



The Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), is reinventing American teacher preparation for the 21st century. The Woodrow Wilson Academy of Teaching and Learning will include two components: a teacher preparation program and a research and development laboratory. Our aspiration is to establish education's equivalent of West Point, the preeminent program for preparing leaders for careers in the profession, and to create the education equivalent of Google Labs, testing what works in educator preparation and developing products for the future. MIT is serving as the incubator for the Academy and the Academy will serve as the lab for MIT.

New Ways to Prepare Teachers

The WW Academy will offer only two programs—teacher education and school leadership. It will initially offer competency-based teacher preparation programs in middle and secondary school math, science, and technology (STEM) teacher education. Other fields will follow. School leadership programs will be added after the teacher education program is fully operational. In the future, it will offer professional development programs and serve as an examining/certification center for teacher and school leader licensure.

The Academy seeks to transform the existing model of teacher and school leader education by instituting a competency-based program, which shifts the current focus of education from how long candidates must be taught to what they have learned and can do. It changes the emphasis in education from establishing common time-fixed processes—credits that must be accumulated, courses that must be completed and lengths of time students must spend in college classes—to achieving common, time-variable outcomes: the skills and knowledge necessary to be a successful teacher or school leader on day one.

The Academy's competency-based program has three components: 1) a set of outcomes or competencies that all candidates must attain in order to earn a credential; 2) assessment tools designed to determine candidate competencies; and 3) a problem-based, individualized, adaptive curriculum tied to these competencies.

Students progress through the curriculum by mastery of the competencies. They graduate when they have mastered all of the competencies. The amount of time required will vary from student to student. Students will experience the challenge-based curriculum in a blended environment including online, face-to-face and clinical education.

Competency-based teacher preparation is a transformative idea that promises to eliminate the distinction between traditional and alternative routes to becoming a teacher and between pre-service education and in-service professional development, both of which are rooted in developing competencies. Rather than distinguishing paths to certification by the amount of time necessary to prepare to become a teacher or school leader, the goal in a competency-based program is for all teachers and school leaders to be competent when they complete the program.

The Academy, building on the best practices of the Foundation's ongoing state-based work in teacher and school leader preparation, will join its competency-based approach with intensive, extended clinical experiences in local public schools, as well as mentoring and professional development opportunities for its graduates in their first three years of teaching. Both elements will draw upon partnerships with local school districts, which will also participate in ongoing evaluation of WW Academy graduates.

The Woodrow Wilson Academy Buckley Teaching and Learning Lab

Named for Woodrow Wilson Trustee and Chair Emeritus Walter Buckley, the Buckley Teaching and Learning Lab (TLL) will engage in two activities—studying what works in the preparation of teachers and school leaders and developing tools and products to advance teacher and school leader education.

The TLL will engage in research and controlled experiments on the Academy's programs. Imagine, for example, studying a group of future teachers in which a third looks like Teach for America corps members, a third looks like alternative route career-changers, and a third looks like traditional teacher education students. The TLL will engage in research on candidates' attainment of credentials, time to completion, performance of the middle and secondary school students in their classes, and retention in the teaching profession. The TLL will augment this work with extensive

research on the new teacher education programs created through the WW Foundation's ongoing educator preparation efforts and serve as a clearinghouse for cutting-edge related research conducted in the field of teacher education and school leadership.

In addition, the TLL, in cooperation with MIT and other partners, will develop products to advance competency-based teacher and school leadership preparation. The most immediate initiatives, which will be completed prior to the opening of the Academy in June 2017, are developing innovative fundamental features of the Academy's teacher education program: subject-matter-specific competencies, challenge-based curricula, assessment tools and games, and a classroom simulator which will constitute the equivalent for teachers of what a flight simulator is to pilots, providing rich experiential learning opportunities beyond the clinical education that students traditionally receive.

Transforming America's Approach to Teacher Preparation

The Academy seeks to be a vehicle for transforming teacher preparation and school leader policy and practice at scale. It will do this by disseminating, publicizing, and targeting its research at policy makers and education leaders eager for improvement in teacher and school leadership education and under pressure to achieve it.

To accomplish this goal, the Academy will leverage its existing relationships with leaders in current WW Fellowship states and will reach out to their counterparts in other states. For nearly a decade—since the establishing of the WW Teaching Fellowship—governors, legislators, chiefs, SHEEOs, and other policymakers have turned to the Foundation for policy guidance on educator preparation-related issues. The Academy will build on those relationships by providing research to policymakers on what works in teacher and school leader education, as well as working with colleges and universities to rethink their programs. The Academy will also build upon existing relationships in government, professional associations, and media.

The Academy aspires to become a model for teacher and school leader preparation programs around the nation and will work with college and university partners to adopt its model as a whole or various components. Its costs, prices, and funding are designed to mirror or be below those of existing teacher and school leader education programs. To facilitate this, the Academy's programs will operate under the dual currency of competency and credits and will be open source. We would like the Academy to be viewed as a demonstration or resource center, where policymakers and practitioners can see the ideas they talk about in action and incorporate them into their programs without cost beyond implementation and operation.

Next Steps

Over the first five years beginning in 2015, the cost of planning and implementing the Academy is projected to be \$30–\$35 million. To date, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation has raised approximately \$17 million with support from the Amgen Foundation, the Bezos Family Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Simons Foundation, an anonymous major philanthropy, and individual donors.

The Woodrow Wilson Academy will engage a group of Design Fellows in summer 2017 in a program that will create and test new ways to prepare teachers to succeed in the diverse classrooms of today and to shape and lead the schools of tomorrow.