from central office, or evaluating if your standards are on written on the board. The university wants to support the good teachers here, so they can be 100 %, and they are very accommodating and understanding of teachers' realities.

Participants across various roles stated, "People are happy here. It is a safe, caring environment. Students used to shut down out of frustration, feeling their needs were not being met, and that they didn't really matter. Now everyone involved says, 'this is my place.'" The community relationship building included reaching out to and working with parents who were now viewed as involved with and supportive of the teachers and the school. It was stated that kids want to go to school and know that someone at school cares for them. A teacher said, "I am concerned about what happens to the kids once they leave the school and go on to sixth grade," emphasizing the need to reach out beyond the school walls to scale up and sustain the positive results of students' lab school experience. A university administrator summed it up as,

> We are not about saving the school and the community. We are here to invigorate the community, families, and parents. We say "you can do this!" And we have close relationships with families. We do it together with families. We let them know "we are all about you and your child."

The focus on students first and the whole child is foundational to the school community relationships and commitment. Teachers described a sense of comfort, belonging, and welcoming. Professional development in addressing the whole child, social emotional learning, trauma informed instruction, and positive behavior intervention systems have been part of the school's focus for teachers. Beyond the teachers, a care team of administrators, a school nurse and social worker work proactively to address needs of at-risk students along with a commitment to student ownership and student participation in school in initiatives such as mentoring programs, a school student-leaders ranger team, recycling, leading the pledge, a green/sustainability team, and a care team for family support.

> There are really no more fights. We use caring and love as preventative. Teachers have worked with this population before, so they know what these kids' lives are like and gear things toward them. Students and teachers hold each other accountable. We think about the whole child, and Maslow. We establish a culture of caring.

Relationships are clearly focused on the well-being of students, parents and the community and building collaboration with the involved university faculty. A clear, positively perceived, shift has occurred in the relationship between the school as an entity and the school district, as the university has taken over ownership of the school itself. Although positive relationships are a strength of the partnership and there is a shared, albeit university-led, vision for curriculum, instruction and assessment, roles within the partnership remain fairly traditional. The partnership is not yet centered on transformation of teacher/faculty/administrator roles or its relationship to improving teacher preparation.

Teachers as Recipients of New Practices

Within the school's student-centered community focus lies a commitment to utilizing student-centered best practices for teaching and learning. Enabling students to become successful, caring custodians of the school and of each other has paid off in terms of student behavior and engagement. Now teachers can

choose how to address learning gaps, so students can be successful. This motivates students to want to be there. One teacher stated, "We are cutting edge with SEL and academics because we are not test driven and use active, engaged learning." At the onset of the partnership, the school had the 5th lowest test scores in the state. To address that concern the teachers use intrinsic motivation, constructivism and real-world based instruction. This enables them to show that "one size" does not fit all students. The university gets most of the credit related to improved teaching and learning in the school. It was consistently stated that the university gives teachers the curriculum and then the teachers can choose how to meet student needs, with approval and support from the building curriculum coordinator. The university faculty designed the curriculum and shared how to teach it in engaging student-centered ways, by developing learning guides for teachers. Teachers stated they felt less pressured about assessment, as the university provided them with alternative, authentic assessment measures that were more student-centered and allowed them to identify and teach to student learning gaps. This began with the focus on literacy and the reading faculty:

> We started with using Lucy Calkins to try new things and have more student engagement. The university Reading Department had a vision about reading and writing and they provided us the resources. It was focused on meeting individual student needs and built on student interest using interest surveys. We're a literacy-based school and all about closing the literacy gaps for kids.

Instruction was described as engaging, "teacher facilitated and student run," and teachers stated that students retain learning from experiences, because they are hands-on. Standards are a natural part of the curriculum that the university faculty designed and provided, so teachers feel they don't have to worry about meeting standards and can "get into teaching" and focus on the students and their questions and thoughts. There is a focus on research-based practices within this specific cultural context. It was stated, "The partnership members build the curriculum around who the kids are." A building administrator explained,

> There are no worksheets. We have engaged learning and space for kids to move around and talk. Kids have multiple ways and opportunities to learn, like centers, small group lessons and then back with the whole class. With support and success, students are more motivated to learn.

