

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION
The University of Michigan
School of Education

Matthew S. Ronfeldt, assistant professor of education, School of Education, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of education, with tenure, School of Education.

Academic Degrees:

Ph.D.	2008	Stanford University, Curriculum and Teacher Education, Palo Alto, CA
M.A.	2000	Mills College, Education, Oakland, CA
Teaching Credential	1996	Mills College, Secondary Mathematics (Physics Supplemental)
B.A.	1994	Amherst College, Physics, Amherst, MA

Professional Record:

2010 to present	Assistant Professor, Educational Studies
2014-present	Faculty Associate, Institute for Social Research (ISR) Survey Research Center (SRC)
2008-2010	Institute for Research on Educational Policy & Practice (Stanford University) Institute for Education Sciences post-doctoral training fellowship program in large-scale, quantitative research. Post-Doctoral Advisor: Susanna Loeb.
2001-2003	Founder/Professional Development Coordinator; Teacher Research Group (in-service teachers), Oakland, CA
1995-2003	Middle School Mathematics and Science Teacher

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Ronfeldt has taught a variety of courses in Educational Studies, including a required core doctoral course and two required courses in the Teaching and Teacher Education (TTE) unit. He has taught each of two doctoral courses in TTE twice (EDUC 774, “The Practice of Teacher Education,” in 2012 and 2015, and EDUC 776, “The Practice of Teaching,” in 2011 and 2014). He has taught EDUC 791, “Foundations of Teaching and Learning,” in 2013, 2014, and 2015. He also has taught in the Teacher Education program at both the elementary and secondary level. He co-designed and co-taught an EDUC 737 course called “The Study and Practice of Field Instruction,” for field instructors and others who wanted to learn more about field instruction. Soon after his arrival at Michigan, he co-taught EDUC 413, “Teaching Secondary School Mathematics,” and the associated practicum courses (EDUC 302 and EDUC 304). Most recently, he served as a field instructor in the elementary teacher education program (EDUC 307).

Professor Ronfeldt identifies a number of programmatic innovations that resulted from his attempts to use his research and scholarship to inform his teaching. While working in the teacher education certification programs, he sought to develop more coherent connections to university course work and field experiences as well as designing coursework around well-articulated

teaching practices. His dossier shows ways he linked the field experiences of preservice mathematics teachers to the mathematics methods course (EDUC 413). For example, he worked closely with the field instructor for EDUC 307, co-planning all the activities, while also designing and leading a “Teachers-in-Residence Program,” for the area teachers serving as mentors. The latter sought to ensure that the area mathematics teachers who were mentoring teaching interns (i.e., preservice teachers) learned something about the curriculum and the teaching practices Professor Ronfeldt sought for the interns to learn and to enact in the field. In his design of the EDUC 413, he specified a set of high leverage instructional practices—providing explanations, leading discussions, and facilitating cooperative group problem-solving—for his interns to observe, rehearse and eventually try in their field sites. It appears he worked closely with the field instructor to tighten the relationship between the methods course and the field seminar.

Professor Ronfeldt has also provided valued mentorship through his mentoring of doctoral students. He has supervised four doctoral dissertations (one completed) and has served as a member of four dissertation committees (three completed). He has served as an advisor to six doctoral students, two masters students, and one post-doctoral fellow. He meets with his advisees on a weekly basis. He is sought after for both formal and informal mentoring.

Research: Professor Ronfeldt’s research addresses an urgent problem of education practice—how to enhance the instructional effectiveness of beginning teachers. The problem is urgent because teacher education programs have come under increased fire for graduating teachers who are ill-prepared for independent teaching practice and because many states are now developing controversial methods of data analysis for use in holding teacher preparation programs accountable for their graduates’ measured teaching effectiveness.

Professor Ronfeldt’s work contributes new insight to this growing debate about the quality and impact of teacher education programs on beginning teachers’ classroom practice. Beginning in graduate school, and extending through 13 papers that he published during his term as an assistant professor at Michigan, Professor Ronfeldt has conducted a series of careful and intertwined studies aimed at untangling the combined influence of teacher preparation programs and the schools where beginning teachers work on early growth in teaching expertise.

His work has shown that graduates of different teacher education programs vary, not only in terms of their measured impact on student achievement, but also in terms of the quality of their observed classroom teaching practice. His work further shows that the length and structure of teachers’ coursework and clinical experiences in teacher preparation programs are associated with these outcomes. Finally—and importantly—his work also shows that school contexts in which teachers receive preservice clinical training and begin their professional practice moderate the influence of teacher preparation programs on beginning teacher student achievement outcomes. In other words, the contexts in which teachers practice teaching matter for the development of teaching skill.

Professor Ronfeldt’s work is important to education policy and practice because it demonstrates that graduates of various teacher preparation programs differ (on average) in the quality of their measured classroom teaching practices. This finding adds to existing findings about program-to-

program differences in graduates' effects on student learning and extends existing methods used to identify more and less effective teacher preparation programs, thereby opening up emergent accountability systems to a much more sophisticated and comprehensive approach to teacher outcome measurement. In addition, Professor Ronfeldt's consistent findings about relationships between length and structure of teacher preparation and early teaching effectiveness, as well as his consistent emphasis on the quality of school contexts where early teacher learning occurs, provide targets for the design of effective preservice teacher training and early induction programs. Finally, Professor Ronfeldt's research creates new linkages between fields of researchers (in teacher education, labor economics, and education policy) that have heretofore operated largely independently from one another using different methodological traditions to build knowledge in their respective fields. By linking substantive insights from the largely single site and qualitative research on teacher education to the collection and statistical modeling of survey and administrative data on teacher education programs and, Professor Ronfeldt has launched a new tradition of interdisciplinary research on beginning teacher learning.

