

## **City Standards Generation: How Urban Educators Might See Their Communities in the Standards Movement**

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### **Abstract**

The author of this article describes the broad consideration of educational standards that occurred with a cohort of 30 masters' licensure students in public, urban university and high school contexts. This deliberation over standards was rooted in the model of standards development presented by these future teachers' licensure program and called upon this next generation of urban educators to develop standards for their own teaching practices. Relying upon a set of urban standards, this program (the Master of Urban Secondary Teaching, or MUST, program) has attempted to focus its constituents—its students, mentors, and university faculty—on preparing novice teachers to work in urban schools and to be responsive to their urban communities and city high school students. This paper describes methods that might provide city teachers with concrete tools for engaging their students with community concerns and means for making schools' standards explicitly relevant to city students' lives.

### **Introduction**

Recent research has documented how urban school districts in the United States often suffer the burden of challenges that almost all school districts eventually face (Peterman, 2001; Weiner, 1999). Typically these districts are intensely bureaucratic and paradoxical, under-resourced and poverty-bound, and are called upon to address the needs of populations that are especially diverse in culture, race, ethnicity, and language. In recent years, these schools have faced two additional

issues: first, an extreme and growing shortage of qualified, appropriately certified teachers across subject areas (Ingersoll, 2002, 2001); and, second, the pressures of the standards movement (Blum, 2001; Fritzberg, 2001; Johnston & Ross, 2001). New requirements imposed by federal and state regulations borne of the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind legislation are likely to intensify both of these concerns.

Districts, universities, and state departments of education have responded to the record teacher shortage with the creation of numerous alternative licensure avenues; one of the most popular new teaching licensure options is the graduate level certification program. In remarkably brief turnaround times, Masters certification programs (often called "Master of Arts in Teaching," or MAT, programs) have furnished school districts with an additional resource for their growing demand for teachers, delivered a more mature population of novice educators to school faculties already facing a dire need for new teachers, and supplied universities with an entirely new population of higher-tuition graduate students (Mayer, Mullens, & Moore, 2000; Olson, 2000; Olson & Jerald, 1998).

As well, educators across the continuum—from preschool teachers to university professors—must consider a swelling cache of standards in their professional routines (Marcello, 1999; Marquez-Zenkov, 2002; Meadmore, 2001; Ohler, 2001; Wise & Leibbrand, 2001). In response to standards movement pressures, many urban districts have answered professional association and state department of education standards with a flood of their own standards lists. Interestingly, the most popular defense against excessive standards seems to be even more standards. As a result, educators at virtually every level and in every context are being overwhelmed by these standards edicts. As an example, for a content literacy course I recently taught in the urban licensure program I coordinate, I attempted to consider at least fourteen different sets of standards as I planned my curriculum. Similarly, my students—future city teachers—must bear in mind standards, objectives, and goals from an ever larger and more vocal array of educational constituents.

Paradoxically, these alternative licensure programs and burgeoning lists of standards bullet points may actually be in danger of exacerbating the teacher shortage and clouding the standards upon which urban educators base their curricula. If these programs and standards are going to address some of the deeper problems of urban schools, then they must explicitly consider the needs of their particular communities, address not only the very existence of the teacher shortage but also the conditions that have led to this shortage, and start to assist future city teachers in recognizing how their urban communities might become core elements in their subject area curricula. Today's urban teacher educators cannot allow the intense conditions in their cities to limit the existence and quality of the uniquely responsive alternative certification programs that such conditions demand. New licensure options must begin to shift the professions of both urban teacher educators and teachers so that they require these educators to take responsibility for address-

ing these intense urban conditions—as they find form in universities, classrooms, schools, and communities.

This paper suggests that educators at every level of schooling and across urban contexts in the United States might intelligently answer these standards pressures and respond to the challenge of teaching in urban communities by beginning to resist the standards movement. And, as scholar-practitioners, urban teacher educators working in alternative licensure programs that use a school-based, professional development school model (Abdul-Haqq, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 1994; Reynolds, Ross, & Rakow, 2002) have a unique opportunity to use the standards movement in pursuit of community-relevant and culturally responsive curricular standards and educational practices (Ladson-Billings, 1998). My recent work as a university faculty member coordinating an urban, social justice oriented secondary licensure program suggests specific ways that this standards movement appropriation might challenge city schooling traditions that too often seem irrelevant to the students, teachers, and communities they serve. In this paper I document my program's attempt to transcend the traditional boundaries between schools and their communities by engaging with these communities in the preparation of urban teachers. My colleagues and I have attempted to cross these established borders by crafting a specifically urban set of teacher licensure standards, as well as by engaging the graduate level preservice teachers with whom we work in a year-long consideration of their own urban, community-relevant teaching standards. The data for this paper was gathered in the content literacy course I taught during the summer semester of this urban licensure program and the findings depict the community-relevant standards these future teachers have researched, selected, and developed.