Within the areas of Language Arts and Social Studies there is focus on intentional themes to reflect the community. Learning is described as active and engaged, where students see themselves in texts and books, guest speakers of color come to work with students and the curriculum is matched to the students. Teachers manage the university supplied curriculum and then add what is needed to meet their students' needs. Math and Science focus on inquiry and hands-on/minds on approaches to instruction. Each curricular subject has a lead faculty member from the university that provides resources and support, team teaches, and helps teachers to find professional development opportunities, as guided by the school's curriculum specialist who leads grade level teacher team professional learning community meetings weekly to implement the university provided curriculum. A university faculty member stated,

> They were using a piecemeal curriculum, but now they have a whole curriculum to follow. We gave them a Math curriculum. Now they have common language goals and vocabulary and I can see how kids progress. They have grade level curriculum meetings with the building curriculum coordinator so they can better serve kids. Cutting edge things are happening. We provide the expertise and resources.

Instruction in the Mountain Academy definitely looks different than it had in the past. The college of education's dean expressed concern as to whether it was enough and if it could be sustained and continue to evolve. She stated, "Are we exploring teaching and learning to the highest degree? Teachers seem to be getting freedom that they need to make changes, but are we really doing anything differently? I hope it is actually transforming things." One key needed element to transform learning in the academy is institutionalized, embedded and teacher-led inquiry.

Teacher Inquiry as Training

Partnerships are grounded in serving the best interests of each institution and their collective efforts to improve education and teacher preparation. From the beginnings of PDS and other school partnerships in the 1980s it was stated that partnerships had "a genuine interest in seeing knowledge production as a shared responsibility of the practitioner and research communities" (Bickel & Hattrup, 1995, p. 36). However, too often teachers' knowledge feels inferior and "threatened" in comparison to what universities bring to the partnership (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Ebbutt et al., 2000). Professional collaborative and teacher-led inquiry and research remain a goal of partnerships today. Open ended questions about inquiry into teaching and learning and the teacher role in inquiry in the Mountain Academy revealed a specific definition that was almost exclusively framed by teaching as inquiry-based instruction and engaging the elementary students in inquiry, rather than professional inquiry or research about teaching practices:

> To my knowledge inquiry and research are not the focus. It is about praxis; sustainability and for training of teachers about topics. We did use a world café to

> come up with ideas and that led to the school green team and mini grants for sustainability and recycling. Things like that are the focus more than inquiry into teaching.

The connection to research into and about one's own teaching, reflection on teaching practices, and action research were not central to the participants' responses and its value was not evident. At best, it was mentioned by few as an after-thought. One university faculty member stated,

> I am not engaging in research and the teachers are not researching. I did take a survey to get their mindsets. Then I asked, "what do you need from me?" And I will help them. They don't need another person to tell them what to do.

Further, the concept of teacher-led inquiry was supplanted by the notion of professional development opportunities, typically reported as provided or financed by the university. The professional development was at direction of the building curriculum coordinator, but resulted from topics that emerged in the teacher PLCs, or professional learning communities. The PLCs themselves were viewed as a chance to talk about what worked or did not work in their classrooms, to ask for support or help from the university, and to keep up with how things were going overall, as well as attend to housekeeping/record keeping for the teams, often related to tracking assessment of student learning. The opportunity for teachers to direct the inquiry, rather than be the recipients of information or support was not clearly present, nor was the connection to the work of the university faculty as engaging in inquiry *with*, rather than *for*, teachers.

> I'd say inquiry is about the art vs. science of teaching. Teachers focus on doing inquiry-based teaching with their students, and have PD to choose from, and then share what they learn with peers. We have provided them field trips to Boston and Plymouth so they could learn about history, first-hand. Our goal is to "provide support for them." We give them lots of technology. . . I do lead lessons and model for them by co-teaching. I do tell them that I am also here to learn from you. Mainly we look at how to teach to close gaps in learning for students.

Teacher as researcher or decision maker was not described as part of the teacher's role. Rather, teachers were implementors who could make adjustments and ask for help and support to work towards stronger teaching proficiency and perhaps, eventually, their own expertise. There was an emphasis on getting teachers to try new approaches in their classrooms as a first step. The curriculum coordinator/administrator said, "We focus on inquiry-based instruction in the classroom. But also, teachers get to try things. We provide ongoing professional development that will stick with us vs a one-shot deal."

