

Registered Apprenticeship Programs for Teacher Preparation Recommended Standards and Design Principles

This brief was developed by the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). October 2022

The United States Department of Labor (DOL) provides a framework of key elements for all Registered apprenticeship programs. Following the organizational structure of the DOL's framework, the following recommendations are offered as standards and design principles for any registered teacher preparation apprenticeship program.

Industry Led - Programs are industry-vetted and approved to ensure alignment with industry standards and that apprentices are trained for highly skilled, high-demand occupations.

Collaboration

The apprenticeship partnership understands the importance of collaboration and identifies P-16 stakeholders committed to using teacher apprenticeships to advance teacher quality and student learning as apprenticeship partners. Partners, as key stakeholders, must each be included in co-creation of curriculum and experiences, implementation, evaluation, and ongoing program improvement. Essential partners include:

- school districts
- teacher associations/unions
- state-approved educator preparation programs
- social service agencies
- teacher licensing organizations
- school-based educators
- state and local labor boards

Program Design

The apprenticeship partnership employs partner expertise and recognized educational standards, proven preparation program and clinical practice research, and program evaluation tools to design approved teacher residency/apprenticeship program options for local districts to adopt.

Program Evaluation

The apprenticeship partnership recognizes the importance of continuous improvement and implements an annual evaluation system that evaluates program design, implementation, feasibility, and sustainability for each school district participating in a registered apprenticeship.

Paid Job - Apprenticeships are jobs! Apprentices earn progressive wage as their skills and productivity increase.

Apprentice Compensation

- Apprentices will be paid for their time in the classroom.
- Upon the successful completion of pre-determined courses, apprentices receive an increase in pay.
- As apprentices demonstrate additional skills and knowledge through completion of clinical modules/rounds within their program, pay should also increase.
- Base compensation for apprentices must be equal to or greater than the substitute teacher rate for the school district hosting the apprentices and be adjusted for relevant existing skills.

Structured On-the-Job Learning/Mentorship - Programs provide structured on-the-job training to prepare for a successful career, which includes instruction from an experienced mentor.

Supplemental Education - Apprentices are provided supplemental classroom education based on the employers unique training needs to ensure quality and success.

Note: Due to the crucial design principle of integrating structured “clinical practice” (on-the-job learning/mentoring) and comprehensive teacher preparation coursework (supplemental education), we present these two elements together.

Education

- Apprentices will participate in education courses in a comprehensive teacher education program in collaboration with an accredited local college.
- Coursework within the program may be completed through a partnership including both community college and four-year colleges.
- Apprentices will receive on-the-job training from an experienced mentor teacher in a relationship that is supported by best practice and research.

Program design should include the following learning experiences and goals for the apprentice:

- Duration and setting: To understand the range of responsibilities and challenges, and to have adequate opportunities to practice skills and engage in coaching and mentoring, a candidate should participate in a full academic year of clinical practice working alongside a cooperating mentor teacher who is the teacher of record for their classroom.
- Range of experiences: Specific experiences should be designed and implemented collaboratively (Educator Preparation Program (EPP), schools, cooperating mentor teacher, and candidate) with a full range of specific topics and skills (derived from the InTASC Standards). These may be designed in a set of experiences similar to the medical model using ‘rounds’ with aspiring physicians.
- Support for candidates to successfully complete both EPP and state-required assessments (including course assessments, clinical practice observations, Praxis Core or other assessment of general academic content, Praxis II or other assessment of content knowledge, and performance-based assessments of teaching skills such as edTPA)
- Emphasis should be provided to address:
 - Research-based classroom management strategies
 - Demonstrated ability to apply knowledge of brain-based research on supporting learning through appropriate attention to:
 - Social-emotional learning
 - Culturally responsive practices
 - Trauma-sensitive practices
 - Restorative practices
 - Understanding (on multiple levels) unconscious bias, implicit bias, systemic and institutional racism, and other sources of inequity.
 - Understanding and reflecting on one’s personal cultural and experiential lenses and how those influence our beliefs and actions.
 - Seeking feedback and coaching to grow personally, mitigating bias, micro-aggressions, and inequitable actions.
 - Cultivate socially just learning environments.
 - Explore and begin to challenge inequities with individuals and systems.
- Portions of the preparation coursework may be based in community colleges. The program may include a partnership specifically between the community college and a four-year college/university to provide the full range of academic preparation for candidates to be profession-ready by the end of their apprenticeship. A

common model may include general academic coursework through the community college and educator specific coursework and field experiences through the four-year+ EPP.

