

A New ERA in Practice

Profiles of Educator Registered Apprenticeship Programs

May 2024

Nicole Reddig, Joyce Milling, Laura Rasmussen Foster,
Elizabeth Standafer, Olivia Rice, and Jessie Stadd

RTI International



This report is the work of the Educator Registered Apprenticeship (ERA) Intermediary, the U.S. Department of Labor funded industry intermediary for educator apprenticeships. This project has been funded, either wholly or in part, with federal funds from the Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration under Contract number [1605C2-23-C-0014], the contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement of same by the U.S. Government.

About the ERA Intermediary

RTI International leads the Educator Registered Apprenticeship (ERA) Intermediary, with the support of WestEd, New America, and TEACHMEducation. With funding from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), the ERA Intermediary provides technical assistance (TA) to state and local education agencies and their partners on the development of Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) in education.

The TA provided by the ERA Intermediary includes opportunities for one-on-one coaching as well as role-alike affinity groups, academies, accelerators, and career fairs. Employer partners who engage in developing a RAP with the support of the ERA Intermediary are also eligible to request incentive funding. For more information about the ERA Intermediary, please visit <https://www.educatorapprenticeships.com/> or email educatorapprenticeships@rti.org. For more information about the Registered Apprenticeship industry partners in your state, see the USDOL Partner Finder website: <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/partner-finder>.

About the “A New ERA in Practice” Series

This report is the first in a series of informational products that explore topics related to educator RAPs nationwide. The report profiles eight programs, including seven K-12 Teacher RAPs that have already enrolled, and in some cases graduated, apprentices, as well as an emerging innovative RAP for K-12 principals. Future reports will dive more deeply into implementation topics, such as funding models and diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful to the following people for graciously sharing their time and knowledge with us and providing the information that informed the program profiles: Reesha Adamson, Michael Broad, Stephen Danna, Mary Ford, Jenny Geno, Kate Hall, Carrie Lively, Colleen McDonald, Canidra McGuire, Bianca Pratt, Tiffany Pruitt, Mary Rinehart, Charlene Sands Russell, Marla Sanders, Susan Tancock, and Bruce Thoren.

Contents

- Executive Summary**..... 4
- Introduction** 6
- Approach** 7
- Synthesis of Profiles** 8
- Educator RAP Profiles** 10
 - Ball State K-12 Teacher RAP (Indiana) 11
 - Saginaw Intermediate School District K-12 Teacher RAP (Michigan) 13
 - Missouri State University K-12 Teacher RAP (Missouri) 15
 - National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE) K-12 Teacher RAP (New Hampshire) 17
 - Classroom Academy K-12 Teacher RAP (New York) 19
 - Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification (APEC) K-12 Teacher RAP (South Carolina) 21
 - Tennessee Department of Education K-12 Teacher RAP (Tennessee) 23
 - Fremont County School District #24 K-12 Principal RAP (Wyoming) 25
- Conclusion** 27
- Next Steps**..... 28
- Glossary** 29
- References**..... 31

Executive Summary

Since the K-12 Teacher Registered Apprentice occupation was first approved in 2021, 30 U.S. states or territories have registered at least one K-12 Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), and 18 have active apprentices.ⁱ In total, there are more than 80 K-12 Teacher RAPs with over 2,100 active apprentices. States also use RAPs for other occupations in education, such as teacher's aides and principals. This report profiles eight RAPs in the education sector across three occupations to demonstrate a complete career pathway: seven K-12 Teacher RAPs and one Principal RAP.ⁱⁱ Collectively, the RAPs profiled in this report enroll over 1,000 apprentices, with more than 90 having completed a RAP (see **Table 1** for full program details). Six of the eight profiled RAPs are in states in which the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL)'s Office of Apprenticeship (OA) is responsible for registering and overseeing RAPs; two of the eight are in states in which a State Apprenticeship Agency (SAA) has responsibility for doing so. The K-12 Teacher RAPs in this report represent a subset of established RAPs with active apprentices. The profiled K-12 Principal RAP represents a growing pathway.

The RAP structure allows for programs to be personalized to the educational needs and experience of the workforce. The RAPs in this report represent varying program sponsors, levels of implementation, recruitment goals, participating populations, and funding mechanisms. Of the eight profiled programs, two are district sponsored, two are educator preparation program sponsored, one is state sponsored, and three are sponsored by another organization, such as a workforce board or nonprofit. Six of the RAPs provide pathways to a bachelor's degree, four to a master's degree, and three to a post-baccalaureate credential.

Nearly all of the profiled RAPs express a goal of addressing local education workforce shortages. For some, that means building a pipeline for high school students to try teaching or upskilling incumbent workers (i.e., paraprofessionals). Seven of the eight profiled RAPs create a pathway for paraprofessionals or other school support staff to advance their careers in a teaching role. Five RAPs target current college students, high school students, and career changers. Four RAPs also support substitute teachers or current teachers looking for additional opportunities.

Educator RAPs offer a tool for recruiting populations that have been historically excluded from the teaching profession with their wraparound supports and earn-while-you-learn model. Seven of the eight RAPs profiled report an explicit focus on recruiting teachers of color while seven report a focus on recruiting teachers with low-income backgrounds. Additionally, five profiled RAPs focus on recruiting and training individuals to become special education teachers or English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers, fields that have historically faced severe workforce shortages. A few programs also expressed goals to recruit teachers with disabilities and armed forces veterans to become teachers. Teacher employment and retention are key intended outcomes of all interviewed RAPs.

Interviewed RAPs also expressed challenges, particularly in the area of funding for both the program itself and to support apprentices in securing available financial resources. Other programs acknowledged the challenge of aligning education and workforce systems and structures in developing educator RAPs.

In summary, while the profiled programs reflect many similar approaches and challenges, each RAP sponsor leveraged the flexibility in design to create unique ways to recruit, train, and retain educators that matched their local needs and priorities.

These profiles are provided for informational purposes only. It is a snapshot in time of activities in these RAPs. It does not imply endorsement or promotion of any RAP design or model by the U.S. Department of Labor.

ⁱ Data included in this report were provided to the ERA Intermediary in, and were accurate as of, November 2023.

ⁱⁱ Ball State University Teacher RAP (IN), Saginaw ISD Teacher RAP (MI), Missouri State University Teacher RAP, New Hampshire Teacher RAP, Classroom Academy Teacher RAP (NY), Tennessee Teacher RAP, Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification Teacher RAP (SC), and Fremont County School District #24 Principal RAP (WY).

Table ES-1

Summary of RAP Characteristics

Characteristic	Ball State University	Saginaw ISD	Missouri State University	National Collaborative for Digital Equity	Classroom Academy	APEC	Tennessee Grow-Your-Own	Fremont County School District #24
Date registered	2022	2022	2020	2022	2021	2022	2022	2023
State	IN	MI	MO	NH	NY	SC	TN	WY
OA/SAA designation	OA	OA	OA	OA	SAA	OA	SAA	OA
Sponsor type	Other	District	EPP	Other	Other	EPP	SEA	District
Occupation	K-12 Teacher	K-12 Teacher	K-12 Teacher	K-12 Teacher	K-12 Teacher	K-12 Teacher	K-12 Teacher	K-12 Principal
Degree obtained during apprenticeship	Bachelor's	Bachelor's	Bachelor's & master's	Bachelor's & post-baccalaureate	Master's	Master's	Bachelor's & post-baccalaureate	Post-baccalaureate & master's
Number enrolled	10	25	194	80	17	37	678	4
Number completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	17	15	59	N/A
Target population								
High school students	•	•	•	•			•	
Paras/support staff		•	•	•	•	•	•	
College students			•	•	•	•	•	
Current teachers								•
Career changers			•	•	•	•	•	
Substitute teachers			•	•			•	
Recruitment goals								
Teachers of color	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
Low-income teachers	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
SPED teachers			•	•		•	•	
ESL teachers							•	
Teachers with disabilities				•			•	
Veterans							•	

APEC = Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification; ESL = English as a Second Language; ISD = Intermediate School District; OA = Office of Apprenticeship; paras = paraprofessionals; SAA = State Apprenticeship Agency; SPED = special education

Introduction

Throughout the United States, individual school districts and state agency teams are seeking to expand the education workforce by growing the teacher pipeline and better aligning the race and ethnicity of teachers with the race and ethnicity of their student populations. These needs arise partly out of the recent pandemic: according to the U.S. Department of Education, only 10 states had returned to pre-pandemic employment levels in public schools as of October 2023.^[1] States' responses to educator shortages include the use of innovative pathway models, such as grow-your-own, teacher residency, and alternative certification processes for lateral entry into the profession. In many cases, these pathways provide the foundation for Educator Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs), which provide on-ramps to a sustainable career in education. Since the K-12 Teacher Registered Apprenticeship occupation was first approved in 2021, 30 U.S. states or territories have registered at least one K-12 Teacher RAP, and 18 have active apprentices.ⁱ In total, there are more than 80 K-12 Teacher RAPs with over 2,100 active apprentices.

