



# Developing Inclusive Educators with the Camden Teacher Pipeline's Inclusive Education Program

**Camden City School District Case Study**

<b>THE CHALLENGE</b>	Attracting and retaining qualified educators to teach students with disabilities has long been a challenge—particularly in high-poverty districts. The pandemic has exacerbated this challenge.
<b>THE COST</b>	When districts lack strategies to attract and retain qualified educators for students with disabilities, students’ learning opportunities become limited, and academic performance will suffer.
<b>KEY TAKEAWAYS</b>	This case study highlights the lessons from a traditional school district in Camden, New Jersey that participates in the Camden Teacher Pipeline’s Inclusive Education Program. The case illustrates the importance of alignment and coordination between partners in teacher pipeline programs and of the provision of explicit support for teaching candidates to build their skills and cultural competencies for educating students with disabilities in urban settings.

**Purpose**

This case study highlights a strategy implemented in Camden, New Jersey to address the shortage of educators prepared to effectively teach students with diverse backgrounds and learning needs, including students with disabilities. Educator shortages have posed persistent challenges to the effective education of all students, particularly those with disabilities. Before the pandemic, 48 states, plus Washington D.C., reported severe shortages of special education teachers (Sutcher et al., 2016). Pandemic conditions may have exacerbated many of the factors that contribute to educator shortages. Over half (55%) of the National Education Association (NEA) members surveyed in 2021 said they were more likely to leave their teaching roles or retire sooner due to the pandemic, almost double the number that expressed the same sentiments in July 2020 (NEA, 2022). Nearly half of the schools surveyed in 2022 (45%) reported current educator vacancies (Institute of Education Sciences, 2022). Educator shortages perpetuate existing inequities in schools. Schools educating a larger share of students living in poverty have more difficulty hiring qualified educators, experience higher attrition, and are more likely to hire inexperienced educators (García & Weiss, 2019).

Furthermore, educator shortages have negative impacts on students. Schools experiencing shortages have to utilize educators outside of their instructional roles and increase class sizes (Institute of Education Sciences, 2022). Research has demonstrated that the disruption students experience from educator shortages and turnover hurts their academic performance (Ronfeldt et al., 2013). Educator shortages are



driven by multiple factors, including low pay, poor working conditions, and declining enrollment in teacher preparation programs (Sutcher et al., 2016). Given the complexity and diversity of factors contributing to teacher shortages, addressing these shortages will require the long-term coordinated efforts of multiple stakeholders (García & Weiss, 2020).

This case study highlights the Camden Teacher Pipeline’s Inclusive Education Program (CTP-IEP) and its early implementation in the Camden City School District (CCSD), as an example of a collaborative solution that addresses shortages of educators with expertise in teaching students with disabilities. The experiences of stakeholders in Camden and CCSD offer valuable examples to learn from for stakeholders in other regions. The case study illustrates how a partnership between local schools, universities, and a philanthropic partner has led to early successes in attracting and preparing educators to teach students with diverse backgrounds and students with disabilities in Camden.

## Research Methods

The Center for Learner Equity (CLE) worked with the Camden Education Fund (CEF) to identify schools in Camden, New Jersey, that were experiencing success in their strategies for educating students with disabilities. CLE selected CCSD to be one of the case study sites after speaking with the deputy chief of special services and learning about the district’s participation in the CTP-IEP. The CTP-IEP involves different partners, so CLE interviewed stakeholders from each of the most central partners. Interviews included leaders from CEF, a program coordinator/instructor from Rowan University, a Relay Graduate School coach, the deputy chief of special services, and a cooperating teacher from CCSD. CLE also reviewed survey data collected by CEF from cooperating teachers and teaching candidates who participated in the CTP-IEP in the 2021-22 school year. Additionally, CLE examined documents provided by CEF’s leaders and a program description on the Rowan University website describing the CTP-IEP.

CLE used interviews, survey data, and program documents to create a detailed description of the CTP-IEP and its implementation in CCSD and to identify consistent themes about the early successes of this program and the broader factors that may have enabled this success. The research team at CLE looked for convergence across different research participants’ accounts and across data sources to strengthen the validity of these themes. CLE also shared a draft with the research participants and integrated their feedback to ensure that this case study accurately portrays the CTP-IEP.