Mentorship/Professional Collaboration

- Apprentices will be paired with a mentor teacher who will provide classroom-based guidance and coaching and will model effective instructional practice for the apprentice.
- Clinical experiences are developed to provide ongoing opportunities for teacher candidates to plan and deliver lessons and then analyze and reflect on their own teaching practice with clinical educators and peers. (TR, 2014, page 7)
- Apprenticeships include frequent assessment and feedback, so candidates improve their skills. (TR, 2014, page 7)
- Apprenticeship programs are designed to support improved student learning. (TR, 2014, page 7)
- The mentor teacher helps the apprentice understand school and community culture and identifies ways to support the school's mission and goals.
- The mentor teacher helps the apprentice identify professional goals and develops a plan to accomplish them and facilitates participation in professional development activities and developing professional relationships with other school colleagues.
- Apprentices collaborate with mentor teachers to design and develop lesson plans that incorporate methodologies and knowledge taught in their academic coursework.
- Collaboratively developed criteria for the selection of mentor teachers should include (from *Great Teaching and Learning* report, p. 14-15):
 - Mentors have demonstrated accomplished practice/are identified as skillful practitioners (minimum three years' experience).
 - Mentors are well versed in the curriculum, assessments, experiences, and theoretical underpinnings of the preparation program.
 - Mentors model a commitment to continuous learning that strengthens professional practice.
 - Mentors engage in ongoing reflection that deepens their understanding of self, the culture and backgrounds of their students, colleagues, and communities.
 - Mentors demonstrate the ability to work well with adults in roles including teaching, mentoring, and coaching.
 - Mentors demonstrate a commitment to their students, their school, and their profession.
 - Mentors embrace the role of mentor and coach to promote the quality of the profession.
- Mentors receive training and ongoing support for their role working with candidates including:
 - Training for working with adult learners in their capacity as a mentor teacher.
 - Focused preparation to support the mentor in both their own reflection and continuous growth and understanding of unconscious bias and cultural competence, and to guide the candidate in growth and understanding of these topics as they work with students, families, and professional colleagues.
 - Orientation from the partner EPP to provide mentoring that aligns with their instructional models.
 - Orientation to support candidates through both EPP- and state-required assessments (including course assessments, clinical practice observations, Praxis Core or other assessment of general academic content, Praxis II or other assessment of content knowledge, and performance-based assessments such as edTPA).
- Mentors receive compensation or an incentive as part of their participation in addition to their regular teacher's salary in the school/district where the apprenticeship program is based.
- Mentor compensation recommendations may include the following:
 - An annual stipend for the mentor
 - Additional options for indirect compensation may include:
 - Mentoring could become a qualification for additional federal student loan forgiveness
 - Mentor training and mentoring hours will be considered eligible professional
 - development hours for the maintenance of teacher certification

Diversity - Programs are designed to reflect the communities in which they operate through strong non-discrimination, anti-harassment, and recruitment practices to ensure access, equity, and inclusion.

Recruitment

- The apprenticeship partnership works with human resources experts to develop recruitment goals and campaigns, candidate screening tools, scholarship/tuition waiver options, and attractive compensation and benefits packages to identify and retain education apprentices. In recognition of the unique skills developed as current school employees, human resources experts will target recruitment efforts towards Education Support Professionals (ESPs) and school support staff.
- Recruitment should result in a diverse pool of apprentices that reflects either the diversity of the region where the apprenticeship is based or the diversity of the nation, whichever is greater.
- Recruitment data is reviewed annually and used to amend the overall recruitment plan.

Retention and Successful Program Completion

- The apprenticeship partnership implements strategies to provide an organizational culture that supports diverse apprentices, honoring and valuing their diversity, and tapping their varied backgrounds as assets to the program and the profession.
- The partnership provides targeted supports for the academic success of each apprentice and to ensure successful completion of all requirements and assessments necessary for program completion and to receive state certification/licensure.
- The partnership tracks the success of apprenticeship program participants through the initial years of induction as early career educators.
- Data is collected from apprentices and program partners throughout recruitment, participation, induction, and after completion to inform program design, expansion/scale, and to ensure high quality and inclusive outcomes.

Equity/Support Services

- Apprentices receive information about state and local social service agencies to gain access to needed supports (e.g., childcare, transportation, insurance).

Scholarship

- Apprentices do not incur charges for tuition for courses and clinical practice experiences during the apprenticeship program.

Quality & Safety - Apprentices are afforded worker protections while receiving rigorous training to equip them with the skills they need to succeed and the proper training and supervision they need to be safe.

- Apprentices are eligible to participate in their college's NEA Aspiring Educators (AE) program. Through the AE program, apprentices receive access to professional enhancements and leadership advancement opportunities, as well as to liability coverage for all professional duties while participating in the apprenticeship program.
- Apprentices participate in all safety training experiences offered to school and district employees (e.g., blood-borne pathogen training).

Credentials - Apprentices earn a portable, nationally-recognized credential within their industry.

- Apprentices will earn/hold a bachelor's degree or higher by the completion of the program.
- Apprentices will meet the requirement for a content-bachelor's degree as required for certification or licensure in states where this is applicable.
- For candidates who already hold a bachelor's degree (e.g., career changers) or who earn the bachelor's degree for a content area, the apprenticeship program may also lead to a master's degree.
- Successful completion of the program will allow apprentices to earn a state teaching credential.

Appendix

Resources

Apprenticeship – Employers - <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/registered-apprenticeship-program>

5 Key Building Blocks - <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/registered-apprenticeship-program>

Registered Apprenticeship Standards Builder - <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/employers/registered-apprenticeship-program/register/standards-builder>

Program Evaluation Standards (Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation)
<https://evaluationstandards.org/program/>

NEA report: [*Great Teaching and Learning: Creating the Culture to Support Professional Excellence*](#). (2017)

The case for higher standards for teaching - <https://www.aft.org/sites/default/files/news/raisingthebar2013.pdf>