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) defines RAPs as "an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience [with a fully qualified mentor], receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally recognized credential."^[2] Apprenticeships can be registered in one of two ways, depending on a state's structure. Some states register programs directly with the USDOL's Office of Apprenticeship whereas others have been granted the ability to run a State Apprenticeship Agency, which registers and approves RAPs within the state. An apprenticeship program must be registered for participants to receive a USDOL Certificate of Completion and for the employer/apprentice to access any available funding for registered programs.

The flexibility of educator RAPs allows states and districts to address their specific workforce development needs while also using an education and training model that has shown positive outcomes in other industries. Educator RAPs may focus on different occupations and target populations to address states' or districts' specific workforce needs. Although this report profiles K-12 Teacher and K-12 Principal RAPs, other occupations approved by USDOL for use in developing an educator RAP include early childhood educator, agriculture education instructor (Career and Technical Education [CTE] Teacher), and school counselor. Flexibility

also allows for RAPs to meet differing learner needs; for example, depending on apprentices' previous educational and career history, the supplemental education included in the program will vary. Sponsors of RAPs can recognize apprentices with significant work experience and/or prior learning credits by awarding advanced placement in the apprenticeship program.

Many educator RAPs also seek to increase pathways into the teaching profession for candidates of color and thereby increase the overall diversity of the teacher workforce.ⁱⁱ Teachers of color have positive short-term academic and long-term life impacts on students of color.^[3] Additionally, teachers of color positively impact the perception of school climate and comfort with school staff for students of color.^[4] However, research suggests that teacher candidates of color may face additional barriers to the profession, especially around licensure, including feeling unprepared for licensure exams, lower passing rates on licensure exams, fewer attempts at licensure exams, and difficulty completing licensure requirements.^[5,6,7] Apprenticeship programs can help participants including teacher candidates of color mitigate these barriers by providing paid on-the-job training, structuring coursework for working professionals, providing additional financial and preparation support for candidates taking licensure exams, and recognizing previous or learned experience in a competency-based structure.

This report profiles programs of varying sizes, sponsors, target participants, and stages of development. It serves as a resource for states, districts, and organizations interested in developing educator RAPs to address their workforce needs and prepare high-quality educators from within their communities. The following sections provide an overview of the approach, a synthesis of common themes and challenges, details on each program, and a conclusion that summarizes findings and potential areas for further research. A glossary of common terminology is included at the end of this report.

These profiles are provided for informational purposes only. It is a snapshot in time of activities in these RAPs. It does not imply endorsement or promotion of any RAP design or model by the U.S. Department of Labor.

ⁱ National K-12 Teacher RAP Data included in this report were provided to the ERA by DOL as of November 2023.

ⁱⁱ According to Pew Research, as of the 2017-18 school year, 79% of public school teachers in the United States identified as white; conversely, only 47% of all public elementary and secondary school students identified as white. This lack of racial diversity in the teaching profession has persisted since schools were desegregated in the 1960s and '70s, resulting in a 32% reduction in the Black teacher workforce (Owen Thompson, "School Desegregation and Black Teacher Employment," *The Review of Economics and Statistics* 105, no. 5 [October 30, 2022]: 962-980, https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_00984 [7]).

Approach

The Educator Registered Apprenticeship (ERA) Intermediary selected eight programs to be profiled for this report with the goal of interviewing programs with a range of sizes, program sponsors, and stages of development. The K-12 Teacher RAPs in this report represent a subset of the established RAPs that have enrolled apprentices. This report also includes a RAP in the K-12 Principal occupation. Across profiles, this report identifies common trends and potential challenges in educator RAP program design while also demonstrating each RAP's customization to meet local workforce needs. Program data on major design points, including enrollment, partnerships, funding sources, target populations, and recruitment goals were first gathered through a pre-interview survey. Some of these design elements are shown in **Exhibit 1**.

ERA Intermediary staff then conducted informational interviews with program representatives to better understand the program motivations, aspirations, and challenges.¹ All profiles were shared with the program staff prior to publication to ensure accuracy of findings. The next section provides a synthesis of common trends in educator RAP design and potential challenges, followed by the RAP profiles.

Exhibit 1. Major Design Elements



¹ The full list of interviewees can be found in the acknowledgments. The interviewees for each profile are listed in the program tables at the beginning of the profile.

Synthesis of Profiles

Although each profiled RAP responds to specific local workforce needs, common themes and innovative practices emerge across them, which can help inform an understanding of why educator RAPs are rapidly developing throughout the country in response to education workforce needs. These themes, summarized below, address common approaches to and challenges with developing and implementing RAPs, especially related to program background, structure, and anticipated outcomes.

Program Background

Across the eight profiled programs, sponsors used different approaches to developing RAPs, with some aligning existing educator pathway models with apprenticeship requirements and others designing new pathways to address local workforce gaps. Six of the eight programs leveraged the potential of RAPs to help district or school employees advance their careers in education as certified teachers or administrators, customizing their programs in response to specific community needs. For example, some programs focused on recruiting educators of color to develop a teacher workforce that is more reflective of the communities served. Other programs targeted their current staff to fill specific

workforce gaps, such as training paraprofessionals to become special education teachers or providing professional advancement opportunities for teachers to become administrators. RAPs for youth participants also emerged as a hiring strategy to retain local talent by supporting high school students' transition from secondary to postsecondary education with low- to no-cost tuition opportunities, employment in the district, and wraparound support. These programs focused on partnerships to develop funding and support mechanisms as part of the RAP to remove barriers to youth participation and increase retention.

Program Structure

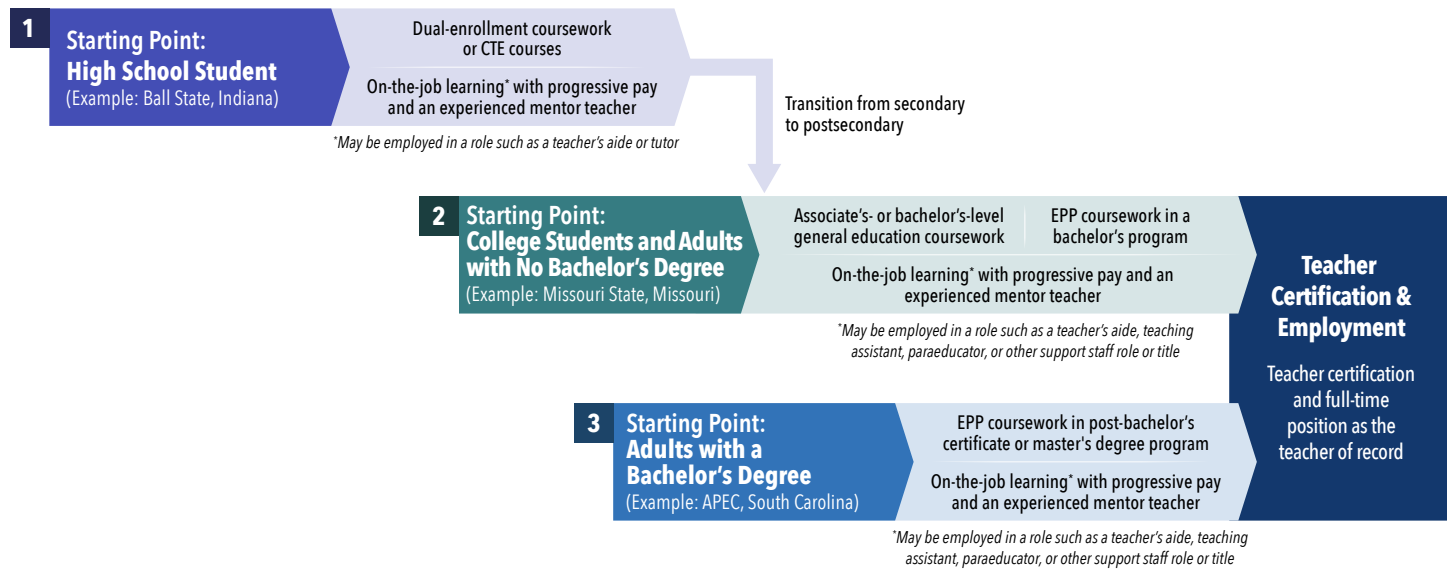
Although all educator RAPs must include the required components of a Registered Apprenticeship (e.g., on-the-job learning, mentorship, paid work experience, and supplemental education), programs have flexibility in how they implement these components. Even with this flexibility, the profiles still illustrate common approaches across all programs. All programs profiled and 95% of all K-12 Teacher RAPs currently registered with USDOL are competency based. This type of RAP allows apprentices working in the education profession to demonstrate their teaching skills and knowledge and to progress their learning from individualized starting points.

