

## TEACHING AND LEARNING SUPPORT CENTER

### Education Center

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March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Bend-La Pine Schools has been a participant in the TeachOregon project since the fall of 2013. During that time, the district has reaped many benefits, but one of the most important is significant improvement of the quality of the student teaching experience in our schools, particularly at the elementary level. The following changes have been most important in elevating the experience for our teacher candidates:

- We have clustered student teachers in schools, attempting to place 2-4 student teachers in the same school for the duration of the school year. Having placements at the same school, as well as having a small cohort sharing the experience, has helped our teacher candidates be completely integrated into the school culture, professional learning initiatives, and parent/community activities.
- Most significantly, the majority of our cooperating teachers have been trained in co-teaching and are engaged with co-teaching strategies with their student teachers. One important benefit of co-teaching is that it attracts outstanding cooperating teachers who might otherwise hesitate to work with student teachers. In the past, some of our most talented teachers have worried about “relinquishing” their classes to novices. However, in a co-teaching model, the cooperating teacher and the student teacher work side by side for most of the school day and year. As the student teacher gains skills and experience, he/she assumes more of a leadership role in the classroom, while the cooperating teacher acts as support to the student teacher directly or with small groups and individual students. Because we are attempting to place student teachers in a school for the entire year, in most cases primary and intermediate teacher partners share student teachers; so students in these classes also benefit from having two trained teachers in their classes most of the school year.

I can say without hesitation that the quality of our cooperating teachers and the experience of our student teachers has been the highest in the history of our relationship with OSU-Cascades. I look forward to continuing to develop the program through our TeachOregon collaborative partnership.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lora Nordquist".

Lora Nordquist, EdD  
Assistant Superintendent, Bend-La Pine Schools