## **Standards for Urban Teacher Education**

In some current circumstances, new alternative licensure programs are attempting to do more than just add to the pool of novice urban teachers or merely provide qualified teacher candidates with another avenue to enter to the teaching profession in city settings. In some instances, these masters licensure programs are specifically geared to consider and address the conditions of urban schools. One program explicitly endeavoring to consider the needs of its community is the one I coordinate at Cleveland State University, the Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) program. Recognizing that intense urban characteristics exist in both city schools and their own university settings, MUST teacher educators have begun to redefine urban teaching by first re-directing urban teacher education. Rather than accede to the intensified and under-resourced conditions of the urban classrooms, schools, and university in which it is housed, MUST has made responding to such challenges explicit in its definition of urban teaching and teacher education.

MUST is a selective, field-based graduate teacher education program, focusing on the preparation of secondary core subject area teachers (English, social studies,

math, and science), and housing students (or “interns”) at seven Cleveland area high schools with a professional development school model (Grisham, Berg, Jacobs, & Mathison, 2002; Johnson, 2000). Four full-time university faculty members coordinate, teach, and supervise the MUST program’s interns. Its goal is to graduate reflective, responsive teacher-leaders who will be prepared to address the effects of race, class, and gender on student achievement and promote their learning through responsive pedagogy (Irvine, 1997; Villegas & Lucas, 2002). Interns are admitted as a cohort, taking classes together throughout the 14-month program, which includes a nine-month, unpaid, school-based internship, working side-by-side with their mentor teachers at area urban high schools. MUST graduates earn a Masters of Education degree with a specialization in Curriculum and Instruction, and, upon completion of state requirements, are licensed to teach in Ohio. As exit requirements, interns complete publishable classroom research projects and professional portfolios.

The MUST program was founded upon the Cleveland State University College of Education model, encompassing a set of outcomes of which all faculty were then at least cognizant and of which most faculty have gained intimate knowledge as the College’s National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) review has approached. These criteria include such categories as “personal philosophy,” “diversity,” and “collaboration and professionalism” (see Appendix A for a complete list of college outcomes). But unique to MUST were the set of program outcomes upon which interns would be assessed throughout the program, using its own portfolio system. These outcomes have evolved across MUST’s short five-year existence into the following program standards:

- A. Social Justice: The MUST intern is a reflective, responsive teacher-leader who successfully addresses the effects of race, class, gender, and linguistic difference on student achievement.
- B. Urban Teaching: The MUST intern promotes students’ learning by utilizing culturally responsive pedagogy.
- C. Urban Schooling and Communities: The MUST intern demonstrates a strong commitment to urban schooling and community renewal.
- D. Resilience, Resistance, and Persistence: The MUST intern addresses the complexities and demands of urban settings by responding appropriately with resilience, resistance, and persistence.

The architects of the MUST program understood that the development of the foundational goals for an urban teacher education curriculum could not be detached from the urban context where the university administering the program resided. They recognized that urban teacher education demands a set of guiding criteria that calls for teacher educators and teacher candidates who do not compartmentalize the skills required to be successful in urban settings. Rather, urban teacher candidates

must act with the tools and awareness required for teaching their urban students even as they engage in their own development as urban teachers, in and across the urban institutions in which they are working. MUST's framers understood that the urban features and the resilient responses required of teacher candidates in these settings were not the temporary conditions of a new MAT program and its core standards; they were the permanent conditions for which urban educators, across school and university settings, must be prepared. Responding to these characteristics needed to become part of the definition of urban teaching and learning, at the beginning of and across the professional lives of educators in these settings. And if these responses were to be a part of classroom teaching and community life in these settings, then they needed to be a part of the teacher education program that would prepare successful teachers for these locales.

