



Introduction

In 2019, the Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE) shared a bold and exciting [vision and mission](#) for education in Maine, supported by five mutually reinforcing strategic priorities:

1. Inspire trust in our organization and in our public education system.
2. Develop, support, and sustain a robust educator workforce.
3. Promote educational excellence and equity for all Maine learners.
4. Ensure student and school safety, health, and well-being.
5. Support a culture of innovation and continuous improvement, led by all the experts in the field.

This document, the #TeachMaine Plan, takes a deep dive into **strategic priority #2: Develop, support, and sustain a robust educator workforce**. The #TeachMaine Plan serves as a dynamic guide for education stakeholders to work collaboratively to achieve two goals: to inspire a talented and diverse future educator workforce, and to support and develop our current educator workforce. For the purpose of this report, educator will generally refer to professionals who work in school settings. This includes teachers, administrators, educational technicians, and [related service providers](#).

This report is the result of contributions of education stakeholders throughout Maine, who provided feedback via multiple channels, including regional [Think Tanks](#), focus groups, surveys, organizational meetings, and informal conversations. Additionally, the Department convened an [Educator Talent Committee](#), a core group of internal and external stakeholders, to share their experiences, look at research and trends, and to make recommendations on how to address Maine's educator shortage.

From this work, four major themes emerged: *Incentivize Recruitment and Retention Efforts; Expand and Diversify Educator Workforce Efforts; Support Educator Development, Growth, and Leadership; and Elevate Educators and the Education Profession.*

Within each theme, readers will find recommended strategies and action steps. These strategies are based on models from Maine that can be expanded, and models from other states that can be adapted. Some strategies are inclusive of the entire educator workforce, while other strategies are more specific to a particular role (i.e. teachers, administrators). Please note these strategies are not designed to be implemented in isolation, rather, they are interdependent, and stakeholders are encouraged to be mindful of this when considering plans to attract, develop, and retain a high-quality educator workforce.

Why Maine Needs a Plan

Maine's educator shortage is not a new issue. In 1999, concerned with the condition of Maine's educator workforce, the 119th Legislature convened a K-12 Educator Recruitment and Retention Commission to study Maine's educator workforce needs and to make recommendations. The commission's report, [Quality Educators: The Best Opportunity for Maine Children](#) was published in 2001. In subsequent years, the Legislature commissioned the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) to study Maine's educator workforce challenges and make recommendations, resulting in the following reports: [Teacher Turnover](#) (2018), [Challenges with Teacher Retention and Staffing Shortages](#) (2019), and a [Feasibility Study of Assessing Supply and Demand for Maine Educators](#) (2019).

MEPRI's recent report, [Educator Recruitment and Retention in Maine](#) (2020) reviews the aforementioned studies, and provides more recent data on Maine's educator workforce. While Maine has made progress in some metrics, including increased education levels of educator workforce and increased gender equity in school leadership, other areas require ongoing attention. Some notable data:

- **Educator Pipeline:** Since 2010, the number of teachers completing Educator Preparation programs in Maine has dropped by 53%--this is the third largest decline in the nation with Oklahoma and Michigan experiencing a 54% decline.
- **Turnover for beginning teachers** (less than 4 years of experience): From 2016 – 2017 nearly 8% of Maine's new teachers left the profession. Expand the window (2015 – 2018) and the percentage doubles with 16% of beginning teachers leaving Maine's education sector.
- **Experienced Teachers and Administrators:** In 2019, roughly 55% of experienced teachers and administrators responding to MEPRI's survey have "seriously considered" leaving the education profession.
- **Aging Workforce:** Maine's teaching workforce has aged. The average Maine teacher in 2018-19 was 46 years old, compared to 42 in 1999. About 1 in 6 teachers (15.6%) was over the age of 60 compared to only 1 in 50 (2%) in 1999.

Additionally, there are gaps in leadership development and urgency in building a strong school leader pipeline to ensure that there are enough well-prepared school and district leaders according to MEPRI's 2021 report, [School Leadership Development Programs in Maine: Building Statewide Capacity and Addressing Challenges](#).

"Overall, the leadership landscape in Maine features larger numbers of school leaders with fewer years of experience, difficulty filling vacant positions, and high turnover particularly in rural and lower resourced districts. In the 2019-20 school year, there were 583 principals in Maine schools with publicly funded students, of whom 23% were in their first two years of experience. Of the 323 assistant principals, 43% were in their first two years. A similar pattern is seen with district leadership: 20% of the 364 superintendents and 52% of assistant superintendents were in their first two years of experience in those roles"(i).

