

CHIEFS
for **CHANGE**

REGISTERED TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM: SYSTEM'S STARTING GUIDE



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Executive Summary

The Challenging Landscape. Throughout the nation, educators play a crucial role in shaping the path to success for our students. Every day, teachers inspire the next generation of future leaders, accelerating the formation of a promising workforce for our country's future. Further, district and state systems work thoughtfully to advance and accelerate opportunities for the workforce to grow and flourish. However, for decades, the education system has grappled with persistent challenges in attracting, recruiting, and retaining high-quality educators. Lasting change has been hard to come by in education as the field historically moves slowly to ensure new adjustments, pilots, and promising programs are set to positively impact our systems. In recent years, there have been no shortage of changes to the landscape, particularly among the educator workforce. District and state leadership are positioned to rethink their comprehensive human capital approach to educator talent.

The Clear Opportunity. Systems are looking for replicable strategies for supporting and elevating the teaching profession. Addressing issues related to the teacher pipeline and continuum requires multiple strategies from a local, state, national, and systems-driven level. In the classroom, nothing matters more to student learning than a child's teacher. Teachers deserve both the respect and support essential to do their jobs well, including programs that effectively prepare them for the classroom; a fair compensation and benefits package; high-quality instructional materials aligned to state standards with related professional learning; and opportunities to grow as professionals, serve as leaders, and advance in their careers. For many systems, that begins with establishing programs to recruit high-quality educators and leaders.

Registered Educator Apprenticeship Programs. In January 2022, the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) was approved by the U.S. Department of Labor to establish a permanent Grow Your Own (GYO) model to be scaled and adopted throughout the state. Led by Chiefs for Change, former Commissioner Penny Schwinn, Tennessee was the first state in the country to sponsor Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship programs between school districts and Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs). Since 2022, more than 40 states have initiated applications to register educator apprenticeship programs.

The educator apprenticeship model aligns leading practices in teacher preparation and development with the rigors and funding of the national registered apprenticeship process. To support highest quality program development and implementation, this playbook is intended to help member systems evaluate and launch their own registered educator apprenticeship programs.

This Playbook is divided into three sections:

1. Building the Framework & Plan
2. Designing the Program Elements
3. Launching for Impact

Introduction

APPRENTICESHIP 101

A Registered Apprenticeship Program is a proven workforce model validated by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) or a State Apprenticeship Agency. Having registered for the program through the USDOL, the Teacher Occupation Apprenticeship model meets national quality standards that are hallmarks for both employers and job seekers.

Regardless of the type of program, a registered apprenticeship must meet the following essential components:

1

Employer Involvement: Employers (districts) are the foundation of every registered Apprenticeship program

2

Structured On-the-Job Training: Apprentices receive training from an experienced mentor teacher while working on-site for the best learning and access

3

Related Technical Instruction: Apprenticeships combine on-the-job training with focused coursework learning through EPPs

4

Compensation for Skill Gains: Apprentices receive wage increases as they gain higher-level skills.

5

National Occupation Credential: Programs lead to a nationally recognized credential (not to replace a teacher's license) that signals to employers the apprentice has completed the registered, recognized program

Registered Apprenticeship is a tried-and-true approach to preparing workers for jobs – and meeting the demand for a highly-skilled workforce that continues to innovate and adapt to meet the needs of our current classrooms and future students.

PART ONE: BUILDING THE FRAMEWORK & PLAN

Partnerships should identify the key members who will work together, the workforce problem they jointly aim to solve, the program's target population, the general roles and responsibilities between members, and an initial work plan.

1A: District Staffing Needs Assessment

Introduction. The first step in creating a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program is identifying the needs of the employing district. Assessing teacher vacancies — both for the present and future projections — will help identify target numbers for recruiting program participants, potential areas to train developing teachers, and specific areas of focus for the program. It is also important to consider what competencies and backgrounds are most needed. For example, districts may identify teacher demographics and familiarity with special populations like English learners and students with disabilities as prioritized needs of focus. It is essential for partnerships to prioritize which areas will be supported by the sustained, long-term effort of building a robust pipeline of teacher candidates.

Collect & Organize Data. First, districts and partners should organize, collect, and review several years of human capital data. Leading practices suggest the last three years of data reveal substantial and consistent talent gaps in the district. Further, data should also be reviewed by grade level, subject area, and certification area. Finally, data should be collected across positions. For instance, available assistant vacancies can be addressed by placing teacher apprentices in those roles as they develop subject expertise and train to become classroom teachers.