Exhibit 2 presents common on-ramps and pathways of Educator RAP programs.

Most of the profiled programs shared the following features:

- Apprentices prepare for general certification, though they can focus their coursework and on-the-job learning experiences on certain education levels or student populations.
- Apprentices become the teacher of record when they complete the program and are fully certified.
- RAP mentors receive a stipend or micro-credential to recognize their experience and time devoted to this role.
- Stakeholders collaborate to develop braided funding streams to offset the costs of the RAP for the employer and the apprentice, such as tuition, fees, and certification exams.
- Programs embed various wraparound services for apprentices, including support groups for nontraditional students returning to higher education, test preparation programs for certification exams, and counseling on financial aid and other potential resources.

Exhibit 2. Educator RAP Example Entry Points and Pathways



APEC = Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification; CTE = career and technical education; EPP = educator preparation program

Anticipated Outcomes

Although the profiled RAPs are too new to analyze longitudinal outcomes, program staff described the results they hope to see as indicators of success. Most programs identified employment in the districts where apprentices are trained as a key outcome, with the ultimate long-term goal of retaining apprentices in the teaching profession. Program staff also mentioned the financial benefits for apprentices as an important outcome, especially in helping paraprofessionals and other school staff advance their careers and increase their salaries. Finally, staff from at least two programs described the benefits of educator RAPs as developing well-prepared educators by providing access to high-quality, experiential training opportunities.

Challenges

Across the profiles, program staff consistently described identifying funding sources for educator RAPs as a challenge. Sustainable funding streams are vital for paying apprentice wages, providing mentor stipends, paying RAP administrative staff, and covering tuition or other education related costs. Although program staff mentioned a variety of federal, state, and local funding sources that apprentices could access, they acknowledged the need to help participants navigate the various financial aid application processes and the time required to do so. According to one program, this need for navigation and advising support extends beyond helping nontraditional students access university systems and processes. It also speaks to the need to adapt university infrastructures to align with RAP requirements to meet the needs of those seeking higher education while working. This type of hands-on support for apprentices was described by staff from multiple programs as being very labor intensive for program administrators. They recommend having dedicated staff and resources to support apprentices and the long-term sustainability of the program.

Other programs mentioned the challenge of aligning education and workforce systems and structures in developing educator RAPs. For example, some programs started with existing grow-your-own models or educator preparation pathways that needed to be "translated" into RAP terminology and adapted to meet apprenticeship requirements. This challenge was echoed by other programs that built educator RAPs from scratch, with one staff member describing the "steep learning curve" needed to build an understanding of apprenticeship. As a staff member from another program put it, "challenges have included changing district and higher education mindsets around teacher preparation, spanning disparate systems with different languages."

Educator RAP Profiles

The following profiles describe the program background, structure, anticipated outcomes, and next steps for eight educator RAPs based on information gathered from the programs through a survey and phone interview. Each profile contains a summary table that details the program’s enrollment, sponsor type, partners, degree level, program type, certification area, and more. This section presents the profiles in alphabetical order.

Table 1 provides a quick reference to the profiled programs.

Table 1. Profiled Educator RAPs

Program	Occupation
Ball State University (Indiana)	K-12 Teacher
Saginaw Intermediate School District (Michigan)	K-12 Teacher
Missouri State University (Missouri)	K-12 Teacher
National Collaborative for Digital Equity (New Hampshire)	K-12 Teacher
Classroom Academy K-12 Teacher RAP (New York)	K-12 Teacher
Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification (APEC) K-12 Teacher RAP (South Carolina)	K-12 Teacher
Tennessee Grow-Your-Own (Tennessee)	K-12 Teacher
Fremont County School District #24 K-12 Principal RAP (Wyoming)	K-12 Principal

Profile 1

Ball State K-12 Teacher RAP (Indiana)

Indiana



The Ball State University K-12 Teacher RAP, founded as a partnership between Ball State and the Pursuit Institute, provides high school students with exposure to the teaching profession.

Table 2. Ball State K-12 Teacher RAP Overview

Year registered	August 2022
OA/SAA designation	OA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	10
Number of completers	N/A
Main certification areas	Elementary education
Type of program sponsor	Region 5 Workforce Board (other: workforce board)
Supplemental education provider	Ball State University Teachers College
Degree level	Bachelor's
Primary partners	The Pursuit Institute Indiana Department of Education U.S. Department of Labor 6 local school districts
Target populations	High school students
Recruitment goals	Teachers of color and low-income teacher candidates
Program type	Competency-based
Primary funding sources	Grant from the Indiana Department of Education Carl D. Perkins funding for CTE

Note: Data provided by program and interview conducted with Carrie Lively (Executive Director, The Pursuit Institute), Susan Tancock (Associate Dean for Undergraduate and Graduate Studies, Ball State University), and Mary Rinehart (Director of Teacher Pathway Programs, Ball State University)

Program Background

Ball State University is the largest educator preparation program in Indiana. The Pursuit Institute is a CTE center in Hamilton County, Indiana, that connects nontraditional and under-represented students with CTE pathways. Staff from the Pursuit Institute approached Ball State faculty about starting a K-12 Teacher RAP to address the shrinking teacher pipeline in Indiana, engage high school students in the teaching field through CTE, and encourage students to go on to postsecondary education.

The program operates in six school districts in Hamilton County, a largely rural county in the center of the state, which share similar needs for educators. Apprentices learn what it means to be a teacher and gain exposure to work in the classroom before leaving high school. Program staff emphasize the need to innovate in the educator preparation space through apprenticeship and push beyond traditional approaches to create a wider opportunity for people to pursue teaching careers.

Program Structure

Apprentices begin the RAP through dual-credit Ball State coursework in high school and continue their educator preparation coursework after matriculating at Ball State. Apprentices become a teacher of record after they have completed the program and are fully certified. The program prepares apprentices for elementary certification, but they can choose to pursue additional certifications, including special education. Apprentices also gain teaching experience in specialized areas through on-the-job learning, such as a placement in a special education classroom.

Ball State recruits for the program through marketing materials, attendance at career fairs, teacher recommendations, and word of mouth. For the initial cohort, apprenticeship program staff and district leadership selected high school students who expressed interest in teaching to participate. Once apprentices are selected, the district that they are working in matches them with a mentor teacher. Mentor teachers receive a stipend as part of the RAP, complete a micro-credential for mentoring, and participate in additional professional development opportunities.

High School Diploma to Bachelor's Degree Pathway

Apprentices enter the RAP as high school students, taking dual-credit courses through Ball State University during their junior and senior years of high school and working as a paid classroom assistant. They can graduate from high school with credits equivalent to a full year of Ball State coursework. Apprentices apply for admission to Ball State after high school and spend 2 years taking education courses and working as a teacher's aide in different schools, subjects, and grade levels. In the final year of the RAP, apprentices complete a year-long residency as a teacher's aide in their home community and, upon completion, graduate from Ball State. The RAP can be completed in 5 years, as a combination of 2 years of high school and 3 years of full-time Ball State enrollment.

Apprentices receive wages according to their districts' salary schedule for a classroom aide role; collective bargaining does not typically apply to classroom aide roles in Indiana. Apprentices learn about teacher's union membership through their on-the-job learning experiences and can choose to join after they become a certified teacher. State CTE funding in Indiana currently covers the cost of the high school dual-enrollment courses. If apprentices return to their home school district for their residency, they can receive a \$12,000 stipend, which can cover tuition for their final year of college. Ball State also received a grant from the Indiana Department of Education for the program, which supports operating costs, intermediary services, mentor stipends, and professional development. Ball State works with local districts to fund the residency stipend through a grant from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

Ball State faculty and staff hope to double the number of apprentices participating per year to continue to boost the educator pipeline and the number of students pursuing postsecondary education in the state. They also emphasize program and degree completion as an important goal. Although there is no formal requirement, Ball State expects apprentices to teach in their home communities following their residency. Looking forward, program staff would like to expand the apprenticeship program to the metropolitan districts in Indianapolis. Through this expansion, they plan to recruit and support more teachers of color, which is a strategic priority for the Teachers College at Ball State.

See the [pathways to teaching](#) website for more information on the Ball State Program!

Profile 2

Saginaw Intermediate School District K-12 Teacher RAP (Michigan)

Michigan



Saginaw Intermediate School District (ISD) is an educational service agency that serves 12 local school districts in Saginaw County, Michigan. The ISD supports local districts in learning about and launching RAPs that start as early as high school to build a full-service pathway to the teaching profession.

