

*Invest in Educators Series*

SREB

# Systems of Support *for Teachers and Leaders*

*How school districts can provide  
well-rounded support for educators  
at all levels, uplifting the profession  
and positively impacting students*

March 2026

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A report produced by Megan Boren, director, educator workforce, with contributions from the members of SREB's Educator Workforce Steering Committee.

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# Investing in Tomorrow

The **educator workforce** is a vital **workforce** for our current and future economy.

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## *Today's Students, Tomorrow's Workforce*

To sustain a growing economy, we must fully prepare young people—the next generation of leaders, entrepreneurs and workers.

**This requires great teachers and school leaders.**



# Investing in Educators

The educator workforce is a central asset to the development of our **future workforce and the future economic prosperity** of individuals, families, communities and the entire region.

## *Recruiting and Retaining Strong Educators*

Our schools and classrooms must adapt to the world of today. So should the education profession.

The key to increased recruitment and retention of great educators lies in our ability to **modernize and uplift** the profession – making it attractive to career seekers.



# Investing in Growth

*Educator growth = Student growth + economic gains*

When students are taught by fully prepared and supported educators, learning achievement rises.

If 10% of teachers were replaced by fully prepared and supported teachers, a student could see a **\$120,551 increase in lifetime earnings**, according to SREB analysis of one Texas study — increasing tax revenue for communities and states.

*Supporting educators improves student learning — and future financial gains.*

Average compounded learning per K-12 graduate:

Consistently taught by underprepared teachers

78 months in math

65 months in reading

8<sup>th</sup> grade level in math

7<sup>th</sup> grade level in reading

Consistently taught by prepared, supported teachers

110+ months in math

110+ months in reading

12<sup>th</sup> grade level

Source: [Kirksey, J., 2025](#) with further analysis by SREB

# SREB's Educator Workforce Blueprint

## *A Comprehensive Approach to Achieve a First-Rate Educator Workforce*

**Four elements are necessary to address educator workforce challenges comprehensively and sustainably.**

These four elements, when improved together, can unlock innovations for the education profession and support educators in every path and stage of their career.

The second element of the Blueprint focuses on professional growth and support of educators – in each and every role, at the school and district levels.



Sources: [SREB Educator Blueprints, 2022 & 2025](#)

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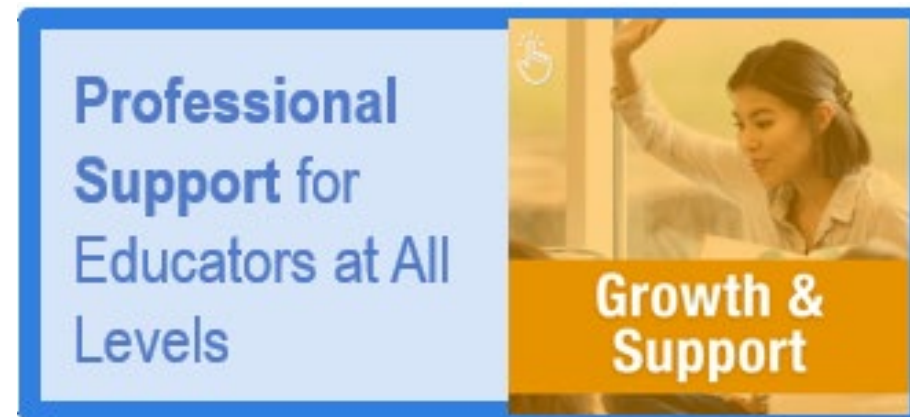
# Professional Support

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## *Growth and Support for the Entire Educator Workforce*

### Professional support includes:

- Quality **mentorship and induction** for new teachers and leaders
- Consistent, relevant, quality **professional learning** and coaching
- **Collaboration, flexibility, time**, resources and support staff for teacher and student success



Source: [SREB Educator Blueprint, 2025](#)

# Continuum of Support

*Effective support is not driven by compliance.*

It is **PROBLEM** and **PEOPLE** driven.

## **No Support:**

Educators receive no formal guidance or help from leaders, designated mentors, coaches or other professional support.

## **Compliance-Driven:**

As part of a required support program, educators complete growth plans and consult with mentors.

## **Problem-Driven:**

Mentoring structures, coaching and learning activities are linked to specific challenges encountered by educators.

