



TEACHER APPRENTICESHIP ACT

Model Policy

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

The state sponsored Teacher Apprenticeship Act will provide a new pathway to enter the teaching profession. Through partnerships with approved educator preparation programs, school districts will have new tools to recruit prospective teachers as early as high school and provide them with on-the-job training and mentorship as they complete a bachelor's degree and/or a state-approved teacher licensure program. This act provides financial and career incentives to candidates who demonstrate the potential to become highly effective teachers. Through the Teacher Apprenticeship act, the state will address the unique needs of urban and rural districts, create stronger, more diverse teacher pipelines and prepare a new generation of teachers who remain in the profession.

SECTION 2: DEFINITIONS

"Apprenticeship" is the period a teacher candidate spends working toward a degree and or licensure with a trained, district-approved teacher mentor.

"Approved Educator Preparation Program" (EPP) means any state-approved teacher education program, including public, private, and alternative certification providers, authorized by the state to prepare individuals to fulfill the state's basic teacher licensure requirements. Districts, charter schools, and charter school networks may apply to the state for approved educator preparation program status for purposes of this act.

Articulation Agreement is a state approved agreement between a district and EPP that meets the requirements outlined herein.

Department is the state Department of Education, or its designee, which is charged with overseeing the Teacher Apprenticeship Program (TAP) program.

District is any school district, charter school network or charter school that the Department approves to participate in the state TAP program.

"Dual enrollment course" is a course taken by a student enrolled in a public secondary school at a state approved institution of higher learning or post-secondary provider.

"Eligible teacher candidate" is:

1. any high school-aged student with a minimum grade-point average determined by the district and EPP and approved by the state on track to meet state requirements for graduation;
2. any para educator with a high school diploma currently working in a school setting;
3. Individuals with bachelor's degrees who do not have education training or credits; OR
4. any other candidate working in an educational position in the community deemed eligible by the district and approved by the state in the district EPP articulation agreement.

"Foundational courses" are courses in basic skill areas, such as mathematics and language arts, that are prerequisite to but not counted towards degree requirements of a teacher preparation program.

"High needs district" is a district in which there is a documented general or field-specific teacher shortage.

"High needs field" is any field in which there is a consistent and documented teacher shortage in a state or district, including but not limited to: special education, English as second language, science, technology, mathematics, and related courses.



“Last dollar funding” is funding that districts provide, using their state TAP allocation, to cover tuition, fees, and associated costs incurred by a teacher candidate and not covered by federal or state aid the teacher candidate receives.

“Mentor Teacher” is a teacher with more than five years of experience currently working in a classroom in a district that is part of a state-approved TAP Partnership. Mentor teachers should be rated highly effective by their school leader for at least two years preceding and during their tenure. If a district lacks teachers who have received a highly effective rating for two years, school leaders have discretion to appoint their most effective and experienced teacher(s) as mentor teachers.

“Paraeducator” is a professional who works in a school or classroom environment providing support to licensed educators (for example” teacher assistants, school-community liaisons, school clerks, and security aides) in schools.

“Teacher Candidate” is a participant in the (TAP) program.

SECTION 3: FUNDING

1. The state will appropriate [\$XXXX] million annually to the TAP program for distribution to qualified school districts at the discretion of the Department.
2. The Department will prioritize distribution of TAP funds to school districts with demonstrated general teacher shortages or shortages in a high-needs fields. The Department shall use school, district, and state level data to quantify teacher shortages. If funds remain in a given fiscal year, the Department may distribute the remaining funds to other applicants at its discretion.
3. The Department will apply to the Department of Labor to register the TAP program as a federally approved apprenticeship and is directed to seek and supplement state appropriated TAP funds with any available federal funds.
4. TAP districts should use state funds to:
 - a) Provide or pay for foundational courses for eligible teacher candidates;
 - b) Provide “last dollar” funding for any tuition, fees or associated costs incurred in the pursuit of a bachelor’s degree or licensure not covered by federal or state aid the teacher candidate receives;
 - c) Provide funds to offset the cost of childcare or transportation for eligible teacher candidates;
 - d) Pay a stipend to teacher candidates and mentor teachers (see “District Responsibilities” below);
 - e) Design tools for curriculum and evaluation related to the TAP program;
 - f) Pay administrative expenses to cover the cost of running the TAP program, not to exceed 5% of the district’s overall TAP allocation;
 - g) Other state-approved expenditures related to the TAP program.

SECTION 4: DISTRICT AND EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS

1. School districts must submit an application (provided by the Department) in partnership with an approved educator preparation provider (EPP). The proposed partnership will satisfy the following requirements:
 - a) The provider (EPP) will have demonstrated success in preparing teachers for elementary and/or secondary schools.
 - b) The EPP will have a demonstrated record of preparing teachers to teach across all fields and to students with diverse needs, including but not limited to students with disabilities, English language learners, or students with other special needs.



- c) The EPP will have a curriculum that aligns with state licensure requirements and requires teacher candidates to demonstrate competencies in classroom and subject-area teaching as determined by Department approved benchmarks and observations and evaluations performed by a mentor teacher.
 - d) The EPP must be able to provide teacher candidates the option for to take classes toward a bachelor's degree and/or teacher licensure without traveling more than twenty-five miles outside of the partner district.
 - e) The EPP may provide virtual or hybrid options for teacher candidates and should make every reasonable effort to ensure that geography and transportation are not a barrier to teacher candidates enrolled in the TAP program.
 - f) The school district will demonstrate capacity and commit to providing teacher mentors for each teacher candidate for an apprenticeship period of two years while the teacher candidate works toward licensure.
 - g) The school district will demonstrate capacity and agree to support TAP graduates employed in the district with mentorship and support, as defined by the state-approved articulation agreement described in this section for a period of two years.
2. The school district and EPP will agree to provide the state with all relevant data to satisfy program eligibility requirements and enable the state to evaluate program outcomes, data include but are not limited to:
- a) General and subject-area specific teacher shortage and retention data;
 - b) Teacher candidate demographic data (aggregate);
 - c) Teacher candidate evaluation and outcomes data (aggregate);
 - d) District and EPP TAP budget data.
3. Upon Department approval of the partnership, the school district and EPP will enter into an articulation agreement, approved by the state, that outlines the commitments outlined in this and any other relevant section of this legislation.