Table 3. Saginaw ISD K-12 Teacher RAP Overview

Year registered	November 2022
OA/SAA designation	OA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	25
Number of completers	N/A
Main certification areas	Elementary, secondary science, secondary math, secondary English, secondary social sciences
Type of program sponsor	Saginaw Intermediate School District (district employer)
Supplemental education provider	Saginaw Valley State University, Delta College
Degree level	Bachelor's
Primary partners	Michigan Education Association/American Federation of Teachers Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity Michigan Department of Education Office of Career and Technical Education Michigan Works
Target populations	High school students, current paraprofessionals, support staff
Recruitment goals	Teachers of color and low-income teachers
Program type	Competency-based
Primary funding sources	Michigan Works funding from the Michigan Department of Labor Michigan Reconnect grants Grow-your-own state grants

Note: Data provided by program and interview conducted with Jenny Geno (Executive Director of Career and Technical Education, Saginaw Intermediate School District) and Tiffany L. Pruitt (Executive Human Resources and Labor Relations Director, Saginaw Public Schools)

Program Background

The Executive Director of CTE for Saginaw ISD, along with representatives from the Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity and Michigan Department of Education, worked with the USDOL to develop a Teacher RAP. The Saginaw ISD K-12 Teacher RAP includes a pre-apprenticeship for high school students as part of the early middle college model and a K-12 teacher apprenticeship for current district staff serving in other roles or new hires that do not have a teaching certification. The district aligned the pre-apprenticeship and K-12 teacher apprenticeship programs so that a student can graduate the high school program, become hired as a teacher's aide or other support staff position, and then complete the K-12 teacher apprenticeship, earning a progressive wage as they move through the program.

One district served by Saginaw ISD, Saginaw Public Schools, participates in the Teacher RAP to eliminate barriers for existing staff who want to become teachers. Saginaw Public Schools already had a grow-your-own style program for employees with bachelor's degrees; however, they also wanted to support staff with high school diplomas who wanted to advance their careers in teaching but did not have the financial means to go to college. By offering the RAP to upskill current support staff, Saginaw Public intends to combat teacher shortages from within their own district and train teachers who already know the school climate and culture.

Program Structure

Apprentices complete coursework with Saginaw Valley State University or Delta College. Depending on their credentials and previous experience, the RAP can take 1 to 4 years to complete. The on-the-job learning component of the RAP is competency based, allowing apprentices to demonstrate teaching skills based on prior experience. The RAP is geared toward elementary general or secondary content area certification but can be specialized for certification in other sectors, such as special education with additional teaching endorsements. In addition to their degree program, apprentices in some districts, including Saginaw Public, will receive training from the district's "new teacher academy" in classroom management, school culture and climate, cultural competency, and positive behavior interventions once they obtain their bachelor's degree and other certification requirements.

In Saginaw Public, all eligible support staff receive information about the RAP, such as through district-run information sessions. To select participants, district leadership holds group and one-on-one meetings with candidates, surveys their level of interest, and reviews past job performance. Once selected, district staff and college officials help the apprentices through the college admission process, course enrollment, and financial aid applications. Apprentices work with assigned mentor teachers in the district across multiple disciplines to gain exposure to different teaching styles and

contexts. Mentor teachers receive compensation for their time. Apprentices are paid through a progressive wage scale negotiated and agreed upon by the local teacher's union, the Saginaw Education Association. The program is fully funded, and apprentices bear no costs for courses or textbooks. Many apprentices have access to Michigan Reconnect, which provides funding for the cost of community college for people over 25 who do not have an associate's degree. The program also receives funding through the Michigan Department of Labor via Michigan Works, financial aid dollars, ISD funding, and state grow-your-own grants.

Partnership with the Teachers' Union

Saginaw Public Schools actively partners with the Michigan Education Association (MEA) in the development and implementation of the RAP. The district created an agreement with MEA to ensure that apprentices would meet all teacher certification requirements, including certification tests and education programming, before becoming a teacher of record. MEA negotiated for the terms of the apprentices' progressive wage scale and compensation for mentor teachers at the district level. Through this work, MEA supports the district in creating a robust teacher apprenticeship pathway for school staff who want to become classroom educators.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

After completing the RAP and passing certification exams, apprentices in Saginaw Public Schools are guaranteed a teaching position and required to commit to teach in the district for 3 to 5 years. This policy allows the district leadership to plan for their own workforce needs and fill vacant positions. Program leadership expects that the increased pipeline of people who they can hire into teaching roles from within the district will be the biggest success of the program. These teachers will be highly trained in classroom management and knowledgeable of the culture and climate of the school community.

Looking forward, program leadership at the ISD and district levels hope that the RAP will expand to include more specialized teaching certifications, including special education. To run a successful apprenticeship program, district leadership advises having well-prepared human resources staff who can manage the program and strong engagement from partners, including labor unions. They see apprenticeship as customizable to a community and, with the right partners and leaders, a tool for solving teacher shortages from within one's own district.

See the [Saginaw ISD website](#)  for more information about the teacher pathway programs!

Profile 3

Missouri State University K-12 Teacher RAP (Missouri)

Missouri



Faculty at the Missouri State University's (MSU's) College of Education designed the Teacher RAP, called the Pathways for Paras program, to expand access to the profession for paraprofessionals with a goal of recruiting current employees in local districts.

Table 4. MSU K-12 Teacher RAP Overview

Year registered	2022
OA/SAA designation	OA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	194
Number of completers	15
Main certification areas	Early childhood education, elementary (general), special education (elementary), special education (secondary), other (deaf and hard of hearing)
Type of program sponsor	MSU (educator preparation program)
Supplemental education provider	MSU
Degree level	Bachelor's or Master's
Primary partners	Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Missouri Department of Labor Ozarks Regional Jobs Center Local Area Special Education Groups 4-Day School Week Districts Missouri Association of Rural Education
Target populations	High school students, college students, current paraeducators and other school support staff, career changers, substitute teachers
Recruitment goals	Preparing special education teachers, recruiting teachers of color, supporting low-income teacher candidates
Program type	Competency-based (6,000 hours)
Primary funding sources	Federal Apprenticeship Building America grants Missouri Access Scholarships Fast Track Grant TEACH Grant Missouri Department of Workforce Development

Note: Data provided by program and interview conducted with Reesha Adamson (Associate Dean and Pathways for Paras Co-Director, College of Education at MSU)

Program Background

Faculty in the College of Education at MSU first learned about registered apprenticeships in education via a podcast. The podcast framed apprenticeships as a workforce pipeline solution; a low-cost strategy to get more people into the teaching profession. MSU already offered a RAP in another department—one of the few housed at a 4-year institution. Based on this experience, the education faculty identified existing pathways for paraeducators that could be reconfigured to meet apprenticeship requirements, such as by expanding current course offerings and providing more virtual and evening options to accommodate working students. Once MSU faculty began to review the certification standards, they saw a natural alignment with the apprenticeship model.

Additionally, MSU provided the College of Education with a \$10,000 start-up grant. These funds were used to recruit participants from a list of all the current paraprofessionals across the state. Initially, they decided to focus recruitment efforts on paraeducators in the special education field given that these staff were already invested in the field and would benefit from becoming certified teachers and increasing their salaries.

Program Structure

To enroll in the apprenticeship program, participants must meet MSU's traditional entry requirements. The program length can vary depending on an apprentice's starting point (e.g., previous degrees attained). Typically, the teacher apprenticeship program starts in a participant's junior year of college after most general education courses have been completed. Apprentices typically become a teacher of record after they complete the program, which is usually after four semesters into the program, though some may earn a provisional license and enter the classroom upon enrollment or during their final coursework.

School districts assign mentor teachers based on state-established criteria that align with certification requirements. Mentor teachers do not receive direct compensation for their role, but they can take coursework toward a higher education teaching certificate—if they teach the prior learning assessment courses—as an acknowledgment for their leadership.

The pay structure for apprenticeships is also determined by school districts, which typically have an existing pay schedule. Apprentices move up the pay schedule based on years of experience or education and are evaluated more frequently. The exemplar model created by district partners provides them with laptops and compensation to participate in professional development sessions, both of which they would otherwise not receive before becoming certified teachers.

Apprentices can apply for scholarships using state and federal funding, which can enable apprentices to participate in the related instruction at no cost to themselves. Federal funding sources include the Apprenticeship Building America and the Good Jobs Challenge grants. Qualifying participants can receive \$2,000 from each of these sources. The Missouri Access Scholarship covers participants' additional expenses not funded by Pell grants. Additional funding support comes from the Fast Track Grant, a state expansion grant from the Department of Workforce Development, the TEACH grant, and scholarships from regional foundations.