Participants from the merged institutions largely viewed the university faculty as the experts and the building and university administration as the decision-makers. The teachers were the implementors, as the curriculum coordinator stated,

> Teachers first try new approaches that they hear about from the university to explore and then they come back and discuss it. This is their form of inquiry. They also model how to do inquiry for their students by engaging students in questioning, exploring and explaining. Then they try to do that with their own practices.

Responses to questions related to inquiry typically focused on professional development that was provided to allow teachers to adapt to keep up with current trends and to "stay on the forefront of new ideas without being too cumbersome for teachers." Professional development was seen as coming from outsiders or others, with teachers often later sharing with their school peers informally at meetings acting as "mini workshops." Teachers and faculty reported lots of choices provided for professional development. Some were with university faculty focused on concepts and practices that were provided by faculty. Lucy Calkins's work in literacy was a big emphasis and a literacy faculty member co-taught with some teachers as they learned to implement Calkins's approaches. Teachers in the academy learned about and practiced investigative approaches to teaching Math with a university faculty member and they worked with their own students and Science faculty to do science projects to learn about hands-on science. Teacher respondents also framed inquiry as the information that they talked about and gained from their curriculum coordinator, "She will always add what we need to help our current instructional focus to become more efficient, like more resources and training. We need to be always learning together."

A large number of teachers reported their experience with inquiry coming from inquiry projects that they worked on in a master's degree Reading class on-site, provided by the university. Teachers were excited that they could put what they were learning in their master's classes directly into practice in their own classrooms. "Those of us getting our masters are excited that we are learning how to do inquiry through class projects. Maybe we will get to do it later too." However, the direction and content for the master's classes and projects were based on the traditional expectations of the master's program, rather than being driven by and built around teachers' needs and voices, as would typically happen within a true partnership. Teachers reported the classes they took were based on the yearly university offerings, and sometimes matched the needs in their classrooms.

A form of inquiry involving teachers within the school was stated to occur through the ongoing weekly meetings that serve to convey information across grade level teams, but also, are deemed to be professional learning communities. These are led by the building curriculum coordinator and often joined by

university faculty. The process is teacher-engaged, but could be more teacher-led and directed. The end result is still a focus on training teachers rather than engaging them as inquirers and decision-makers. Although teachers are involved in the PLCs, this is not a decision-making platform. A university faculty member described this "inquiry" structure:

> Inquiry happens through communication and PLC team meetings. We, as faculty, focus on areas for the teams to try and then they decide what works and what does not. The curriculum coordinator gets input from teachers about what is working and she goes to the advisory board to suggest a focus. An example is a focus on collecting some schoolwide Science data as a Science assessment. But, the focus is still on more professional development rather than actual inquiry. The advisory board determines a focus for these efforts with school administration for the year by examining goals with teachers.

There was not an intentional "big picture" related to inquiry at the school, but rather a patchwork of professional development activities, courses taken to get a master's degree, information from faculty and school administrators about how to close the gap, and a focus on the teachers' role as implementor. There was little focus on intentional, designed questioning about best practices and teacher-driven and produced data and knowledge. The college of education dean stated,

> Inquiry seems to happen in pockets. It is not systematic. Nothing is really driving it as a whole. Faculty can do their research, to see if what we do in teacher preparation in university classes actually translates and works in an authentic setting and that can inform our practice here. But that is about as developed as inquiry is right now.

Role of Teachers in Professional Preparation

> The establishment of the UNC System laboratory schools provides the opportunity to redefine and strengthen university partnerships with public schools, improve student outcomes, and provide high quality teacher and principal training. The lab schools will partner directly with local school districts to promote evidence-based teaching and school leadership, while offering real-world experience to the next generation of teachers and principals. (UNC System, 2020)

