

Talent Pipelines Working Group Meeting Notes

Task Force Members Present: Brandon Chandler, Christie Volmer, Casey Morgan, Chris Tatum, Leah Tunnell, Justin Terry, Sherry Taylor, Suzanne Kirkland, Ashley Osborne

Staff Members Present: Camille Davenport, Melissa Yoder, Jessica McLoughlin, Beth Burkhart, Mark Olofson, Xochitl Rocha

Invited Panelists: Becky Hampton (Region 4, Inspire Texas), Kristi Kirschner (Brazosport ISD)

Session Welcome, Introductions, and Logistics

Jessica McLoughlin made introductions of the staff from TEA and leaders, and shared the working group objectives:

1. Summarize input from last session and share impact on overall working group structure,
2. Debrief pre-work and gather initial perspectives around key issues, common barriers, and areas for prioritized focus,
3. Identify key objectives to address to support talent pathway development and develop recommendations to address those objectives. These may include possible statute, rule, or district-level policy changes needed, and
4. Identify next steps between the August and October meeting.

Summary of Last Session:

The facilitator shared the takeaways from the last meeting. There was an expressed need for quality preparation pathways and partnerships to support teacher preparation aligned to PK-12 needs.

Context & Data:

Mark Olofson shared that the teacher pipeline is of vital importance to the advancement of Texas Public Schools and shared key data on new hires within the state. The number of new hires has been steady since 2013–2014 and increased in the 2021–2022 school year. He defined new hires as an individual employed as a teacher in the current academic year, but not employed as a teacher in the previous year. He stated that this was only 15% of new hires. Returning teachers made up 29% of new hires, the largest group entering the profession. Re-entry includes individuals who did not teach in the prior year or who were part-time. Another key point shared was that the alternative certification pathway has changed drastically over time because they need to get a position to be on that pathway.

Areas to Prioritize:

The facilitator oriented the group around thinking about multiple entry points and supporting teachers and LEAs at each point and focusing efforts on re-recruiting teachers who've left the profession. The facilitator also

oriented the group around recruiting, training, and certifying teacher candidates through quality preparation practices and strategies.

The facilitator shared that the group would dive into the “apprenticeship system,” which consists of 3 entry points. The initial entry point into the pipeline includes initiatives such as high school Grow Your Own programs, recruiting and growing talent within schools and communities. The second point in the pipeline are teachers re-entering into the classroom and employing intentional strategies and supports to recruit and enable former teachers to re-enter the workforce. The third and final entry point includes incentivizing and supporting teacher leaders and mentors.

Pre-work Debrief Part 1: Profiles along the Pipeline

The group discussed the pre-work.

Debrief of the Third Future Schools Session (main room):

Following the Third Future Schools session in the main room, the facilitator led the group in a debrief and discussion. The facilitators named a few strategies used to combat issues around attracting and retaining quality educators and building a system of retaining effective teachers. Strategies included staffing models and financial support focused on teacher time, targeting marketing and recruitment strategies for educators, and talent pipeline planning with teacher apprentice and learning coach roles. The facilitator asked that the group keep these recommended strategies in mind during the session.

Guests Kristi Kirschner and Becky Hampton: Brazosport ISD (BISD), Region 4 INSPIRE TEXAS, Brazosport College Partnership

Guest Kristi Kirschner described the partnership between Brazosport ISD, INSPIRE TEXAS, and Brazosport College. In partnership with two Educator Preparation Programs, Region 4 INSPIRE TEXAS and Brazosport College, Brazosport ISD can sustain a locally funded grow your own program and offers paid apprenticeships for teacher candidates who work alongside a paid mentor teacher. This partnership grew from a need to address current and future teacher pipelines and emphasized the need to use the resources within the community.

Ms. Kirschner shared that to meet the needs of the district, they first had to understand the barriers. Then, they offered high quality training and support for teachers in the apprenticeship process, including on the job training and enabling candidates to receive credit from both Educator Preparation Programs to save time and money towards earning their degrees. BISD acted as broker, building a low-cost and no-cost apprenticeship program. They explored funding through The Workforce Commission, Department of Labor (DOL), and private funding. These external funding sources make it possible for candidates’ tuition to be covered. In addition to external funding, the district utilizes sustainable local funds from the attrition budget for teachers and paraprofessionals to pay candidates. In addition, the program offers wrap around services to candidates, including childcare and transportation. Candidates “earn while they learn.” They were able to “braid together” funding through these partnerships to support a teacher pipeline.

