

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board: Leading the Way in Teacher Workforce Innovation

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board is proud to launch a transformative initiative that creates a bold, accessible and high-quality pathway for individuals aspiring to enter the teaching profession. In direct response to the national teacher shortage, and with a vision to become the leading region in addressing this critical challenge, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is laying the foundation for the largest, most collaborative teacher apprenticeship system in the country.

The Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Program (T-RAP) brings together all essential stakeholders in the education ecosystem: workforce boards, teacher candidates, institutions of higher education, Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs), and school districts to build equitable, low- or no-cost pathways into the teaching profession. This model not only strengthens the educator pipeline, but also ensures that aspiring teachers receive the support, mentorship, and experience necessary to thrive in the classroom.

As a national model for educator workforce development, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has meticulously codified the standards, requirements, and operational framework needed for institutions and districts to effectively implement and sustain a teacher apprenticeship program. Rooted in best practices and adapted from proven models across Texas and the nation, this initiative is aligned with both regional workforce demands and long-term educational outcomes.

Through this innovative approach, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board can now offer:

- School districts a strategic solution to address staffing shortages.
- Teacher candidates a high-quality, debt-conscious, earn-and-learn pathway to certification.
- Communities access to a stronger pipeline of well-prepared, diverse, and committed educators.

This Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Playbook is designed to be a comprehensive guide for all stakeholders interested in launching or participating in this initiative. It provides clear, actionable steps and resources to support implementation from recruitment to retention.

As a part of this work, we are proud to serve as the regional connector, linking school districts with future educators who are ready to begin their journey through a registered

teacher apprenticeship, creating a stronger workforce and a brighter future for students and communities across the Gulf Coast.

The Gulf Coast Workforce Board remains steadfast in its mission to connect talent to opportunity, and this effort reflects a powerful commitment to reimagining how we grow and sustain the educator workforce. By bridging the gap between aspiring teachers and the classrooms that need them, the region is not only responding to an urgent challenge, but also leading a national movement toward excellence, equity, and innovation in public education.

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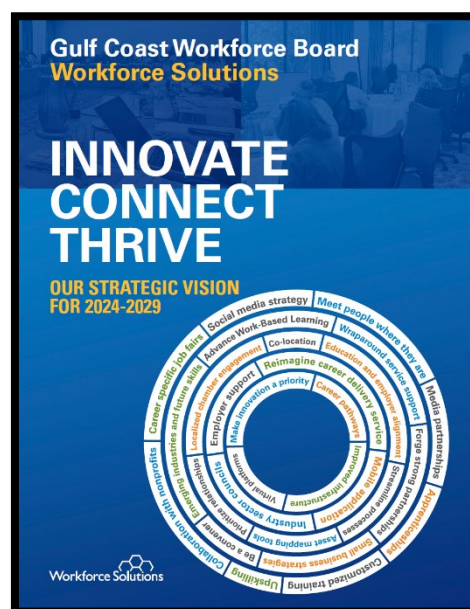
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Introduction

The Texas Gulf Coast region, spanning 13 counties, 88 school districts, and a robust network of community colleges, 4-year colleges, and a wide variety of technical colleges creates one of the most diverse and economically vibrant areas in the state. As the region continues to experience rapid growth across multiple industries, the demand for a well-prepared, highly skilled workforce has never been greater. Among the most critical needs is a sustainable pipeline of certified educators who are equipped to meet the academic and developmental needs of students across our schools.

Recent data reveals a concerning trend: the current supply of certified teachers is falling short of the growing demand across Gulf Coast school districts. In recognition of this urgent issue, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board has formally designated teaching as a “high-skill, high-growth” occupation, underscoring both the complexity of the profession and its pivotal role in shaping the region’s future workforce. If left unaddressed, the educator shortage could have long-term consequences on educational outcomes and regional economic vitality.



To address this challenge, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is committed to advancing innovative, scalable strategies to strengthen the educator pipeline. Central to this effort is the Teacher - Registered Apprenticeship Program (T-RAP), a proven, earn-and-learn model that offers aspiring teachers a clear, supported, and low-cost pathway into the profession. By combining paid on-the-job experience with structured mentorship and academic coursework, this approach not only increases access to the profession, but also improves retention and teacher preparedness.

This playbook is designed as a comprehensive guide for education leaders, workforce professionals, and stakeholders who are interested in implementing a T-RAP

that meets both U.S. Department of Labor and Texas state requirements. It offers an overview of the current educational and labor landscape in the region, explores the benefits and challenges of launching an apprenticeship program, and outlines a framework for success built on collaboration across K–12 districts, postsecondary institutions, Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), and other non-profit organizations supporting a strong teacher workforce.

The content in this playbook reflects insights and expertise gathered from a wide range of stakeholders across the secondary and postsecondary education sectors. It represents a shared vision: to grow a diverse, effective, and sustainable teacher workforce that is prepared to meet the evolving needs of Gulf Coast students, and to support long-term economic resilience throughout the region.

Roles and Key Terms

Throughout the playbook, terminology specific to registered apprenticeships and education will be used including acronyms for those terms.

- **Apprentice/Teacher Candidate/Resident** - These terms are often used interchangeably. A teacher apprentice that is associated with a Registered Apprenticeship through the Department of Labor is the only type of apprentice that is federally recognized. Throughout this playbook, a teacher apprentice or registered teacher apprentice refers to a paid employee enrolled in a state-accredited teacher preparation program, participating in structured on-the-job learning and coursework.
- **Apprenticeable Occupation** - An occupation that is specified by industry and recognized by the Department of Labor. These occupations require at least 2,000 on-the-job learning hours, involve the progressive attainment of knowledge and skills, and require related instruction that complements the on-the-job learning.
- **Braided Funding Model** – This refers to a model of funding apprentices that utilizes multiple funding sources to support an apprentice to maximize funding impact across an entire apprenticeship program.
- **Career Pathway** – This refers to the route in which an aspiring teacher seeks to become certified.
- **Career and Technical Education (CTE)** – These are specialized education programs in secondary and postsecondary settings that teach academic, technical and employability skills needed to be successful in the workforce. Some examples of program track a student can pursue are education, information technology, and health science.
- **Consortium** - A collaboration between one (1) or more Board(s), Community College(s), Technical College(s), or Education Service Center (ESC) formalized in a written agreement, to fulfill the terms and conditions of this RFA. The written agreement will include support of key industry and community stakeholders along with roles and responsibilities of each partner.
- **Convener** - An entity that initiates, organizes, and facilitates collaboration among multiple parties, often serving as a neutral or trusted coordinator to align efforts, foster communication, and drive collective action.
- **Customer Relationship Management Systems (CRMS)/Apprenticeship Information Management System (AIMS)** – A CRM should effectively collect data and information to help manage apprenticeship progress and demographics. Texas Workforce Commission's data collection system application, AIMS, is only required for TWC-funded apprenticeship activities.
- **Data Stepback** – This is a structured process used in education to analyze data, assess performance, and adjust moving forward that will ensure continuous improvement.
- **Education Service Center (ESC)** - A non-profit service organization devoted to supporting educators and school personnel in their efforts to improve student achievement, operate more efficiently, and implement initiatives as defined in Texas Education Code § 8.002. There are twenty (20) ESCs in Texas.

- **Educator Preparation Program (EPP)** - A state-approved college or university program that provides the coursework and clinical training required for teacher licensure.
- **Employer Partner** – This refers to a school district or charter school that hires and supports the apprentice.
- **Independent School District (ISD)** - An entity responsible for implementing the state's system of public education and ensuring student performance as established in accordance with Texas Education Code, Chapter 11.
- **Journey Map** – A journey map provides a real-world visual example for how apprentices can enter a career pathway.
- **Journey Worker/Mentor Teacher/Lead Teacher** - A fully certified, experienced teacher who provides direct supervision, coaching, and support to the teacher apprentice.
- **Local Workforce Board** - A regional entity that sets the strategic direction for a regional workforce system. The Gulf Coast Workforce Board (GCWB) serves the 13-county region of the Texas Gulf Coast and serves as an extension of the Texas Workforce Commission. In this playbook, it is recommended that the local workforce board serves as convener for an apprenticeship program.
- **On-the-Job Learning (OJL)** – On-the-Job Learning is the hands-on classroom experience under a mentor teacher including teaching, lesson planning and assessments. This is where teacher apprentices practice skills they learn from their Related Technical Instruction.
- **Portable Credential** – This is a nationally recognized certification earned upon program completion. In the case of teaching credentials, teachers will likely be required to complete a transfer process if moving from state to state.
- **Pre-Apprenticeship** - A program or set of services designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a RAP. A Pre-Apprenticeship program, by definition, has a documented partnership with at least one (1) RAP.
- **Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP)** – Registered Apprenticeship, or Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), refers to the program within which apprentices are registered. For this playbook, most RAPs are created by the coordinated efforts of education partners.
- **Related Technical Instruction (RTI)** – Related Technical Instruction refers to the coursework component provided by the EPP. This can also be provided by a college or other agency that has been accredited by the state of Texas.
- **Sponsor** - The organization (e.g., school district, EPP, or partnership) responsible for administering the apprenticeship program and ensuring compliance with federal/state standards.
- **State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC)** – This board was established in 1995 to oversee the preparation, certification and standards of conduct for public school educators in Texas. They work closely with the Texas Education Agency (TEA).
- **Support Services/Wraparound Services** – These are services that extend beyond academic instruction and classroom experience. Wraparound services are meant to address the holistic needs of an apprentice and can include tutoring, transportation, childcare, or financial aid.

