

Cornerstone University Steering Committee
AGENDA

March 17, 2026

Attendees: In-Person: Kim Hofstra, Kristin Rich, Eleanor Vandyke, Janorise Robinson,
Mike Irwin, Tim Mabin, Laurie Burgess, Dan Bartels

Notes taken by: Jenny Longfellow

- I. Welcome/Introductions

- II. Cornerstone University Updates
 - A. CAEP Accreditation - Self study is due in June. In March 202 we will have our site visit.

 - B. CU Alum
 - highlight for impact (evidence for CAEP and advertising). Dan - One of their teachers who is a CU graduate and she really stands out as a leader. She has become the favored 4th grade teacher and even stepped in for the dean for a few days when she was out for her husband's medical leave. She did a great job and really is making a difference. Janorise has two students that are doing really well at building community in their classrooms. It is not something you can teach, it is a gift and they have it. They are moldable and want to learn. Tim - He has 2 students at Ottawa. Both are doing well. They are teaching in Chemistry and Algebra 2 all day. They are past the overwhelm with all the things. Candace runs a club. Doing a great job with maintaining high standards and expectations. Both are very empathetic and love on the kids, good relationships with the kids. Jeff is helping with an SAT program that is funded by a grant, specifically some math prep things. Both have said they plan to be at Ottawa as long as he is at Ottawa.

 - C. Year Out surveys - Please understand the surveys you receive from MDE are important and those scores play into our first year Teacher Education Preparation scores. Please fill them out and submit them.

 - D. Teaching cadet programs - Mike has early college partnership program with Davenport. Teacher who teaches AP Psychology had went to Davenport and is also an adjunct for a class at Davenport. It is the 3rd or 4th year into, so should soon start to get some of the graduates. Janorise - Goes through KCTC. Students are assistants in the elementary program.

Tim - Partners with KCTC as well. Mike - Would it be possible to have a CU student come to the school and talk about why they decided to go into education and share their experiences at CU.

- E. Science of Reading certificate - Our students have been trained in the science of reading and Professor Vander Kolk has been ahead of the curve in terms of this. We have a certificate that is going through the process right now of being approved, so that in the future our graduates will actually be able to put on their resume in addition to the teaching certificate, that they also earned a science of reading certificate through three of our literacy courses that we already offer. Ellie - Takeaways from class - she is realizing right now that her students did not get that type of instruction in the lower grade level. Her CT and her have been talking a lot about this. Seeing how the patterns and understanding how they are learning and reading - not using spellcheck. Trying to meet them where they are at in their reading and helping them grow. Reading programs and their success are really staff-dependent. If you have a passionate teacher who does well, the students do well. It has been really great to be with a teacher to have conversations about and collaborating and combining views on it and see what we can do to best help these students. It is exciting to see the students' growth in their reading. Tim - I had students go through the training and it really added a lot to their toolbox for the classroom. Mike - taking high school students and putting them in a reading class is difficult to get motivation and engagement, but if you have teachers who are interested in the high school level, are passionate and committed, it is super helpful.

III. News from the districts

- Dan - Continue to work with students to prepare them for the classroom. It is not just about building relationships, it is also having a plan. A plan for deescalation, plan for working with parents and communicating with them, etc. Janorise - is there a component that teaches building culture and classroom management strategies? Laurie - She teaches this in her course in TAP. Books by Jessica Minahan are very helpful in the classroom management strategy. Mike - What are some non-negotiables (conditions for learning) that you are putting in place? Anything that can be done in advance to promote the ease and intention of learning instead of managing chaos, which can cause burnout and stress when having to figure out the process alone. It has been easier to have the expectations in place beforehand and then readjusting where needed.

IV. Open Discussion