#TeachMaine Plan Overview

In response to these needs, the Maine DOE presents the #TeachMaine Plan:

Theme 1: Incentivize Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Strategies:

- A: Compensate educators competitively
- B: Increase scholarship and loan forgiveness programs

Theme 2: Expand and Diversify Educator Workforce Efforts

Strategies:

- C: Diversify Maine's educator workforce
- D: Increase educator recruitment efforts
- E: Increase high-retention pathways into teaching
- F: Expand data systems



Theme 3: Support Educator Development, Growth, and Leadership

Strategies:

- G: Expand induction and mentoring support for new teachers
- H: Increase ongoing professional support
- I: Develop and support well-qualified teacher leadership
- J: Develop and support well-qualified school and SAU leaders

Theme 4: Elevate Educators and the Education Profession

Strategies:

- K: Promote positive perception
- L: Expand and diversify educator recognition programs

Theme 1: Incentivize Recruitment and Retention Efforts

Strategy A: Compensate Educators Competitively

Nationally, low salary scales continue to negatively impact the educator pipeline, as well as retention of practicing teachers. Compared to college-educated professionals in other fields, beginning teachers earn about 20% less, with the gap widening to 30% by mid-career. A lack of competitive compensation for teaching professionals is one factor that has led to the nationwide teacher shortage. Highly qualified high school graduates who may be interested in teaching increasingly opt for careers that are more financially viable. Potential “career changers” who wish to move into classroom teaching often face a decrease in salary—a barrier that may prove difficult to overcome. Flat salaries also impact teacher attrition, with mid-career teachers exiting the profession or moving to higher paying districts.¹



Maine data mirrors these national trends. The data support the need for more competitive compensation in order to attract and retain a high-quality teacher workforce. According to Morris and Johnson, (2018), “Salary level remains strongly correlated to school (teacher) retention rates even after school size, poverty level, and locale are held constant”².

In 2019, the Maine DOE met with state-wide stakeholders (teachers, administrators, higher education staff, community members, policymakers) via [regional think tanks](#), meetings, and interactive conference sessions to discuss educator excellence, recruitment, and retention. Throughout the state, compensation consistently ranked as one of the most significant factors affecting stakeholders’ ability to attract and retain well-qualified teachers.

In 2019, Maine took a significant step in addressing overall teacher compensation with a change in statute (20-A M.R.S. [§13407](#)), which increases the minimum pay for certified teachers in Maine from \$30,000 to \$40,000 over a period of three years:

Fiscal Year 20-21: \$35,000

Fiscal Year 21 -22: \$37,500

Fiscal Year 23-24: \$40,000

¹ Espanoza, D., Saunders, R., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Taking the long view: State efforts to solve teacher shortages by strengthening the teaching profession*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

² Morris, L. & Johnson, A. (2018). *Teacher turnover in Maine: Analysis of staffing patterns from 2005-06 to 2016-2017*. Gorham, ME: Maine Education Policy Research Institute.

These scheduled salary increases for Maine's teachers are an important step in addressing salary inequities among school administrative units throughout the state. Raising salaries of Early Childhood Educators (birth – 5, public pre-K partnerships), as well as Adult Education teachers would strengthen the educator workforce serving Maine's youngest learners and Maine's adult learners.

In addition to teacher compensation, state and local leaders should also explore options that provide targeted support to address more specific needs, financial stipends for teacher leadership and expertise, and alternative, innovative compensation strategies.

Actions to achieve this goal include:

A1: Financial Incentives for High-needs Subjects and Locations

School administrative units (SAUs) find filling teaching positions challenging for certain high-needs subjects and in high-need locations. Rural SAUs, smaller schools, schools with comparatively high poverty rates, and schools with high numbers of English Learners are particularly challenged.

Based on [Maine's 2021-2022 shortage list](#), positions difficult to fill include: Early Childhood (Pre-K), Early Elementary (K-3), Students with Disabilities, Health, English-Second Language, Mathematics, Middle Level Science, Physical Science, French, Spanish, Physical Education, Adapted Physical Education, Industrial Arts/Technology, and Gifted/Talented. Career and Technical Education schools also have positions that are difficult to fill. These include programs that prepare youth for the following careers: firefighter, EMT, automotive mechanics, truck/bus drivers, automotive repair, diesel engine mechanic, carpentry, marine maintenance, electrician, computer info services, machine toll operator/shop, weld braze solder, building maintenance, plumbing, agricultural production, production manager, childcare/guidance, and business admin/manager. Attracting educators to these content and technical areas would increase opportunities and access to these careers for Maine students.