## Findings

### The Camden Teacher Pipeline’s Inclusive Education Program

CEF started the Camden Teacher Pipeline (CTP) in 2019. According to CEF program documents, the goal of the pipeline is to “attract new teachers to Camden and provide them with robust, hands-on training, and align their student teaching experience with schools that will be hiring for full-time positions.” CEF’s executive director, the former chief of staff at CCSD, had gained firsthand experience and insight into the challenges involved in attracting and retaining educators in Camden. When New Jersey changed its



clinical practice requirement in 2018 to lengthen it to one full year, she explored the shift with higher education partners. Together, they felt this was a prime opportunity to start the pipeline, as the extended clinical placement would give educators experience akin to a teacher residency without the financial burden. The CTP is a partnership between different university, school, and nonprofit stakeholders in Camden who each play unique roles in the program, as outlined below. Each of the partners has been involved since the program’s establishment and was central in its design and development. CEF’s executive director explained that building the pipeline collaboratively with all stakeholders has been critical to its success.

PARTNERS IN THE CAMDEN TEACHER PIPELINE	
PARTNER	ROLE
Rowan University Rider University	Provide coursework and teaching certifications
Camden City School District* Freedom Prep Charter School KIPP Cooper Norcross Academy Mastery Schools of Camden* Uncommon Schools Camden Prep	*Host teaching candidates for their seven-week clinical observations  Host teaching candidates for their year-long clinical practice (i.e., student teaching)
Camden Education Fund	Coordinate partners to facilitate the matching of teaching candidates and schools and provide additional support to teaching candidates (described below)
Relay Graduate School of Education	Provide monthly Deliberate Practice coaching for teaching candidates during their year-long clinical practice and first year of teaching

Launched in 2020, the CTP-IEP is a specific track of the CTP with the goal of effectively preparing educators to teach students with disabilities in inclusive settings in Camden. The CTP-IEP centers on a partnership with Rowan University and its inclusive education major. Graduates of the inclusive education major earn two state certifications in New Jersey: an initial license in elementary education and a teacher of students with disabilities endorsement. Thus, graduates can work as either general or special educators. Regardless of the teaching position graduates ultimately choose, the intent behind the program is to prepare them to effectively teach all students effectively including students with diverse cultural, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds and students with disabilities.

Rowan’s inclusive education major was already under development when their partnership with the CTP launched, creating natural synergy to leverage the program as part of the CTP. The program coordinator





for Rowan’s inclusive education major explained that the major was motivated by national data showing that New Jersey ranked among the worst states for educating students with disabilities in inclusive settings. Faculty from different departments were inspired to create a major that would better equip educators to teach students from diverse backgrounds and with diverse learning styles in inclusive settings. The program coordinator believed that partnering with Camden was a natural fit given the diversity of students enrolled in Camden schools. Camden stakeholders, including CCSD’s deputy chief of special services, are included in Rowan’s inclusive education program board and have opportunities to advise on the program’s design based on the needs of Camden schools.

Rowan’s inclusive education major includes coursework in special education, elementary education, English as a second language (ESL) education, and urban education. Faculty across programs co-teach and model interdisciplinary teaching. Thus, candidates in the inclusive education major get early exposure to teaching models that they will be expected to use in their classrooms. Candidates begin by learning how to deliver instruction in inclusive classrooms that is accessible to all learners. Pedagogy is based on Universal Design for Learning principles<sup>2</sup>, and candidates also learn how to implement multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) frameworks before moving on to more specialized coursework for students with disabilities through a specialized instruction course. Building educators’ capacity to teach students with diverse racial, linguistic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds is an explicit part of Rowan’s inclusive education major. Teaching candidates complete a seven-week clinical observation in a district serving students with diverse backgrounds and learning styles while taking coursework in trauma-informed practice, working with families and communities, and bilingual education. The hope behind the CTP’s partnership with Rowan is that recruiting students from the inclusive education major to do their field experience in Camden will give them a chance to apply the skills they are learning in their coursework and ideally spark a desire to work in Camden full-time after they graduate. Since its inception, candidate interest in the program has rapidly grown. Early cohorts included fewer than 10 candidates, but the latest cohort graduated 58 candidates.






