

University of North Texas and Denton ISD
Principal Residency Program
Memorandum of Understanding
June 11, 2024

SUMMARY:

This item requests approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of North Texas (UNT) and Denton ISD (DISD) to establish a partnership for the design and implementation of a graduate cohort partnership that will allow District employees to obtain a Master of Education in Educational Leadership degree (the “master’s program”) through UNTs College of Education.

PREVIOUS BOARD ACTION:

No previous Board Action.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

DISD and UNT have been in frequent communication regarding this partnership. The proposed MOU meets the requirements established by the District.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Request for Grant Funds from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and acceptance of such funds require DISD to match the amount of \$150,000.00 (10 principal residents participating in the program x \$15,000). TEA will provide DISD \$648,000.00 for payroll costs, professional and contracted services, supplies, materials, and other operating costs.

BENEFIT OF ACTION:

Denton ISD believes the one-year, full-time residency program is a powerful strategy for preparing instructional leaders. It provides real-world experiences with the advantages of a gradual release model and lots of real-time mentoring and coaching. These candidates will be not only prepared as certified administrators, but with the UNT partnership and customization for Denton ISD, they will be fully prepared with the Denton ISD mindsets, skill sets, tool sets, and unique experiences to immediately be effective leaders in Denton ISD.

The tight integration of Denton ISD tools, processes, philosophies, and beliefs into the UNT courses and the authentic and substantive residency experiences will expedite the high-quality preparation of the residents and allow the district to suspend its usual leadership development program and redirect those funds to support and sustain the residency partnership.

The full-time, year-long residency is the cornerstone of the program that fully prepares residents to understand, apply, and experience the role and responsibilities of campus administration. This is facilitated through the following:

- (a) Denton ISD will partner with UNT for master’s degree coursework and principal preparation. Coursework will include two practicum experiences that align with the principal competencies and aligned pillars and coordinate through a gradual release learning model throughout the residency experience.
- (b) Residents will learn how to successfully support grade-level and department PLC meetings while building teachers' capacity to function as high-performance teams, utilize data to inform instruction and next steps, and advocate for students’ needs.
- (c) Residents will be involved in all day-to-day aspects of campus operations and administration, including professional development, staffing, facilitating campus culture, parent meetings, grievance hearings, teacher observations, and most importantly, instructional leadership. Residents will assist with facilitating and overseeing all specialized campus programs, including but not limited to Section 504, bilingual education, Gifted and Talented, Special Education, ESL, dyslexia, and MTSS.
- (d) Residents will facilitate the CIP process through a gradual release model of responsibility.
- (e&f) All assigned principal mentors will receive training to coach and support the resident. District-level administrators will also provide support to the residents. Throughout the process, principal mentors will employ a gradual release model of responsibility to ensure residents obtain the necessary knowledge and skills.

With Denton ISD being a fast-growth school district, there is a constant need for building and maintaining career pathways for our high-performing teachers to develop into high-quality principals. The Principal Residency Program will create a leadership pathway, allowing DISD to increase the pool of diverse principals needed due to our fast growth. Denton ISD and UNT are committed to continually working collaboratively to strengthen the district’s leadership pipeline. Denton ISD is committed to employing leaders who reflect the DISD student population and are well-prepared to lead campuses in need of assistance.

PROCEDURAL AND REPORTING IMPLICATIONS:

DISD assures that program funds will supplement (increase the level of service) and not supplant (replace) state mandates, State Board of Education rules, and activities previously conducted with state or local funds. DISD provides assurance that state or local funds may not be decreased or diverted for other purposes merely because of the availability of these funds. DISD assures that program services and activities to be funded from this grant will be supplementary to existing services and activities and will not be used for any services or activities required by state law, State Board of Education rules, or local policy.

ALTERNATIVES:

None at this time.

SUPERINTENDENT’S RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees approve the Memorandum of Understanding between UNT and Denton ISD for Principal Residencies

STAFF PERSONS RESPONSIBLE:

Jason Rainey, Interim Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

ATTACHMENT:

Memorandum of Agreement – UNT Principal Residency

APPROVAL:

Signature of Staff Member Proposing Recommendation: _____

Comments: _____

Signature of Divisional Assistant Superintendent: _____

Comments: _____

Signature of Superintendent: _____

Comments: _____