Consider the following data categories:

- **Vacancies** - Number of vacancies at the start of each year for the last three years or longer across grade and subject areas
- **Retention** - Length of time instructional staff have been teaching with the district overall and at their current school, across grades and subject areas if possible
- **Demographics** - Race/ethnicity, gender, experience, and languages spoken of current instructional staff across grade and subject areas
- **Retirement/Resignation/ Non-Renewals** - Number of retirements, resignations, and non-renewals for the last three years or longer, across grade-levels and subject areas
- **Certification Subject Area(s)** - Subject areas/grade levels teachers are endorsed in, across three or more years where possible
- **Teacher Effectiveness Ratings** - Teacher performance across grade and subject levels

1B: Identify Teachers Most Needed in the Local Community



Research supports that a demographically representative teaching force has a variety of positive impacts on students, including in the areas of academic achievement, discipline, and social development. Furthermore, evidence supports that increasing educators' connection to the community can reduce teacher vacancies in rapidly demographically changing schools.



Registered Teacher Apprenticeships can increase workforce representation as districts, states, and EPP programs strive to attract a diverse group of qualified individuals that reflect their local community and student needs.

Registered Teacher Apprenticeships are a promising lever for growing a demographically representative workforce.

Program teams can compare:

- Demographics of partner EPP's program enrollment and graduates
- Demographics of the state teacher workforce
- demographics of the state population
- Demographics of the local community



1C: Identify a Source of Future Teachers

After reviewing the teachers most needed in the local community, systems should identify the source of future teachers. Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Programs can support multiple sources of talent, including but not limited to:

- High School Students
- Paraprofessionals or Teaching Assistants
- School-Based Staff
- Early Retirees
- Career Changers



Chosen populations are dependent on the local context, and partnerships may have a greater chance of successfully recruiting from populations who have already indicated a high level of interest in becoming teachers, hold significant enough size as a population to warrant a program and fit within the resource parameters of the partnership.

1D: Identify Strong CCC or EPP Partner



Above all, strong partnerships should be aligned on teacher recruitment and retention goals, maintain the capacity to support and contribute to the success of the program and demonstrate a willingness to collaborate and sustain a strong working relationship.

DISTRICTS SHOULD CONSIDER

- EPPs Report Card or Overall Performance Indicators
- EPPs enrollment and representation of graduates based on areas of alignment
- Rate of graduates of the EPP being hired into district schools

EPPS SHOULD CONSIDER

- Districts annual staffing and vacancy reports
- Districts hiring and representation needs based on staffing data for areas of alignment
- Student performance and areas of greatest academic need for acceleration

1E: Review Partnership Roles and Responsibilities

Establishing the right project team and the correct division of roles and responsibilities among team members is an important task for long-term success.

The scale and team structure will vary significantly across districts and states. Teams should make locally informed decisions about their own internal talent, experience, and capacity to best support the project work recognizing that each system will be unique in structure. In instances where system teams are small and capacity are limited, it is important to partner with EPPs who are able to accommodate project needs.

- **District:** The project lead should ideally be a member of the district's executive team and could operate in a role comparable to Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operations Officer, Head of Human Resources or Talent, or other similar leadership role. Ideally, the project lead will oversee the district's teacher recruitment strategy and operations and be able to support district resources and capacity behind the project.
- **State:** The project lead should ideally be a member of the state's team in one of the following lanes: Human Capital, Licensure and Preparation, Teacher Effectiveness, or Innovation.
- **EPPs:** The project lead is typically the person who oversees high-impact components of educator preparation programming, such as faculty, administrative staff, or institutional leadership.



PART TWO: DESIGNING THE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Once partnerships determine shared goals and program outcomes, the team can drive towards designing a registered teacher apprenticeship. Though the registration paperwork is not extensive, it is essential that teams spend the time designing a program to meet the local recruitment needs to best accelerate student achievement.

Program design will include key elements, such as the sequence and structure of an apprentice's coursework and on-the-job learning experience, the budget and capacity partnerships are committing to the project, and specific details around the size and scope of the training effort. Applicants should review components of this playbook, consult the U.S. Department of Labor resources for establishing an apprenticeship program, and work with their respective state or local workforce team to ensure they are meeting the standards for a registered apprenticeship. The materials that follow provide details on each component of a registered apprenticeship model, as well other essential areas for consideration.