Special Education Certification

MSU also piloted a special education apprenticeship model that leverages a university policy that awards prior learning credit. Faculty reviewed special education course outlines to identify content that could be learned through the on-the-job training and supplemental instruction. They also designated 24 undergraduate credit hours and 18 graduate credit hours that could be awarded by the school district. Apprentices do not pay tuition for these credits, which provides a cost-saving benefit. Currently, about 80 of 200 school district partners offer these credits to their apprentices.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

The first apprenticeship cohort graduated in December 2023, and MSU faculty, along with some state legislators, visited the graduates at their school site to present them with college stoles in honor of their graduation. Most of the graduates will continue to work in the districts where they trained. The associate dean describes the expected successes of the apprenticeship as being able to fill teacher shortages with qualified teachers and retaining teachers in the profession. Program staff also are working to raise awareness of and buy-in for educator apprenticeships across the state, describing the model as a more efficient way to prepare teachers.

Partnerships with state, regional, and local agencies have expanded MSU's reach. For example, MSU contracts with the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to train other institutions of higher education on the apprenticeship model. Five other universities have since registered an educator apprenticeship program, with up to 30 registered programs expected by the end of the fall 2023 term. Additionally, the institution has supported rural schools to launch apprenticeship programming for paraprofessionals in districts offering 4-day school weeks, where the fifth day is dedicated to training apprentices.

See the [Pathways for Paras website](#)  for more information about the program!

Profile 4

National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE) K-12 Teacher RAP (New Hampshire)

New Hampshire



The National Collaborative for Digital Equity (NCDE)'s community-based educator RAP is supported by educator preparation programs, the state teacher's union, school districts, and funders. With support from these partners, this competency-based K-12 Teacher RAP has been expanded to multiple districts within New Hampshire. Throughout the program, apprentices are paid and receive 4 years of mentorship while they complete a bachelor's degree or post-baccalaureate program.

Table 5. NCDE K-12 Teacher RAP Overview

Year registered	2022
OA/SAA designation	OA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	80
Number of completers	N/A
Main certification areas	Early childhood education, elementary, elementary ESL, secondary math, English, special education, ESL, social science, visual/performing arts, school counselor
Type of program sponsor	NCDE (other: nonprofit)
Supplemental education provider	Community College System of New Hampshire, Plymouth State University, University of New Hampshire College of Professional Studies, New England College, Rivier University
Degree level	Bachelor's, Post-Baccalaureate
Primary partners	NEA-NH School districts New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation
Target populations	High school students, college students, current paraprofessionals/support staff, career changers, substitute teachers
Recruitment goals	Preparing special education teachers, teachers of color, teachers with disabilities, and low-income teacher candidates
Program type	Competency-based
Primary funding sources	Apprenticeship New Hampshire FAFSA Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding Local charitable organizations Apprenticeship Building America grant

Note: Data provided by program and interview conducted with Mary Ford (Director of Inclusive Pathways, NCDE)

Program Background

The NCDE saw an opportunity to improve support and preparation for teachers as they embarked on registering their K-12 Teacher RAP. Enrollments in educator preparation programs had dropped significantly in New Hampshire while the number of applications received for district positions also declined. NCDE intentionally developed each component of their K-12 Teacher RAP to address these challenges.

Program Structure

Before the RAP begins, potential apprentices attend an information session, followed by a one-on-one meeting with NCDE to assess how their career goals align with the RAP. Candidates then participate in two 2-hour follow-up sessions, which include completing apprenticeship and financial aid paperwork, training from the New Hampshire Higher Education Assistance Foundation consultants, and discussing certification options. Funding from ApprenticeshipNH helps pay for all Praxis core requirements and Pearson Assessments needed for licensure. After these sessions, NCDE connects apprentices with the educator preparation programs offered across the state to meet their certification goals. By design, apprentices can select the supplemental instruction provider of their choice. This flexibility is meant to create healthy competition among teacher preparation programs and to include community colleges in the pathway, especially given the decreased enrollments in educator preparation programs throughout the state.

To better support apprentices, NCDE advocates for local higher education institutions to change their course delivery structure. Apprentices typically balance a full academic course load with full-time jobs and family responsibilities. NCDE, inspired by a model from Coventry University in England, works with institutions to split coursework into two 8-week terms, with apprentices taking two courses each term and completing an assignment that connects the content between terms. Additionally, NCDE negotiated lower per

credit tuition rates for apprentices to ensure that there are more affordable high-quality options across the state. NCDE also provides wraparound support for apprentices, including in-person or virtual weekly study groups and financial coaching for the apprentices.

Recruiting Internationally Trained Professionals

Through the educator RAP, NCDE has attracted and retained internationally trained professionals as teachers in districts like Manchester, where currently 44% of students come from homes where English is not their first language. Additionally, NCDE created a pre-apprenticeship opportunity that includes intensive English language learning for those interested in the RAP but who may need additional support with developing their English language skills. This pre-apprenticeship followed by the RAP provides a clear pathway to obtaining the language skills and credentials necessary for these professionals to be prepared to teach in New Hampshire. One success story includes a trilingual apprentice from Egypt, who held a bachelor's and master's degree but was working as a paraprofessional and only making \$15 an hour. After participating in the NCDE RAP, she was hired full time as a French teacher in New Hampshire.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

NCDE celebrated and recognized the first two apprenticeship completers during National Apprenticeship Week in November 2023. To recruit additional participants, the Community College System of New Hampshire, with an Apprenticeship Building America grant, will create a systematic recruitment strategy for NCDE, including an improved web presence, updated flyers, media coverage, and presentations. Moving forward, NCDE also will recruit apprentices with the state labor union, NEA-NH.

In addition, NCDE noted the need to secure funding to compensate the mentors for their experience and time to scale RAPs. To address this, NCDE originally obtained a grant from the NH Charitable Foundation to pay mentors within one school district. They plan to also work with the Community College System of New Hampshire to reimburse school districts monthly for up to 50% of the apprentice's wages through Apprenticeship Building America funds. This reimbursement process will provide the additional funds needed to pay mentor costs and help to expand the RAP to new districts that could not previously find funding for the mentors.

See the [NCDE website](#) for more information about the apprenticeship program!

Profile 5

Classroom Academy K-12 Teacher RAP (New York)

New York



In 2021, New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) partnered with local districts and colleges to develop the Classroom Academy, a 2-year graduate-level RAP, to address the teacher workforce crisis through comprehensive preparation. The Classroom Academy was the first RAP in New York State to lead to state teacher certification, with the goal of facilitating long-term employment in school districts, often within the communities where the apprentices live.

Table 6. Classroom Academy K-12 Teacher RAP Overview

Year registered	2021
OA/SAA designation	SAA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	17
Number of completers	17
Main certification areas	Childhood grades 1–6, elementary special education/childhood grades 1–6 dual certification, English language arts, social studies, math, biology, physics, earth science
Type of program sponsor	Classroom Academy (other: nonprofit)
Supplemental education provider	State University of New York (SUNY) Plattsburgh at Queensbury, SUNY Empire, Sage Colleges
Degree level	Master's
Primary partners	Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex Board of Cooperative Educational Services NYSUT TEACHMEducation
Target populations	Paraprofessionals, career changers, and college students
Recruitment goals	Teachers of color and low-income teacher candidates
Program type	Competency-based
Primary funding sources	District funding Teacher Residency Program Grant Apprenticeship Expansion Grant

Note: Data provided by Colleen McDonald (Program Director, TEACHMEducation) and Stephen Danna (Employer Outreach Director, TEACHMEducation)

Program Background

The Classroom Academy RAP is led by the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), NYSUT, and TEACHMEducation. Three institutions of higher education (SUNY Plattsburgh at Queensbury, SUNY Empire, Sage Colleges) serve as related education providers. NYSUT's role includes bargaining when the apprentice will be represented as a student member or full member, negotiating appropriate mentor stipends, and collaborating on resources and supports for both apprentices and mentor teachers.

Classroom Academy is embedded in the New York State (NYS) school state aid system. This reimbursement aid system allows New York's 37 BOCES to partner with 697 of the 721 districts across the state to provide shared, relevant, and cost-effective programming. The BOCES state aid reimbursement model provides districts with a reliable revenue stream and return on investment generated by the RAP.

Program Structure

The Classroom Academy program immerses teacher candidates, pursuing initial teacher certification through a graduate program pathway, in a school community for 2 years and allows for the application of learning, guided practice, and independent work. This competency-based program requires applicants to have a bachelor's degree but does not require them to have already been working in the district. Classroom Academy apprentices are recruited from a multitude of places, including the New York Department of Labor website, school districts, underemployed or underserved communities, and higher education applicant pools. In New York, RAPs can offer all certification areas, allowing the program to be customized to meet districts' specific workforce needs.

For RAP mentorship, Classroom Academy matches each apprentice with an experienced educator, known as an Attending Teacher. Apprentices serve in the matched classroom for the first year and a half of the program and are allowed to substitute for their own Attending Teacher as needed before participating in an alternate placement for a 7-week period during the second year of the program. Upon their return to their home classroom, apprentices are released to substitute within the school or district for up to 2 days per week in their certification area. They cannot serve as the teacher of record until they are fully certified. In Classroom Academy, the Attending Teacher, as determined by the roles and responsibilities, receives up to a \$4,500 stipend per year.

