

Registered Teacher Apprenticeship State Policy Guide

Registered teacher apprenticeship programs (RTAPs) are a relatively new form of educator preparation that remove barriers for aspiring educators by allowing them to earn a salary, train with experienced mentors, and work towards licensure and, when applicable, a degree at little to no cost. For districts and educator preparation programs (EPPs), teacher apprenticeships can serve as customizable, employer-driven pathways to meet local workforce needs. Although teacher apprenticeship programs can vary by program and state, they are often tailor-made for currently employed, non-teacher school staff (such as paraprofessionals or long-term substitutes) who are looking to advance their careers as teachers-of-record.

How can teacher apprenticeship programs support marginalized student populations?

Teachers are the [most influential](#) in-school factor for student success; they strengthen academic achievement and provide students with months' worth of additional learning. The influence of good teachers [extends beyond](#) just test scores — they help drive critical long-term achievements, such as high school completion, college enrollment, and future earning potential. Despite the well-known impact of high-quality educators, students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are consistently [less likely](#) to have access to these crucial supports than their white and higher-income peers.

Beyond access to high-quality educators, students of color also find themselves far less likely to have educators who reflect their race or ethnicity. These students thrive when they have teachers who look like them, and research consistently shows that teachers of color benefit all students — [especially students of color](#). Black and Latino students who have teachers of the same race or ethnicity are [less likely](#) to be suspended and are more likely to graduate high school, attend college, and obtain a post-secondary degree or credential. Yet, the proportion of teachers of color in the classroom fails to reflect the share of students of color across the country. While more than half of U.S. public school students are individuals of color, only about [20% of teachers](#) share similar racial and ethnic backgrounds and, as a result, many students attend schools [without a single teacher of color](#).

Inequitable access to a diverse and high-quality educator workforce not only deprives today's students of rich perspectives that are crucial for their growth and success, but it also reflects the urgent need to cultivate the diverse talent needed to meet the demands of the nation's teacher workforce. The proliferation of RTAPs could increase the number of aspiring teachers of color who can access seamless, affordable, and flexible pathways that effectively prepare them to succeed in the classroom and stay in the profession.

State Example: Massachusetts

Massachusetts has emerged as a strong example of a state building RTAP infrastructure [centered around diversifying its teacher workforce](#). The state plans to build an RTAP model that is grounded in culturally and linguistically sustaining teaching and learning environments; embedded in local communities to close existing gaps between student and teacher demographics; focused explicitly on filling high-need, hard-to-staff roles; supported by organizations committed to equity-driven preparation and support; and provides multiple entry points for all types of aspiring teachers.

Questions to Ask District Leaders about Implementation, Evaluation, and Program Monitoring

1. Understanding Teacher Apprenticeship Structure and Design

- Is the program registered with the U.S. Department of Labor or a State Apprenticeship Agency?
- Can apprentices serve as teachers-of-record during any part of the apprenticeship?
- Will apprentices receive a specific type of licensure? (SPED, STEM, etc.)
- How many apprentices do you hope to support each year?
- What are the eligibility requirements to enroll in a program?
- Do aspiring candidates need to be currently employed school staff?
- Has the EPP/district published its local apprenticeship standards that outline program design, required competencies, wage schedules, etc.?
- Will these programs be free for apprentices? If not, how much will the program cost?
- How does the district's teacher apprenticeship strategy overlap with existing teacher preparation and recruitment methods offered (such as Grow Your Own programs, teacher residencies, etc.)?

Data to consider

- School-level data on teacher diversity and equity
 - Teacher retention rates, disaggregated by race/ethnicity
 - Out-of-field teacher rates
 - Certified teacher rates
- EPP enrollment data disaggregated by race/ethnicity
- District-level shortages by subject and school
- State and district strategic plans
- Any state-level guidance issued by the legislature, governor, SEA, or other education groups.

2. Recruitment Strategies

- Are there recruitment strategies to place apprentices at schools in need of additional teachers of color and high-quality teachers?
 - For larger districts, is there intent to prioritize building RTAP infrastructure in schools with the greater needs, including schools with the highest proportion of underserved students?
- How is the district marketing their teacher apprenticeship program with potential applicants?
- Is there an intentional effort to recruit from communities with a high proportion of potential candidates of color?
- Does the program offer opportunities where aspiring candidates, especially candidates of color, can meet with current or recently graduated apprentices?
- Will apprentices who successfully graduate from this program be guaranteed employment opportunities, as teachers-of-record, in the district?

Data to consider

- Current district recruitment strategies
- School-level data on teacher diversity and equity
 - Teacher retention rates, disaggregated by race/ethnicity
 - Out-of-field teacher rates
 - Certified teacher rates
- EPP enrollment data disaggregated by race/ethnicity
- District-level shortages by subject and school

3. School Climate and Apprentice Satisfaction

- What is the determined wage schedule for apprentices? How much will they make at the start of their program? How much will they make at the end of their program?
- What is the ratio of apprentices to mentors?
- Will apprentices have an opportunity to select or identify potential mentorship pairs?
- Are mentors given a stipend, or additional pay, for training teacher apprentices?
- Do active apprentices have opportunities to provide upward feedback about mentorship opportunities, program experience, and/or desired supports?
- What supports are available for currently employed teachers of color?
 - Does the district/school organize intentional spaces for school staff to connect and collaborate (i.e., affinity groups)
- Does the district administer teacher satisfaction surveys?

Data to consider

- School-level data on teacher diversity and equity
 - Teacher retention rates, disaggregated by race/ethnicity
- Teacher satisfaction survey data
- District budgets
 - Cost of mentor teacher bonuses
 - Retention bonuses

Other Resources on the Topic

- **ApprenticeshipUSA:** [Explore Registered Apprenticeship](#)
- **ARE Advocating Across Government tool, Teaching Quality and Diversity:** Outlines what state, district, and school leaders can each do to provide students with equitable access to high-quality, diverse educators. Advocates can use this guide to identify who should be the target their advocacy.
- **ARE Guidebook: Teaching Quality and Diversity:** Provides a list of policy and practice suggestions for schools and districts designed to address inequities in access to high-quality, diverse educators. Advocates can use this guide to make suggestions to change to district practices based on the answers to the above questions.
- **Learning Policy Institute:** [How States Can Support Teacher Apprenticeship: The Case of Tennessee](#)
- **Pathways Alliance:** [National Guidelines for Apprenticeship Standards for K-12 Teacher Apprenticeships](#)
- **Pathways Alliance:** [Compendium of Apprenticeship Programs](#)
- **RTI International:** [Design Considerations: Mentoring in K-12 Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Programs](#)
- For the full text outlining regulatory requirements for registered apprenticeship programs, see [29 CFR Part 29](#) and [29 CFR Part 30](#)