2A: Program Size and Selection

Program Size

Systems should identify how many teachers the partnership will seek to train and in what specific grade and subject areas. The decision should be made in consideration of the district's long-term hiring needs as well as the partnership's budget and capacity to support the project. Partnerships may have to choose among several shortage areas and train more teachers than potentially needed, understanding that even model programs have candidate attrition. The ideal cohort size may vary year to year as well.

Program Capacity

Partnerships should ensure they have adequate staff and support to cover the costs of training their desired number of future teachers. Systems may focus on building up cohort size over time as the program demonstrates success and return on investment. Above all, partnerships should ensure they have the resources to sustain any cohort over the full duration of their program (1-3 years).

Program Selection

Selecting and vetting potential apprenticeship candidates is a significant decision and can ultimately impact apprentice retention and teacher success rates. Determining how apprentices will be admitted into the program and what criteria partnerships will use to evaluate candidates is the first key transition point in any apprenticeship program.

The system-led process for apprentice selection comes before the EPP admissions process.

This allows for systems to admit apprentices into community college coursework, gain the correct course credits, boost scores for entrance requirements at EPPs, or acclimate the candidate to the rigors of a program prior to higher-level coursework and exit requirements.

Finally, systems should be sure to review the federal apprenticeship requirements for the application process.



2B: Refine for Competency-Based RTI

Some of the prospective teacher apprenticeship candidate pools include individuals who do not have the requisite level of college coursework to immediately begin their related instruction with an EPP partner. Partnerships should consider admitting applicants who demonstrate the promise and commitment to become teachers but may need additional support in meeting admission requirements to enter an EPP.



First, partnerships can identify initial selection criteria for the apprenticeship program that will allow apprentices to begin receiving the support and learning they need to qualify for admittance into an EPP.

Second, partnerships should collaboratively refine their program expectations to prioritize the competency-based components of the program.

For instance, many ideal teacher apprentice candidates have spent years in school systems. EPPs and systems can agree upon credit-for-prior-learning assessments or portfolio and artifact demonstrations to recognize competency in certain courses and standards.



Note: Apprenticeships can be registered as hybrid, time-bound, or competency-based. The R-TAP programs are competency-based.

2C: Establish On-the-Job Learning Hours & Exit Requirements

Every apprenticeship program includes structured on-the-job learning, and apprentices get hands-on training from an experienced mentor at the job site. On-the-job learning is developed by mapping the skills and knowledge that the apprentice must learn over the course of the program to be fully proficient at the job.



Although competency-based programs, teacher apprentices are recommended to attain 2000 hours of on-the-job training per year of their program. The on-the-job learning hours should align to a partnership's established learning hour requirements. When completed in conjunction with their related academic coursework, the required hours should enable apprentices to be proficient in the apprenticeship's set of on-the-job learning competencies. Ultimately, proficiency in these competencies should indicate that an apprentice is ready to be a fully certified classroom teacher.

Many systems elect to place the apprentice as a teacher's aide, creating flexibility for both system needs daily and the competencies necessary for program completion.



2D: Establishing Master Mentor Teachers

Each apprentice should have a mentor teacher to support them throughout the apprenticeship. Teacher candidates should be working collaboratively with their mentor teacher as an instructional team and should have ongoing opportunities to apply content and pedagogical knowledge. Further, systems should offer both training and stipends to their mentor teachers, ensuring highest quality retention for their leading instructors as they take on additional responsibility and leadership support.

The on-the-job learning experience should allow for ongoing feedback and support to teacher candidates, encouraging them to reflect on their practice and make adjustments. Mentor teachers should be trained in conducting evaluations and providing actionable feedback, encouraging teacher candidates to utilize feedback to support their greatest growth.

2E: Determining Compensation for the Teacher Apprentices

Providing apprentices with escalating job responsibilities where they can learn on-the-job is an essential component of the model. Apprentices are also required to receive pay and reflective increases as their skills and knowledge increase. Providing apprentices with escalating job responsibilities where they can learn on-the-job is an essential component of the model. Apprentices are also required to receive pay and reflective increases as their skills and knowledge increase.