While many sets of standards in education are perceived as static criteria—exaggerating their status as non-negotiable and potentially irrelevant laws—the MUST standards have been gradually but consistently modified. While they grew out of the founding committee's awareness of the intense urban conditions city students, teachers, and community members faced, they've been tailored over the past four years through ongoing informal and formal discussions amongst program faculty, interns, and mentor teachers. The standards' continued evolution has enhanced the extent to which these are responsive to the needs and conditions of the program's urban community. The key way in which these standards have changed over four years is the addition of a rubric that more clearly defines what each program outcome suggests should occur in school and classroom practices (See Figure 1).

These standards have also evolved as the result of other factors. Because our College of Education has been engaged in preparations for a National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) review over the past two years, I have paid particular attention to this organization's program standards (NCATE, 2002) and how these relate to the MUST program's teacher education outcomes. As well, because I expect these teacher candidates to address the highest and widest range of professional standards available, I have considered the "core propositions" of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS, 1994) in my literacy course preparations. And, since these interns will eventually be licensed to teach math, science, social studies or English, I have gathered the content standards of their respective professional organizations. These included standards from the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), and those of several science educator professional organizations (e.g., National Science Teachers Association, or NSTA).

## **Standards and Urban Communities**

While understanding one's educational ideals is a professional reality—and

Figure 1  
Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) Program Outcomes Rubric



Masters in Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) Outcomes Rubric (Revised April, 2005)

<p><b>MUST Outcomes:</b></p>	<p><u>Social Justice</u> The MUST intern is a reflective, responsive teacher-leader who successfully addresses the effects of race, class, gender, and linguistic difference on student achievement.</p>	<p><u>Urban Teaching</u> The MUST intern promotes students' learning by utilizing culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy.</p>	<p><u>Urban Schooling &amp; Communities</u> The MUST intern demonstrates a strong commitment to urban schooling and community activism.</p>	<p><u>Resilience, Resistance, &amp; Persistence</u> The MUST intern addresses the complexities and demands of urban settings by responding appropriately with resilience, resistance, and persistence.</p>
<p><b>Assessment:</b></p>	<p>1. Recognize and respect their own and their students' personal, social, and cultural uniqueness and understand how these attributes affect teaching and learning</p> <p>2. Reflect on and address effects of race, class, gender, linguistic difference, ability, and sexual orientation on their own and their students' achievement</p> <p>3. Use this information to engage their students, to promote intrinsic motivation, and to encourage personal, professional risk-taking</p> <p>4. Promote their own and their students' development of personal, school, and community literacies by using effective, culturally relevant classroom practices</p> <p>5. Intern selected criteria:</p>	<p>1. Encourage their students to actively participate in creating and governing their own learning experiences and environments, including assessment procedures</p> <p>2. Relate achievement to teaching strategies by reflecting on strategies and adjusting teaching and assessment practices to meet students' individual and group needs</p> <p>3. Develop range of relevant, holistic, learner-centered curricula that utilize available resources and produce authentic results</p> <p>4. Intern selected criteria:</p>	<p>1. Demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between schools and the community, and of the community factors that influence students' learning processes and academic achievement</p> <p>2. Promote their own and their students' abilities to make informed, socially-conscious, democratic decisions within the classroom, the local community, and in a wider forum</p> <p>3. Develop and teach lessons that are explicitly relevant to the conditions and needs of students' lives and communities (e.g., family concerns, transience, violent events, poverty)</p> <p>4. Incorporate artifacts from students' lives and communities into their teaching and utilize authentic activities and assessments</p> <p>5. Intern selected criteria:</p>	<p>1. Use personal and professional reflection to transform challenges related to student achievement into positive learning experiences</p> <p>2. Devise creative, relevant solutions to planning, classroom management, school, and community challenges</p> <p>3. Use personal resources to respond to a lack of school resources.</p> <p>4. Intern selected criteria:</p>

Exemplary: At the culmination of the MUST program, an intern may be assessed as demonstrating an "exemplary" understanding of the program outcomes under the following conditions:

1. The intern has demonstrated a "proficient" understanding over time, through all previous reviews
2. The intern constructs a presentation portfolio for portfolio showcase during second summer session and attends showcase event(s)
3. The intern develops and submits a plan that illustrates how she/he will integrate these outcomes/rubric points into their first year teaching practices

considering the political forces affecting one's profession may be an astute practice—even a cursory review of these varied lists makes it clear that the current standards profusion has ceased to represent an attempt to formulate anything akin to a common vision for public school educators. Rather, it symbolizes an effort by professional associations, government organizations, and administering bodies to retain or increase their pieces of the educational pie. And, sadly, the effect of this outbreak is to shield any core ideas of public school curricula from the apparently detrimental influence of classroom teachers, teacher educators, or community members (Apple, 2001; Vinson, 1999). Too often this standards glut largely ignores any explicit connection between subject area content and a community's needs or strengths. The by-product of this standards overload is a limitation on the public's ability to "define their own interests and desires" (Ross, 1999)—their standards—for public schools. And in a city context, where school already seems like an irrelevant interruption in students' days, standards that blur constituents' visions of the purposes of formal schooling are veritable death knells for this institution. So, while the nature and quantity of the expectations that teachers and students face multiply, their relationships to the intense urban conditions in which these students and teachers work and live are diminished.

The future high school teachers with whom I work often hear their students lament that their books, assignments, exams, and the very nature of their classes are irrelevant to their lives. In some contexts, this complaint is merely bothersome: in schools where many students are provided with external support systems that value formal education, the seeming irrelevance of an assignment may not deter students from meeting their academic responsibilities. But in the inner city classrooms in which I work with this next generation of city teachers, these laments frequently speak to a level of disengagement that our educational system fails to consider adequately. With a better than 60% dropout rate in the city classrooms in which the MUST interns and I work, every message that high school students send is one to take seriously. For a teacher educator, the message to be heard is not these individual students' laments, but the voices of many generations of these students—who eventually form an entire community—that reject school as an extraneous institution.

Urban students, teachers, and teacher educators need sets of standards that are explicitly relevant to their lives in order to make schooling and its curricula a pertinent institution in their communities. More importantly, city teachers need examples of processes of standards development that provide them with the tools to continually reformulate their high school curricula so that they explicitly address the changing conditions of their students' and communities' lives. As described above, as a part of their scholarly practice the founders of the MUST program have attempted to develop a set of teacher education standards that consider the broader needs of this urban community. But my own and the program's more important challenge is that pressing practitioner question: what impact has this model process had on the standards that guide the MUST interns' teaching practices in city

classrooms? And, even more specifically, how might urban teacher educators aware of the dangers of the standards movement help future city teachers to avoid the simultaneously overwhelming and irrelevant trends of the standards movement?

### **Urban communities, “Literacies,” and Standards**

As a literacy educator, I looked to my own content literacy course for the means to address these questions. In recent decades “literacy” has grown to encompass one’s proficiency with more than traditional texts—like classic and young literature or textbooks (Hull & Schultz, 2002; Pappas & Zecker, 2001). It is now understood that our students bring literacies in musical, electronic, and visual media—to name a few—as well as the comprehensive range of people, languages, dialects, and experiences that they encounter in their innumerable life settings (Moje, Young, Readence, & Moore, 2000; Resnick, 2000). The blooming catalogue of recognized texts supplied by current literacy theory recognizes community experiences as valid educational material. In this world of “multiple literacies” (Gallego & Hollingsworth, 2000; Moje & O’Brien, 2001), community life is understood as both a “text” with which today’s students are and must be literate, and as one of the most promising tools for encouraging students’ development of more traditional subject area and literacy skills.

In our city schools, where far too many students fail to engage with their academic opportunities, educators must consider any means through which we might increase our students’ participation in traditional subject area content, literacy skills and with school in general. Relying on these notions of the potential for integrating community experiences into my students’ teaching of both their subject areas and literacy skills in these content areas, and in hopes of bringing the experiences of their students’ urban communities into our university and public school classrooms, I asked my students to begin to document these experiences—the various community and personal literacies their students possessed—using the notion of “literacy maps” and the tools of digital photography (Collier & Collier, 1986). Eventually, their analysis of these photo images and their articulation of the literacies present in their students’ communities resulted in the development of alternative, explicitly relevant subject area standards.

For my students, imagining how the community might impact their teaching standards began with a detailed visual understanding of the existing conditions of these communities. Using digital cameras, each intern constructed a “community literacy map” that addressed the question “What are the environments, resources, buildings, homes, and institutions you and students might encounter on the way to and from school?”. As follow-ups to these visual literacy maps, interns wrote short “keys” describing the community literacies that they recognized in these visual depictions.

