Teachers’ decision-making must be quick, given that the demands of planning, teaching, classroom management, grading, and professional development would be better served in a 48-hour day rather than the mere 24 hours that we have to work with. What can teachers do to ensure their decision-making is best for their students and themselves? One thing to consider is applying the tenants of Whole Child to a Whole Teacher approach. In what ways are colleges of education and K-12 schools supporting the Whole Teacher? Below, we outline some of the ways that our education program at The College of New Jersey (TCNJ) supports a Whole Teacher approach for our Teacher Candidates (TCs) and the ways that we see the “Whole Teacher” approach happening in the school districts where we observe. Note that we adapted the wording of each Whole Child Tenet slightly to better apply to teachers.

1. **HEALTHY**

*Each teacher enters school healthy and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.*

**Teacher Preparation Program**

**Self-Care**—When TCs begin their field experience, we take time to discuss healthy choices such as getting enough rest, eating well, and taking time for activities outside of teaching. At the end of each semester, TCs who have completed their fieldwork write letters to TCs who will be in the field in subsequent semesters. Most of these letters touch on the importance of self-care and keeping up your own strength in order to be of value to your students.

**Partner Schools**

**Healthy Eating**—We have visited a number of schools that encourage faculty to make good decisions around healthy eating. One favorite example of healthy eating support is the Pot Luck Soup Competition that a local middle school holds. Never have we seen so many slow cookers in one room. As a bonus, when students walked in, they grew curious about the ingredients in the soups and the healthy choices their teachers were making. Thus the healthy focus for teachers transfers to their students. Also, when students see teachers doing something together that isn’t academic, they are reminded that their teachers are people too!
SAFE

Each teacher feels physically and emotionally safe in the school environment.

Teacher Preparation Program

Mental Health Support Training—This year, we are hosting our first school mental health support workshop for TCs. This workshop was developed after TCs returned from their fieldwork and reported concern about how to work with students who are suffering from depression, anxiety, and other mental health issues that impact their daily lives. This workshop will include a panel of guidance counselors, school support specialists, and others with expertise on working with students who are struggling with mental illness in a school setting.

Partner Schools

Mentoring Programs 2.0—We’ve seen some great examples of mentoring programs that have recently been given a reboot to fit the needs of 21st century teachers. While the traditional first-year teacher/veteran teacher model continues to be in effect, some of the most powerful mentoring relationships have been among mixed groups of veteran and new teachers. A mentee can find a colleague to provide feedback and support, and thus, a feeling of safety when taking professional risks.

ENGAGED

Each teacher is actively engaged in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.

Teacher Preparation Program

Active Learning and Debrief—A phrase that we use in our class often is, “The learning is in the debrief.” We do not simply tell TCs about strategies they can transfer to their classrooms, we engage them with these strategies and then debrief on the experience, which enables the TCs to see the strategies through the lens of a teacher rather than a student.

Partner Schools

Exciting Professional Development—We are happy to report that there are some great professional development programs in schools right now! Whether schools are utilizing their in-house talent by having colleagues present to one another or they are bringing in outside consultants and experts, the importance of active learning is coming through in PD too. A great sign that PD is meaningful is when teachers are doing more of the work than the presenter; teachers are up and moving and engaging in meaningful conversations. Educational consultant, LaVonna Roth says it best, “If your bum is numb, your brain is drained.” If PD is more participant-centered, it is more likely that the classrooms of the teacher participants will be more active and student-centered too!
**SUPPORTED**

*Each teacher has access to personalized learning and is supported by qualified, caring adults.*

**Teacher Preparation Program**

Unit Plan Conferencing—As a TC, learning how to plan and implement your first unit can be a daunting and scary task! We recognize that each of our students needs individualized support and guidance beyond the whole-class instruction. What the TCs desire is a mentor who listens to their questions, understands their needs, and advocates for their professional, social, and emotional development. Therefore, we schedule a 30-minute to one hour unit plan conference with every TC to provide this holistic support.

*time-management*—Often TCs become overwhelmed with planning and grading and dedicate an inordinate amount of time to making sure their work is stellar. While we applaud this dedication, we want to be sure that our TCs do not burnout. We explore time management and its relationship to stress by reading some of David Allen’s work on productivity. Based on his work, TCs develop organizational systems that work for them to organize short-term and long-term work.

**Partner Schools**

Modeling Prosocial Behavior—It is amazing to see the myriad ways teachers challenge themselves to model prosocial behavior for one another. From something as simple as saying, “I am trying to make sure that every student speaks every day” to something more long-term like “I am working to help my student value the importance of sharing and collaboration,” teachers model possibilities for one another. This modeling among teachers can then trickle down to positively impacting the prosocial behavior of their students.

**CHALLENGED**

*Each teacher is challenged and prepared for success in the school setting and in the global environment.*

**Teacher Preparation Program**

Technology—While some may assume that TCs are going to be comfortable with educational technology, the reality is that even this generation of teachers, whose lives have been documented non-stop on smartphones, are still a bit wary of Smartboards and using classroom apps to engage their students in a productive way. To help allay concerns and to help TCs evaluate tech tools that can be effectively integrated into their classrooms, we invite teachers and administrators from local school districts to share how they are using technology in powerful ways.

**Partner Schools**

Teacher Leaders—The term teacher leader has been evolving. Teachers are recognizing that they can be leaders from the classroom by sharing their innovative instructional approaches in PLCs, ed Camps, at conferences, or online. At TCNJ, we have created a Teacher-to-Teacher program that provides an environment for teachers to share their ideas with each other and to develop the skills they need to share these ideas with faculty at their school and in their community.

We believe that if TCs and practicing teachers are in environments that support the Whole Child and the Whole Teacher, they will be able to be their best professional selves for their students. To learn more about approaches that teachers are taking to live as Whole Teachers and to manage planning, instruction, classroom climate, and professional development, we are conducting research via a survey at https://goo.gl/forms/lGk4Z3BOpnODRCAu1. We would be honored for you to take 10 minutes to complete this survey so we can bring together some of the best tried and tested strategies from teachers like you to share with our professional community.