



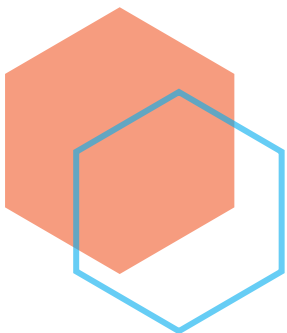
REGISTERED TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM: EDUCATOR ENGAGEMENT RESOURCE

Introduction

This Educator Engagement Resource is a part of the Strengthening the Pipeline project, designed to put key tools in the hands of system leaders and teams.

While attracting top teacher talent is undeniably essential, fostering a thriving educational environment requires a holistic approach that goes far beyond just staffing. Recognizing the critical role of educator retention, the toolkit emphasizes the implementation of scalable and customizable support opportunities.

From professional development initiatives to advocating among decision-makers, the resource recognizes multiple system-level considerations. Namely, the support and recognition of teachers currently in classrooms is just as important as attracting new talent to the profession.



Major System-Level Strategies:

Tailored and Personalized Professional Growth (PD)

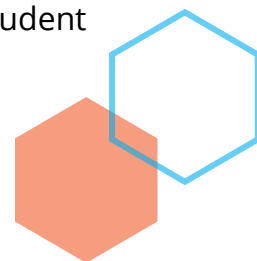
Teachers express their eagerness for more personalized and meaningful professional growth opportunities. This could look like state or district training, or opportunities beyond typical programming. Systems should recognize both a) the training all K-12 educators need in their locale, as well as b) the opportunity to allow for additional customization and further growth by enabling individual selection. Elements of effective growth opportunities could include: content-focused sessions, collaborative environment, exemplary practice models, coaching and expert guidance, or feedback mechanisms and reflective practices.

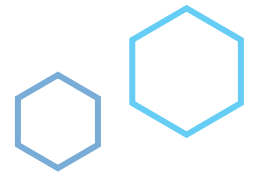
Meaningful Compensation and Benefits

Though pay is not the motivating factor to join the profession, it can be a reason that educators choose to leave. Most importantly, systems must take into account the ultimate take home amount individuals consider. After taxes, healthcare, and retirement, it is essential that educators can clearly determine their month to month amount, particularly in dual-educator households, educators supporting families, or those working to pay off student loans. Perceived “slight” differences between neighbor districts or across state lines may well be the reason educators choose to teach in one system versus the other.

Restructure Competitive Pay Levels

It often takes decades for a teacher to achieve the highest level of teacher pay. In some states, educators with a decade of experience or a masters degree find themselves earning less than those in positions not mandating a college degree. Consequently, teachers may be incentivized to leave the classroom to achieve higher levels of pay in the district or state office. A concise yet robust salary structure, featuring competitive entry-level rates, incentives for professional growth, and equitable compensation throughout one's career, serves as a potent mechanism for attracting and retaining talent. Further, systems should strategically build the salary structure, mindful of critical vacancies, challenging-to-staff areas, and essential positions for accelerating student achievement.





Clear Career Advancement Opportunities

Educators often perceive teaching as a profession with limited vertical mobility, prompting veteran professionals to seek administrative roles for career progression. Introducing teacher leadership roles with additional compensation allows educators to diversify their responsibilities while remaining closely connected to teaching. Positions like mentorship, instructional coaching, and professional learning coordination offer avenues for growth and retention.

Significant Support from Building-Level Leadership

School and district leadership plays a pivotal role in shaping the overall school climate and employee satisfaction. More than pay, educators name that administrative support is the number one reason they would or would not remain in the classroom. Spending time in classrooms, gaining insights into educator needs, advocating for resources, and fostering community are essential supports educators acknowledge as making a positive - or negative - difference in their classroom instruction and professional tenure.