## **People-Driven:**

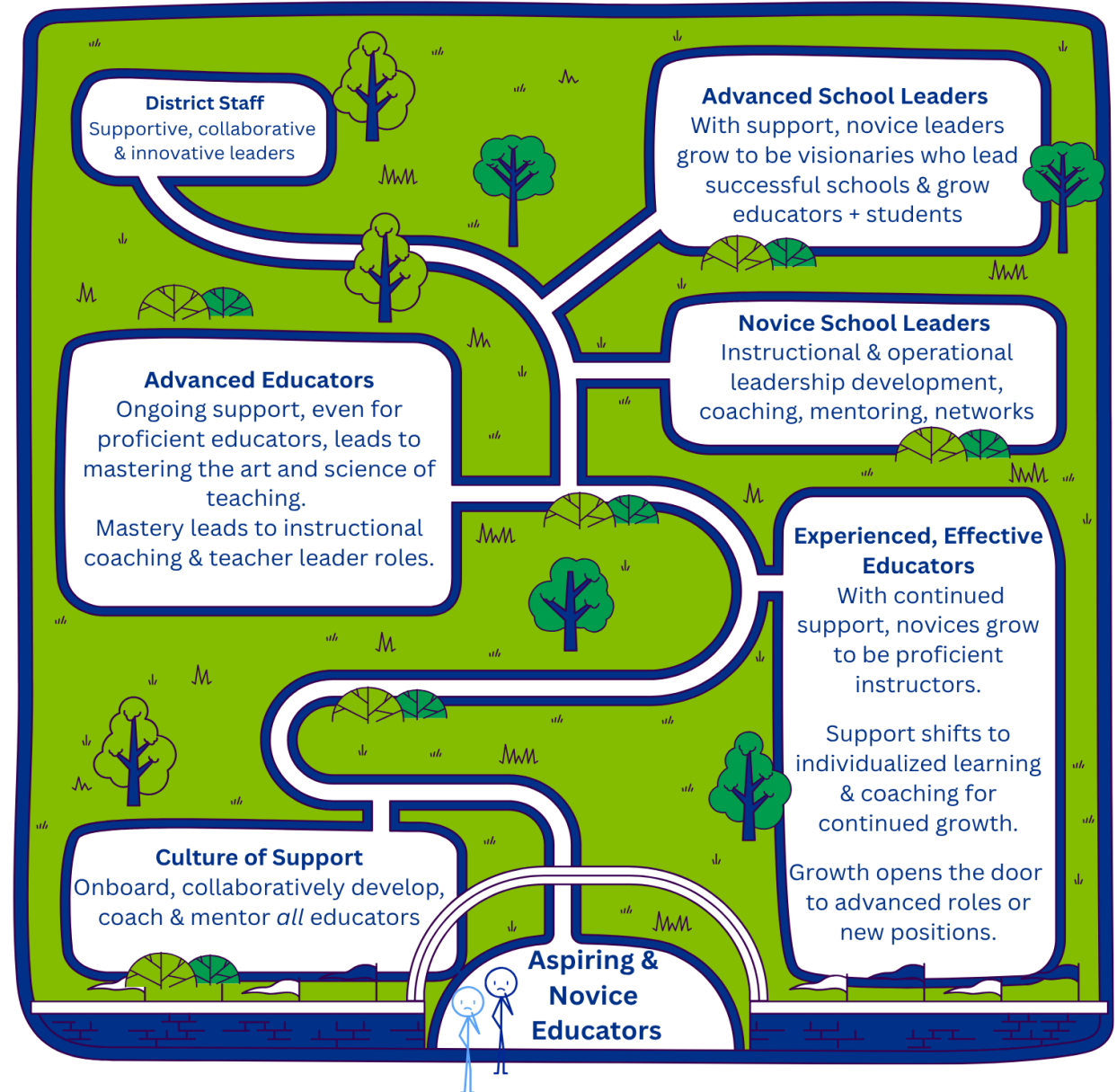
Leaders, mentors, coaches, professional learning communities and other growth strategies collectively support educators' entry and progress in the profession.

Source: SREB

# A System of Educator Support

Move from the status quo to a culture of support for all educators, prioritizing growth, advancement and student outcomes.

Chart created by SREB using information from:  
[Barton, J., 2020](#); [Garcia, E., Weiss, E., 2019](#)



# A System of Support

Support is key for all educators, no matter their role or experience level, to grow their agency, self-efficacy, knowledge, skills and abilities to improve student outcomes. Continuous support for growth, mastery and career advancement is pervasive in a strong system.