This can be adjusted for other programs, depending on local collective bargaining agreements. Apprentices are paid through the BOCES or school district in the same manner as attending teachers. Apprentices earn at least \$21,000 in the first year of the program and at least \$22,000 during the second year.

Sustainable Funding

The New York Department of Labor offers two grant opportunities—the Teacher Residency Program Grant (a governor's initiative) and the Apprenticeship Expansion Grant (AEG). The AEG can provide funding to employers or sponsors to reimburse school districts for up to 50% of the apprentice's wages (up to \$15,000) or up to \$15,000 of supplemental instruction costs including tuition assistance, books, fees, or tools. The Teacher Residency Program grant provides up to \$30,000 per resident to support tuition costs or a living stipend. In addition, state university candidates can receive \$5,000 in tuition assistance. The NYS Education Department also amended the state-level Contract for Shared Services to facilitate the use of the BOCES revenue stream across the state. Additionally, the NYS governor and legislature allocated \$30,000,000 in grant monies to support the development and implementation of teacher residency programs, the foundation of the RAP model.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

Classroom Academy provides district co-sponsors with trained, newly NYS-certified early career teachers, familiar with district programs, priorities, and context, which benefits student learning and reduces the likelihood of high turnover rates with the subsequent cost. Short-term survey and anecdotal feedback from participants suggests the return on investment as the key indicator of success. They include a lower student-to-educator ratio for improved learning outcomes, continuity of instruction when apprentices substitute for their Attending Teacher (at any time during the program) or other teachers in their certification area (up to 40 days at the end of the program), and opportunities to improve practice for lead teachers.

Emerging opportunities and next steps have included creating the NYS Educator Workforce Development HUB to act as a fully funded technical assistance resource for stakeholders, including districts, BOCES, local union affiliates, and institutions of higher education. The technical assistance will help these stakeholders form partnerships to register high-quality educator RAPs, navigate the cross-agency systems, and develop the tools to recruit and retain teacher candidates to meet local workforce needs. Various philanthropic organizations also have committed one-time funding to help district partners step into the educator apprenticeship model.

See the [Classroom Academy website](#) for more information on the apprenticeship program!

Profile 6

Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification (APEC) K-12 Teacher RAP (South Carolina)

South Carolina



The Alternative Pathways to Educator Certification (APEC) program at Columbia College provides lateral entry to the teaching profession for employees in nine partner districts who already have their bachelor's degrees. APEC follows a residency model, which includes a 1-year on-the-job learning component (e.g., clinical experience) and related coursework.

Table 7. APEC K-12 Teacher RAP Overview

Year registered	2022
OA/SAA designation	OA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	37
Number of completers	15
Main certification areas	Early childhood, elementary (general), special education (elementary), secondary math, secondary English, special education, other (middle-level education)
Type of program sponsor	Columbia College (educator preparation program)
Supplemental education provider	Columbia College APEC program
Degree level	Master's
Primary partners	School districts
Target populations	College students, paraprofessionals, career changers
Recruitment goals	Preparing special education teachers, recruiting teachers of color, and supporting low-income teacher candidates
Program type	Competency-based
Primary funding sources	Districts pay apprentices wages South Carolina Commission on Higher Education (covers tuition and other costs for participants) National Center for Teacher Residents (supports tuition scholarships) State grants (e.g., Apprenticeship Carolina) Local organizations provide money for tuition scholarships and supports stipends for mentor teachers

Note: Data provided by program and interview conducted with Marla Sanders (Associate Professor of Education and APEC Center Co-Director, Columbia College)

Program Background

The APEC program at Columbia College, a liberal arts institution of higher education, serves district employees who already have their bachelor's degrees, many of whom are currently working as paraprofessionals. The South Carolina Department of Education's regulations require that individuals pursuing alternative certification must have their bachelor's degree. Although apprentices can pursue certification in a variety of areas offered by the college's traditional certification programs, most APEC participants choose to certify in either special education or early childhood education because these are the areas in which many paraprofessionals are employed.

APEC faculty recognize the importance for K-12 students to have diverse representation among their teachers. The program received a grant from the National Center for Teacher Residencies, which supports the recruitment and retention of teachers of color. In 2022, the college received a Teacher Quality Partnership Grant from the U.S. Department of Education, which it has used to expand access to APEC to career changers and recent college graduates with an interest in teaching.

Residency Turned into Registered Apprenticeship

In 2018, Columbia College, a liberal arts institution of higher education, received a 5-year grant from the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education to create the APEC program. As APEC faculty learned more about apprenticeships, they realized that the residency model they developed had all the components of a registered apprenticeship. This allowed them to leverage their existing certification process and courses to develop an apprenticeship program, which included existing faculty and clinical supervisors.

Program Structure

APEC primarily recruits current district employees who are interested in certification, with the majority having served in the paraprofessional role. Columbia College partners with the nine districts to host in-person and virtual recruitment events and disseminate information about the program. Other recruitment efforts include partnerships with other state agencies to host apprenticeship fairs for high school and technical college students and job fairs for retired veterans, hosted by South Carolina Works, the workforce development agency. The application process includes submitting an application form, three letters of recommendation (one of which must be from the school principal), a writing sample, and an interview with APEC faculty and representatives from the partner districts.

The program includes a full school year (August–May) of competency-based on-the-job learning. Each participant is assigned a mentor teacher and a faculty supervisor, who evaluate the on-the-job learning component using the state's rubric aligned to the teaching standards. To be a mentor, teachers must have 3 years of experience and be recommended by their principals. Apprentices start coursework in the summer term before the clinical experience and continue through fall, spring, and the next summer term, at the end of which they can apply for their teaching certification. At the end of the apprenticeship, which requires completion of the clinical experience, related courses, and the Praxis exam, participants become certified teachers. After completion, apprentices are expected to work in their host district for 3 years.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

Overall, the program reports a 97% retention rate in the teaching profession. APEC leadership attribute this high retention rate to their intentional recruitment of employees currently working in the partner districts, as they have direct experience with students and the community and understand the district culture. They also cite the extensive clinical preparation, guided by supportive and experienced educators and mentors, as another success factor. Columbia College's grant has been extended for a sixth year to replicate the program in another part of the state, and they are currently working with another higher education institution to do so.

See the [program website](#)  for more information on the APEC program!

Profile 7

Tennessee Department of Education K-12 Teacher RAP (Tennessee)

Tennessee



The Tennessee Department of Education and the University of Tennessee System partnered to form the Tennessee Grow-Your-Own (TN GYO) Center in March 2022. The center works to expand its grow-your-own program and K-12 Teacher RAPs across the state with a focus on engaging educator preparation programs to support apprentices as working students.

Table 8. Tennessee Department of Education K-12 Teacher RAP Overview

Year registered	2023
OA/SAA designation	SAA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	678
Number of completers	59
Main certification areas	Elementary, elementary special education, elementary ESL, secondary science, math, English, special education, ESL, social sciences
Type of program sponsor	Tennessee Department of Education (state department of education)
Supplemental education provider	University of Tennessee at Knoxville, Chattanooga, Martin, Southern; Austin Peay State University, Lipscomb University, Middle Tennessee State University, Cumberland University, Lincoln Memorial, University of Memphis, Arete Montessori
Degree level	Bachelor's, Post-Baccalaureate
Primary partners	Local workforce development boards (9) Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development The University of Tennessee System 70+ partnering local education agencies across the state
Target populations	High school students, college students, current paraprofessionals/support staff, career changers, substitute teachers
Recruitment goals	Preparing special education teachers and ESL teachers, recruiting teachers of color, teachers with disabilities, veterans to become teachers, and supporting low-income teacher candidates
Program type	Competency-based
Primary funding sources	Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds District funding Tennessee 2024 Grow-Your-Own Scholarship

Note: Data provided by program and interview conducted with Charlene Sands Russell (Middle TN Regional Manager, TN GYO Center), Bianca Pratt (East TN Regional Manager, TN GYO Center), Canidra McGuire (West TN Regional Manager, TN GYO Center), and Kate Hall (Associate Director, TN GYO Center)

Program Background

Tennessee launched its first grow-your-own program locally with just one educator preparation program (EPP) and their primary local district partner in March 2020. In January 2022, the Tennessee Department of Education built on the grow-your-own work and registered a K-12 Teacher RAP to scale the model across the state and in March 2022 opened the TN GYO Center. The TN GYO Center supports districts by increasing the teacher pipeline to address teacher shortages. By engaging in the apprenticeship program, districts guide efforts to develop teachers to meet their workforce needs, opening the pathway up to a wider population.

Since creating the RAP, 11 EPPs and 73 districts out of 140 across the state have joined. These efforts to scale the program across the state have provided access to the teaching profession for over 600 participants in less than 2 years. During this time, over 50 apprentices completed the RAP.