The intent of the North Carolina legislation requiring the establishment of partnership "lab schools" has a clear focus on educator preparation. It calls for the initiative to result in high quality teacher and principal training, as well as real-world experiences where newly minted educators can learn about evidenced-based teaching, or best practices. There is yet to be a clear, well developed, innovative, and jointly designed teacher preparation focus within the Mountain Academy. Clearly the multipronged nature of the mandate provides challenges not only logistically, but also in terms of conceptualization, shared vision, and ownership through collaboration. The academy's work has centered on and been successful in establishing a commitment to the community and students, establishing relationships that ground the shared work of the academy and ultimately student academic and social/emotional success, and providing opportunities for classroom teachers to learn about and engage in student-centered, evidence-based teaching. This has served as the groundwork and foundation of the actions of the academy over its beginning years. The opportunity to build preservice teachers into the work and vision has been lacking. Some of this is due to logistics, and some of it is likely due to the sequential focus of establishing priorities to keep things manageable and agreeable to the partners involved. There is a missed opportunity to redefine the role of preservice teachers, their teacher mentors, university faculty, and building administration through innovation, shared decision-making, and restructuring the definition of field experiences. Preservice teacher education has clearly not been a substantial part of a new vision within the academy:

> We are getting there. It has been left out for a while. We have had one or two student teachers mostly in need of remediation. There was a problem getting them placed. We do not have a process by which to get student teachers and methods block students in the school. That was the plan for spring but Covid made it impossible to do this then and in the fall. There is talk about dormitories housing students or only requiring students who live close by to participate or having students required less days there. But this hasn't happened yet and has not been on the radar screen even though I've been bringing it up in board meetings from the beginning.

One challenge articulated by university faculty and administration is the distance between the university campus and the Mountain Academy. The need for teacher preparation students to have experiences outside of the rural mountain schools near the university is acknowledged, and thus, the distance a given challenge. A university faculty member shared,

> The fact that the school is 90 miles away is a barrier. The field placement office is working on how to get more of our students there. I would like to have methods block II classes here, but it isn't worked out. So, my students did a field trip with academy students. And we did have one Social Studies student teacher.

The university-based liaison/ associate dean said,

> We are starting to get more student teachers and planning to get methods and block interns in. We have

> had lots of good one-shot experiences, like music faculty bringing down university students for a day. There is lots of potential to learn from teachers who are using research-based practices. Our students can learn about teaching in a real diverse setting if they are interested in social justice and teaching in places different from where they grew up. In the past our graduates could not cut it when they got jobs in an inner-city setting. If we can immerse them in this type of setting over a longer period of time they will get to know the kids, families, and the community.

Contributing to the logistical challenge of distance and traveling between the university and the school is a traditional mindset regarding roles, relationships, and the nature of field experiences prior to and including student teaching. The college of education uses traditional placement models through the student teaching office, rather than collaborative models using a professional development school or partnership approach. Student teaching is supervised by a cadre of adjunct professors rather than built into the program and utilizing full-time faculty and clinical educator teacher leaders within the schools. Placements are made exclusively through the field placement office working with district level administration rather than building relationships between designated faculty and designated teacher leaders in the partner school. This approach limits the flexibility and new ways to think about both placements and roles of teacher educators across institutional boundaries which could lead to addressing some of the distance and space issues and open up new approaches to field experiences. Opportunities within this traditional concept of field experiences are both limited in number and scope within the academy. One teacher stated,

> We were able to have two student teachers in the first three years but we hope to get more. The students are able to come and visit our school. Sometimes they help out with field trips. They have all been very nice when they come to visit and talk with the kids. We haven't had a cohort or large number of university students come to our school yet because it is so far to drive we are trying to figure out how maybe we could house them nearer to the school. Right now, we are not really sure how we can get students from the university out here. One reading faculty member has been able to hold a master's course onsite though.

The intent of transforming teaching seems to underlie the desire for more pre-service teachers working with the academy teachers. However, the potential for role shifts for student teachers, teacher leaders, and new roles for school-linked faculty are not yet part of the dialogue. This leads to the effectiveness and potential for transforming teaching and learning hinging on the traditional notion of working with a good teacher who lets "pre-service teachers try things," rather than it being a designed part of a plan for new paths for pre-service teacher education in the academy.

> We hope that this will become a place where lots of students can come and try out what they are learning in their courses. They can learn it's okay to make mistakes and that we are here to support them and want to try innovative and best practices.