The apprenticeship model offers multiple on-ramps or entry points into the field, including students who are engaged with college coursework and need a space to demonstrate learned skills. Candidates have shown a high interest in the program; most recently, over 175 applicants applied, 100 were interviewed, and of that group, 76 candidates were selected. Furthermore, 42% of the 76 offers were current employees, 78% of apprentices are seeking certification in high need areas (i.e.: Bilingual, Special Education, and Secondary Math, Science, and English Language Arts), and 15% are male teachers.

Pipeline Strategy Snapshot: Ashley Osborne, Ector County ISD (ECISD)

Ashley Osborne presented strategies utilized in Ector County ISD. In 2019, the school year began and ended with 18% teacher vacancies because they couldn't fill the positions. In response, the district developed a strategy to meet their teacher workforce needs. They employed a three-pronged strategy: 1) Investment in talent development and high-quality preparation, 2) Compensate teacher candidates by offering paid residencies by partnering with local universities and operating their own in-house alternative certification program. 3) Utilizing a Grow Your Own model for high school students, who can earn credit towards their Bachelor's degree and be a classroom teacher of record as soon as a year or two after graduating high school.

The next steps for the district are to develop pipeline efforts for other hard to staff positions, such as counselors, principals, and diagnosticians. They shared that there is also a need to establish an agreement with teachers on the number of years they are required to remain in the district after earning their credentials, to ensure there is a return on the investment made.

Debrief BISS and EISS Case Studies:

Taskforce members debriefed the case studies.

Key Takeaways:

The Facilitator led Task Force Members in a reflection over the smaller group breakouts and shared out the common themes and connections.

Working Group Recommendations: Objectives, Impact, Actors and Possible Next Steps

For each phase (Recruit and Train, Re-recruit, and Retain), Task Force Members share related strategies and possible impact for each "bucket."

Phase 1: Recruit and Train Phase

For the first bucket, **Recruitment and Training**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Train Human Resources teams on recruitment strategies and best practices that go beyond college career fairs, including partnerships for local workforce solutions, tailoring efforts toward candidates re-entering the profession and high needs areas.

- Provide incentives to new hires, through referral incentives for current employees and considering alternative calendar options such as the 4-day work week.
- Utilize recruitment technology, such as data systems to better track recruitment, retention trends, and hiring needs and establish a statewide job board.
- Sourcing candidates from underutilized areas, such as local Workforce solutions job fairs and connecting with career services at universities to tap into students who haven't potentially pursued an education path and provide more flexibility for entry such as non-traditional preparation pathways that allow districts to hire candidates while they student teach.

For the second bucket, **High School and Training Pathway**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Engage with pathway planning and partnership, which includes creating pathways for high school students to earn dual credit and become a teacher (i.e.: CTE course).
- Offer incentives to high school students during and after their candidacy/residency in the district.
- Provide technical assistance to districts and programs as they develop the pathway.

For the third bucket, **Pathways for Current Staff and Community to Become Teachers**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Build partnerships with Colleges & Universities to help current staff and community members obtain their degrees and certifications.
- Collect data on community members and staff to determine their interest in becoming teachers.
- Establish partnerships to fund recruitment initiatives.
- Evaluate, leverage, and streamline DOI flexibilities.

For the fourth bucket, **Access to High Quality Teacher Preparation**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Establish partnerships between Educator Preparation Programs and LEAs to create pipelines of educators, share best practices, align on priorities for high quality teacher preparation and preparation models, including Regional 2+1 models, online programs, and PLA models where some courses are taught at the local level to meet individual district needs.
- Leverage clinical teachers in Human Resources Strategy. For example, run cohorts that begin their clinical teaching experience in the fall and spring, and use the December graduates as a “bench” for teaching beginning in the spring.
- Provide technical assistance for EPPs in developing paid teacher residency models, where candidates receive pay, high quality preparation, and work side by side with a mentor teacher. By working with a technical assistance provider, LEA's and EPPs can be a part of a greater network of others who are doing similar work.
- Create a space to share best practices, require EPPs to provide candidates with coaching, reflection, practice opportunities, and to align with LEA's on priorities for the teacher pipeline.