- **Technical Assistance Provider (TAP)** - An organization that supports program design, implementation, and continuous improvement.
- **Texas Education Agency (TEA)** – This state agency oversees public primary and secondary schools in Texas. It ensures laws and policies are followed, administers statewide testing, distributes state and federal funding, and supports educator certification and development (in coordination with SBEC).
- **Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board** – This is the agency that oversees postsecondary education in Texas. They are responsible for approving degree programs, coordinating funding, collecting data on performance and they ensure strategic plans are implemented.
- **T-RAP** – Teacher - Registered Apprenticeship Program is a program recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor that recognizes teacher apprentices.
- **U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)** – The U.S. Department of Labor is a federal agency responsible for promoting the welfare of job seekers, improving working conditions, advancing opportunities for profitable employment, and ensuring work-related benefits and rights. For T-RAPs, the DOL registers and oversees apprenticeship programs, sets national standards, and provides funding and technical assistance
- **Wage Schedule** - A structured plan showing progressive wage increases as the apprentice gains skills.

Regional Landscape and Needs Assessment

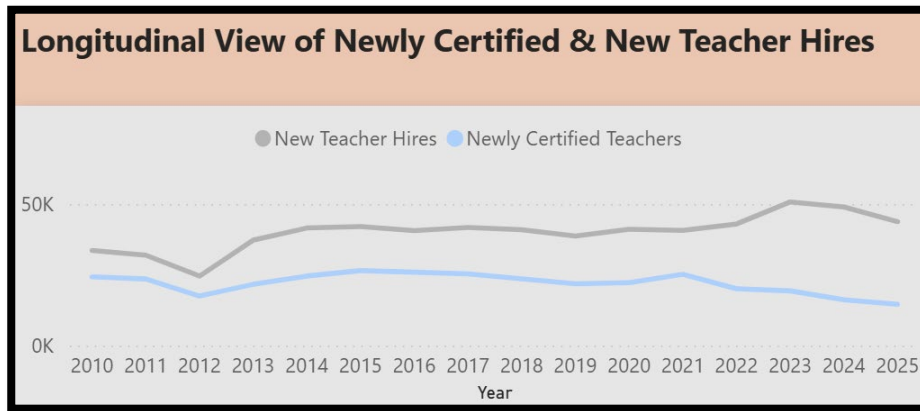
The Texas Gulf Coast region is experiencing a critical and deepening teacher shortage that jeopardizes the continuity and quality of education across its 13 counties. In the 2024–2025 academic year alone, Texas witnessed 48,431 teachers leaving the profession, an alarming attrition rate of 12.91%. Meanwhile, only 43,771 new hires were made, equating to an 11.81% hiring rate. This imbalance is further exacerbated by the fact that over 12% of teachers across the state are uncertified, with many serving in classrooms while still working toward full licensure.

Academic Year	Number of Teachers	Number of Teachers who Exited in Previous Year	Percent of Teachers who Exited in Previous Year	Number of New Teacher Hires in Current Year	Percent of New Teacher Hires in Current Year
2024-25	370,509	48,431	12.91%	43,771	11.81%
2023-24	375,169	45,173	12.16%	48,986	13.06%
2022-23	371,356	49,839	13.45%	50,762	13.67%
2021-22	370,433	42,840	11.57%	42,971	11.60%
2020-21	370,302	33,945	9.34%	40,720	11.00%
2019-20	363,527	36,473	10.16%	41,090	11.30%
2018-19	358,910	37,303	10.43%	38,691	10.78%
2017-18	357,522	36,900	10.44%	40,977	11.46%
2016-17	353,445	35,964	10.34%	41,728	11.81%
2015-16	347,681	35,747	10.43%	40,593	11.68%

These trends are most acute in high-need instructional areas such as bilingual education, special education, STEM disciplines, and career and technical education (CTE) classes. The resulting staffing crisis not only places a strain on existing educators but threatens student outcomes and long-term economic growth in the region.

Current Data on the Certified Teacher Shortage

The shortage of certified teachers has reached unprecedented levels. According to the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) "Newly Certified and New Teacher Hires Dashboard," Texas hired approximately 43,800 new teachers during the 2024–2025 school year. Of those, 13,500 had neither certification nor a permit and an additional 14,600 teachers were newly certified, meaning they had only just completed certification within the year.



Together, this means that nearly two-thirds (64%) of all new hires are either completely uncertified or have less than one year of teaching experience, placing enormous pressure on school districts to deliver high-quality instruction amid a growing deficit of educators. The result is a widening gap between the supply of certified teachers and the rising demand in Texas classrooms.

Contributing Factors to the Certified Teacher Shortage

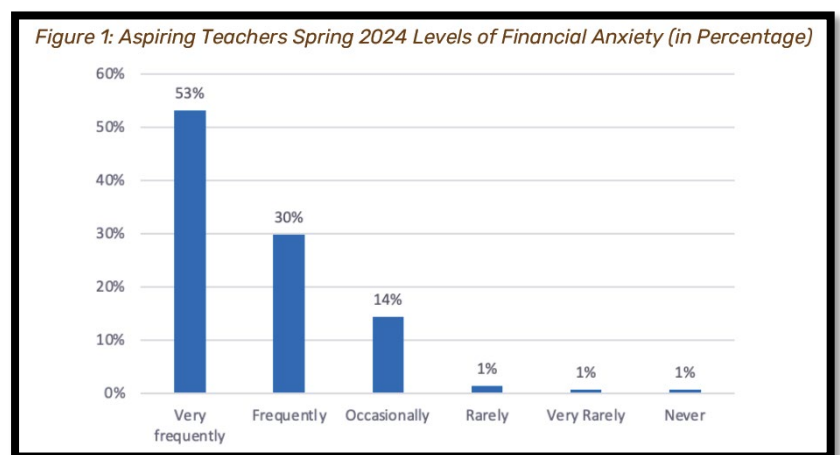
Attrition and Turnover

The exodus from the profession has reached historic highs. TEA data for 2024–2025 shows the highest number of teachers exits ever recorded. In Houston ISD, Texas's largest school district, the teacher turnover rate was approximately 22%. Among unlicensed new teachers in rural areas, nearly 45% leave after three years in the profession.

These challenges are not unique to large urban and rural districts. Similar trends are occurring across small and mid-sized school systems throughout the Gulf Coast, as well.

Economic Barriers

Economic realities play a central role in discouraging individuals from entering or remaining in the teaching profession. Over the past decade, teacher salaries have not kept pace with inflation, diminishing the profession's economic appeal. Prospective educators must often weigh the high cost of earning a



teaching credential against a salary that may not cover basic living expenses. According to the Prepared to Teach – Aspiring Teachers’ Financial Burden Survey (Spring 2024), 53% of teacher candidates experienced financial anxiety very frequently. Moreover, financial pressures on districts, especially in under-resourced areas, limit their ability to offer competitive salaries, smaller class sizes, or professional development opportunities.

Recruitment & Retention Challenges

The image and perception of the teaching profession also significantly impact recruitment efforts. Compared to other professional pathways, teaching is often viewed as low-status and high-stress, especially given the increased accountability measures and stagnant pay. Overall, enrollment in teacher preparation programs has dropped by at least 20% over the past decade.

When it comes to teacher retention, research indicates that under-prepared teachers leave at two to three times the rate of well-prepared teachers. For teachers who do choose to leave and pursue a different profession altogether, a National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports the top benefits of their new jobs include –

- Better personal life and work balance,
- More autonomy or control over their work,
- Better manageability of workload, and
- Professional prestige.

With declines in both teacher recruitment and retention, the gap in the workforce required to meet the needs of school systems will continue to widen.