While these projects allowed these future city teachers to document the literacies that students possessed—and that they might incorporate into their own

standards and curricula—I recognized that such exploration and modeling was insufficient for ensuring that these community experiences would find a place in their teaching practices. If our program was truly to provide these future city teachers with tools for considering their communities' needs in their own curricula, then we had to supply them with tools for making sense of their own teaching practices and for constructing standards and curricula with an immediate relevance to their students' intense urban lives. Like their own MUST program's outcomes, if their high school subject matter was going to possess an authentic urgency, then the foundations—or the standards—on which these curricula rested had to communicate this relevance.

Paralleling my own course preparations, in the early weeks of my literacy courses with these students, I asked them to gather an even larger pool of standards from school districts, professional organizations, and government bodies of education. This standards research afforded my students an expansive overview of the subject matter principles that educators now consider when standards are discussed and curricula are developed. These banks of standards also gave students a visceral sense of the burden that constructing a standards-based curriculum has become, and a wealth of standards ideas from which they might select as classroom teachers.

While my students were initially overwhelmed by these banks of bullet points, I asked them to use the definition of a "standard" as "a level of quality or excellence that is accepted as the norm or by which actual attainments are judged," and then to begin to select from this pool a set of guiding educational ideals that they might use in their own classrooms. As well, I asked them to look to the visual evidence of their students' community literacies provided by their digital photographs to begin to construct curricular standards that explicitly referenced their students' lives. Each future teacher eventually selected their own set of five to seven standards and a similar collection of "real world" literacies on which they based a series of lessons in a two-week unit. For this paper, I'll highlight examples of the standards and literacies that several English and Math interns developed, selected, and designed. While these examples are far from exhaustive, my hope is that they will illustrate the relevance of these standards to city students' lives.

My students chose a combination of standards—from content (related to math or English curriculum), to professional (related to their interactions with colleagues), to community (related both to their schools' city settings and to their classroom guidelines), to personal (related to their own interests). Specifically, one future English teacher, Pat, emphasized an Ohio English/language arts standard—"Students will analyze the rhetorical devices used in public documents, including state or school policy statements, newspaper editorials and speeches." She then reinforced this ideal through an NCTE standard that called for the use of a broader range of texts in English classrooms—"Students will use a variety of technological and information resources [e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video] to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge." Finally, she augmented this standard with her own terms—"I will honor my students by choosing material that

has relevance to their communities and personal lives. If a suitable material cannot be chosen, students will be given the option to choose their own.”

Most importantly for this study’s goal of explicit standards and curricular relevance, many of my students selected educational goals that emphasized their awareness of the connection between their students’ school, personal, and community lives. Another English intern, Tony, selected the following standard as the core guiding principle for his teaching: “Students will read a wide range of print and non-text to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the culture of the United States and of the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment.” These future city English teachers recognized that their curricula must explicitly require students to explore the world outside of school—“Students will take risks and expose themselves to the broader world”—and then bring these lessons back to their homes and neighborhoods—“Students will contribute to the community.” They called upon students to “build a bridge [between school and out-of-school experiences], personally connect to the world around them, and become active learners.”

They also named straightforward, immediately relevant educational guidelines—“Students will learn to relate writing skills to everyday experiences”—and equally germane but more didactic ones—“Students will learn to be resilient from bad choices they have made in the past, persistent in their pursuit of better decision-making, and resistant to making bad choices in the future.” Specifically, another future English teacher, Jerry, recognized that high school English instruction provided an opportunity to concentrate on not only relevant content but also useful forms: “Students will bring their ‘stories’ into the classroom (i.e. cultural background, community interaction, etc.) so that we can personally connect to the content on which we will be focusing.”

One English intern, Rachel, was especially articulate about how she planned to incorporate her students’ community experiences into her teaching; she noted that the “literacy to which students will be exposed is the importance of cultural/community background. In this case, unpleasant experiences may be the best catalyst for discussions.” And Jane, another future city English teacher, intended to appeal to students’ everyday experiences in our “fast food nation” for support with basic critical, literacy skills:

Even if it is just a sign at a fast food restaurant, students read some form of text everyday. By using these daily encounters, we can help the students understand what causes them to engage with texts . . . . Every student views a text through his or her own unique lens. The issue at hand (be it political party power or soda pop preference) is filtered through personal beliefs and established knowledge. From here we can encourage students to explore how they arrived at their own views. Do they really understand or know all the facts to make an argument? If not, how did they learn what to believe?