Candidates for the inclusive education major are recruited to participate in the CTP-IEP in their third year of the program. All candidates in the inclusive education major complete a seven-week clinical observation in a Camden school. After completing the clinical observation, candidates have the option to remain in the CTP-IEP. If they choose to remain in the CTP-IEP, they will complete the following steps:

<sup>2</sup> For more information on Universal Design for Learning principles, please see <https://www.cast.org/impact/universal-design-for-learning-udl>. For more information about Multi-Tiered Systems of Support frameworks, please see <https://guide.swiftschools.org>.



STEPS OF THE CTP-IEP	
1	<b>COURSEWORK AND CLINICAL OBSERVATIONS</b> Candidates complete the required coursework for the inclusive education major at Rowan University, including a seven-week clinical observation in a Camden school.
2	<b>CLINICAL PRACTICE</b> Candidates complete their year-long clinical practice requirements set out by Rowan University at a Camden school. Candidates receive monthly coaching from the Relay Graduate School of Education through Deliberate Practice sessions.
3	<b>HIRING PROCESS</b> Candidates pursue full-time teaching roles in Camden. Candidates receive job placement support from the CTP (described below).
4	<b>FIRST-YEAR TEACHING</b> Candidates hired continue to receive coaching via Deliberate Practice sessions from the Relay Graduate School of Education for their first year of teaching.

Teaching candidates in the CTP-IEP also receive targeted support to facilitate their successful preparation and transition to teaching students with disabilities in Camden.

SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TEACHING CANDIDATES IN THE CTP-IEP	
 <b>STIPENDS</b>	Candidates receive a \$4,000 stipend during their clinical placement year.
 <b>TEST PREP</b>	CTP collaborates with Rowan University to ensure candidates have the resources and tools they need to pass tests required for certification.
 <b>DELIBERATE PRACTICE</b>	Candidates receive 3 hours of coaching each month from Relay Graduate School of Education.
 <b>CANDIDATE SCHOOL MATCHING</b>	Candidates attend an open house with CTP school partners to learn about schools, interview with schools of their choice, and are matched with mutual interest for their year long clinical practice.
 <b>JOB PLACEMENT</b>	Candidates work with CTP to refine their resume, work on their interviewing skills, and develop a plan for their Camden job search.



CCSD is a large traditional school district in Camden (see Table 1 for additional information). Although the district began the 2021–22 school year with no educator vacancies, vacancies emerged throughout the year. This is particularly true for educators who specialize in teaching students with disabilities. By the winter of 2022, 14 of the district’s 140 special education teacher positions were vacant and an additional 12 special education teachers had taken leaves of absence. Like many districts, CCSD experienced educator vacancies even before the pandemic, but the pandemic added new challenges. CCSD’s deputy chief of special services noted that staff retirements were more prevalent this year than in the years past and that substitute teachers were particularly hard to find.

**Table 1**

CAMDEN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT DETAILS <sup>3</sup>	
Grade levels served	PK 12
Total enrollment	6,782
Percentage of students with disabilities	18%
Percentage of English learners	8.7%
Percentage of Black students	43.1%
Percentage of Latinx students	54.5%
Percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch	95.5%

Finding qualified candidates for open special education teaching positions in CCSD has been a particularly difficult challenge, according to the deputy chief of special services. She noted that there were only 2 candidates for 14 special education vacancies. Furthermore, in their demo lessons, the candidates did not exhibit the instructional skills they were seeking for educators of students with disabilities.

<sup>3</sup>All data, except for the percentage of students with disabilities and percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch, reflect the 2021–22 school year and were reported by the New Jersey Department of Education at <https://www.nj.gov/education/doedata/enr/index.shtml>. The percentage of students with disabilities reflects the 2019–20 school year, the most recent year that data were available, located from <https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/data/2020.htm>. The percentage of students qualifying for Free or Reduced Price Lunch reflects the 2013–14 school year, the last year before data collection requirements changed, and were reported by the New Jersey Department of Education at <https://www.nj.gov/education/doedata/enr/index.shtml>.



