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SPOSATO'S ELEMENTARY RESIDENCY AND LICENSURE PROGRAM IS NAMED AS ONE OF THE NATION'S TOP TEACHER PREP PROGRAMS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE EXPERIENCES

Boston, MA – The elementary teacher residency and licensure program of The Charles Sposato Graduate School of Education¹ has been named among the top in the country by the [National Council on Teacher Quality \(NCTQ\)](#), a nonpartisan, not-for-profit research and policy organization, for strong commitment to quality clinical practice experiences aimed at preparing aspiring teachers for the realities of the classroom.

This month NCTQ released its [2020 Teacher Prep Review: Clinical Practice and Classroom Management](#), which finds little national progress in the adoption of quality control metrics of clinical experiences (including student teaching and residencies), particularly in the process for selecting mentor teachers which is managed not only by teacher prep programs but also their partner school districts.

Sposato's elementary residency program stands out as among *only seven non-traditional residency programs* and 33 traditional undergraduate or graduate elementary programs nationwide that earn an A for strong clinical experience requirements, and serves as a model of excellence for others. These top-performing programs are recognized for:

- Requiring candidates to spend ten or more weeks in an experienced teacher's classroom, including at least four days per week or the equivalent in the classroom each week;
- Screening mentor teachers for mentorship skill and/or instructional effectiveness as measured by student learning, among other skills; and
- Requiring program supervisors to give student teachers written feedback based on observations at least four times during the clinical practice experience.

The evidence for the importance of high-quality clinical experience is undeniable. A National Research Council report said that clinical practice experience is one of three "aspects of preparation that have the highest potential for effects on outcomes for students," and recent research has found that having a high-quality clinical practice experience can mean a first-year teacher starts out as effective as a typical teacher in her third year.

¹ The Charles Sposato Graduate School of Education is a two-year program, whose graduates receive a Master's in Effective Teaching (MET) degree. This NCTQ review is specifically for Sposato's elementary residency and licensure program which takes place in the first year of the MET program.

“We are immensely honored and humbled to accept this designation as a model clinical practice program. For years, our trainees at Match and other Sposato partner schools have benefitted from our unique model of practice oriented and feedback driven teacher preparation.. As a residency program, we believe that our mission to prepare highly effective teachers serving low-income students hinges on our ability to model and simulate classroom experiences under the guidance of highly effective classroom mentors. This is what we’ve been able to achieve for our trainees through our residency model, and we remain extraordinarily proud of that.” –**Dr. Jalene Tamerat, Dean of The Charles Sposato Graduate School of Education**

Of the three indicators NCTQ examines, almost all elementary programs dedicate sufficient time for clinical practice to occur and most make sure that their elementary teacher candidates are observed frequently. However, despite significant research on the outsized impact of the mentor teacher, few require the classroom mentor teacher to be both effective (in terms of student learning) and have the skills to mentor another adult. A major obstacle to teacher preparation programs adopting more rigorous screening of mentor teachers appears to be that they traditionally defer to school districts in the selection of mentors. Teacher residency programs proved to be a notable exception to this practice, with 88% of these programs playing a more active role in the selection of classroom mentors for aspiring teachers.

“These top programs are to be commended,” observed Kate Walsh, President of NCTQ. “Too many teacher prep programs struggle to make clinical practice a meaningful learning experience for aspiring teachers – especially when it comes to selecting effective mentor teachers, often due to lack of quality control by their partner school districts. The effort that these top programs have made to ensure alignment with their local districts so they can offer strong clinical experiences will have lasting positive impacts on their teacher candidates, and more importantly, their candidates’ future students.”

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has, at least for this year, reshaped much of what happens in schools, including clinical practice experiences for aspiring teachers. Many states and teacher preparation programs have moved their clinical practice experiences online or abbreviated them. However, the basic principles of quality clinical practice still stand in spite of COVID and are still critical to the success of aspiring teachers in their future careers.

Now in its fourth edition, the *Teacher Prep Review* assigns a team of experts to evaluate teacher preparation programs on three elements of clinical practice: 1) the length of the experience, 2) the frequency of observation and feedback from a program supervisor, and 3) that the program requires that mentor teachers are effective and have the skills needed to mentor another adult.

Read the full NCTQ summary of findings, see all top-performing programs, and dig deeper into the methodology at www.nctq.org/2020TPRPractice

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The Charles Sposato Graduate School of Education is a unique and successful graduate school of education that is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education to grant Master’s in Effective Teaching degrees. At Sposato, our work is fundamentally about social justice—trying to provide the best educational opportunities for children with limited financial resources. We also aim to serve as a proof point, to show what’s possible in rigorous teacher preparation organized around what’s best for kids. To learn more about Sposato, please visit www.sposatogse.org.