Legislative and Policy Pressures

State-level accountability systems and standardized testing mandates place significant pressure on educators. While these policies aim to improve outcomes, they often create high-stakes environments that lead to burnout and frustration. Exit interviews consistently identify workload and test-based performance evaluations as factors pushing educators out of the profession.

Though some legislative efforts have been introduced to bolster training and improve compensation, much work remains. Holistic and innovative policy framework is needed to address both the systemic and local dimensions of the shortage.

Shortage Areas and Educational Impact

Critical teaching shortage areas include:

- Bilingual/ESL Education
- Special Education
- Early Childhood and Elementary Education
- Secondary Mathematics and Science
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Computer Science and Technology Applications

Vacancies in these content areas often result in larger class sizes, diminished student support, and higher burnout among remaining staff. The impact is especially severe for vulnerable populations, including English Language Learners and students with disabilities. Widening educational disparities leads to less engaged students today which can lead to diminished economic and workforce participation tomorrow.

Regional and Statewide Responses to Teacher Shortage

State-Level Initiatives

The Texas Teacher Vacancy Task Force, established in 2022, provided a foundational blueprint for tackling teacher shortages statewide. Key policy recommendations include:

- Increasing teacher salaries
- Expanding “Grow-Your-Own” initiatives
- Supporting paid teacher residencies
- Enhancing mentoring and onboarding supports

Designated shortage areas are now eligible for financial incentives through TEACH Grants and Public Service Loan Forgiveness, offering aid to those entering high-need fields.

Lack of Equitable, High-Quality Pathways

Teacher preparation programs that do not offer a robust learning experience can significantly undermine the strength and stability of the teacher workforce. Some programs provide inadequate instruction in pedagogy, classroom management, and differentiated instruction, leaving new teachers ill-equipped to meet the diverse needs of their students. Clinical experiences may also be limited or poorly supervised, which does not provide candidates meaningful, hands-on practice. Additionally, low entry and exit standards can result in the certification of individuals who lack skills necessary to pass certification exams and master teaching competencies. Teachers from such programs frequently experience higher levels of stress and burnout, leading to

increased attrition—especially in high-need schools. This turnover disrupts student learning and places a financial and logistical burden on school systems that must continually recruit and support new staff. Ultimately, students taught by underprepared teachers tend to show lower academic growth, which exacerbates educational inequities and diminishes public confidence in the teaching profession.

Local Efforts in the Texas Gulf Coast

School districts and Education Service Centers (ESCs) in the Gulf Coast have launched various innovative responses to address the need for high quality teachers. Examples include -

- Houston ISD - Increased teacher compensation and structured mentorship programs for new teachers, and Leadership Academy for experienced teachers.
- Region 6 ESC - Developed a program that supports teachers for two years beginning in their senior year of college. This residency offers paid, on-the-job experience as they observe classrooms and practice teaching in a local school district.
- Brazosport ISD - Partnered with Brazosport College to form the first district recognized with a K–12 apprenticeship model in Texas.

These are just three examples of local innovation that yielded sustainable results in response to workforce needs.

Teacher Registered Apprenticeship as a Strategic Solution

T-RAPs represent a transformative opportunity to solve the teacher shortage. These programs integrate paid, on-the-job training with academic coursework and mentorship from experienced educators. This “earn-and-learn” model offers an alternative to traditional certification routes that are often cost-prohibitive and time-consuming.

Addressing Financial Barriers

T-RAPs reduce economic barriers by paying apprentices while they learn. This model increases accessibility and enables career mobility for a wider range of candidates, including paraprofessionals, mid-career changers, and community members with deep ties to local schools.

Creating a Sustainable Talent Pipeline

School systems with active T-RAPs often leverage their current workforce (i.e. paraprofessionals). By supporting individuals who already know the community and have a stake in student success, districts have an opportunity to cultivate a homegrown,

high-retention workforce. These educators are more likely to stay in the profession and provide continuity in their schools.

Improving Educator Readiness Through High-Quality Programming

Mentorship and in-classroom experience are the cornerstones of T-RAPs. This structure ensures that teacher candidates develop real-world skills before becoming lead instructors. Prior to T-RAPs, some school districts have relied on partnerships to provide additional support to new and aspiring teachers. These partnerships, such as those between Harris County Department of Education's Center for Educator Success (CES) and Houston-area school districts, provide extended supports for educators. CES, in partnership with a school district, offers a "Grow Your Own" program with three full years of teacher support. This depth of support is something T-RAPs have built into the program.

Key Takeaways

T-RAPs offer a compelling, scalable solution to the teacher shortage crisis in the Texas Gulf Coast region. By minimizing financial burdens, improving teacher preparedness, and creating sustainable talent pipelines, these programs position school districts to better serve students and communities alike.

Through this playbook, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board outlines the pathway to implementation, codifying the steps, structures, and partnerships necessary to ensure success in building the next generation of high-quality educators.

History and Benefits of Teacher Registered Apprenticeships

As highlighted in the previous chapter, the teacher shortage in Texas has reached a critical level. In response to this growing crisis, T-RAPs have emerged as an innovative and highly accessible pathway for aspiring educators. By integrating paid employment, structured mentorship, and aligned coursework, T-RAPs create a sustainable pipeline into the teaching profession, particularly for individuals who may otherwise face barriers to entry. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the origins of teacher apprenticeships, followed by an in-depth look at the benefits they offer for individuals, schools, and communities.

History of Registered Teacher Apprenticeships

T-RAPs are a relatively recent innovation in educator preparation, with pioneering programs first emerging in states like Tennessee and New York in 2022. In 2022, the U.S. Department of Labor officially recognized teaching as an “apprenticeable” occupation, making it eligible for inclusion in the National Apprenticeship System. This designation allows T-RAPs to be registered through the Office of Apprenticeship or through State Apprenticeship Agencies, opening the door for scalable, standards-aligned, and locally adaptable models.

The model is gaining traction rapidly. In 2024, nearly 13,000 apprentices registered in education programs across the country, a dramatic increase over the past five years. These occupations include teachers, teacher’s aide, and K-12 Principals. Early evidence from pilot programs shows that participants in T-RAPs are more likely to complete their preparation programs and remain in the profession long-term, largely due to the embedded support, compensation, and real-world experience they receive.

Benefits of Teacher Registered Apprenticeships

For many aspiring educators, the traditional pathway to certification is financially burdensome, academically rigid, and often disconnected from the realities of classroom teaching. T-RAPs offer a transformative alternative, one that is more accessible, practical, and supportive from start to finish.

Earn While You Learn

One of the most compelling advantages of T-RAPs is the “earn while you learn” structure. Traditional routes into teaching typically require candidates to take on student debt while juggling coursework and unpaid field experiences. In contrast, apprentices

are paid employees from the outset, enabling them to support themselves and their families while developing critical classroom skills.

This financial support significantly reduces the need for student loans or secondary employment, allowing apprentices to fully engage in their professional growth. It also promotes economic mobility, making the pathway to teaching more viable for a broader and more diverse pool of candidates.

Embedded Mentorship

Each apprentice is paired with an experienced, certified teacher who serves as a mentor, providing ongoing guidance, feedback, and modeling of best practices. This mentorship relationship is a cornerstone of the apprenticeship model. It-

- Builds confidence and instructional competence
- Accelerates professional growth
- Offers real-time coaching in classroom management, lesson planning, and student engagement

The result is a more resilient, better-prepared first-year teacher who has already developed strong foundations in both pedagogy and classroom leadership.

Integrated Coursework and Practice

T-RAPs intentionally combine academic learning with hands-on experience. Apprentices complete aligned coursework while working in real classroom settings, reinforcing technical knowledge through daily application. This integration ensures that teacher candidates-

- Understand theory and apply it in context
- Receive immediate feedback to refine practice
- Develop deep, practical skills in a supported environment

By embedding learning within the school day, T-RAPs also allow candidates to develop familiarity with school culture, build professional networks, and contribute meaningfully to student success long before they assume full teaching responsibilities.

Key Takeaways

In the Gulf Coast region and beyond, T-RAPs have the potential to transform educator preparation and workforce development by addressing a wide range of barriers to teaching as a career pathway. Continued investment and coordinated expansion will help build a diverse, well-prepared, and community-rooted teaching workforce capable of meeting the educational needs of today and the workforce demands of tomorrow.






Apprenticeship Requirements and Models

T-RAPs are a district-driven solution that results in well-prepared educators. Something that sets it apart from other talent programs is that requirements come from several governing entities. This chapter provides an overview of the requirements, approaches to consider when creating a T-RAP and provides a recommended T-RAP apprentice entry level framework.