CCSD has adapted to special educator shortages by shifting and consolidating some of its special education programs. For instance, if a school only has one student that requires a resource class, administrators have worked with the family to locate another school with that program so that smaller programs could be combined. While CCSD has been able to maintain all special education programming in the midst of shortages, the deputy chief of special services explained that the biggest challenge has been logistical work for school leaders and added stress for educators. Educators have often been asked to cover classes for others during their prep time, taking away their time to decompress and prepare for lessons. She also worried that having special educators take on new roles, including teaching at different grade levels, in different content areas, or at different schools, may lead to more burnout and compound the existing shortage challenges.

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[Shifting educators to teach different grade levels, at different schools, or in different content areas] causes stress on the teacher because now I'm moving the teacher [from a] school that they have been in for seven years, and that has also caused teachers to want to leave. The instability of like, "Am I going to be able to stay in my class? Am I going to be able to teach this program?" We've been moving [educators] around based on student needs as much as possible. - CCSD deputy chief of special services

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While CCSD has been part of the CTP for several years, the 2021-22 school year was the first that the district had the opportunity to host candidates from the new CTP-IEP. The district's deputy chief of special services described the program's new inclusion track as "a light at the end of the tunnel" to address educator shortages for students with disabilities. She added that interviewing candidates interested in doing their year-long field placements at CCSD has brought hope and excitement.

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It's been a breath of fresh air. The [candidates] are so excited. It's refreshing to meet with the [candidates] and talk about how excited they are about their [field] experience. That part I have loved in meeting with the possible [candidates]. - CCSD deputy chief of special services

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In the 2021-22 school year, two candidates in the CTP-IEP completed their year-long field placement in the district, while other candidates were introduced to the district through the program's seven-week clinical observations. When selecting cooperating teachers to work with the CTP-IEP candidates, the district leader explained that they chose experienced teachers in co-taught classrooms who worked well with their co-teaching partners. One of the cooperating teachers who worked with candidates during their seven-week clinical observations explained what a typical day involved. Candidates would observe one day per week for seven weeks as the cooperating teacher, and his co-teacher taught math and science classes throughout the day. Most of their instruction involved splitting the class into small groups, so candidates had ample opportunities to observe small-group instruction. During transition times between classes, he made time to explain his thought process for using different instructional approaches in the lesson that candidates





had just observed.

Candidates and teachers who were placed together for seven-week clinical observations or year-long clinical practice in CCSD generally shared positive feedback of their experiences when surveyed during the 2021-22 school year. At the end of their seven-week clinical observations, over half of the candidates who were placed in a CCSD school indicated that they would consider teaching in Camden full-time. Of the two candidates who completed their year-long clinical practice in CCSD, one reported an intention to apply to a Camden school for a full-time teaching position. All cooperating teachers surveyed from CCSD agreed that the candidate(s) they were matched with demonstrated the potential to be strong teachers in Camden.

Early Successes

Teaching candidates are developing an appreciation and cultural competency for teaching in Camden.

The candidates’ asset-based view of Camden and their development of cultural competency was evident to stakeholders who worked closely with them. The program coordinator at Rowan University was excited to hear a shift in the way candidates spoke about Camden after the program incorporated opportunities to learn about the rich history of Camden. Candidates’ appreciation for Camden and articulation of why they would want to teach in Camden came through clearly for the deputy chief of special services of CCSD when she interviewed them for year-long clinical practice placements. These comments matched the candidates’ expressions of interest in Camden. In fact, four of five candidates who took the CTP-IEP survey during their year-long clinical practice in a Camden school stated that they were interested in pursuing a full-time teaching role in Camden.