Finally, Steven saw numerous opportunities to use his students’ everyday literacies

as foundations for his English teaching, as he intended to call upon their knowledge of music, movies, and romance for the primary bases of his curriculum:

1. Teacher will draw from students' love and appreciation for music of any genre. Students will be encouraged to share songs and interpretations.
2. Teacher will utilize students' knowledge of film and interest in the medium to appeal to and reach an understanding of content.
3. Teacher will make use of a common concern of all teens (love and courtship) by selecting texts that apply to these themes.

Chris, a math preservice teacher, focused her curricular goals on immediate relevance to her students' lives, through the standard "Students will write and solve real world, multi-step problems involving money." Her other standards and objectives included helping students to develop their money management skills and to articulate financial goals, to own and insure a car, and to live in their own apartment or home. Relevant math standards were frequently evident in what she witnessed in her students' lives and communities. She saw core curricular goals in this concentration on simple money management skills:

Effective money management starts with goal setting. Students need to identify and prioritize personal and financial goals and the steps and resources needed to achieve these goals. Financial goals should be realistic and specific and have a time frame. Most people can't tell you how they spend their money, only that it is gone, spent. Students need to understand what it means to create and maintain a budget and the importance of doing so.

And she intended to have her students explore these "real world" budgeting concerns through the issue of car ownership:

Students in high school are just getting their driver's licenses and many want to own a car after doing so. Students need to be able to make intelligent decisions when comparing new and used cars. They also need to understand using credit and the importance of auto insurance and the factors that affect their cost of insurance, such as how old they are, where they live and what their driving record is.

By searching the on-line versions of the local newspaper's classified ads, another future math teacher, Marco, intended to focus his students on using math "to understand various social issues by investigating the options available in the job market for those with mathematical understandings." Finally, Pamela, another future urban math teacher, recognized that her math curricula standards had to appeal to her students' desires to "connect [the] classroom to [the] real world and [the] need for math to be doable." She also described how her math teaching had to demonstrate her awareness that all students have a need to be "social, a need to be respected, a desire to know and be known . . . [a] desire to have fun together, [a] need for school to be enjoyable, and [a] need to feel comfortable with self and others." And she saw that the diverse urban community in which she intended to

work required that her math curriculum had to begin with the goal of educating “open-minded, tolerant community members.”

While many of the curricular standards and goals that these future math and English teachers selected or developed were not especially detailed, did not relate directly to district or professional association standards (e.g., NCTM or NCTE), or were not even necessarily age appropriate, they clearly wove together authentic community and subject area concerns. Based on their unit standards, I eventually asked my students to select specific texts (both traditional and alternative) that they might incorporate into sample lessons. They detailed activities that appealed to the community literacies they had identified, and that they would use to introduce these texts, to engage their students with the texts, and to assess students’ understandings of the texts and their proficiency with their unit standards. While the data of these texts and activities is voluminous and rich, this article’s tight focus on standards requires that I share these findings in another paper.

## **Conclusion**

The MUST program at Cleveland State University is a late 1990’s incarnation of the recent masters licensure trend. Through this program a small group of teacher educators have attempted to re-define the goals of a teacher education curriculum so that its foundational ideals—its standards—are requiring new teachers to consider the conditions of the broader urban contexts in which they are working. By modeling an explicit consideration of a community’s needs and giving shape to these requirements in the standards to which its future teachers are held, this teacher education program is preparing the next generation of city teachers to engage in the same way with their students, their communities, and the standards that guide their teaching. This paper reports briefly on the development of this program, and concentrates on the results of the standards generation process one recent cohort of this program’s future city teachers encountered. While this paper has shared particular standards by which this program and these future urban teachers are guided, perhaps the most compelling aspect of this perspective on standards in urban teacher education and city settings is the model of responsive, professional standards generation that the program provides.

While the high school curricular standards highlighted here were often filled with novice teacher fantasies, they constitute a significant starting point for envisioning the ultimate place of academics in city students’ lives and for assisting educators at every level and in every context to make sense of the current outbreak of content standards. This standards generation process made accessible in our city university and high school classrooms issues with which city teachers and students are already concerned. And, in city contexts, where school frequently seems like a debatably relevant intrusion in young adults’ lives, all standards might attempt to engage students in this way, and the standards to which teachers hold their own

teaching and their students' learning might be ones that are explicitly relevant to the students and their communities.