Apprenticeship Requirements

T-RAPs in Texas must meet a combination of federal and state requirements, which distinguishes them from traditional teacher preparation pathways. Because standards are being provided by both entities, T-RAPs are a more rigorous and comprehensive entry point into education than traditional or other alternative certification programs. T-RAPs must abide by guidelines set by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), the Texas Education Agency (TEA), and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC).

Department of Labor Apprenticeship Standards

Employer Involvement	Related Technical Instruction	Structured On-the-Job Training	Compensation for Skill Gains	National Occupation Credentials
				
Employers (school districts) drive the apprenticeship because they identify a need for high-quality teachers and can offer jobs to apprentices during the apprenticeship.	Registered teacher apprentices receive supplemental classroom education based on the employer's unique needs. This training is provided by an EPP and college.	Apprentices receive structured on-the-job training through an experienced mentor and receive coaching from an Apprentice Supervisor.	Registered Apprenticeships are jobs and apprentices earn progressive wages as their skills and degree coursework progress.	Registered teacher apprentices earn a portable, nationally recognized credential as an educator. Teacher certification demonstrates that a teacher is considered highly qualified.

All Registered Apprenticeships, including T-RAPs, must meet the five core components outlined by the DOL. Those are-

- Paid, structured on-the-job training under a qualified mentor teacher
- Related technical instruction (RTI) aligned with academic and certification requirements
- Progressive wage increases as apprentices demonstrate increased skills
- Nationally recognized credential upon completion
- Employer involvement in program design and delivery

Texas Teacher Certification Requirements (TEA and SBEC)

In addition to meeting federal apprenticeship standards, T-RAPs must also ensure apprentices fulfill Texas educator certification requirements:

- Earn a bachelor's degree (if not already obtained)
- Complete a state-approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP)
- Pass all required certification exams (e.g., PPR, content-specific exams)
- Submit a standard teacher certification application through TEA

Texas Teacher Registered Apprenticeship Requirements

By following the state-mandated certification requirements along with federal level apprenticeship requirements, Texas T-RAPs ensure teacher candidates receive a rigorous educator preparation experience. Becoming a Teacher Registered Apprentice in Texas ensures teacher candidates go beyond the expectations of a standard teacher certification process, as noted in the graphic below.

Employment	Related Technical Instruction (EPP)	On-the-Job Training & Mentorship	Gradual Compensation for Skill Gains	Bachelor's Degree	Pass Certification Exams and Submit for Licensure
Apprentices must secure employment in a role that provides valuable experiences that are relevant to the apprenticeship program.	Apprentices must complete an Educator Preparation Program (EPP) that is available through online courses or courses offered in the community (residency or hybrid).	Apprentices receive job-embedded training from an experienced mentor teacher and coaching from an Apprentice Supervisor.	Apprentices receive wage increases as they demonstrate mastery of teaching competency and degree coursework.	Apprentices obtain a qualifying bachelor's degree.	Apprentices prepare for and pass required exams to teach in the area for which they are seeking certification.

Registered Apprenticeship Approaches

There are three different ways you can design an apprenticeship - competency-based, time-bound or hybrid. Each approach has their advantages and disadvantages, and the school district needs should determine which approach to choose. Each approach is outlined below along with advantages and disadvantages.

	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Time-based	This is the most traditional form of apprenticeship. In time-based apprenticeships, apprentices are required to complete a specific number of hours in on-the-job training and classroom instruction.	Tracking progress is easy due to simply tracking time in the program.	This approach simply matches time with teacher readiness. <i>*For this reason, this is not the recommended approach for a T-RAP.</i>
Competency-based	In this model, apprentices are assessed based on their ability to perform specific tasks or demonstrate certain skills, rather than the amount of time they spend in training.	Offers the apprentice flexibility. Apprentice can enter an apprenticeship at various levels and previous experience counts towards apprenticeship credit, reducing the amount of time required for teacher apprentices to complete the apprenticeship.	More challenging to compile and track progress on individuals and competencies. Additionally, competency mastery may not match up exactly with academic/school years.
Hybrid	This model combines elements of both time-based and competency-based approaches. It typically involves a set number of hours in training but also emphasizes the demonstration of competencies .	This is a flexible approach for apprentices while giving guidelines of when completion of competencies is expected.	Tracking time and competencies is challenging, and apprentices may need to use the maximum amount of allowable time for competency mastery.

While there is no one-size-fits-all T-RAP approach, both competency-based and hybrid approaches ensure that competencies are mastered per the expectations of TEA and SBEC. Again, the local workforce can support by determining workforce needs, local context and available partnerships to determine which approach works best.

T-RAP Recommended Apprenticeship Entry Points

Apprentice entry points are important because they set up parameters and a framework from which a program should be designed. There are implications on budget, cohort planning and all core components of a T-RAP. Once the apprentice entry framework is determined, a journey map for an apprentice should be completed for each type of apprentice. This will support organizations in accounting for the cost for an apprentice to complete the entire program and any additional wraparound supports that are needed. An example of a framework that can be used or adjusted is below.

Apprentice Level	Credit Hours Required for Entry	Coursework Required	Employment Recommendations	Degree, Certificate or Licensure after Completion
Pre-Apprentice (High School Students)	0	Education and Training Courses and/or AAT Curricula and/or any locally determined curricula	Office Aide, Tutor, Educational Aide 1 (or any role providing hands-on training and does not displace paid employees)	Up to 60 credit hours
Level 1 (High School Diploma or GED, Some college credit, adult learners with no college)	0-60	Education and Training Courses and/or AAT Curricula and/or any locally determined curricula	Office Aide, Tutor, Educational Aide 1, 2 or 3 (or other roles determined locally)	AAT and/or Educational Aide 2 or 3 Certificate and/or Title 1, Part A Paraprofessional AND enrollment in an approved EPP
Level 2 (Candidates with AAT, community college graduates, college juniors)	61-90	Approved EPP Curricula	Educational Aide 3, Title 1 Part A Paraprofessional (or other roles determined locally)	Bachelor's Degree AND Educational Aide 2 or 3 Certificate and/or Title 1, Part A Paraprofessional
Level 3 (College seniors, Careers changers with a Bachelors)	91-120+	Approved EPP Curricula	Educational Aide 3, Title 1 Part A Paraprofessional, Teacher Resident, Substitute Teacher (or other roles determined locally)	Bachelor's Degree and/or Standard Teacher Certificate

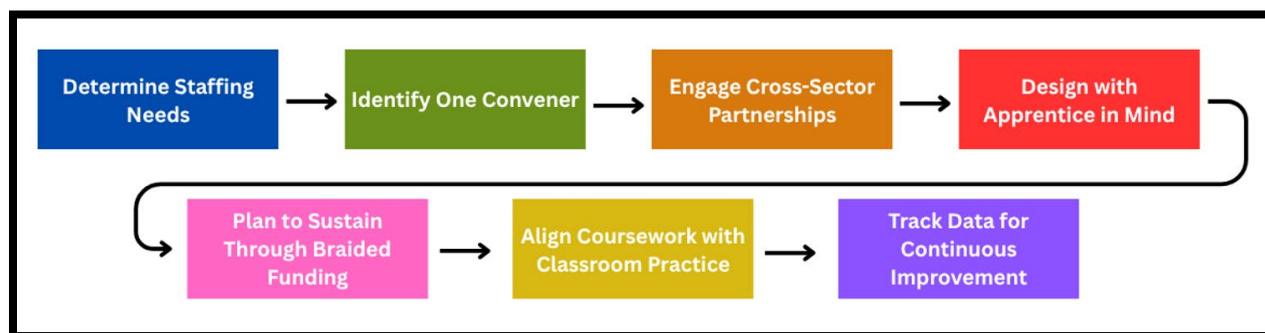
**Wage at each apprentice level is locally determined and must include progression alongside Apprentice levels. Pre-Apprentices can be unpaid or paid but should not displace paid employees.*

Key Takeaways

T-RAPs represent a transformative opportunity for school districts to grow their own teacher workforce. By blending job-embedded learning with academic rigor and structured mentorship, T-RAPs create a robust, accessible, and locally grown talent pipeline into a school community.

Best Practices to Create a T-RAP

The Department of Labor clarifies the approach organizations should take when launching a registered apprenticeship program. Within Texas, there are a set of steps required to become a certified teacher. With careful coordination, these steps can be woven together to create a seamless experience for the apprentice. This chapter provides the steps needed to plan for a successful T-RAP launch.