We have students who are excited to go to Camden asking me if I know places in Camden.... “Have you been to this place? Have you been to this restaurant? Have you been here?” So they’re interested, connected, and excited to be there. – Rowan University program coordinator

[Candidates] had done their research on Camden. They knew why they connected with Camden... I was like, “Principals, we need to get these guys here, so we can get them in there in your building the following year.” So far, the feedback from principals has been great as well, so I feel like the [candidates] have been prepped. They know what to expect, and they want to be in Camden. – CCSD deputy chief special services

Teaching candidates bring skills that are in high demand to Camden Schools. Stakeholders from Rowan and Camden schools reported that the candidates in the CTP-IEP are developing skills that set them apart from others. Many candidates in the CTP-IEP have added bilingual certifications, according to Rowan’s program coordinator. The deputy chief of special services at CCSD was impressed with bilingual candidates who were fluent in Spanish, adding that CCSD does not typically see bilingual applicants.



Throughout the interview process, the deputy chief of special services at CCSD was also impressed by candidates’ knowledge and mindsets around educating students with disabilities.

One of the [candidates interviewed] that really stood out to me was a special education teacher candidate, and she was just really able to articulate that piece about least restrictive environment and how important that is to students... we have this kind of scenario question that we asked, “Where would you place the student,” because we want to get their take on LRE. And I feel like they really had that understanding—how important it is for students with disabilities [to be included with their peers in general education], so that’s huge because that mindset you need it immediately when you come in. – CCSD deputy chief special services

**The CTP-IEP connects candidates to Camden schools for full-time teaching positions.** Despite the fact that CCSD and other Camden charter or Renaissance schools each have their own hiring timelines, the CTP-IEP has been able to connect interested candidates to schools. In fact, according to CEF, at least 75% of students who participate in CTP are the CTP has been reaching its goal of getting at least 80% of its candidates hired as full-time teachers in Camden since its first year. Support from the CTP has helped candidates feel better equipped to pursue teaching positions in Camden. Candidates surveyed in 2021-22 during their year-long clinical practice characterized the CTP’s resume and interview support as helpful. Most felt prepared to submit a resume to become a teacher.

Enabling Factors

**The design of the CTP-IEP removes barriers and provides a more streamlined experience for committed teaching candidates.** The CTP-IEP was specifically designed to remove barriers and incentivize participation for committed teaching candidates in Camden. First, Rowan University’s inclusive education major is structured differently from other certification options for teachers of students with disabilities in New Jersey. Rowan received approval from the state to restructure its program so that candidates could graduate with dual certifications for elementary education and teaching students with disabilities in only eight semesters rather than ten. The program’s restructuring was meant to create a more streamlined and intentional pathway for candidates to become certified to teach students with disabilities. Furthermore, the newly structured program has more rigorous requirements, as candidates must complete more fieldwork in both general and special education in a shorter period of time. A Rowan administrator believed that this restructuring increased the commitment of applicants. She theorized that the increased requirements for fieldwork and rigor enticed more intentional applicants to the program, as opposed to those who may have opted to complete the add-on certification due to difficulties finding a job.

The stipend provided by CEF for candidates participating in the CTP-IEP also removes barriers for qualified candidates. The director of school investments with CEF explained that the rationale behind the stipend was twofold. First, the stipend was intended to make teaching in Camden a more economically viable



option for candidates by helping them pay for school, rent, and other expenses that could otherwise prevent them from participating. Second, the stipend was meant to honor and elevate the importance of the full-time commitment candidates make to student teaching.

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The student teaching requirement is a state-mandated requirement, but there is no payment provided. There's no compensation to students. And part of that requirement is that by their second semester, they actually are taking on a full-time teaching load. In thinking about other sectors, like in the medical profession, if you are in a residency, then that is a paid position of some sort. It's paid because of the degree of responsibility that [you're] taking on, and also because of the amount of knowledge that you know at that point. [We wanted] to honor the profession of teaching and also provide an incentive for students to be able to come to Camden.

- CEF director of school investments

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**Support provided by the CTP-IEP builds candidates' cultural competencies for teaching in Camden.** Culturally responsive teaching is a central aspect of the support provided to teaching candidates by the CTP-IEP. Coursework at Rowan University was designed to help candidates take an asset-based approach to teaching in urban settings like Camden.

