

# Teacher Residency for Rural Education: A community-centered approach to teacher preparation

Thursday, August 31, 2017



GORHAM, NH - On July 27, 2017, community leaders, superintendents, teachers, school counselors, UNH faculty and doctoral students descended upon North Country Education Services



(NCES) for a symposium prepared by a cohort of five UNH graduate students, Alicia Chevoor, Missy Croteau, Kim Dorman, Holly Munce and Shannon Wydra, who are enrolled in the new UNH Teacher Residency for Rural Education (TRRE) program. During the symposium, the students (known as “residents”) shared their evolving philosophies of teaching and facilitated small group conversations about the benefits, resources, and challenges of teaching in rural New Hampshire schools.

The symposium is emblematic of the TRRE program, which emphasizes a community-centered approach to teacher preparation. “This event provided a rich forum for a mix of community and school stakeholders to engage in thoughtful give-and-take about how rural schools can enhance their service to the community and address a range of community needs that don’t

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necessarily fit under a narrow definition of education,” noted Tom Schram, TRRE’s Director of Pedagogy and Clinical Experience. “The TRRE residents did a superb job facilitating discussions about how schools and communities can work together.” TRRE resident Kim Dorman echoed Schram’s sentiments saying, “Teaching in a small rural community is a gift and a wonderful opportunity to strengthen the town, the school, and yourself as a teacher. The summer institute’s final symposium really brought to life the collaborative desires we all share.”

The TRRE program, a Masters program that prepares and supports new elementary and secondary science and mathematics teachers for rural New Hampshire schools in Coös County and Laconia, was designed based on input from school and district partners across the state. School and community partners are involved in resident recruitment, admissions, coursework, and clinical experiences, and provide ongoing guidance to the program. Residents are supported by UNH faculty, school, and community mentors throughout the program. All coursework and clinical experiences take place in the communities where the residents will ultimately teach.

The TRRE program is funded in part by a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education Teacher Quality Partnership program. Over the course of the grant, the TRRE program will prepare and support 60 prospective teachers to work in high need rural New Hampshire schools. Key features of the TRRE program include learning to engage with communities in and out of classroom, integrating STEM curriculum, and supporting all students through research-based pedagogy. The 15-month program begins with a summer institute that involves UNH coursework, a community-based internship, and observations and interviews with community members and education professionals. During the academic year that follows, residents continue

coursework, complete a full year “residency” in a rural high need school under the guidance of an experienced teaching mentor, and collaborate with community-based organizations. During the final summer of the program, residents complete coursework toward a Masters degree and fulfill the requirements for New Hampshire teacher certification. Graduates commit to teaching in rural New Hampshire schools for at least three years and are provided with two years of induction support through the TRRE program.

Partnerships across the state are integral to the TRRE program’s success. These partners include the New Hampshire Department of Education, North Country Education Services, NEA-NH, SAU 3 (Berlin), SAU 36 (White Mountains), SAU 30 (Laconia), and SAU 20 (Dummer, Errol, Milan, Gorham Randolph Shelburne Cooperative). UNH partners include the UNH Department of Education, College of Liberal Arts, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Engineering and Physical Sciences, Joan and James Leitzel Center, Cooperative Extension, and Carsey School of Public Policy.

Along with implementing the TRRE program, UNH faculty, staff, and doctoral students<sup>[1]</sup> are conducting a longitudinal research study of the impact of the TRRE program on teacher learning, practice, community engagement, and ultimately student learning in rural New Hampshire communities. We look forward to continued collaboration and research with our school and community partners moving forward!

For more information about the TRRE program, please visit the TRRE website: <https://cola.unh.edu/trre>

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[1] The TRRE program is led by TRRE management team members Leslie Couse, Emilie Reagan, Ann Spencer, Tom Schram, Kathryn McCurdy, Dan Lord, Vince Connelly, Sharon

McCrone, Tom Higginbotham, Beth Fornauf and Carrie Portrie.

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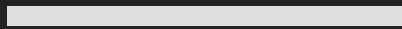
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