

Creating Career Advancement Opportunities for Teachers



Problem Overview

The Teacher Vacancy Grant Pilot Program provides a significant opportunity for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to address their current staffing challenges while strengthening their long-term teacher pipeline. LEAs can use the available funds to create high-retention pathways to address staffing challenges at the district level or develop equitable access strategies aimed at specific district schools.

Evidence-based strategies pertaining to **creating career advancement opportunities for teachers** can help LEAs effectively achieve these objectives. The strategies are based on best practices, research, and experiences from successful programs nationwide. Implementing these strategies can enable LEAs to create sustainable solutions that not only tackle their immediate staffing challenges but also support their long-term teacher pipeline.

Strategy Summary

Expert teachers often feel limited in their career advancement opportunities, and aside from becoming a principal, there are few opportunities to progress within the teaching profession. Models such as [Opportunity Culture](#) offer a potential solution by creating teacher leadership opportunities, expanding the reach of effective teachers, and providing them with additional pay.

One of the key features of this model is the multi-classroom leadership approach, where highly effective teachers lead a team of other teachers. By taking on additional responsibilities, such as coaching and collaborating with colleagues, teacher leaders can improve the effectiveness of other teachers while reaching a larger group of students. This approach helps to build a culture of continuous improvement within schools, which can positively impact student achievement and lead to increased teacher retention (Backes & Hansen, 2018; Hassel et al., 2014; Natale et al., 2016).

In addition, research shows that when teachers have voice, input, and control over their instructional roles, they stay in their jobs. A [report](#) from Teach Plus offers useful ideas on ways to leverage leading teachers by providing them with additional responsibilities and pathways for growth.

Leaders might be able to create leadership roles that do not require teachers to leave classrooms behind. Teachers who positively contribute to the school community by taking on extra responsibilities must receive a stipend when they mentor new teachers or play a leadership role. There is a teacher leader endorsement in Illinois, which may help prepare teachers for success and impact in leadership roles in schools.



Examples

- **Career Pathways**

Teachers in the Baltimore City Public Schools, along with their administrators, developed a career pathway model. This model enables teachers to move up the payscale and seize leadership responsibilities by earning what are called “achievement units.” This model allows a teacher to mentor and coach colleagues, provide professional development sessions at the district level, and supervise student teachers. For example, a lead teacher works directly with the principals to improve the school’s academic performance.

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- **Instructional Coaching**

Revere Public Schools in Massachusetts implemented a new model called Colleague 2 Colleague. In this model, veteran teachers can apply to be relieved of their regular academic responsibilities to become consulting teachers for two years. Veteran teachers partner with other teachers in the district during that time to provide support and guidance. Those instructional coaches return to their classrooms when the two-year period ends to use new teaching skills and practices.



Sources

Gozali, C., Claassen Thrush, E., Soto-Peña, M., Whang, C., & Luschei, T. F. (2017). Teacher Voice in Global Conversations around Education Access, Equity, and Quality. FIRE: Forum for International Research in Education, 4(1). Retrieved from <http://preserve.lehigh.edu/fire/vol4/iss1/2>

[Here Today, Gone Tomorrow?](#) Report from the AFT Teacher and School Staff Shortage Task Force, July, 2022.