## *What is an effective system of support?*

**An all-embracing, collaborative system to support all educators.**

A strong support system has:

- ❑ **Tiered, scaled, multi-faceted** support for all – from the superintendent down to instructional support staff
- ❑ Consistently offered strategies that are **tailored** by level of mastery *and* individual need
- ❑ A broad set of **comprehensive** support for all novice professionals

Support connects opportunity to capacity-building and incentives to uplift performance and improve outcomes for educators *and* students.

A strong system of support includes:

- ❑ A cultural foundation of support
- ❑ Quality instructional and operational leadership
- ❑ Induction and mentoring
- ❑ Coaching, differentiated learning, professional development, learning communities and support networks
- ❑ Incentives that reward success and foster retention and advancement

Sources: [Redding, S., 2009](#); [Bloomfield et al, 2024](#)

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# A System of Support

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## *Why is a system of support needed?*

To grow all educators and their capacity to improve student success.

Each education professional at every role and stage of success needs support to:

- ❑ **Adapt** to their environment, role and responsibilities
- ❑ **Grow** their instructional skills
- ❑ **Connect** and engage with students, colleagues and families
- ❑ **Expand** their knowledge
- ❑ **Master** the art of teaching and leading
- ❑ **Handle** challenges productively
- ❑ **Advance** to the next level



# A System of Support

## *How does a tiered support system look in practice?*

The system should be built and implemented with aligned tiers and layers to grow all educators entering any new role from novice to mastery.

**Novice assistants, support staff & teachers** receive regular feedback from leaders & mentors, individualized professional learning opportunities & coaching, plus support from learning communities.

**Novice administrators** receive feedback from district leaders, a mentor or support network, plus individualized professional learning & coaching.

**Novice district leaders & staff** receive feedback from coaches and professional learning.

**New teacher leaders (multi-class, master, mentor, lead teachers) & novice administrator mentors or coaches** receive regular feedback from leaders and coaches, specific professional learning opportunities on quality mentoring and adult learning theory, plus support from a mentor community of practice.

**Experienced leaders, administrators, teachers & staff** receive continual feedback from supervisors and coaches, individualized professional learning to keep improving to improve their practice and quality professional learning communities.

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# District- level Support

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*What should a support system for district leaders, staff & instructional coaches provide?*

**Core support, such as:**

**Structural guidance** — to establish and maintain clear, purposeful district policies and infrastructure for strong instruction, student impact, safety, school improvement and staff growth and retention

**Data monitoring assistance** — to monitor key student and faculty data annually and use it to guide targeted programming and continuous improvement

**High-impact learning** — to build school leader and educator capacity through professional

development, mentoring, coaching and networking opportunities for all role-alike groups

**Instructional leadership** — to ensure that school leaders are visible and engaged in observations, feedback, resource sharing and reflective practices with faculty and staff

**Resource access** — to share best practices, materials and connections and to reduce unnecessary workload for educators

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# School Leader Support

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## *What should a support system for school administrators provide?*

### Guidance for school administrators on:

**Vision sharing** — actively communicating the mission to foster belonging and alignment

**Staff presence** — be visible, provide feedback, resources and timely support

**Data analysis** — collaboratively investigation to inform decisions and align resources with needs

**Reflective practice** — consistent assessments, research-based instructional practices, positive classroom culture and recognition

**Mentoring programs** — identify and grow mentor capacity, train and support mentors, and enable peer collaboration

**Operational capacity** — improve school goal setting, planning, operational functions and innovative staffing and scheduling models

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***SREB's School Leader Induction Framework and guidance resources are available for schools and districts to begin or improve their own leader support system.***

*[SREB.org/Induction](https://www.sreb.org/induction)*

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# Teacher Leader Support

## Who are teacher leaders?

These advanced roles can include positions like multi-classroom leaders, mentor teachers, master or extended impact teachers, and content leaders.