Launching a Successful T-RAP

Determine Staffing Needs

School districts drive the creation of a T-RAP. The local workforce board can help stakeholders determine if teaching is a high demand field in the region and they will also have resources to identify which areas or school districts need the most teachers. Once it's been determined that a school district has a need to fill teaching positions, specific subject areas or specializations should be prioritized. For instance, one rural district may need only a few math teachers, while a neighboring urban district may require dozens across multiple certification areas. Tailoring apprenticeship design to local labor market conditions and specific shortages is critical.

Key questions school districts can use to guide this phase include -

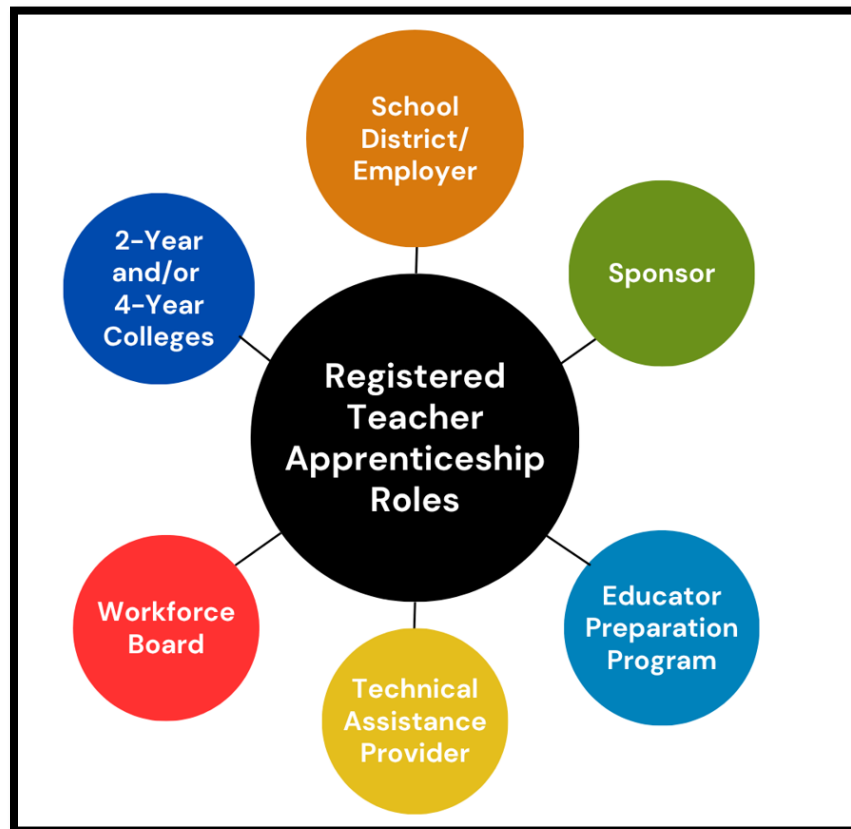
- What content areas face the greatest staffing challenges?
- Why are these shortages occurring (e.g., compensation, geography, certification barriers)?
- What support structures are needed for apprentice success?

Identify One Convener

Having one entity serve as the convener and unifying force is essential. Workforce Development Boards are ideal regional conveners due to their established networks and deep understanding of school district and labor market dynamics. Their involvement helps align T-RAPs with broader regional workforce strategies and ensures efficient coordination across stakeholders. While it's not necessary for the convener within the partnership also be a sponsor, it may be convenient.

Engage Cross-Sector Partnerships Early

Once a convener has been identified, the task of gathering partners and coordinating meetings falls onto that one partner. According to the National Center for Apprenticeship, T-RAPs consist of all invested stakeholders participating in the planning and implementation of programming. Most T-RAPs engage a cross-sector team of partners including -



Again, because workforce boards can connect a variety of organizations across a region, they are best positioned to serve in the convener role. Once partnerships are formed, each stakeholder should have clearly defined roles. These partnerships should be formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that clearly outlines roles, responsibilities, and expectations. A document containing required and recommended roles can be found and adjusted, as needed, in resources available on the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's [Career Pathways website](#). Building strong, collaborative relationships can be time-consuming and may require some persistence to get connected with the appropriate leaders. This step is important, though, because relationships and context are invaluable when creating a T-RAP.

Design with the Apprentice in Mind

After roles and responsibilities are defined, program design should begin with the apprentice experience in mind. This is the step where the apprentice entry point is

useful, especially when determining the barriers to program completion an apprentice may have. The journey map being created for each apprentice level should ensure all requirements are met and the experience will be of high quality. Designing all components of a T-RAP can become complicated and some organizations choose to bring in a technical assistance provider (TAP) to help problem-solve. Consider wraparound supports such as transportation stipends, tutoring, or flexible scheduling.

Plan to Sustain Through Braided Funding

Long-sustaining T-RAPs use braided funding strategies, including WIOA, state grants, and philanthropic support, to cover tuition, stipends, and instructional costs. There is a full chapter on funding in this playbook because it is a topic that requires careful consideration for sustainability of T-RAPs.

Align Coursework with Classroom Practice

T-RAPs must integrate high-quality Related Technical Instruction (RTI), ideally aligned with state certification competencies and district instructional frameworks. Curriculum should be delivered by EPPs and grounded in evidence-based teaching strategies. When coursework is directly connected to the apprentice's classroom experience, knowledge transfer and skill development is more likely. Regular feedback loops between school districts and EPPs are vital to ensure content relevancy and quality. This work will involve collaboration between all coursework providers. That includes high schools (if dual credit is transferred), two-year colleges, four-year colleges and EPPs. All coursework must meet competencies set forth by TEA and SBEC.

Track Data for Continuous Improvement

Establish systems to monitor apprentice progress, mentor feedback, certification milestones, and employment outcomes. Use this data to refine the model and advocate for continued funding and expansion. It's important that a data-tracking system and the staff who will manage that data is built into the plan. More information about data tracking is covered in a subsequent chapter.

Key Takeaways

In summary, T-RAPs offer a promising solution to meet the needs of school district teacher shortages. The importance of a strong plan for the T-RAP cannot be understated. Plans should consider the apprentice experience alongside successful completion of required T-RAP components to produce the highest quality future teachers.

Funding Strategies and Resources

Strategic funding plays a critical role in the success of T-RAPs. Sustainability of funding is necessary because it could take several years to ensure a single cohort of aspiring teachers successfully complete the apprenticeship. To ensure long-term viability, a comprehensive funding strategy must be supported by strong operational systems. This chapter covers the types of expenses apprentices encounter and the investments that will be required to build a T-RAP.

The Cost of Apprenticeships

When estimating the total cost to support an apprentice through a T-RAP, it is essential to consider the entry level of the apprentice. Whether an individual is entering with prior experience, some college credit, or starting from the beginning, their starting point will influence both the type and amount of financial support needed. Financial support can be leveraged to supplement apprentice wages, cover tuition, licensure preparation, provide high-quality mentorship and offer essential wraparound services like childcare and transportation.

Expenses can be categorized into four primary areas -

School District	Training or EPP	College	Personal Costs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apprentice salary• Training costs• Healthcare• Marketing & recruitment• Mentor stipends• Technology• Classroom supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Cost• Marketing & Recruitment• Certification Exam costs• Technology• Certificate cost• Test preparation/ Test study support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tuition & Fees• Advising Fees• Pre-application & application costs• Dual credit courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Childcare• Transportation• Groceries• Housing/Utilities• Professional Clothing

By fully accounting for comprehensive costs during each apprentice's journey, the complexities of the financial burden become clear. With that clarity comes the need for a funding approach that supports the full scope of apprentice needs with a model that leverages multiple funding sources.

Braided Funding Approach

With the variety of funding sources available for T-RAPs, organizations should be strategic about how they utilize funding. A braided funding model is an approach that combines multiple funding streams including federal, state, local, and private sources, to support the various costs associated with a T-RAP. Rather than relying heavily on a single funding stream, braided funding allows organizations to align and layer resources to maximize impact, ensure sustainability, and reduce financial strain on any one entity. It also allows organizations to build efficiency and provide flexibility by using funds to meet emerging needs. This approach is especially valuable in dynamic educational environments and under-resourced communities, where strategic use of funding can significantly expand access and opportunity for aspiring educators.

How to Braid Funds

The key to understanding how to braid funds is to understand the individualized amount needed for each apprentice. An intake process could be created during the planning process so that it is clear to all stakeholders what their expected investment will be. Since there should already be pathways mapped out by cost, a foundational cost for each apprentice level by entry point is known. The intake process ideally captures any additional financial needs of the apprentice including any wraparound services.