The group identified the research and next steps for this phase as exploring funding sources and ways to gain buy-in from district departments. Additionally, the group identified they needed framing around roles of state, legislature, and the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) in various parts of the pipeline.

Phase 2: Re-Recruit

For the first bucket, **Targeted Marketing and Recruitment Strategies for Returners**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Utilize targeted recruitment approaches using industry best practices.
- Restructure positions to include part-time positions and job-sharing opportunities for retirees.
- Offer incentives, such as wrap-around services, increased the pay, and bonuses to teachers who recommend teachers.
- Provided customized support that pairs returning teachers with mentors who are specially selected to work with returners instead of those new to the profession.

For the second bucket, **Removing Process Barriers**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Adjust the educational setting by leveraging virtual educators to oversee hard-to-fill classes across multiple campuses.
- Offer flexible schedules or part-time opportunities especially for hard-to-staff positions.
- Offer paid maternity or parental leave to teachers.
- Address state level policy and regulation barriers such as removing surcharges on retirees who are re-hired and removing barriers for out-of-state certifications.

For the third bucket, **Providing Induction and Training Supports**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Offer fiscal, time and quality of life flexibility. For example, make schedules flexible or offer part-time opportunities (i.e.: 2 stay at home parents to equal one FTE) or align PLA to master's credits (i.e.: instructional technology).
- Provide technical assistance on how to structure funding.
- Provide best practices for training returning teachers, which include personalizing professional learning and utilizing retired administrators to mentor those returning to education, providing ongoing support.

The group identified research and next steps for this phase as exploring data to gain insight on why teachers left the workforce to eliminate those barriers.

Retain Phase

For the first bucket, **Talent Pipeline Planning**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Think strategically about pipeline development to meet district specific needs and clearly define multiple career progression pathways and competencies.

- Increase compensation for effective teachers.
- Collect and analyze data to strategically identify talent.

For the second bucket, **Staffing Models and Financial Supports**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- Provide exemplars for how to structure the day to include additional teacher leader roles.
- Streamline, structure & increase funding through strategic compensation, allowing time for teachers to plan and prepare for class.
- Provide technical assistance support for districts to design staffing models that enable teacher leadership structures.

For the third bucket, **Teacher Leader/Mentor Development Training and Supports**, Task Force members identified the following strategies:

- For effective teachers, create roles aligned to strengths and eliminate non-prioritized functions.
- Offer incentives (stipends, PTO, flexible schedules, etc.) and compensation to teachers who are willing to mentor and develop peers and compensate teacher leaders for the added responsibility.
- Enable Micro-credentialing to celebrate growth, standardize milestones, and offer incentives.
- Utilize strong teacher leaders as coaches for state-driven curricular models (I.e.: Amplify, Eureka).
- Compensate trainers of teacher leaders who serve as coaches.
- Identify teacher leaders, target training and support that aligns to teacher leader needs, and formally post teacher leaders positions with clear criteria.

The group identified research and next steps for this phase as exploring the connection between retention strategies with the Strategic Compensation Working Group and the Teacher Experience Working Group and to look at other industry practices.

Acronyms:

- EPPs: Educator Preparation Programs provides numerous services for students seeking to earn teacher certification.
- ISDs: Independent School Districts are a type of school district in some US states for primary and secondary education that operates as an entity independent and separate from any municipality, county, or state.
- PLA: Prior Learning Assessment is a process for assessing learning gained outside a traditional academic environment.
- LEA: Local Education Agency (LEA) A public board of education or other public authority within a state that maintains administrative control of public elementary or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state. School districts and county offices of education are both LEAs.
- FTE: FTE stands for full-time equivalent. It is a unit of measurement that represents the number of hours worked by a single employee in a week.
- PTO: Paid time off (PTO) refers to the time that you are paid for when you are not working. PTO includes paid vacation, sick time, holidays, and personal time all wrapped up into one category that

allows you the freedom of using your time as you please. Other companies treat vacation, holidays, sick time, and personal days separately.