Apprentices shall be paid a progressively increasing schedule of wages based on either a percentage or a dollar amount of the current hourly journey worker wage rate, which is: \$27.42.





2F: Offer Comprehensive Support for All Apprentices

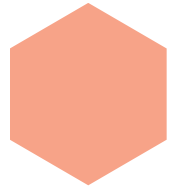
Apprentices will require support and guidance through each stage of the apprenticeship process, and in some cases, participants may require support beyond that traditionally provided by an EPP. Many teacher apprentice programs will include candidates who are returning learners, work full-time, are first-generation college students, maintain family responsibilities, or are not native English speakers.

When identifying target populations, it is important that stakeholders build measures to reduce barriers to program design. Research suggests that investing in comprehensive, student-centered support for teacher candidates that are intentionally designed to meet their needs can support completion rates. Partnerships should engage each cohort of apprentices upon the start of their pathway to understand their needs.

Potential additional supports include:

- **Academic Support.** Built-in tutoring, educational planning, advising, and support for developing academic skills (such as study habits, time management, note-taking, etc.) are important components of a comprehensive approach.
 - **Social Support.** Built-in tutoring, educational planning, advising, and support for developing academic skills (such as study habits, time management, note taking, etc.) are important components of a comprehensive approach.
 - **Financial Support.** Access to funding to cover costs that may be prohibitive outside of tuition - textbooks, supplies, transportation, child care, etc. - can incentivize student's participation.
 - **Dedicated Support Staff.** Hiring or appointing an individual to support students in navigating the program from start to finish is a very useful addition to program design.
 - **Test Preparation Support.** Providing test preparation support for licensure exams supports the needs of students who may struggle with test taking.
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Part Three: **Launching for Impact**



3A: Staffing and Budget Modeling

Staffing

Supporting the apprenticeship with an effective staff is key to successful implementation. Each system's cohort size and need will vary; however, positions for staffing consideration are included below:

- (District) Educator Pipeline Facilitator - oversees new teacher performance in the classroom, provides support and counseling, and offers evaluations to identify areas of improvement
- (District) Mentor Teachers - serve as apprentices' primary teacher mentors and host apprentices as teacher aides in their classrooms
- (District) Multi-Classroom Leaders - supervise multiple teams of mentor teachers and their apprentice teacher aides, ensuring classrooms are successfully improving student outcomes
- (EPP) University Supervisor - oversees new teacher performance in the classroom, provides support and counseling, and offers evaluations to identify areas that need improvement

Scaling Up or Down

Local need varies in the available and interested talent pools, and the notes below include recommendations for scaling the staffing model up or down based on context:



Recommendations for Small Staff Models

- Partner with other districts to help offset program costs and staffing capacity issues
- Utilize existing staff to fill some responsibilities of the apprenticeship program
- Start small with the apprenticeship cohort size and increase the scale over time as the program demonstrates results



Recommendations for Larger Staff Models

- Add additional pathways to meet all of the human capital needs in the district
- Add staff dedicated to monitoring and evaluating the program
- Include more support staff focused on supporting apprentices throughout the pathway



Budget

Successful partnerships should include a budget model that identifies how funds are allocated and what funds are tied to specific staffing, activities, and other important program components. To ensure sustainability of the program, the budget model should be frequently amended and discussed with the core team.

Consider the following questions for evaluating funding sources:

Federal, State, System, and Local Dollars

- 1. What sources of funding does the district already have available for the program?**
 - a. Can part of the district's operational budget be spent on the program?
 - b. What Title II dollars, or other educator and staff-facing funds, are available?
- 2. What other sources of funding can be utilized to help fund the program?**
 - a. What are other possible local funding sources that can be used for programming?
 - b. Are there any available state, federal, or philanthropic grant opportunities that could support this innovative program?
 - c. Are there specific funding sources available for apprenticeship or workforce development that can be utilized?
 - d. Are there state or US DOL funding opportunities for workforce development or apprenticeships?
- 3. What sources of funding do partnerships have available to supplement the program?**
 - a. Do any of the partners have any grant funding it could use to help fund the program, either funding dedicated to EPPs or LWDAs?
 - b. Are there any other sources of funding the partnerships may have to help fund this program?

Candidate-Specific Funds

Partners can investigate additional sources of funding specific to each candidate. Eligibility will vary depending on the background of each apprentice, but should be determined in the student enrollment process in consultation with the EPP's financial aid office to maximize the benefits and reduce overall costs.