Across the remainder of their program year, the MUST program interns have continued to reflect on their evolving conceptions of educational standards, and to re-think the specific standards that guide their preservice teaching. Evidence from this ongoing study indicates a noteworthy shift in their understandings of standards, their apparent roles in generating or choosing these standards, and the content of the standards they believe should be prominent in their classrooms. The introductory evidence of the study shared in this paper also suggests that these teachers are selecting curricular objectives to which they are personally and professionally committed, and that their recognition of teachers' and students' places in the development of standards has broadened.

Because city teachers and teacher educators often work in a world of academic life and death, it is imperative that they are conscious of and can articulate the fundamental "big ideas" of their curriculum—the ones from which they can compose lessons that matter in recognizable ways to their students. While the goal of many city teachers and teacher educators might be to construct relevant curricula (learning experiences that actively and tangibly integrate issues, events, and concerns from students' homes and community lives), many educators—particularly novice urban teachers—are lacking the means for comprehending whether the lessons they teach possess this relevance.

This study also suggests that for both urban teacher educators and urban teachers—and for scholars, practitioners, and scholar-practitioners—the value of standards cannot be summarized by a single set of educational goals—or an exhaustive array of such sets. Perhaps, instead, the value of standards is in the intelligent and collaborative selection process through which educators focus on lucid, relevant, and assessable goals. And with an additional set of standards pressed upon educators ostensibly every day, having the tools to participate in or facilitate such a process may be the primary skill that teachers and students in every setting require. Rather than contemplating only the impact that teachers can have on constituents' support for existing standards (Ross, 1999), city teachers' curricula and pedagogical practices should include a process of standards production that requires them to engage with the communities of their schools.

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## Appendix A

### CSU College of Education Outcomes

1. Personal Philosophy: The CSU teacher education student articulates a personal philosophy of teaching and learning that is grounded in theory and practice.
2. Social Foundations: The CSU teacher education student possesses knowledge and understanding of the social, political, and economic factors that influence education and shape the worlds in which we live.
3. Knowledge of Subject Matter and Inquiry: The CSU teacher education student understands content, disciplinary concepts, and tools of inquiry related to the development of an educated person.
4. Knowledge of Development and Learning: The CSU teacher education student under-

- stands how individuals learn and develop and that students enter the learning setting with prior experiences that give meaning to the construction of new knowledge.
5. Diversity: The CSU teacher education student understands how individuals differ in their backgrounds and approaches to learning and incorporates and accounts for such diversity in teaching and learning.
  6. Learning Environment: The CSU teacher education student uses an understanding of individual and group motivation to promote positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
  7. Communication: The CSU teacher education student uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster inquiry, collaboration, and engagement in learning environments.
  8. Instructional Strategies: The CSU teacher education student plans and implements a variety of developmentally appropriate instructional strategies to develop performance skills, critical thinking, and problem solving, as well as to foster social, emotional, creative, and physical development.
  9. Assessment: The CSU teacher education student understands, selects, and uses a range of assessment strategies to foster physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of learners and gives accounts of students' learning to the outside world.
  10. Technology: The CSU teacher education student understands and uses up-to-date technology to enhance the learning environment across the full range of learner needs.
  11. Professional Development: The CSU teacher education student is a reflective practitioner who evaluates his/her interactions with others (e.g., learners, parents/guardians, colleagues and professionals in the community) and seeks opportunities to grow professionally
  12. Collaboration and Professionalism: The CSU teacher education student fosters relationships with colleagues, parents/guardians, community agencies, and colleges/universities to support students' growth and well-being.

## About the Author

Kristien Marquez-Zenkov is an assistant professor in the literacy area of the Department of Teacher Education at Cleveland State University. He is a veteran urban teacher and administrator, and now serves as the director of Cleveland State's Master of Urban Secondary Teaching (MUST) program and coordinates partnerships with high schools in the four districts that are the home to this program. He is currently piloting an urban induction project, as well as conducting a nationwide study of the mentoring needs of early career urban teachers. He has been the recipient of recent research awards from the Cleveland State University Provost, the University Center for Teaching and Learning, and the Graduate College. In addition to a concentration on urban teacher education, he and his wife own and operate a non-profit art gallery in Cleveland that showcases the work of new local artists. His recent research has concentrated on the impact of the standards movement on city teachers, students, and communities, and his first book (in press) is a collection of case studies and analyses of urban professional development school partnerships.