Program Structure

Because of the variety of EPPs and districts across the state involved with the RAP, the TN GYO Center supports a wide apprentice population that ranges from current paraprofessionals to adult career changers. In applying to be part of the RAP, districts identify their target population through a needs assessment, and the center connects the district with one or more of the participating EPPs that enroll the identified population.

Being registered as competency based allows apprentices flexibility in when they complete the RAP based on any prior supplemental education or experience and their ability to demonstrate the required competencies. Typically, a post-baccalaureate certificate will take an apprentice 1 year to complete, and a bachelor's degree program will take 2 years. Instead of a traditional semester of student teaching, apprentices must learn and demonstrate on-the-job competencies under the mentorship of an established teacher. Mentors receive training from TN GYO Center to shift their role from supervising a traditional student teaching

experience to serving as a mentor and being able to evaluate competencies in the RAP. Additionally, the mentors work with apprentices for longer than one semester, providing ongoing and sustained support for new teachers developed through the RAP.

Partnerships with the local workforce development boards and the State Apprenticeship Agency helped to increase existing grow-your-own funding for the RAP. In February 2023, the Tennessee Department of Labor and Department of Education signed a memorandum of understanding to set aside funding from the workforce boards across the state to help the districts implement the RAP. Employers participating in apprenticeship are the target audience for this funding from the Tennessee Office of Apprenticeship. In a pilot program, the workforce boards provided WIOA funding for wraparound services for eligible apprentices. Apprentices gain access to Study.com to prepare for the Praxis exam, with exam fees covered by the TN GYO Center.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

The TN GYO Center is leading a pilot with seven districts across the state to register existing teaching as a profession programs as supplemental education in a pre-apprenticeship program for high school students. The goal of the teaching as a profession expansion program is to recruit high school students who are curious about teaching but worried about paying for college with student loans. Since the announcement of the pilot program, many additional districts have reached out to the TN GYO Center to find out how they can be involved.

A persistent challenge to teacher apprenticeship has been finding funding to cover the cost of tuition, books, fees, and testing so that there is no cost to the apprentice. Through the TN GYO Center's support and resourcing, EPPs are actively pursuing lower cost pathway options for registered teacher apprentices. One EPP, for example, is preparing to launch a \$2,500 post-baccalaureate certificate that can be completed in 1 year in an asynchronous, blended format. Another EPP has reduced their undergraduate tuition by 50% for registered teacher apprentices who do not have 100% of state or federal non-repayable aid available. Through an allocation in the TN governor's budget specifically for grow-your-own programs, the TN GYO Center will distribute grow-your-own scholarships to assist in covering the total cost of tuition, books, fees, and testing for registered teacher apprentices.

Community College Partnerships

Recently, after reviewing more than 1,200 interest form responses submitted by potential apprentices, the center identified a need to help individuals without an associate's degree to access a pathway into the apprenticeship. To address this need, the TN GYO Center is working with community colleges to develop a pre-apprenticeship program for paraprofessionals to obtain an associate's degree and enter the Teacher RAP. To serve this population of learners effectively, the TN GYO Center partners with EPPs and community colleges to strengthen transfer pathways from associate's to bachelor's degrees, minimizing credit loss during the transfer process.

See the [TN GYO Center website](#)  for more information on the apprenticeship program!

Profile 8

Fremont County School District #24 K-12 Principal RAP (Wyoming)

Wyoming



Faced with increasing teacher and school administrator shortages in the region, the Fremont County School District #24 superintendent started a K-12 principal RAP to provide leadership opportunities for teachers in their district and recruit new teachers with interest in professional advancement.

Table 9. Fremont County School District #24 K-12 Principal RAP Overview

Year registered	October 2023
OA/SAA designation	OA
Number of apprentices currently enrolled (as of date)	4
Number of completers	N/A
Main certification areas	K-12 principal
Type of program sponsor	Fremont County School District #24 (district employer)
Supplemental education provider	University of Wyoming, American College of Education
Degree level	Master's, Post-Baccalaureate Credential
Primary partners	Department of Labor, Wyoming Department of Workforce Services, Wyoming Professional Teaching Standards Board
Target populations	Current teachers
Recruitment goals	Current teachers seeking leadership opportunities
Program type	Competency-based
Primary funding sources	ESSER funds State apprenticeship grant Funds from current district budget

Note: Data provided by program and interview conducted with Bruce Thoren (Superintendent, Fremont County School District #24) and Michael Broad (Wyoming State Director, Office of Apprenticeship, Department of Labor)

Program Background

Fremont County is an expansive, rural county in central Wyoming that includes the small town of Shoshoni and neighbors a Native American territory. Although the district used to receive 7 to 10 applicants for teaching jobs, now they may only get one applicant. By offering the RAP as a professional advancement opportunity for teachers, the district hopes to recruit and retain quality teachers with aspirations for leadership roles. Previously, teachers in the district with interest in leadership positions had to pursue principal certification through online training programs, often at their own expense. Through apprenticeship, the district now provides hands-on leadership training for teachers at no cost and uses current district administrators as mentors.

Program Structure

The principal RAP provides on-the-job learning for existing teachers looking for professional advancement in Fremont County School District #24, in conjunction with a master's degree or post-baccalaureate credential. The state of Wyoming requires a master's degree for administrative certification; the apprenticeship is designed so that an apprentice can either earn a master's degree or a post-baccalaureate certificate if they already have a master's degree and desire additional administrative training. Apprentices can enroll in programs through the University of Wyoming or American College of Education. The apprentices earn a K-12 Administrator endorsement approved by the Professional Teaching Standards Board, but apprentices can choose to specialize in a school-level or content area. The district covers the entire cost of the program for apprentices, including all coursework and textbooks, through funding allocated by the school board.

All teachers in the district with at least 3 years of teaching experience can apply for the program. The application includes reflection questions regarding their leadership experience and interest, and selection factors includes proven leadership ability and experience addressing conflicts. Four current district administrators serve as mentors (current building administrators and the superintendent), which caps program participation at four apprentices at a time. Mentors evaluate apprentices based on their mastery of administrative competencies, which can take around 4,000 hours, or about 1.5 to 2 years, to achieve. Apprentices increase steps on the district pay scale as their education level increases and receive a yearly stipend to recognize their work in the program: \$1,000 in the first year, \$2,000 in their second year, and \$3,000 in their third year. The district currently uses Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds to support the program. They have also applied for a grant for RAPs through the Wyoming Workforce Services.

Apprenticeship as Career Advancement

The principal RAP in Fremont County school district aims to provide career advancement opportunities to their current staff who have professional goals to move into administrative positions. Traditionally, there were limited professional advancement opportunities for the district and those available required teachers to enroll in online programs at high costs. Through apprenticeship, the district can work with teachers who have promising leadership skills and train them to serve as administrators in their community. The superintendent hopes that the district will become known for the career advancement opportunities that it provides, including apprenticeship, and become a destination for ambitious educators who seek those opportunities.

Anticipated Outcomes and Next Steps

District leadership hopes that the principal RAP will provide continuous leadership opportunities for staff. The program design allows district leadership to plan for administrative succession and consider candidates from within their community. Although the goal is for staff to stay in the district, the district leadership considers the principal RAP to be a pipeline to build stronger administrators and retain teachers throughout the region, even if they move on to other districts. By building a sustainable pipeline, the RAP aims to train Wyoming educators who want to continue to serve their community in administrative roles.

See the [Wyoming Teacher Apprenticeship Initiative website](#) for more information about educator apprenticeships in Wyoming!

Conclusion

The RAPs profiled in this report represent varying program sponsors, levels of implementation, recruitment goals, participating populations, and funding mechanisms. Some common themes in their backgrounds, structures, anticipated outcomes, and challenges were also identified.

Program Backgrounds

Through Registered Apprenticeship, local communities and states designed their programs to meet their unique workforce needs and priorities. This may include meeting workforce shortages in specific certification areas, increasing enrollment of youth into postsecondary educator preparation programs, supporting paraprofessionals to obtain postsecondary degrees and upward economic mobility in their community, and/or increasing the racial diversity of the educator workforce.

Program Structures

Common approaches to the design of the RAP elements were identified across the programs. All of the programs emphasized the importance of mentors supporting apprentices in on-the-job learning, and most programs compensated mentors with a stipend or credential. Programs provided financial supports to apprentices such as tuition scholarships and stipends for textbook costs, as well as services such as certification test preparation and financial aid coaching. Programs utilized funding from state and federal grants as well as local district budgets and college financial aid. This funding helps most RAPs cover apprenticeship wages, mentor stipends, overall program operations, and tuition and fees; a few RAPs also fund designated staff positions, licensure exam fees, and educational supplies such as textbooks or lesson materials.