Several considerations should include:

- **Pell Grants** - Apprenticeship participants that are veterans will have access to additional education financial benefits that can support the costs of tuition at the EPP program.
- **GI Benefits for Veterans or Dependents** - Apprenticeship participants who are veterans will have access to additional education and financial benefits that can support the costs of tuition at the EPP program.
- **Federal Funding for Employment & Training for SNAP Recipients** - Individuals eligible for federal SNAP benefits may also be eligible for federal workforce and training funds to support their participation in an apprenticeship program.
- **State or Local Scholarship Opportunities** - Program participants may be eligible for various Tennessee state and local scholarship programs. Programs should specifically consider how participants could be eligible for state scholarships and other grant programs.

3B: MOU

Once partnerships have established a proposed model and are ready to launch, it is important to establish a legal agreement between partners that details program obligations and responsibilities.

It is recommended practice to involve your legal team early on in drafting these documents to ensure your organization is adequately represented and that the MOU is aligned with organizational practices and commitments. This MOU between the district, EPP, and other key partners should outline the role and responsibilities of each party involved, commitments and expectations, and partnership parameters (termination, compensation, etc.). Other partners besides the district and EPP should be included if they are obligated to administer or be involved in any key responsibilities in executing the apprenticeship program.

Lastly, it is important to include an articulated data-sharing agreement for potential research and evaluation partners.

3C: Comms & Marketing - Teachers & Programmatic Support

Identifying a comprehensive and detailed communications, recruitment and marketing plan for a teacher apprenticeship program is a significant step to launching and implementing a successful program. There are key messages that should be heard by various audiences, and partnerships will need to be thoughtful about ensuring their communications arrive to and resonate with the appropriate stakeholders.

1. **Recruiting Program Staff** - Partnerships may also find that the positions from which they are recruiting may have their own workforce shortage challenges. Sharing stories of impact and potential to find mentor teachers and district staff is essential.
2. **Internal Communications** - Strong internal communication will positively impact program apprentices and staff recruitment and ensure the program has supporters across the district and EPP. Partnerships should consider highlighting the new apprentices and positive impact the program will have for the school district.
3. **Communicating the Program to the Community** - It is essential to communicate the program and its benefits to key stakeholders - such as school boards, local elected officials, and community leaders - who can ultimately support and champion the program's purpose and outcomes.

Messages and stories may choose to include several of the following components:

- Saturating multiple formats
- Focusing on simple messages
- Clearing away obstacles
- Addressing concerns
- Aligning with broader messaging campaigns, like National Apprenticeship Week



3D: Program Impact

To move towards measuring impact, partnerships should - as a start - consider the following three categories of information in the design of the program's data collection and evaluation strategy:

1. **Intended Program Impact and Outcome** - Specifically define what the program does, the goal(s) the program intends to achieve, and how it plans to go about accomplishing these goals.
2. **Indicators of Success** - Establish a set of metrics to evaluate the program's success. What would it look like when the program achieves the intended goals? What measures really matter in relation to the intended outcomes?
 - a. Establish common performance measures that can be standardized across partnerships to facilitate comprehensive program evaluations.
 - b. Consider both output and outcome measures, short-term and long-term impacts.
3. **Indicator Measures** - How did the performance demonstrate the key indicators above?
 - a. Design ongoing data collection routines to regularly evaluate effectiveness.
 - b. Collect participant and other stakeholder feedback through surveys, interviews, focus groups, document reviews, etc.



3E: Additional Resources

You can find additional supporting documents, guidelines, and exemplars on USDOL's [Apprenticeship.gov](https://www.apprenticeship.gov) website, including but not limited to:

1. [Dear Colleague Letter](#): Department of Labor and Education collaborate on joint strategies to address teacher workforce challenges
2. [Education Webinar](#): Scaling the Teacher Pipeline and Career Pathways through Registered Apprenticeship
3. [Factsheet](#): Biden-Harris Administration Announces Private and Public Sector Actions to Strengthen Teaching Profession and Help Schools Fill Vacancies
4. [Common Terms](#): Explore common terms in Teacher Registered Apprenticeships
5. [Education Webinar](#): Leveraging Registered Apprenticeship for K-12 Teacher Careers