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What are the things in this neighborhood that are the beacons of the neighborhood culture? Where's the pulse of the neighbors? [Coursework emphasizes] having [candidates] really take a shift [from] what's typically a deficit-based view of urban areas [to] really seeing the beauty of urban education, urban environments, the riches and culture, and seeing again, the assets that are in the neighborhood.

- Rowan University program coordinator

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CEF also worked with Rowan to expose candidates to teaching in Camden earlier in their preparation program. The executive director of CEF explained that the intent behind this decision was to show candidates firsthand the good things happening in Camden schools and to start them toward developing relationships with educators and students. As candidates are doing their full-time student teaching in the CTP-IEP, they receive additional support rooted in culturally responsive teaching and asset-based thinking through their deliberate practice sessions hosted by the Relay Graduate School and through interview preparation services provided by CEF.



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I think that the evolution that has happened over the last couple of years is that [instructors at the Relay Graduate School have] infused more culturally responsive teaching into every single thing whereas before, it was one session on culturally responsive teaching. How can you infuse culturally responsive teaching and reflection into the questions that you're asking, into who you're asking the questions of, into your demeanor and your tone throughout? How are you thinking about the various learning styles that are in the room? [Students in Camden] have so much potential but haven't always been offered what they deserve. I want to make sure that [teaching candidates] don't just see [their practice] as a transaction but how can we look at these young people as whole people. – Relay Graduate School coach

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**Deliberate practice sessions provide a space for teaching candidates to strengthen their skillset for teaching students with disabilities in Camden.** Candidates regularly reported that the Deliberate Practice sessions were the most useful form of support they received from the program, according to a CEF leader. All teacher candidates surveyed agreed that the Deliberate Practice sessions improved their preparedness to serve in the classroom. The instructor of these sessions from the Relay Graduate School explained that the sessions gave candidates a chance to reflect more on their teaching practice and to become adept at problem-solving. She believed that problem-solving skills are critical for the effective individualization of instruction for all students, including students with disabilities.

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I think sometimes that there are teachers who try to just kind of check the boxes. Like, "Here's my checklist. This is what I'm supposed to do with a student who has a disability." Check, check, check. Whereas, these students are very reflective. They're really taking this year to learn, to see different ways of implementing strategies by their cooperating teacher, by me, by their Rowan teachers. They're not as linear in their thinking which I think is really helpful. They have a structure that they can work with, but they're not just trying to check a box in order to do something. – Relay Graduate School coach

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**Coordination from CEF facilitates connections between CTP-IEP candidates and Camden schools.** As the coordinator of the CTP-IEP, CEF continually makes connections between candidates and schools in Camden. Stakeholders in the program believe that these connections are critical for facilitating hiring in Camden. CEF coordinates a matching process in which candidates in the CTP-IEP get to meet educators, learn about different schools in Camden, and rank the schools in which they are most interested. Schools also rank the candidates they are interested in and are matched for interviews to ensure a good fit during candidates' year-long field experience. According to a leader at CEF, candidates and schools are almost always matched with their top one or two choices, and candidates and schools alike have expressed satisfaction with field experience placements. The CCSD special education director explained that the field experience matching process introduced the district to several strong candidates whom they may



want to eventually hire full-time. The process also enabled the district to consider candidates’ unique skillsets and career goals when placing them with a cooperating teacher and school for field experience. Overall, CEF’s coordination of the field experience matching process has promoted early connections between candidates and schools and allowed both candidates and schools to articulate their priorities and needs.

As candidates complete their field experience requirements, CEF continues to facilitate connections between candidates and schools to streamline the hiring process and maximize the potential for CTP-IEP candidates to remain in Camden. A CEF leader described how schools in Camden have variable hiring timelines, which can complicate the search process for candidates. Coordinators from CEF have ongoing conversations with candidates and schools to promote the awareness of these timelines and of candidates’ interest in the schools. These conversations have helped schools hire CTP-IEP candidates by ensuring that candidates are given early consideration.