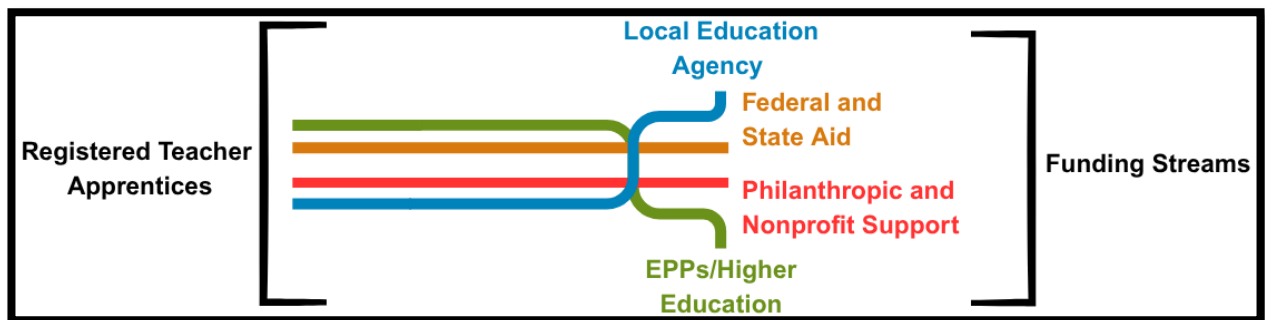
SUCCESS STORY

On March 24, 2025, the Gulf Coast Workforce Board convened a regional workshop focused on addressing the complexities of funding for T-RAPs. The event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from across the Gulf Coast region, including representatives from secondary schools, post-secondary institutions, technical assistance providers, and workforce development organizations.

The workshop centered on conducting cost analyses for apprentices entering apprenticeships at various entry points. Using a Teacher Apprenticeship Framework as a guide, participants analyzed four distinct apprentice profiles with associated costs. A key insight from the workshop was the presence of numerous hidden costs that apprentices face - costs that extend beyond tuition and fees. These include childcare, transportation, study materials, technology access, and other wraparound supports that are essential for teacher preparation but are often overlooked in standard budgeting models.

Funding Sources and Required Investments

Securing funding is just as critical as determining the total investment required to support each apprentice. A comprehensive intake and cost assessment accounts for all expenses an apprentice may incur including tuition, wages, licensure preparation, mentorship, and wraparound services such as childcare and transportation. With this information, stakeholders can identify funding streams and align those to support the apprentice towards a low-cost or no cost program. The goal is that with funding from multiple sources, any gaps not accounted for can be covered by another source.



Institutions are successful in securing and sustaining funding when they –

- Partner with multiple organizations including workforce boards, school districts, EPPs and other non-profits or Education Service Centers (ESCs).
- Align with funder priorities and initiatives such as residencies or grow-your-own programs.
- Demonstrate impact or the intended impact with data such as highlighting apprentice retention rate or student outcomes.
- Remain flexible regarding allocation of budget to support apprenticeships.

School District Investment

A sustainable budget model starts with school districts, according to Kristi Kirschner, Board President of Gateway Education Partners. In her experience, the most successful districts reallocate or reinvest budgets that were focused on current talent towards a budget that funds and prepares future teachers. Kirschner notes that “local funds are the focal point,” and other entities such as workforce boards, grants and non-profits can serve as funding sources to fill funding gaps. School district expenses include -

- **Salaries or Stipends** - Apprentices often work as paraprofessionals or teacher residents while completing their teacher training. This means that some of the marketing dollars spent attracting new teachers can be repurposed to the apprentice program since those apprentices will become the workforce once

apprenticeship is complete. Some districts have also leveraged a portion of their substitute teacher budget for apprentices.

- **Mentor Teacher Compensation** – Most districts provide funding for experienced teachers who support apprentices during their first years of teaching.

Higher Education and EPP Partners

Educator Preparation Providers (EPPs), including colleges and universities, are essential for certifying educators and may be able to minimize costs for apprentices. Types of support that can be offered could be -

- **Offering reduced tuition or scholarships** - Especially for apprentices that qualify through income.
- **Embedding apprenticeship pathways into existing degree programs** - Aligning coursework with licensure requirements and apprenticeship standards.
- **Sharing faculty and facilities** - To support instruction and assessment.

As the Related Technical Instruction (RTI) provider, these partnerships ensure that apprentices receive high-quality academic preparation alongside their classroom experience.

Leveraging Government Support

Government funding is another potential source of funding for T-RAPs. The Department of Labor and the state of Texas have increasingly supported teacher development initiatives, but the amount and requirements of funding often shifts. There can also be strict guidelines that programs or apprentices must meet to qualify for funding. For example, only colleges on the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL) are eligible for funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), a potential federal funding stream. For this reason, it's important to stay abreast of current legislation and ensure qualifications are met before planning a budget using these sources. Some of the resources through federal or state funding include -

- **Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) grants** - These funds help cover program development, mentor stipends, and administrative costs. Some examples of this are Apprenticeship Building America (ABA) and the State Apprenticeship Expansion (SAE) grant.
- **Local Education Agency (LEA) Funding** - Texas allocates funds that support new teachers and the retention of teachers through school districts. While

initiatives and support can change, Texas is aligned with having high-quality teachers in the classroom.

Philanthropic and Nonprofit Support

Foundations and nonprofit organizations are increasingly investing in teacher workforce development. Tapping into these sources can be helpful in closing the funding gap for apprentices. Some financial support they may provide are -

- **Grants for program startup or expansion** – Some grants are set aside specifically to launch or increase the impact of established apprenticeship programs.
- **Support for wraparound services** - Such as transportation, childcare, or exam preparation.
- **Technical assistance and capacity building** - Helping districts and EPPs design sustainable, equity-focused programs.

Key Takeaways

In conclusion, establishing a sustainable and operationally stable T-RAP requires a strategic approach to funding. By leveraging a braided funding model that combines federal, state, local, and private resources, stakeholders can ensure that apprentices receive the individualized support they need without unnecessary financial waste. A comprehensive intake process, strong partnerships, and alignment with funder priorities to maximize impact and ensure long-term viability. With thoughtful planning and collaboration, T-RAPs can become a powerful tool for building a diverse, well-prepared teacher workforce.

Recruiting Teacher Candidates

A successful T-RAP depends on a strong and sustainable pipeline of candidates. Recruitment should be intentional and targeted to the candidates an organization is seeking to attract. In some situations, T-RAPs will choose to launch with only one pathway, such as paraprofessional to teacher. Recruiting with only one candidate profile is much narrower and focused. However, as a program expands and seeks to attract a wider variety of teacher candidates, a multi-tiered strategy will be needed to reach dual credit students in high school, learners in postsecondary institutions, and career changers or paraprofessionals already working in schools. Regardless of recruiting strategy, strong relationships with partners are foundational to recruiting teacher candidates for a T-RAP long-term. This chapter outlines recruiting actions that can be taken across three levels: high school, postsecondary, and district-based recruitment.

High School Recruitment

High schools can be the starting point for recruiting future educators. Early exposure through Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses and career days are important to showing students that teaching is a viable career, especially when T-RAPs are a pathway option. Recruiting can encompass -

- **Career Exploration Presentations** - Teachers and administrators can provide engaging presentations during class time or at a career fair to introduce students to teacher apprenticeships and education as a career. This is relatively “low lift” because schools have ample teachers and administrators to choose from on campus.
- **“Grow Your Own” Programs** - Specific programs can provide students with a clear pathway towards teacher apprenticeship and certification. In these programs, school districts can create an educational pathway towards becoming a teacher through dual credit courses, low risk teaching opportunities like summer enrichment opportunities for younger students, and mentorship from current teachers. These programs, while effective, require close partnership with local community colleges to ensure transferability of dual credit courses.
- **Counselor and CTE Collaboration** - Counselors and CTE instructors can work to identify high school students with an interest in teaching and connect them to post-secondary institutions to help guide them through pathways from high school to college. Dedicated time can be set up on the high school campus for the college to speak to aspiring teachers. Again, this option requires that school districts partner with at least one college who can support with this effort. The

local workforce board may be able to assist school districts seeking to partner with post-secondary institutions.

Postsecondary Recruitment

Community colleges and four-year institutions are critical recruitment hubs, especially for first-generation college students, career changers, and paraprofessionals.

Establishing a recruitment committee to attract teacher candidates to a T-RAP provides several strategic and operational benefits. This committee can play a pivotal role in ensuring the program attracts, selects, and supports high-quality candidates who reflect the needs and diversity of the communities they serve.