Validation of teacher preparation is viewed as a major impetus for the lab school initiative by the state, sort of a way to prove what schools of education are teaching their students in a real-world setting. An unnecessary and increasingly political dichotomy between theory and practice could be addressed as pre-service teachers employ best practices learned in their coursework within challenging school settings. Further, lessons learned in real-world partner schools may be used to inform the education of teacher candidates in their coursework. One teacher stated,

> I am not familiar with the idea of the lab school. But now I know you want these preservice beginning teachers to see a real school and see that what they are learning in the university can and does work. They can see it work. Then maybe they won't think of it as theory versus practice, but can come out and see the implications of using best practices with all kinds of learners, even those who have challenges in the communities that they come from.

A professor shared, "I do take things from Mountain Academy to my students. I teach an AIG class one day per week at the academy and can share real experiences from that with my students."

The mandated lab school partnerships within the state of North Carolina are intended to act as an impetus for building and sharing best practices in working with challenged urban schools and to inform best practices in teacher preparation that will span across the state. The lab schools are to serve as models of best practices to inform schools beyond their current boundaries. There is an expressed desire to do this within the Mountain Academy partnership. The benefits and even necessity of engaging partnership teachers in new roles as teacher educators within and beyond the school site need to be addressed and become part of the partnership's intended goals. The expressed desire and need to build pre-service education more intentionally and actively into the structure of the academy is present, and rethinking and restructuring the concept of field experiences and placements within the college of education should facilitate this. Thinking more broadly about re-conceptualizing roles across school/university boundaries and learning from best practices in and research about school partnerships and professional development schools could help to facilitate addressing challenges. Finding boundary spanning individuals with this expertise and building teacher leadership

may open up new approaches and visions for what teacher preparation could look like within the Mountain Academy.

Teacher Leadership

In order to become a teacher in the Mountain Academy, one had to engage in a selection and interview process. Teachers who were progressive, knowledgeable about urban title-one settings, and whose philosophy and practices were compatible with the constructivist focus of the college of education were chosen. This process allowed the work of the academy to progress quickly and for shared vision to be developed related to meeting students' needs with engaged teaching and learning approaches. The assistant principal, who serves as the school curriculum coordinator and instructional leader was chosen as well, while the school principal remained. The university associate dean/coordinator stated,

> We hired that person to be the principal. She wanted to stay and knew the community. Most of the existing teachers did not stay. I had to stay neutral as I made the hiring and personnel decisions/based on the school principal's input. As far as leadership, the principal reports to me, and I make decisions and work with the dean. I am friendly, but administrative when I go into classrooms to visit, to maintain my administrative role.

The relationship established between teachers, administrators, and university faculty, has not yet exploited the capacity for these strong, intentionally selected teachers with a shared vision to become teacher leaders beyond the boundaries of the classroom. The concept of teacher leadership within schools overall remains largely untapped, as Helterbran (2010) states "Despite the many calls for teacher leadership over the years, the message has not reached teachers themselves in any large measure" (p. 363). When asked about leadership in the academy all participants consistently indicated that the academy was led by school-based and university administrators followed closely by university faculty, who were deemed the experts who plan the school's curriculum, determine the type instruction, and provide support and resources for teachers to engage in effective implementation. The associate dean stated,

> We wanted to avoid coming down from the mountain and telling them what to do. We wanted them to have teacher freedom. It started out that I was the first leader. It had to be that way. It had to start with us, the university. It was now "our" school. I was the one to make it happen and I worked with the principal's input on our plans and proposals. Now we have a leadership team that leads, including the principal, the assistant principal who is the school curriculum coordinator and school-based university liaison, and the school Director of Student Affairs and Emergency Management.

The associate dean at the university and the curriculum coordinator at the school were consistently named and viewed as those leading the academy by all participants. The dean described the leadership within the academy as "traditional":

> The principal is the head at the school. She works with district. The associate dean is the head college liaison, really the driver behind starting up and running the academy. Then there is the school leadership team, made up of representatives from the school and university communities. Then the teachers who get firsthand experience in trying research-verified teaching practices with university faculty as their support system.

It was perceived that permission needed to be gained from these identified leaders to undertake any initiatives related to teaching practices or professional development. However, teachers reported that they were viewed with respect and the leadership wanted to meet teachers' needs and treated them as professionals. The concept was one of benevolence. The administrators and university faculty at the academy wanted to help the teachers and the teachers were eager to receive that help to improve their practices. Teachers made comments about the administrative leaders stating, "They give us the road map: we are the drivers," and "We have freedom to try and experiment as long as we get students to end goal." They stated that university faculty were "department leaders who come down to get our opinion of what is working to tweak things." There is a view of teacher as supported learner, with professors always asking, "What do you need from me?"