SECTION 5: DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITIES

As a participant in a TAP partnership, the district will:

- 1. Develop a system for recruiting candidates, including but not limited to:
 - a) Identifying eligible teacher candidates and providing information about the TAP program;
 - b) Identifying teachers within the district that meet the requirements outlined herein to become a mentor teacher.
 - c) Articulate pathways for eligible teacher candidates, including but not limited to:
 - i) a pathway for high school students to become paraeducators
 - ii) a pathway for paraeducators to become teachers
 - iii) a pathway for individuals who hold a bachelor's degree but do not have training or college credits specific to education or pedagogy.



2. In conjunction with the partner EPP, develop a curriculum that includes intensive on-the-job training for teacher candidates;
3. In conjunction with the partner EPP, identify the subject-matter and on-the-job skills and competencies teacher candidates must possess to graduate from the TAP program;
4. In conjunction with the partner EPP, identify a mastery-based evaluation system that will determine when eligible teacher candidates have mastered the skills and competencies necessary for graduation from the TAP program and outline benchmarks that teacher candidates must meet as they progress through on-the-job training;
5. Offer a schedule that enables teacher candidates to work full time in the district while participating in the program and allows para educators to continue in their current positions.
6. Provide a flexible schedule for participating para-educators to support their success in the program, including but not limited to a reduction in duties that will facilitate TAP course completion and on-the-job training;
7. Pay a stipend to mentor teachers participating in the TAP program.
8. Pay a stipend to teacher candidates that increases each time a teacher candidate achieves pre-determined competency-based benchmarks;
9. Develop a “last dollar” application system, approve eligible teacher candidates for the “last dollar” program, and use “last dollar” funding to cover any tuition, fees, or associated eligible expenses not covered by aid the teacher candidate receives from federal or state programs;
10. Give hiring priority to TAP graduates who meet the requirements for open positions within a district;
11. Annually report to the state, using a template provided by the Department, TAP activities, spending, teacher candidate and mentor demographic information, and, where applicable, outcomes including but not limited to:
 - a) number of teachers completing the TAP program hired by the district;
 - b) retention rates of TAP graduates;
 - c) and any student outcomes associated with TAP graduates.

SECTION 6: EDUCATOR PREPARATION PROGRAM RESPONSIBILITIES

As participants in the TAP program, approved EPPs will:

1. Accept as tuition any state or federal funds that may offset the cost of tuition that districts pay on behalf of TAP teacher candidates.
2. Agree to provide support services, including, but not limited to, counseling, tutoring, transportation, and technology support.
3. Agree to provide required classes in places and times accessible to TAP teacher candidates.



SECTION 7: TEACHER CANDIDATE RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon graduation, teacher candidates will:

1. Provide proof of application for state and federal aid for which teacher candidates may be eligible before applying to the district for “last dollar” funding;
2. Agree to teach in the district for a period of five years, pending an offer of employment from the district;
3. the district retains the authority to sever employment with a teacher candidate at any time during or after the completion of the TAP program;
4. TAP graduates who sever their agreement with the district after any period of employment may become ineligible for student loan forgiveness (see section 8.4 below) Teacher candidates who sever their employment agreement prematurely due to illness, family circumstances, or other hardship may be excluded from this requirement.

SECTION 8: STATE AND DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Department will recruit a wide range of EPPs that can issue Bachelor’s degrees to participate in the program, including but not limited to:
 - a) Traditional and alternative EPPs currently operating in the state;
 - b) Traditional and alternative EPPs that meet the requirements above currently operating in other states;
 - c) Regionally accredited institutions;
 - d) Online postsecondary institutions;
 - e) Mastery and/or competency-based providers.
2. The Department will approve EPPs that charge competitive tuitions;
3. Not more than three years after the state funds its first TAP districts and EPPs, the Department will contract a third-party entity to independently evaluate the TAP program, including state progress and all participating districts, EPPs, and district/EPP partnerships.
 - a. After the first evaluation, subsequent evaluations of the state’s progress will take place bi-annually.
 - b. A district/EPP will not be subject to individual evaluation until it has received TAP funds for two school years.
 - c. District/EPP evaluations will occur every third year after a district/EPP’s first evaluation.
4. Evaluations will include but are not limited to data and analyses of the following, which will be reported statewide AND disaggregated, where appropriate, at the district/EPP level:
 - a) Teacher candidate enrollment and persistence in the program;
 - b) Rate of teacher candidate 4-year degree completion under the program;
 - c) Rate of state licensure completion under the program;
 - d) Rate of obtaining a teaching position in the sponsoring district;



- e) TAP length of teaching tenure in the district of TAP program completion;
 - f) Subsequent TAP graduate effectiveness
5. The Department will publish each bi-annual and district/EPP level report in an accessible place on its website.
 6. In conjunction with the TAP program, the state will implement a program of forgivable loans. All TAP teacher graduates will be eligible for a forgivable student loan, even if the loan was incurred prior to participating in the TAP program. Loans shall be fully forgiven if a graduate completes 5 years of service in eligible schools, with partial forgiveness for shorter periods of service.