Anticipated Outcomes

Most programs identified employment in the districts where apprentices are trained as a key anticipated desired outcome, with the ultimate long-term goal of retaining apprentices in the teaching profession. Most programs stated a goal to recruit teacher candidates of color, and a few mentioned specific strategies to diversify the profession, including licensure exam preparation and support for English Language Learners. This additional support is intended to mitigate the barriers that people of color face in educator preparation and licensure, including licensure exams, costly college coursework, and course schedules that are incompatible with full-time work.

Challenges

Funding for RAPs is a common challenge across programs, both in terms of identifying sustainable funding sources (e.g., to cover mentor stipends and program staff to help administer the program) and helping apprentices secure financial resources to cover tuition and other expenses. Programs have concerns over funding sources including grants that may sunset. Another noted challenge includes the need to better align education and workforce systems and structures to support the development of educator RAPs.

Next Steps

The programs profiled in this report provide examples of established educator RAPs that have a vision to increase pathways into the educator workforce.

Lessons learned from these programs include leveraging the flexibility of RAPs to design programs based on workforce needs, building partnerships with organizations that support community needs (i.e., teachers' unions, CTE centers, licensure exam preparation networks), and creating sustainable staffing and funding structures to ensure program longevity. As demonstrated by all profiled RAPs, competency-based approaches to on-the-job learning can further honor apprentices' prior experiential learning from past work and training. Combined with high-quality educator preparation coursework and mentorship, this training model produces strong classroom educators in areas that need them the most. Education leaders interested in starting educator RAPs can use these profiles and lessons learned to inform their development process.

This report offers a snapshot of the context and understanding of the current landscape of educator RAPs. Defining best practices within educator RAP development and implementation as well as identifying long-term outcomes will require additional time and research. As educator RAPs grow and develop, additional research and documentation is needed to understand how RAPs are scaled in this sector. Additionally, programs can prepare for outcome evaluations by collecting data on apprentice and mentor experiences as well as employment and quality outcomes. The ERA Intermediary will continue to share research briefs that contribute to the knowledge base on educator RAPs, including additional program profiles; resources on diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in apprenticeship; and funding sources.

Glossaryⁱ

Apprentice A paid employee who participates in structured on-the-job learning to prepare for a career. Apprentices earn a progressive wage as their skills and productivity increase. *Education Term: Teacher Candidate or Resident.*

Competency-Based Approach An approach to RAPs that measures skill acquisition through the individual apprentice's successful demonstration of acquired skills and knowledge, as verified by the program sponsor.

Educator Preparation Program (EPP) A program designed to qualify an individual for professional certification as an educator provided by institutions of higher education or other providers, including an alternative route to certification program.ⁱⁱ

Educator Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) A RAP in the education sector that prepares apprentices to become K-12 teachers, principals, paraprofessionals, etc. Educator RAPs are designed to fully meet state licensure and certification requirements.

Grow-Your-Own A teacher preparation strategy focused on developing and retaining teachers from the local community.ⁱⁱⁱ

Hybrid Approach An approach to Registered Apprenticeship Programs that measures the individual apprentice's skill acquisition through a combination of specified minimum number of hours of on-the-job learning and the successful demonstration of competencies as described within the program.

K-12 Teacher RAP An educator RAP that is registered with the K-12 teacher occupation code.

Mentor An experienced worker who has attained a mastery level of skill, abilities, and competencies required for the occupation and who oversees and guides the work of the apprentice during on-the-job learning. Each RAP defines the number of apprentices that can be assigned to each mentor, typically with a ratio of one apprentice to one mentor, but not to exceed two apprentices to one mentor. *Education Term: Lead Teacher, Expert Teacher, or Mentor Teacher.*

On-the-Job Learning Clinical experiences that provide fully supported, increasingly demanding opportunities to apply coursework and reflect on practice under direct supervision of the teacher of record who serves as the mentor. On-the-job learning is developed and outlined by the program sponsor, union, and other education stakeholders to meet local needs. *Education Term: Clinical Experiences or Student Teaching.*

Pre-Apprenticeship A program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a RAP.

ⁱ Unless otherwise noted, all definitions are adapted from the U.S. Department of Labor, "Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Common Terms," ApprenticeshipUSA, updated November 2022, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/dol-teacher-registered-apprenticeship-terms-factsheet-v03.pdf>.

ⁱⁱ Adapted from the U.S. Department of Education, 2022 Title II Report: Academic Year 2020-21 Data, October 2022, <https://title2.ed.gov/Public/Home.aspx>.




ⁱⁱⁱ Adapted from New America, "Grow Your Own Educators," accessed December 2023, <https://www.newamerica.org/preK-12-education/grow-your-own-educators/>.

Glossary

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)	An industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce and individuals can obtain paid work experience and receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable nationally recognized credential with cross-state reciprocity. RAPs are industry-vetted and approved and validated by the USDOL or a State Apprenticeship Agency.
Sponsor	Any person, association, committee, or organization operating an apprenticeship program and in whose name the program is (or is to be) registered or approved.
Supplemental Education	Classroom instruction required to meet all state and EPP standards. The supplemental education requires enrollment in a state-accredited educator preparation program for coursework.
Teacher Residency	A post-baccalaureate preparation strategy where aspiring teachers work in the classroom for an entire year alongside an accomplished mentor teacher while preparing for their chosen profession. A residency model typically includes partnerships between districts and preparation programs, pre-service curriculum, and mentor teachers as key supports during the residency year. ⁱ
Time-Based Approach	An approach to registered apprenticeship program RAPs that measures skill acquisition through the individual apprentice's completion of at least 2,000 hours of on-the-job learning described in a work process schedule.
Wage Schedule	A progressively increasing schedule of wages to be paid to the apprentice consistent with the skill acquired. According to the USDOL, apprentice wages must reflect a starting wage and a wage for a fully certified, entry-level teacher, be at least minimum wage, and increase at least once during training. The wage scale may be aligned with school wage scales.

ⁱ Adapted from the Pathways Alliance, "Towards a National Definition of Teacher Residencies," <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Tzvzp9oKozwn3D-fo9AHafDrQ4aSnGm7/view>.

References

1. "Raise the Bar: Eliminate the Educator Shortage," U.S. Department of Education, accessed December 2023, <https://www.ed.gov/raisethebar/educators>.
 2. "Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Common Terms," Apprenticeship USA (2022), accessed January 2024, <https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/dol-teacher-registered-apprenticeship-terms-factsheet-v03.pdf>.
 3. Thomas S. Dee, "A Teacher like Me: Does Race, Ethnicity, or Gender Matter?" *American Economic Review* 95, no. 2 (April 2005): 158–65, <https://doi.org/10.1257/000282805774670446> .
 4. Seth Gershenson et al., "The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers," *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* 14, no. 4 (November 1, 2022): 300–342, <https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.20190573> .
 5. James Cowan et al., "Teacher Licensure Tests: Barrier or Predictive Tool?" Working Paper No. 245-1020, October 1, 2020, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED609773.pdf>.
- Drew H. Gitomer and Andrew S. Latham, "Generalizations in Teacher Education," *Journal of Teacher Education* 51, no. 3 (May 2000): 215–20, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487100051003009> .
- Emery Petchauer, "Teacher Licensure Exams and Black Teacher Candidates: Toward New Theory and Promising Practice," *The Journal of Negro Education* 81, no. 3 (2012): 252–267, <https://doi.org/10.7709/jnegroeducation.81.3.0252> .
- Hannah Putman and Kate Walsh, "A Fair Chance: Simple Steps to Strengthen and Diversify the Teacher Workforce," National Council on Teacher Quality, February 2019, <https://www.nctq.org/publications/A-Fair-Chance> .
6. Emery Petchauer, "Shall We Overcome? Self-Efficacy, Teacher Licensure Exams, and African American Preservice Teachers," *The New Educator* 12, no. 2 (April 2, 2016): 171–90, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1547688x.2016.1156456> .
 7. Laura Delgado, Kristin Baese, and Ally Hauptman, "A Pathway to Teaching for Paraprofessionals of Color," *Phi Delta Kappan* 103, no. 3 (November 2021): 17–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00317217211058508> .
- Conra D. Gist, Amaya Garcia, and Yukari Takimoto Amos, "An Essential but Overlooked Workforce: Elevating the Need to Investigate the Career Development of Paraeducators," *Journal of Career Development* 49, no. 5 (May 4, 2021): 089484532110109, <https://doi.org/10.1177/08948453211010968> .
- Jarren Kanze, "Increasing Community Representation in the Teacher Workforce: Understanding the Experience of School Support Staff" (Dissertation), 2022, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED621460>.
- James McLeskey, Naomi C. Tyler, and Susan Saunders Flippin, "The Supply of and Demand for Special Education Teachers: A Review of Research Regarding the Chronic Shortage of Special Education Teachers," *The Journal of Special Education* 38, no. 1 (May 2004): 5–21, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00224669040380010201> .