

State Efforts to Promote Teacher Leadership

The Southern Regional Education Board convened a state leaders' roundtable in North Carolina to identify strategies that could improve the effectiveness of early-career educators. SREB staff developed this briefing, which highlights how education leaders in six states used three levers — certification, pay, and recognition — to identify, deploy and retain teacher leaders.

Addressing State Teacher Shortages Requires a Long View

Teacher shortages serve as a wake-up call that could empower state leaders to consider how to remake the teaching profession from the inside out, focusing on changes to how they staff schools, support novice teachers and improve student achievement. Developing a framework to support teachers' professional growth is crucial. Teacher leadership efforts and initiatives are one strategy in a comprehensive framework to address teacher shortages.

When confronted with pervasive teacher shortages, state leaders often look for interventions that address immediate challenges. SREB identified four strategies used by state policymakers to increase teacher supply in the short run.

Figure 1. Popular Strategies to Address State Teacher Shortages	
<i>Provisional Licensing</i>	Revise licensure requirements to allow more prospective teachers to receive job-embedded mentorship and professional learning and become professionally licensed teachers
<i>Financial Incentives</i>	Create scholarships and loan forgiveness programs to encourage teacher candidates to teach high-need subjects or take positions at hard-to-staff schools
<i>Reciprocity</i>	Revise licensure requirements to support recruitment of out-of-state teachers
<i>Hire Retired Teachers</i>	Adjust state retirement system rules to allow districts to hire retired teachers for a limited period, usually one to three years

While these strategies might provide some immediate relief to districts encountering teacher shortages, state leaders should consider how to meet immediate needs while thinking about how to solve teacher shortages in more long-range, systematic ways.

Tiered Certification

Mature Models: Georgia

The Georgia Professional Standards Commission created a [four-tier licensure system](#) in 2014. The Commission issues the **pre-service certificate** to candidates participating in clinical internships or residencies. Educators graduating from a qualifying educator preparation program and candidates enrolled in alternative certification programs receive an **induction certificate**. After meeting experience and effectiveness criteria, teachers may apply for a **professional certificate**. The fourth tier recognizes teacher leadership in two ways. Teachers who are experts in improving student achievement and professional practice may apply for the **advanced professional certificate**. Teachers who demonstrate leadership in mentoring and supporting their colleagues may apply for the **lead professional certificate**.

Recent Models: Arkansas and Oklahoma

The Arkansas State Board of Education adopted an Educator Career Continuum in October 2018 based on licensure changes outlined in [Act 294](#) (2017). The regulations require the state department to issue four licenses. The **early-career** and **career professional educator licenses** are similar in scope to Georgia's induction and professional certificates. Teachers may apply for the **lead professional educator license** after documenting one of the following: passing score on a state-approved assessment, completion of micro-credentials, or graduation from a recognized teacher-leader program. To be eligible for the **master professional educator license**, teachers must receive a certain award, receive National Board Certification, or complete an advanced degree or state-recognized micro-credentials.

The Oklahoma Legislature approved two advanced licenses in [2018](#). The law requires the State Board of Education to issue a **lead teaching certificate** to teachers with five or more years of experience who complete a “meaningful individualized program of professional development” and demonstrate instructional effectiveness by earning certain evaluation ratings. **Master teaching certificates** require a minimum of seven years of experience and receipt of the highest evaluation rating, “Superior.” Teachers can receive the master teaching certificate with the second-highest rating – “Highly Effective” – if they hold or have held National Board Certification. The law defines the maximum teaching load for lead and master teachers, specific leadership roles, and supplemental pay for advanced license holders.

Differential Pay

North Carolina Pilot

In 2016, the North Carolina General Assembly created a competitive pilot program for districts to develop advanced teaching roles. Interested districts submitted proposals that described the qualifications and expectations for advanced roles, salary supplements for teacher leaders, and a detailed implementation plan. The State Board of Education funded grants for six districts in Year One. The second district cohort will implement their strategies starting in Fall 2019.

Several districts adopted the Opportunity Culture model, which allows principals to deploy multi-classroom leaders. MCLs promote teacher effectiveness in a school building, co-teach with struggling educators, and lead professional learning activities.

Tennessee Differentiated Pay Plans

The Tennessee General Assembly requires districts to develop differentiated pay plans that promote recruitment and retention and support staffing in high-need subjects and at hard-to-staff schools. District plans must differentiate teacher pay using one or more of the following criteria:

1. Teachers hold licenses in a high-need subject area or take positions at hard-to-staff schools
2. Teachers take on additional job roles or responsibilities
3. Teachers receive differentiated pay based on individual, school or district performance, as measured by the state's educator evaluation or school accountability systems.

Recognition

Nominating Teacher Leaders in Louisiana

The Louisiana Department of Education created the Teacher Leader Program in 2013. School districts nominate teachers, inviting them to apply to become [Teacher Leader Advisors](#). The advisors support state and district efforts by developing instructional materials, leading professional learning opportunities, and providing feedback on the state department's current and future strategies. The state department pays advisors for materials and activities that they complete. A larger group of teacher leaders attend an annual summit in New Orleans. Over 5,000 teachers attended the last summit.

In October 2018, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education approved [mentor teacher](#) and [content leader professional development credentials](#). Districts nominate prospective mentors and content leaders, who undergo training paid for by the state department. Last year, 1,000 mentors and 200 content leaders received training. After completing the professional development, the state department assesses mentor teachers and content leaders. Teachers who pass the assessment receive a renewable (non-licensure) certificate that could count toward requirements for

the Educational Leadership Certificate, a license for school administrators.

Building Awareness and Capacity in Tennessee

The Tennessee Department of Education and the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE) created the Tennessee Teacher Leader Collaborative in 2015. The [statewide campaign](#) invites teachers to “choose the teacher leader pathway most appealing to [them].” Teachers can access leadership opportunities in four areas: public advocacy, coaching, feedback gathering, and public outreach.

Three Questions for State Policymakers

1. How could the state licensure frameworks address advanced teacher roles?
2. How could the formal recognition of advanced teaching roles through the licensure process affect school staffing, teacher mentorship, and school culture/working conditions?
3. How could state leaders use certification, pay and recognition to address teacher retention challenges?

For More Information

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