The leadership structure of the academy was described by some as a "shared bureaucracy" and operating in a top-down manner. The academy's shared visions and goals were collaboratively developed, but the decision-making structure was traditional as one faculty member explained,

> We are a privileged white institution and pretty much operate that way. The Chancellor handed down the charge from the state to the dean, who handed it to the associate dean as the college administrator of the academy, who then relayed this to the school principal. If the goals we developed for the Mountain Academy conflicted with the state we would get our hands slapped and then comply. I think we can leverage our power on their behalf to support the school's teachers, but this hasn't been a focus. Discussion and plans about power should have come first or as part of the planning and implementation. It should have been foregrounded.

A shift in power and roles had not occurred within the lab school partnership. Much of the focus on leadership reported by

the study participants was on administrative issues and coordinating across various entities represented in the academy, not only the university and the school itself, but also, district level administration and trying to involve administration across the university beyond the college of education. The dean stated, "The school belongs to the whole university. Everyone has been involved." Once things got settled in, after the associate dean wrote the charter, chose faculty from the college to invite to work in the academy, and communicated with the district HR, leadership shifted somewhat towards decisions made within the academy itself:

> It is really a "symbiotic relationship" between the school and the college of education. It goes both ways between faculty and the teachers. Our associate dean started it off. She wrote the charter and she does all the administrative work with the university and the school district. She works with the school district's HR department and communicates with the dean's office in the college of education. But now it has become more of a three-headed monster as we look at decisions being made within the building. We have our associate dean making decisions at the college level, the school principal making system level decisions for the school level, and then the curriculum coordinator who really bridges the gap between the university the school acting as the primary decision-maker about curriculum, instruction, and professional development.

Creating an infrastructure that includes a teacher leader component is vital when establishing professional development schools or university/school partnerships. Creating new leadership roles for teachers demonstrates the value and impact that teacher leaders bring to partnership work (Roselle & Hands, 2020). Attempts have been made to increase teacher participation in developing a sense of ownership and leadership, largely through regular grade level/PLC meetings between teachers and the curriculum coordinator, but the structure remains hierarchical.

> Team meetings are used to communicate with the teachers. The curriculum coordinator focuses on areas for the teams to work on. The teams try new things in the classroom and talk about what works and what does not and they encouraged to say if something works or not. There is also an advisory board consisting mostly of university folks, one parent representative, and the superintendent from school district. The face of the academy leadership is the associate dean. She worked through the political mess and worked with our partners to get an answer to "What does the Academy look like?" The principal is a liaison with the district and the curriculum coordinator is the direct liaison with the college of education and worked primarily with the reading faculty initially, as this was the first focus of the academy.

Teacher leadership in professional development schools is described as "a strategic, process-oriented stance motivated by deep concern for students and activated through formal, informal, and hybrid leadership roles that span the boundaries of school, university, and community" (Hunzicker, 2018, p. 24). There is a stated desire by academy administrators to increase teacher leadership and ownership beyond what they do within the classroom walls. The building coordinator stated,

> Teachers are beginning to grow as leaders. We need more work here. It's about trust. Before, as a district-run title-one school there were lots of mandates. It was testing focused, and there was a required strict adherence to things. Now, we focusing on having honest conversations and I want help them keep balance as they take on more leadership. Teachers have a little freedom now but they are still not used to it. Trust is growing, and that's what we need first.

It is important to develop teacher leadership and other boundary spanning roles as this is "an important component of school reform" (Wenner & Campbell, 2016, p. 2). It is necessary not only to improving, but transforming schools and supporting teacher-led research for teachers to become active partners in transforming both teaching and teacher preparation.