For example, the University of Houston – Downtown (UHD) forms a committee to meet prior to recruiting “kick-off season.” UHD leaders identify ideal candidate profiles to design a strategy for the upcoming student recruitment period. Dr. Tonya Jeffery, the Principal Investigator, Advisor and Mentor for UHD’s DAIR to Teach program, leverages relationships that have been built with school districts and community colleges to streamline recruitment efforts. Active recruitment is then coordinated with these partners and often takes place at area high school and community college campuses. The UHD team seeks out new partnerships to expand their program reach to as many students as possible. Additional strategies that can be used are -

- **On-Campus Outreach** - Host information sessions, classroom visits, and tabling events to raise awareness of T-RAPs.
- **Transfer Pathways at Community Colleges** - Establish MOUs between two-year and four-year institutions to ensure a smooth transition for aspiring teachers.
- **Advising Integration** - Train academic advisors to include T-RAP pathways in their guidance for education majors and undecided students.
- **Joint Recruitment Events** - Collaboration between 2-year and 4-year institutions along with EPPs can be powerful at recruitment fairs or for an informational webinar. Recruitment reach online is wider and attracts a variety of prospective students.

District-Based Recruitment

School districts are uniquely positioned to recruit individuals already embedded in the education system—such as paraprofessionals, substitute teachers, and community members. Some actions that can be taken are:

- **Internal Talent Pipelines** - Identify and support paraprofessionals and aides who aspire to become certified teachers. Organizations can plan for internal

recruitment days to share information about how T-RAP works within their district.

- **District-Wide Communication** - Distribute newsletters and leverage internal portals to promote apprenticeship opportunities.
- **Incentives and Supports** - Clearly communicate the benefits of T-RAPs including stipends, tuition assistance, and mentorship.

Continuous Outreach and Innovation

Recruitment for teacher candidates is an ongoing process. According to the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, teaching is categorized as a high-growth, high-skills occupation. This means that teaching will offer “higher-than-average wages, skills levels and employment opportunities for the next 10 years,” according to Parker Harvey, Manager of Regional Economic Analysis at the Gulf Coast Workforce Board. To summarize, teaching will be a role that needs continuous recruiting efforts for years to come.

Key Takeaways

Recruiting teacher candidates for T-RAPs require a multi-level, community-driven approach. By engaging high school students, supporting postsecondary learners, and empowering current school employees, stakeholders can build a robust pool of teacher candidates.

Regulations & Policies Impacting Teacher Registered Apprenticeships

As more school districts consider T-RAPs, a successful launch must be built on a strong foundation of regulatory compliance, thoughtful design, and sustained partnerships. This chapter provides an overview of the federal and state policy frameworks that guide T-RAP development.

Federal Regulations

At the federal level, teacher apprenticeships are recognized and governed by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) through its Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) framework as eligible programs under its broader workforce development strategy. Upon registration, the sponsor must submit a detailed program plan that outlines training standards, wages and the equal opportunity policies in place. The DOL requires specific components be met so that apprentices can earn nationally recognized credentials after engaging in high-quality training.

The foundation of a T-RAP that is recognized by the DOL must consist of the following -

1. **Paid, On-the-Job Learning** - Apprentices earn a wage from the start of employment and pay must increase as they gain skills and experience.
2. **Related Technical Instruction (RTI)** - Apprentices receive classroom-based instruction aligning with their job duties—typically delivered by a college, university, or training provider.
3. **Structured Mentorship** - Apprentices are paired with an experienced mentor to receive guidance, feedback, and support throughout the apprenticeship.
4. **Progressive Wage Increases** - As apprentices demonstrate increases in their knowledge, skills and competency, their wages must increase accordingly.
5. **Nationally Recognized Credential** - Upon completion of the apprenticeship, apprentices earn a credential that recognized across the education sector.

Aligning with federal standards, teacher apprenticeship programs not only ensure compliance but also gain access to technical assistance, funding opportunities, and a national network of support. These regulations serve as a blueprint for building robust, sustainable pathways into the teaching profession.

State of Texas Regulations

The process of becoming a certified teacher in Texas is governed by policies established by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). Regulations help to ensure all future educators meet standards of content knowledge, pedagogical skill, and professional conduct before they serve as a classroom teacher. T-RAPs must integrate into the existing educator certification framework, primarily through Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs).

Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)

Every aspiring teacher in Texas must be enrolled in a state-approved Educator Preparation Program (EPP). These programs can be through a traditional college pathway, or they can be considered an alternative certification route, which includes T-RAPs. EPPs deliver educator coursework, supervise the clinical experience, and ultimately recommend candidates to be certified. Universities and independent EPP organizations provide the competency coursework required for teacher certification.

Certification Exams

Candidates must take and pass all required exams aligned with their desired certification area to be recommended for certification. These usually include:

- **TEXES Content Exam:** This exam assesses subject-specific knowledge.
- **Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) Exam:** This exam evaluates a candidate's teaching practices and classroom management.
- **Science of Teaching Reading (STR) Exam:** This exam is required for early childhood through 8th grade certification in specific content areas and it assesses essential reading instruction topics.

Clinical Experience

Texas also requires teaching candidates to complete clinical experience. These should be in person and with the guidance of a certified mentor teacher under the supervision of an EPP. These experiences are meant to help prospective teachers develop classroom management and teaching skills. For teacher apprenticeships, this requirement is typically fulfilled through paid, supervised classroom work and still under the guidance of a certified mentor teacher and the EPP.

Background Checks and Fingerprinting

A final step that all teacher candidates must complete is a national criminal background check before being fingerprinted through the Texas Department of Public Safety.

Certification Types & Certification Renewal

Texas offers the following types of teaching certificates:

- **Intern Certificate:** This certificate is appropriate for candidates completing requirements while employed.
- **Probationary Certificate:** This certificate can be issued for one year while a teacher candidate completes a certification program with an EPP.
- **Standard Certificate:** This certificate is granted when a teacher candidate completes all certification requirements.

Certified teachers must renew their credentials on a consistent basis, complete continuing professional education (CPE) hours and maintain a clean disciplinary record.

Compliance and Oversight

Starting and sustaining a T-RAP requires high-quality systems with compliance in mind. The strongest systems follow all federal and state requirements and protect apprentice information. The DOL conducts audits and/or site visits at any time and programs not meeting expectations are required to take corrective action. The T-RAP sponsor is responsible for –

- Submitting a detailed program plan during the registration process.
- Maintaining records of apprentice progress, wages, and instruction.
- Compliance with federal equal opportunity regulations.
- Conducting consistent reviews to ensure program is meeting the DOL's RAP standards.

In Texas, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) and TEA are both responsible for regulating EPPs, including those who leverage apprenticeship models. Oversight is governed by the Texas Administrative Code (TAC), which provides program standards and accountability measures.

Oversight in Texas includes:

- **Five-Year Continuing Approval Reviews:** All EPPs must receive a comprehensive review at least once every five years. A review includes an audit of documentation, review of candidate records, and program outcomes.
- **Performance-Based Monitoring:** TEA also evaluates EPPs using indicators such as certification exam pass rates, candidate completion rates, and employment outcomes. All programs are assigned risk levels and may be required to undergo additional actions if below baseline benchmarks.
- **Corrective Action Plans:** If EPPs are not meeting expectations, they must submit and implement corrective action plans.
- **Annual Reporting:** All EPPs are required to provide annual data on candidate enrollment, completion, and certification. This data is published on a public platform and allows for statewide monitoring.

Internal Oversight

In addition to federal and state oversight, apprenticeship sponsors—such as school districts or regional partnerships—should create internal systems for monitoring program alignment and fidelity. Areas for monitoring to consider are -

- Mentor effectiveness with apprentice feedback.
- Fidelity of documentation including number of instructional hours and wage progression requirements met.
- Data performance against state and federal expectations.

Key Takeaways

Strong systems and structures for data collection should be part of the T-RAP design to ensure all federal, state and local compliance is followed. While sponsors are responsible for reporting to the DOL for compliance, data collection and program evaluation is the responsibility of all stakeholders in a partnership, highlighting the need for strong relationships from the outset. With strong collaboration and communication, measuring metrics in a T-RAP can be manageable.