Robust Mentorship and Collaboration Opportunities

- Even past their initial years of teaching, educators continue to seek mentorship and collaboration opportunities. Networks, cohorts, and working groups are valuable experiences for educators to share ideas, resources, and support among their counterparts. Ongoing mentorship and collaborative initiatives system-wide can foster professional growth, enhance teaching effectiveness, and improve employee satisfaction. While many districts have embraced induction and mentorship programs, the most effective ones adopt a multifaceted approach tailored to meet the unique needs of new educators, including but not limited to:
 - A dedicated orientation week for new educators at the onset of the academic year.
 - Guidance from qualified and trained mentors for a minimum of two years.
 - Regular support team meetings alongside formal mentorship.
 - District-led courses and workshops addressing pertinent topics for novice educators.
 - Continuous mentor training.
 - Principal training on supporting early-career educators and mentors.

Research underscores the effectiveness of targeted support during those first few years of teaching, generating greater efficacy and retention among educators.

Meaningful External Opportunities



Real Policy Influence and Accountability

Across the board, educators express their desire for greater inclusion in discussion and decision-making. This includes multiple levels of the system, including but not limited to the school, district, and state-level teams. Further, teachers increasingly voice their appreciation for opportunities to share their classroom experiences with elected officials, allowing for real-time understanding and engagement.

Clear Licensure and Certification Reciprocity

State licensure requirements vary considerably, posing challenges for educators seeking licensure in new states. Reciprocity agreements streamline this process, yet they remain inconsistent across states, potentially hindering teacher mobility. Efforts like the Interstate Teacher Mobility Compact aim to address these challenges by fostering agreements among states, facilitating smoother transitions for educators relocating across state lines.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR LIVABILITY AND LONGEVITY

Housing

Accessible Grants: While not all systems are challenged with the same barriers to entry for their teachers, housing remains a concern for many. Some states offer housing non-repayable grants, available to all teachers and staff, to be used towards the purchase of a home. Others might be eligible for down payment assistance. Further, local teams and non-profits may also review teacher eligibility for state specific government housing grants, or relocation stipends.

Affordable Housing: Some systems are teaming up with nonprofits to recruit and retain teachers to their system by providing them with affordable housing. Districts are opening apartment complexes in repurposed spaces (former, unused district buildings or closed schools) within the district. The creative ways to repurpose buildings, or ensure that affordable options exist for single or multi-family units offer real access for teachers otherwise priced out of teaching in the district.

Scheduling

Focus on Essential Instruction: Implementing flexible scheduling for teachers is paramount for fostering a conducive learning environment and promoting educator well-being. By allowing teachers to focus dedicated time on content areas and planning periods, we empower them to deliver high-quality instruction tailored to student needs. Moreover, reimagining the traditional structure to reduce teachers' in-building hours not only offers them greater work-life balance but also presents opportunities for cost-effective solutions.

Leverage All Building Level Adults: Introducing less expensive staff to cover monitoring duties such as hallway supervision, lunch, and recess enables a redistribution of resources, maximizing efficiency without compromising on student safety or support. Further, building the structure to allow for key training and learning moments for paraprofessionals, tutors, substitutes, and aids to grow and develop allows for a continuous pipeline. Embracing flexible scheduling not only enhances teacher productivity and satisfaction but also lays the foundation for a more agile and responsive educational ecosystem.



Conclusion

This Educator Engagement Resource underscores the imperative of adopting a comprehensive approach to education that addresses more than just vacancies. The Strengthening the Pipeline project is a multifaceted approach to reimagining human capital. By prioritizing educator retention alongside recruitment efforts, this toolkit advocates for scalable and customizable support initiatives, acknowledging the various considerations at the system level.

From fostering professional development opportunities to championing the recognition of educators' contributions, it underscores the significance of sustaining and empowering those currently in classrooms while also attracting new talent to the profession. Through collaborative efforts and strategic implementation, we can strengthen our educational ecosystems, ensuring the success and well-being of both educators and students alike.