Conclusion

Teachers, faculty, administrators, and especially students and their parents shared positive things happening with students and learning within the Mountain Academy. One concern consistently mentioned by participants was the question of sustainability of the academy, especially after its allotted mandated five-year stent expires. The role of teacher leader is essential if the academy is to survive and thrive. Leithwood et al. (1999) states that transformational leadership provides sustaining support for the school- university partnership. Teachers are key participants in such leadership. Cultivating and supporting the creation of teacher leaders is "one approach with empirical evidence demonstrating its viability as a solution for sustaining systemic teacher quality and school improvement efforts" (Poekert et al., 2016, p. 310). In order to continue to grow in the areas of inquiry, teacher preparation, and re-visioning educator roles across institutional boundaries, teacher leadership is key. The direction, growth and sustainability of a partnership is determined by not only by supportive organizational structures, but also the nature of the relationships and the "strategic fitness" of all involved (Day et al., 2010). This is all situated within the culture of the school. Culture matters in teacher development and preparation and has been foregrounded in critiques of teacher preparation. It has been asserted that teachers actually learn to teach in the schools where they work, rather than in

higher education or in any alternative routes whose emergence are the direct result of the ineffectiveness of higher education teacher preparation programs (Waters, 2018). However, ongoing studies grounded in the work of Linda Darling-Hammond (2005) continue to assert that teacher preparation and certification matter to teacher retention, quality research-based teaching and learning and student academic performance (Ingersoll et al., 2012; Nguyen et al., 2018; Ronfeldt et al., 2014; Suppa et al., 2018). The intersection of these oppositional views may prove fruitful ground for partnerships that may have initially been mandated by a sense of panic about the inadequacy of teacher preparation in terms of numbers and oft claimed ineffectiveness. Mandated partnerships may end up providing opportunities for teacher preparation to redefine itself through the revisioning of school and university cultures and providing opportunities for situated learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991) within a newly codeveloped culture. The Mountain Academy may illustrate a lack of redefining cultures, roles and leadership within a partnership, but it may also illuminate the possibilities not only to bring opposing viewpoints together via a shared goal, but to actually act as an impetus for real change. Rethinking culture is a means to improving practices within a new model of shared learning communities to move the field of education forward. Cultivating a culture of ownership and leadership by all, beyond current administrators, is the first step toward continued growth, dissemination of practices developed, and sustainability of this model. The need to examine power, teacher leadership, and teacher identity within the partnership is necessary to help the lab school not only meet, but move beyond the state mandated charge. There is a need to go beyond the serendipitous sharing of university-gifted best practices within the school to the goals of transformation of the school itself, impacting other schools, and reimagining teacher preparation. This may only be achieved through intentional planning and restructuring to cultivate teacher leadership by forging a culture of new power structures and roles, within a much needed third space. SUP

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Appendix A

Survey Results

= **Highest Ratings (mean score 3.7 >)
*= **Lowest Ratings (mean score 3.0 <)**

1. **As a teacher I am a valued partner in the collaboration between the college of education and the Mountain Academy.**
   Answer choices
   1 N=0 (0%)
   2 N=0 (0%)
   3 N=13 (62%)
   4 N=8 (38%)
   Mean= 3.4 Mode=3
2. **The focus of the partnership work is jointly owned and determined by the college of education faculty and teachers at the Mountain Academy.**
   Answer choices
   1 N=0 (0%)
   2 N=1 (5%)
   3 N=15 (68%)
   4 N=6 (27%)
   Mean= 3.2 Mode=3

