

# Questions to Consider to Strengthen Clinical Practice

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From NCTQ's [Clinical Practice Action Guide](#)

## Focus Area 1: Strong district-prep program partnerships

- What are the goals you intend to achieve related to student teaching?
- How will you measure success toward those goals?
- What role can you take in the partnership?
- What roles do you need others to play?
- What resources do you need from others to reach those goals?
- What resources can you provide (e.g., data infrastructure, sample MOUs)?
- What opportunities to give and receive feedback will you build into the partnership?
- How will you track whether feedback is acted upon?

## Focus Area 2: Student teacher-cooperating teacher matches

- What criteria are you setting for cooperating teachers?
- In what ways do criteria for cooperating teachers align with the research on what matters most for cooperating teachers (e.g., being instructionally effective)?
- How are you currently identifying cooperating teachers and making placements?
- What opportunities are there to centralize and/or streamline the placement process?
- How could you better leverage technology to make great matches?
- What is the level of financial need among student teachers?
- What financial support can you provide (or where can you identify financial support) to make student teaching more financially feasible?
- What is the current compensation for cooperating teachers?
- What financial support or other compensation might help attract cooperating teachers and recognize the time and effort they put into this work?
- What are the current experiences of aspiring teachers of color, during and prior to clinical practice?
- What support or resources could help more aspiring teachers of color successfully complete clinical practice and become teachers?

## Focus Area 3: Cooperating teachers and program supervisor training

- How are you currently assessing cooperating teachers' ability to mentor adults?
- What additional training for cooperating teachers can you provide or require?
- What training is currently offered or could be offered to help cooperating teachers and program supervisors use observation instruments, including ensuring that all raters are scoring student teachers consistently in a way that reflects the prep program, district, and state's expectations?
- How often are student teachers observed by the prep program supervisor?

- At what phases of clinical practice (e.g., during both early fieldwork and full-time student teaching) are student teachers observed?
- Do student teachers receive both formal and informal observations?
- How does data from program supervisor and cooperating teacher observations feed back to the program to inform preparation and to the district to inform hiring considerations?

#### **Focus Area 4: Student teacher placement sites**

- Can you identify the schools and subjects likely to have vacancies in the coming year? If not, what data would you need to make those projections and how can you build the system to get it?
- What are the characteristics of schools where first-year teachers tend to work?
- What steps can you take to ensure that student teachers have clinical practice experiences in similar settings to where they're likely to get their first job?
- How can you intentionally build opportunities for student teachers to experience a range of different settings?
- What are the types of settings that each student teacher should experience?

#### **Focus Area 5: Student teacher skill development**

- What early field experiences do candidates receive?
- What skills should candidates practice, how are those experiences scaffolded, and how do candidates receive feedback?
- What experiences are student teachers given to explore and implement high-quality instructional materials, both prior to and during clinical practice?
- What resources do student teachers need to be able to implement high-quality instructional materials?
- What observation instruments are used to give feedback to student teachers?
- In what ways do the observation instruments align (or not) with the prep program's expectations and expectations for candidates once they become in-service teachers?
- How are observation instruments differentiated based on the type of experience (e.g., an early fieldwork experience vs. full-time student teaching) or based on the content or grade the student teacher is teaching?
- What skills and knowledge do novice teachers need to be successful?
- How are you defining learning outcomes for student teachers collaboratively, providing relevant instruction and practice opportunities for teacher candidates, and assessing those outcomes?

#### **Focus Area 6: Data and outcomes**

- What data do you currently have available, or could gather easily, to measure immediate and longer-term outcomes for clinical practice?
- What would you like to know about your clinical practice system?
- What data do you need to answer your research questions?
- What data is not currently available?
- How might you be able to access, collect, or develop systems to organize the data you do not currently have?
- How are you currently using data to improve your clinical practice system?
- How might you strengthen your use of data for continuous improvement?