## *What should a support system for school administrators provide?*

### Assistance for teacher leaders to:

- ❑ Develop adult leadership skills in **coaching, facilitation and mentoring** through targeted and ongoing professional learning
- ❑ Integrate into and lead **instructional reflection:** coherence, PLCs, walkthroughs
- ❑ Improve **data-use skills, feedback strategies, and trust-building practices**
- ❑ Assist **designing and delivering professional learning** to other teachers aligned to school improvement goals
- ❑ Enhance **team-teaching structures** and processes

A support system for teacher leaders should include structures to:

- ❑ Provide professional learning and coaching on adult learning theory to those who mentor other educators
- ❑ Integrate teacher leaders into the school's instructional leadership team
- ❑ Significantly limit assignments that are not integral to instructional leadership of a team of teachers or improved student outcomes
- ❑ Recognize their leadership contributions through increased compensation and release time

# Support for Experienced Teachers

*What should a support system for experienced teachers provide?*

Teachers who have demonstrated proficient knowledge of teaching and learning still need more help, such as:

- Ongoing **professional learning, coaching and training** to enhance their capacity as strong instructors
- **Opportunities to advance** in the profession to teacher-leader roles that extend their reach and impact in the school
- **Rewards and recognitions** for their contributions to student learning and school growth



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# Novice Teacher Support

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## *What should a support system for novice teachers provide?*

**Structured orientation** — as well as assigning rigorously selected, trained mentors

**Cohorts and learning communities** — to foster belonging and peer support

**Regular mentoring** — including weekly sessions, collaborative planning, observations with growth-oriented feedback

**Just-in-time mentoring** — and emotional support to address immediate needs and well-being

**Professional learning** — on culture, management, evaluation, differentiation, planning, and data use

**Induction** — support for the first two to three years in the profession

**Workload protections** — smaller student caseloads, extended planning time and fewer non-instructional duties

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***SREB's Teacher Induction Framework and guidance resources are available for schools and districts to institute or improve their own novice teacher support system. [SREB.org/Induction](https://www.sreb.org/induction)***

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# Teacher Candidate Support

## *What should a support system for teacher candidates provide?*

### Similar support to novice teachers:

- ❑ Scaffold instructional duties, from tutoring, small group instruction, co-teaching, to leading a classroom
- ❑ Pair candidates with **strong supervising mentors**
- ❑ Invite candidates to structured orientation and **onboarding** activities
- ❑ Provide **structured mentoring** including daily guidance, emotional support, collaborative planning, co-teaching, and observations with growth-oriented feedback
- ❑ Include candidates in **induction, professional development** and **learning communities**

### Common types of teacher candidates

**Student teacher or intern** — traditional teacher candidate 16-week exposure to teaching with a supervising mentor

**Teacher apprentice** — candidate enrolled in apprenticeship program who experience multiple years or practicum and internship

**Teacher resident** — year-long on-the-job trainee, typically in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of traditional preparation or an extended alternative prep program

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# Support for Support Staff

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## *What should a support system for non-instructional support staff provide?*

### Integration in learning opportunities, like:

- Inclusion in **professional learning communities** and **induction** structures
- **Coaching** and role-based professional learning
- Tools for **data-driven support** and **small-group tutoring**
- Clearly **defined roles and expectations** that provide visibility and inclusion in coherent instructional design and delivery
- Training in **learning principles**, ongoing feedback, and support aligned to district and school vision

### The role of support staff

Non-instructional support staff include key roles that provide services to aid instruction for students. Roles like teacher assistants or paraprofessionals, librarians, counselors, interventionists and nurses all support positive learning environments.

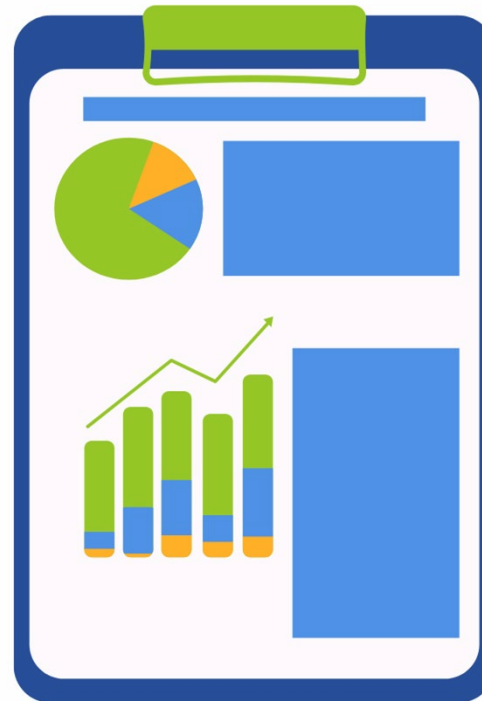
They provide integral operational, safety and behavioral support, which allows instructional staff to focus on designing, delivering and assessing student learning.

