

Westwood's AVID Success Team: Teacher candidate roles

November 2020

Westwood High School addressed unmet needs by partnering with MLFTC to deploy teacher candidates in new ways.

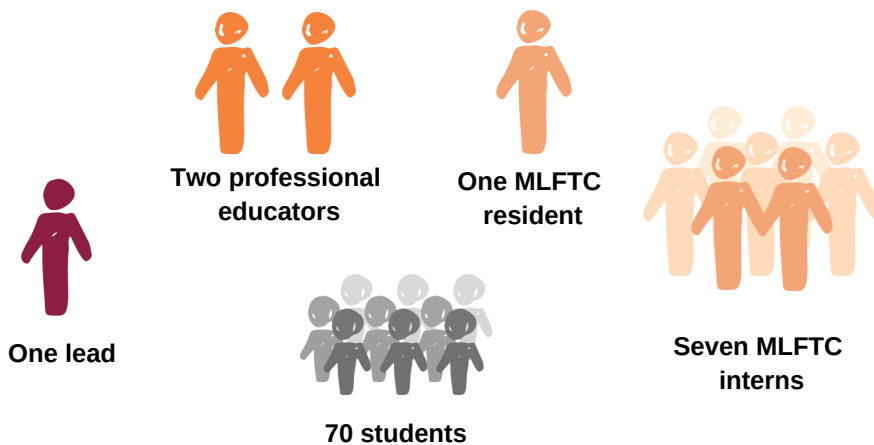
Overview of internship and residency at MLFTC

MLFTC offers a variety of professional experiences to prepare educators to deepen and personalize student learning and to work effectively as part of an educator team, including internship and residency.

Both interns and residents are placed in teams across Westwood High School. Interns are typically juniors who support a team of educators only one or two days per week. Residents are typically senior-year students engaged in 15 weeks of rigorous, practice-embedded experience, teacher collaboration and family engagement.

| | MLFTC interns | MLFTC residents |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| Year | Typically juniors | Seniors |
| Weekly time commitment | One or two days per week | Five days per week |
| Length of time commitment | Three to six hours per day | Fifteen weeks |

The composition of the AVID team



The ninth grade AVID team at Westwood comprises three professional educators (one of whom serves as the lead for the team) and eight MLFTC teacher candidates — one resident and seven interns.

Together, they support 70 students across three learning spaces.

Of course, there isn't a magic ratio when it comes to how many interns or residents a team can support, and the team may have a different composition next year.

The internship experience on the AVID team

AVID team interns have highly specific small-group facilitation roles intended to deepen and personalize student learning.

When the COVID-19 pandemic impacted schools, the team knew they would have to pivot their model to better meet the changing needs of students and educators. The impact of managing multiple modes of instruction — in-person, virtual synchronous and virtual asynchronous — pushed AVID team teachers to consider how they could leverage distributed expertise and specializations to thrive, not just survive, in this new and complex context.

In considering how best to support students, educators and the interns themselves, the AVID team elected to redefine intern roles through role specialization. (See [this resource](#) for a description of a process similar to the one the AVID team used.) Rather than have interns engaging mostly in observation and instructional activities, interns now serve in highly specific small-group facilitation roles intended to deepen and personalize student learning. Roles include, but aren't limited to:

- **Intervention and tutoring support:** Interns provide one-on-one skills-based interventions and homework and assignment assistance.
- **Small-group instructional leader:** Interns work with a targeted group of students to support whole-group instruction outcomes.
- **AVID tutorial leader:** Using a Socratic method, interns lead students to push their thinking by asking questions versus giving answers.
- **Student engagement support:** Interns design mini-lessons including tips and tricks for managing time to support students in accomplishing coursework requirements.
- **Learning management system support:** Interns support the professional educators with content development and assist students with asynchronous assignments.
- **Inquiry project lead:** Interns lead students through investigating open-ended questions such as, "Does college lead to my future success?"

“ Interns enjoy being on a team, rather than with one teacher, because they are gaining feedback and experiences from teachers who have many different styles.

Professional educator
AVID team

By clearly defining the specialized roles interns fill, the team lent clarity to the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to perform them effectively and paved the way for interns to engage more deeply and meaningfully with students and the educator team. As interns' skills and confidence grew, their roles evolved in complexity. For example, early intern roles included one-on-one tutoring, small-group facilitation and supporting with family communication. But as the semester evolved, interns played an active role in the planning and facilitation of Wednesday inquiry project days (the inquiry project lead role described above).

In addition to working with students, interns engage in weekly team planning meetings focused on preparing them to implement the specific student supports they will administer in the coming days and weeks. In this way, the internship prioritizes depth over breadth for interns, effectively providing them with a more focused and immersive experience planning for and implementing a narrower subset of learning experiences for students.

Throughout their internship, interns receive regular coaching and feedback (both formal and informal) from all professional educators on the team. In addition to receiving pedagogical content knowledge feedback from the educator whose subject area matches their program area of focus, interns receive feedback from all educators on the team on building relationships and creating positive classroom culture; crafting multi-disciplinary and content-based learning experiences; and delivering effective, engaging instruction.

“ More is more! More eyes on students, more opportunity for individual feedback and intervention. [Taking a teaming approach with teacher candidates] allows for capability to develop and run large, complex projects.

Professional educator
AVID team

The residency experience on the AVID team

AVID team residents co-plan with, co-teach with and receive feedback from all educators on the team, both within and outside of the content area that matches their program of study.

Within the residency model on the AVID team, the resident plans and co-teaches with educators both within and outside of their content area, breaking tradition with the historically prevalent one-resident, one-mentor approach. Residents work collaboratively five days a week following the professional educator's schedule aligned to their program of study and are immersed in all aspects of the professional educator roles. But in addition to co-designing, co-teaching and leading lessons in their own content area, the AVID team resident co-designs and co-teaches multidisciplinary lessons in partnership with other members of the team. Additionally, the instructional shifts required as a result of COVID-19 have impacted the AVID team resident just as they have impacted educators the world over: the resident is deeply immersed in the pedagogical and operational virtues and challenges of virtual contexts and blended approaches and has, along with the rest of the team, prioritized learner-centered design as part of an effort to ensure all students are provided with deeper and personalized learning.

As in more traditional apprenticeship models, the AVID team's resident participates in all team planning meetings and school-based professional learning experiences. They receive coaching and feedback from their university site lead and the educator who specializes in their program of study. But because they co-plan and co-teach multidisciplinary lessons with all members of the educator team, they also have the benefit of learning from all of them. Rather than familiarizing themselves with the teaching style of only one mentor teacher, the AVID team's resident sees how three different educators build rapport with students and deliver engaging lessons. Rather than modeling their planning after the example set by their mentor teacher alone, the AVID team's resident has the opportunity to learn from the planning skills of all three professional educators on the team. And while the educator who specializes in the resident's program of study certainly provides the bulk of the pedagogical content knowledge feedback the AVID team's resident receives, the other educators on the team are generous in the general pedagogical feedback they offer, regularly coaching the resident on building rapport with students, family engagement, instructional clarity, assessment strategies and more.