Plans for Continued Improvement

The CTP-IEP is a new initiative, and stakeholders agree that it will continue to evolve and improve as they learn from experience. One of the ongoing challenges the program faces is selecting cooperating schools and teachers. According to stakeholders, candidates’ early introduction to Camden schools through their 7-week clinical observations is critical for shaping their impressions of Camden schools and future teaching plans. Of all candidates surveyed who completed their clinical observations in a Camden school in 2021–22, a third were considering teaching in Camden. Candidates’ survey responses suggested that the quality of their clinical observation experiences may have shaped their future intent. Candidates who reported that they were considering teaching in Camden typically indicated that their clinical observations provided them with the opportunity to support small-group instruction. Some candidates’ survey responses and interviews also highlighted the importance of alignment between Rowan’s curriculum and the missions and visions of cooperating schools. A coach who worked with CTP-IEP candidates from the Relay Graduate School explained that alignment is critical for ensuring that candidates have the chance to practice the pedagogy and instructional principles learned through their coursework. Vetting cooperating teachers and schools to ensure their teaching philosophies align and selecting cooperating teachers who are open to feedback may be important for enhancing candidates’ experiences and potential for success in Camden schools.

We give [candidates] the pedagogy; we give them the examples and the practice and the self-awareness and all of the things that they need to do. And then they might be placed in a classroom where the cooperating teacher doesn’t agree with any of that. And yes, [the candidate is] able to practice what it’s like to have difficult conversations, but they’re sometimes not able to practice what we want them to practice because you might have a disagreement of opinion or values. So really properly vetting the schools that the [candidates] will be placed in, and the teachers that they’ll be placed with, and also offering the [cooperating teachers] training, support, rubrics, [and] more so that they can properly in coach and support that [candidate]. – Relay Graduate School coach





## KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Educator preparation programs can expand the pool of candidates qualified to teach students with disabilities by streamlining certification requirements, providing support during training, and expanding opportunities for clinical practice in inclusive settings.
- Intentionally designed coursework and coaching can build candidates' cultural competencies for working in inclusive settings and urban districts.
- Ongoing coaching throughout clinical practice can help candidates hone their pedagogy and approach for individualizing instruction for all students.
- Philanthropic partners and non-profits can play a critical role in alleviating educator shortages by coordinating teacher preparation programs, schools, and other support providers to bolster support for candidates and facilitate their matching with schools.
- When teacher preparation programs and schools align in their vision for effective inclusive education, candidates can have more useful clinical practice experiences.

## GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- **State education agencies:** How might your state's teacher certification requirements enable or prevent candidates from graduating with the preparedness required to teach students with disabilities in inclusive settings?
- **Educator preparation programs:** To what extent do coursework and field experience in your program prepare candidates for teaching in inclusive settings? Does your program consider the needs of local districts?
- **Districts and schools:** How does your district or school partner with regional educator preparation programs to explore alignment in vision and pedagogy for inclusive education? What support does your district or school offer cooperating teachers to ensure that their philosophy and pedagogy are aligned?
- **Philanthropic partners and non-profits:** What coordination and support needs are unmet for educator preparation programs and districts/schools in your region?



# About the Center for Learner Equity

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The Center for Learner Equity is working to ensure that public schools – both within the charter school sector and beyond it – are designed for inclusivity and equity from the start. When we improve access and outcomes for students with disabilities, all students benefit.

## MISSION

We are committed to ensuring that students with disabilities, particularly those in under-resourced communities, have the quality educational opportunities and choices they need to thrive and learn. We accomplish this through research, advocacy, coalition formation, and capacity building with national, state, and local partners.

## VISION

Students with disabilities will have the same opportunities for success as their peers.

 @learnerequity

centerforlearnerequity.org

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# Acknowledgements

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# About the Camden Education Fund

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The Camden Education Fund (CEF) is a non-profit organization dedicated to accelerating progress in Camden’s public school system. CEF works with families, school partners, and community leaders to identify citywide needs in education. CEF then provides grants and develops strategic partnerships to address these citywide needs. Grantees may include schools, non-profits, and universities.

## MISSION

To sustain and accelerate progress in Camden’s public school system.



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