In sum, Professor Ronfeldt's program of research is firmly grounded in questions of conceptual importance to the field, generally attentive to the limitations of research designs for drawing causal inferences, and justifiably concerned with issues of model specification in a field that operates under many different statistical modeling approaches.

Recent and Significant Publications:

- Ronfeldt, M. & Campbell, S. (2016). Evaluating teacher preparation using graduates' observational ratings. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 38(4), 603-625.
- Ronfeldt, M., Kwok, A., & Reiningger, M. (2016). Teachers' preferences to teach underserved students *Urban Education*, 51(9), 995-1030.
- Ronfeldt, M. (2015). Field placement schools and instructional effectiveness. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 66(4), 304-320.
- Ronfeldt, M., Farmer, S., McQueen, K. & Grissom, J.A. (2015). Teacher collaboration in instructional teams and student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 52(3), 475-514.
- Ronfeldt, M., Schwartz, N., & Jacob, B. (2014). Does pre-service preparation matter? Examining an old question in new ways. *Teachers College Record*, 116(10), 1-46.
- Ronfeldt, M, Loeb, S., & Wyckoff, J. (2013). How teacher turnover harms student achievement. *American Educational Research Journal*, 50(1), 4-36.

Service: Professor Ronfeldt's service both within the School of Education and to his broader academic community has been exemplary. He served as a member of the School of Education's Executive Committee. He served on a search committee focused on research methods and the study of diversity and equity, was a member of the quantitative methods task force, and organized the Educational Studies colloquium series for one year. He also has provided service for the teacher education program, for example through his work on a practice-based course and as a member of the elementary clinical assessment design team. In his professional fields, Professor Ronfeldt has provided service that meets the norm for an assistant professor. For example, he has served as a participant at several annual meetings of the Policy Analysis for California Education (PACE) working groups, a member of the Michigan Department of Education Educator Evaluation Research Advisory Group, and a consultant for the Tennessee

Department of Education. In addition, he served as a section chair for American Educational Research Association (AERA; the primary professional organization for educational research). Finally, he has served as a reviewer for at least seven journals (including for top AERA journals), a handbook chapter, and conference proposals.

External Reviewers

Reviewer A: “What makes Ronfeldt’s research so valuable is not only its relevance to the larger social purpose of improving the education of poor and minority students, but also its conceptual clarity and methodological transparency and rigor.”

Reviewer B: “I have singled out this most recent paper for detailed comment, but would say that all of the publications you sent me are first rate: Careful, sophisticated analyses, making full use of large-scale data sets.”

Reviewer C: “Each of his articles considers potential threats to the interpretations of his findings, which is then followed up by empirical investigation, logical argument, or appropriate cautions. The research studies are all well-written and both technically appropriate and accessible to relatively non-technical audiences who need to understand the implications of this work.”

Reviewer D: “... the nature of the research that Professor Ronfeldt has conducted, his status as the common denominator for all these publications (rather than working with the same co-authors or exclusively with mentors), and the fact that he frequently publishes with graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and peers quells any concerns about sole-authorship and substantiates his contributions to his body of work.”

Reviewer E: “Thanks to Dr. Ronfeldt’s assembly and creative use of datasets, we can now venture strong hypotheses on these issues.”

Reviewer F: “In my view, Matthew has made solid contributions to the field of research on education policy and reform, and in particular to understanding the quality of elementary and secondary teachers. I have increasingly heard of, and have come across, his work and writing. He is increasingly cited among those of us who do this kind of work.”

Reviewer G: “In sum, Matthew Ronfeldt is a careful [junior] empiricist, with a track record studying problems from multiple angles and with multiple sources of data, developing practical policy proposals based on the evidence he sees, which is subsequently willing to test in randomized field experiments. That’s quite impressive. If he applies that same style throughout his career—and because he’s done it on multiple topics, there’s no reason to expect he will not continue to do so—he will amass a truly remarkable record of achievement. I would encourage you to promote him, because the field needs more scholars like him.”

Summary of Recommendation: Professor Ronfeldt’s body of independent and collaborative research is strong evidence of considerable talent and future promise as a scholar. Professor Ronfeldt is a promising scholar whose substantive research questions and findings serve as the basis for future research, policy, and design experiments in the field of education. He is

nationally recognized for the complexity of conceptual framing underlying his work, the methodological rigor with which he conducts his research, the development of conceptual arguments in his papers, and his ability to capture the attention of an interdisciplinary audience. He brings together realms of expertise: deeply grounded in practice and schools, he connects teaching and teacher education, qualitative and quantitative research methods, and educational policy. His teaching and service to the School of Education and the profession make strong and useful contributions to the School and University mission as well. It is with the support of the School of Education's Executive Committee and the Promotion and Tenure Committee that I recommend Matthew S. Ronfeldt for promotion to associate professor of education, with tenure, School of Education.



Elizabeth Birr Moje
George Herbert Mead Collegiate Professor,
Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, and Interim Dean
School of Education

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