Collecting Data to Evaluate the Program

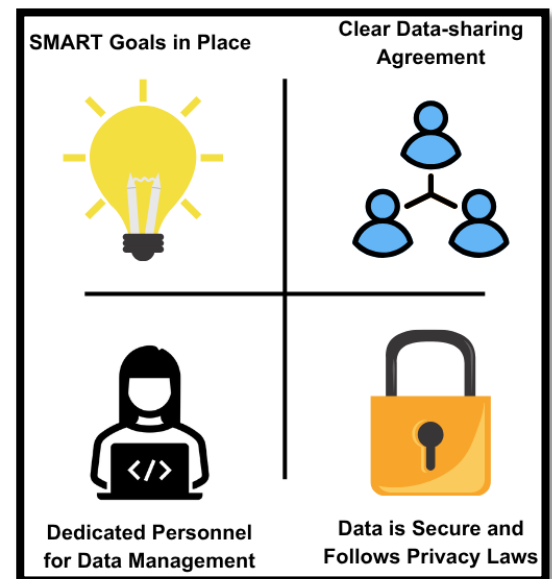
Taking the time to set up effective data collection and reporting systems is critical to ensuring a T-RAP is high quality and sustainable. The purpose of creating a T-RAP is to increase the number of high-quality teachers in classrooms and data is essential to inform us about whether we are successful. This chapter will cover the purpose of data collection, examples of helpful data to collect and considerations to have when selecting the tools for data collection.

Philosophy for Data Collection

Defining clear, measurable goals is crucial when establishing systems to collect data and evaluate apprenticeship programs. Strong goals are often written as SMART goals (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound). These goals can include outcomes such as teacher retention rates, mentorship quality, certification exam performance or any other number of metrics.

It is also essential to allocate adequate personnel time and budget to fulfill all reporting obligations effectively during the planning phase of a T-RAP. When planning the staffing model alongside the need for data management, some questions to consider are -

- Can the current staff capacity be shifted to handle data management or is there a need for additional staff?
- What training will be needed depending on the data collection tool we will use?



Any data collection tool selected must also prioritize data security and privacy. Systems should be designed to protect sensitive apprentice and institutional information and must fully comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and all other applicable data protection regulations.

Finally, data sharing among T-RAP partners is vital for program coordination and continuous improvement. Putting clear protocols in place to govern who has access to what data, under what circumstances, and through what mechanisms, minimizes confusion and maximizes each education partner's capacity.

Best Practices for Data Collection

Who Should Collect the Data

In most cases, the program sponsor is the primary entity responsible for collecting and reporting data to all required agencies, including the U.S. Department of Labor and other funding or oversight bodies. However, there are instances where data collection and reporting responsibilities are shared across partners.

For example, when a grant or funding stream is awarded to a specific partner, such as a school district, educator preparation program (EPP), or workforce board, that entity may be required to report on the use of those funds independently. In such cases, data collection becomes a shared responsibility, and coordination is essential to ensure consistency and accuracy.

To support this collaboration, it is a best practice to establish a formal data-sharing agreement among all partners. This agreement should outline:

- Roles and responsibilities for data collection and reporting
- Data ownership and access protocols
- Security and privacy standards (e.g., FERPA compliance)
- Frequency and format of data sharing

Types of Data to Collect

It is essential to consistently monitor and evaluate the performance of T-RAP partners to ensure program effectiveness and continuous improvement. While individual organizations may track their own internal metrics to assess success, it is equally important for all partners to align on a core set of shared performance indicators. These shared metrics provide a unified and comprehensive view of the program's overall impact. This alignment also fosters transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making.

To capture a full picture of program performance, data collection should be holistic, incorporating both quantitative data (e.g., program completion rates, licensure attainment) and qualitative data (e.g. apprentice feedback, mentor reflections). Below are examples of common data types and metrics that can be used to evaluate and strengthen T-RAP implementation.

Apprenticeship Demographics & Program Performance	Grant and/or Funding Requirements	Continuous Improvement and Learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprentice program completion by work hours, competencies mastered, and coursework completion • Certification exam scores • Apprentice retention rates • Apprentice demographics • Employment outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of apprentices leveraging various types of funding • Apprentice indicators for grant or funding assistance • Wraparound services utilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprentice self-reflections • Survey feedback on mentorship quality • Customer service surveys (i.e. apprenticeship experience with financial aid, EPP responsiveness) • Overall target performance

Tools for Data Collection

Selecting the right tools for data collection and analysis is critical to data reporting across multiple entities, including the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), grant funders, and institutional partners. Many existing data systems may lack the capacity or functionality to comprehensively capture the full scope of information required for teacher apprenticeship programs. Some of the tools needed to collect data include –

- RAPIDS is a required data reporting system that is provided by the DOL once an apprenticeship is granted.
- Any data collection platform that will roll up data from a variety of sources (i.e. Excel, PEIMS, LMS, surveys) is ideal. If it is not feasible to purchase a third system, organizations can develop a dashboard data system that will serve similar in function.
- Qualitative collection tools include observation rubrics, surveys, and self-reflection documents. Quantitative data collection tools can include post-secondary grading systems, attendance records and employment tracking systems within school districts.

Analyzing Data

Analyzing data with stakeholders is an important step for the ongoing improvement of an apprenticeship program. A stepback is a structured reflective practice commonly utilized in coaching, mentoring, and performance evaluations to assess a situation,

action, or outcome. It involves intentionally pausing to analyze what occurred, why it occurred, and how future performance can be enhanced through the lens of data.

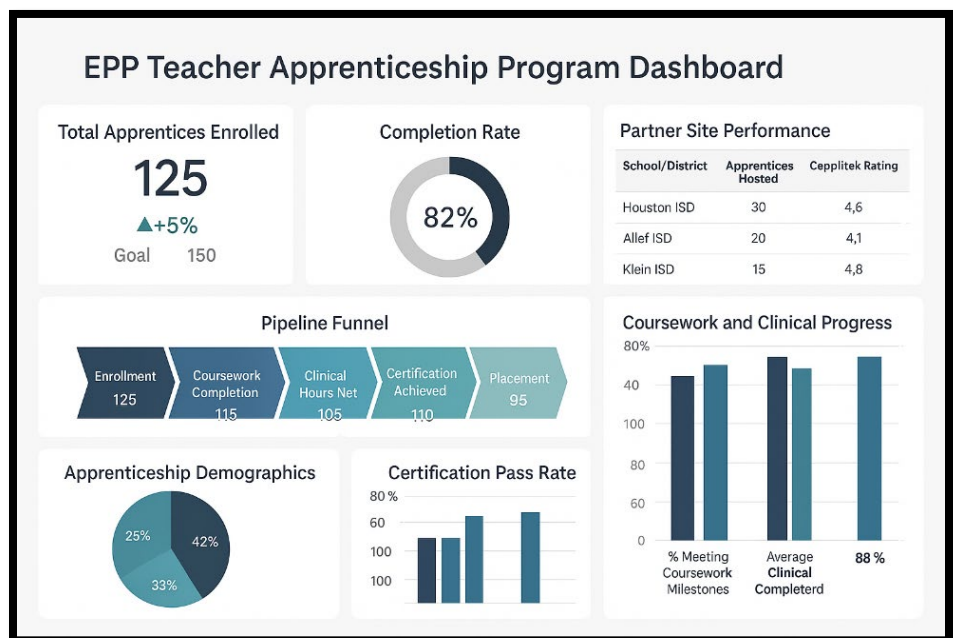
These sessions typically explore -

- The actions taken by the apprentice or within the T-RAP
- Challenges encountered during the process
- Key lessons learned
- Strategies for applying those lessons in the future

Within a T-RAP, mentors may conduct stepback sessions with apprentices following the completion of a competency focus during the school year. T-RAP conveners are a natural choice to facilitate a broad, data-driven stepback involving all apprenticeship partners. Given that both secondary and postsecondary education systems operate on semester-based calendars, end-of-semester serves as a natural transition point to provide ideal opportunities for collective reflection. Dashboards, like the example below, can be beneficial when monitoring the effectiveness of an entire program.

Some of the metrics included in this dashboard are –

- **Total Apprentices Enrolled -** Displays the current number of apprentices actively enrolled in the program.
- **Completion Rate -** A donut chart showing the percentage of apprentices who have completed the program out of those who enrolled.
- **Partner Site Performance -** A table displaying how different partner school districts are performing based on specified metrics.
- **Pipeline Funnel -** A funnel chart visualizing how apprentices move through major program milestones.
- **Coursework and Clinical Progress -** A grouped bar chart showing completion rates towards coursework and clinical milestone.



- **Apprenticeship Demographics** - A pie chart visualizing the demographic composition of the apprentices by category (e.g., race, gender, or background).
- **Certification Pass Rate** - A bar chart showing performance on licensure or certification exams.

By transparently examining program strengths and areas for improvement, stakeholders can make informed decisions that enhance strategic planning and elevate the overall quality of the apprenticeship experience.

Key Takeaways

With thoughtful planning, adequate staffing, and a commitment to using both qualitative and quantitative data, T-RAPS can not only meet reporting requirements but also drive meaningful outcomes for teacher candidates and the broader education system.