# Taking Action

Let's build support systems that uplift the entire profession.

*Every educator deserves the right support at the right time.*

Intentional support system planning can lead to creating the culture and environment that enables success.



Three key steps to create a districtwide system of support for educators:

*Step 1*

**Review** your district's current support offerings for educators in all positions and at different levels of expertise to identify specific successes, gaps and challenges.

*Step 2*

**Develop and commit** to a clear vision and goals for your district's tiered system of comprehensive educator and leader support.

*Step 3*

**Create** a detailed implementation plan to put your long-term vision into action.

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# Taking Action

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## *System Development Recommendations*

1. Create a vision for a culture of support in the school district.
2. Review the supports currently offered to educators in various roles and levels and how they do or do not align.
3. Determine the successes versus gaps in support provided for different educator role groups.
4. Create long-term goals for the tiered system of support for different educator roles at different levels of mastery.
5. Develop system policy that supports the system goals with intentionality. Commit to a regular policy audit to ensure rules and processes support desired outcomes.
6. Create implementation plans for building the support system in stages, concentrating on the educators with the most need in your district first.
7. Create feedback mechanisms and progress monitoring plans to capture key outcomes at regular intervals. Capture data such as instructional growth, educator satisfaction, agency and self-efficacy and retention.
8. Prioritize funding the work over time, while eliminating expenses that may contradict your goals or desired outcomes.

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# Taking Action

## *Implementation Recommendations*

1. Begin implementing new or improved teacher and leader support strategies to those in roles or experience stages that need the most support. Review your data to answer questions such as:  
  
*Where does the district experience the highest turnover rates? Do we employ high numbers of new teachers, principals or assistant principals? What do novices struggle with the most? Do our school and teacher leaders successfully improve student and colleague outcomes? What types of supports are lacking the most for each high-needs role and experience group?*
2. Monitor implementation of the first support system elements and strategies to determine successes, challenges and potential improvements. Identify what is working well and adjust what is not.
3. Scale your system to improve support for additional role groups or experience levels, adjusted for the groups' needs.
4. Continually observe, analyze and improve the support strategies and offerings for all educator groups. Monitor data often. Seek external help in evaluating progress if needed.
5. Remain consistent and vigilant throughout each stage of implementation.

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# Taking Action



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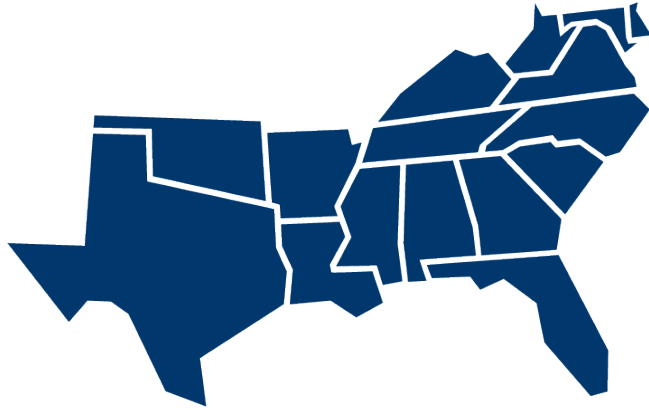
***Adequately preparing, supporting and valuing new teachers leads to higher retention, improved student outcomes and economic gains.***

Building and maintaining a system of comprehensive support for all educators within a school or district takes commitment and hard work. But it can lead to increased student outcomes by helping to equip the entire educator workforce within a district with all the skills, competencies and knowledge necessary to move the needle.

With increased mastery in teaching and learning, improved educator and leader satisfaction, agency, self-efficacy and retention, the result is cost savings and increased stability for schools and the communities they serve.

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# About SREB



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*The Southern Regional Education Board works with states and schools to improve education.*

**Mission:** To guide and support states as they advance all levels of education to improve the social and economic vitality of the SREB region.

## How We Work

### *Analyze & Publish*

We share promising practices and provide reliable data and research to inform strategy.

### *Convene & Engage*

We bring together decision-makers in education, state government and workforce to forge consensus and share scarce resources.

### *Support Action*

We work side-by-side with policymakers and educators to implement policy and improve teaching and learning.



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**For more research, data, guidance and resources on supporting and growing educator talent, contact:**

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