3. **The partnership supports my professional reflection on practice based on my needs and questions as a teacher.**
   Answer choices
   1 N=0 (0%)
   2 N=0 (0%)
   3 N=11 (50%)
   4 N=11 (50%)
   Mean= 3.5 Mode=3/4
4. **As a teacher, members of the college of education faculty work with me to set a direction for our partnership work.**
   Answer choices
   1 N=1 (5%)
   2 N=2 (9%)
   3 N=8 (36%)
   4 N=11 (50%)
   Mean= 3.3 Mode=4
5. **I am involved in the decision-making about our partnership work with the college of education.***
   Answer Choices
   1 N=2 (9%)
   2 N=6 (27%)
   3 N=10 (46%)
   4 N=4 (18%)
   Mean= 2.7 Mode=3*
6. **The partnership work at Mountain Academy is transforming education in my school.****
   Answer choices
   1 N=0 (0%)
   2 N=0 (0%)
   3 N=6 (27%)
   4 N=16 (73%)
   Mean= 3.7 Mode=4**
7. **I am helping to lead transformational change in my school due to the partnership.**
   Answer choices
   1 N= 0 (0%)
   2 N=1 (4%)
   3 N=14 (64%)
   4 N=7 (32%)
   Mean= 3.1 Mode=3
8. **There are professional and personal benefits to me as a teacher at the Mountain Academy.****
   Answer choices
   1 N=0 (0%)
   2 N=0 (0%)
   3 N=6 (27%)
   4 N=16 (73%)
   Mean= 3.7 Mode=4**
9. **We have established time and support for shared inquiry for teachers.**
   Answer choices
   1 N=0 (0%)
   2 N=3 (14%)
   3 N=10 (45%)
   4 N=9 (41%)
   Mean= 3.27 Mode=3
10. **We have established time and support for shared inquiry for pre-service teachers.***
    Answer choices
    1 N=1 (5%)
    2 N=3 (14%)
    3 N=14 (67%)
    4 N=3 (14%)
    Mean= 2.9 Mode=3*
11. **As a teacher, I have been able to support the inquiry of college of education faculty into improving teaching and learning.**
    Answer choices
    1 N=0 (0%)
    2 N=3 (14%)
    3 N=9 (43%)
    4 N=9 (43%)
    Mean= 3.6 Mode=3/4
12. **As a teacher, I have been able to support the inquiry of college of education faculty into improving teacher preparation.***
    Answer choices
    1 N=1 (0%)
    2 N=4 (15%)
    3 N=10 (50%)
    4 N=7 (35%)
    Mean= 3.0 Mode=3*
13. **The Mountain Academy partnership was developed to meet the specific needs of my school's cultural and contextual factors.****
    Answer choices
    1 N=0 (0%)
    2 N=0 (0%)
    3 N=7 (35%)
    4 N=13 (65%)
    Mean=3.7 Mode=4**
14. **I feel that trust has been developed in working with the college of education faculty in the Mountain Academy partnership.****
    Answer choices
    1 N=0 (0%)
    2 N=0 (0%)
    3 N=6 (30%)
    4 N=14 (70%)
    Mean= 3.7 Mode=4**
15. **Communication about our collective work between the college of education and the Mountain Academy is effective within my school.**
    Answer choices
    1 N=0 (0%)
    2 N=2 (10%)
    3 N=7 (35%)
    4 N=11 (55%)

Mean= 3.5 Mode=4

16. I have ownership in the work of the partnership.*
Answer choices
1 N=0 (0%)
2 N=5 (20%)
3 N=10 (50%)
4 N=6 (30%)
Mean= 3.0 Mode=3*

17. The work of the partnership is a natural part of education at the Mountain Academy.
Answer choices
1 N=0 (0%)
2 N=0 (0%)
3 N=9 (45%)
4 N=11 (55%)
Mean= 3.6 Mode=4

18. I value the work of the partnership between the college of education and the Mountain Academy.**
Answer choices
1 N=0 (0%)
2 N=0 (0%)
3 N=4 (20%)
4 N=16 (80%)
Mean= 3.8 Mode=4**

Appendix B

Interview Guide

1. Is the partnership academy focused on meeting your school's needs? How? Is it effective/what emergent needs should now be addressed? (aligned with survey: *Partnership developed to meet context and cultural needs of my school* and *Work of partnership natural part of the school*)
2. What do you view as the value of your school being a partnership with the college of education? In terms of the education your students are receiving? What could be done to increase the value?(aligned with survey: *Transforming education* and *Valuing partnership*)
3. Does being a partnership with the college of education help to meet your needs as a teacher? How? What future needs do you anticipate? (aligned with survey: *Supports professional reflection based on my needs* and *Professional benefits to me*)
4. Who leads the work of the partnership? (aligned with survey: *Teachers help lead, Teachers help set direction*, and *Teachers involved in decision making*)
5. How much is inquiry into teaching and learning part of the Academy? How does this happen? How is the focus on inquiry determined? Who engages in/leads it? (aligned with survey: *Time for shared inquiry among teachers, Inquiry with interns/pre-service teachers, Support inquiry of college faculty into teaching and learning* and *Inquiry into teacher preparation*)
6. What is your relationship with college of education faculty. Tell me about communication. Trust? What changes would you like to see in working with faculty? (aligned with survey: *Teacher ownership, Teacher voice, Partnership is jointly owned*, and *Effective communication and collaboration*)
7. How do you see the Academy impacting teacher preparation? (aligned with survey: *Improving teacher preparation*)