Examples of programs to attract high need educators include:

[Colorado Rural Teaching Stipend](#): Teacher candidates who agree to student-teach in a rural district and remain in any rural district for 3 years upon graduation with a teaching degree are eligible for a stipend. Additionally, teachers can earn stipends if they teach in a high-needs subject area (science, math, special education), or if they teach in districts with high levels of cultural and linguistic diversity.³

South Carolina's [Rural Recruitment Initiative](#) provides an annual salary stipend of \$1,500 for teachers in high turnover districts who teach in critical subject areas. This initiative

³ Colorado Center for Rural Education. (n.d.). Colorado rural teaching stipend. Accessed 2020, March 31. <http://www.unco.edu/colorado-center-for-rural-education/student-teaching-stipend.aspx>

also includes additional strategies, such as housing support, travel stipends for commuters, certification examination support, and loan forgiveness.⁴

A2: Financial Incentives for Teacher Expertise and Teacher Leadership

Providing a stipend, or some other form of financial bonus, to teachers for their leadership and expertise can help alleviate the wage gap impacting mid-career teachers and may reduce the rate of teacher attrition.

Some states increase compensation for the following teacher leadership roles and responsibilities:

- leading teacher professional development
- facilitating instructional leadership teams
- mentoring beginning teachers
- serving as a model or coach for other teachers

SAUs in Maine vary in the levels at which they compensate teacher leadership roles. (Teacher leadership models are explored in greater depth in Strategy I: Develop and Support High-quality Teacher Leadership.) If Maine is to provide equitable compensation for its teacher leaders, it should consider a state-wide teacher leadership career ladder, such as the one implemented in Iowa in 2013.

The [Iowa Teacher Leadership and Compensation \(TLC\) Program](#)⁵ establishes a five-tier career ladder for teachers, with the top three tiers carrying increased responsibilities and increased compensation (\$2,000, \$5,000, and \$10,000). This initiative has both increased teacher retention and has had a positive impact on instructional practices and the professional climate in participating districts.

Many states, including Maine, offer a salary supplement for teachers who have earned [National Board Certification](#). National Board Certification, created in 1987 by teachers for teachers, is a voluntary, highly reflective professional development opportunity. [Research](#) shows increased learning in students who are taught by National Board-Certified teachers, and in terms of retention, a recent South Carolina [study](#) shows National Board Certification to be a proven strategy for retaining highly-effective educators in the classroom.

⁴ Unpublished data from the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention & Advancement. (Personal communication, 2020, January 21).

⁵ Iowa Department of Education: Teacher Leadership and Compensation System. Accessed 2020, March 31. <https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/educator-quality/teacher-leadership-and-compensation-tlc-system>

Since 2014, Maine has provided an annual salary supplement to National Board-Certified Teachers (NBCTs). In 2019, with an update to statute (20-A M.R.S. [§13013-A](#)) Maine joined Arkansas, Washington, Alabama, Colorado, Hawaii, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, Utah, West Virginia, and Wisconsin in providing an increased salary supplement to NBCTs teaching in high-needs schools. In Maine, the increased Salary Supplement is paid to NBCTs who are employed in a school in which 50% or more of students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

The Maine Legislature, Maine Department of Education, and SAUs are also encouraged to collaborate with other established Maine organizations, associations, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to implement increased compensation for educators who successfully complete leadership programs.

A3: Alternative Compensation Strategies:

Maine's stakeholder groups encouraged SAUs and state agencies to experiment with creative compensation alternatives, including housing, transportation, utilities, childcare, creative use of time, and sabbaticals.

Nationally, 25% of former teachers report that housing assistance would encourage them to return to the classroom.⁶ In Maine, stakeholders reported a need for more affordable housing for educators in cities and towns in the southern part of the state, as well as in coastal communities located in Hancock and Washington counties.

[Housing incentives](#) have been implemented successfully in urban and rural locations throughout the country. In urban areas such as Hartford, Chicago, and Indianapolis, districts have offered housing assistance in a variety of forms, including working with nonprofits to make available newly renovated houses to teachers at below-market costs, offering affordable rentals in designated teacher residential apartment buildings, and home down payment assistance. In Arizona, one district worked with a local credit union to help teachers finance mortgages on customized tiny homes.⁷

As mentioned in strategy A1, South Carolina's [Rural Recruitment Initiative](#) includes housing in their "approved incentives list". Districts who take advantage of the housing incentive receive funding for the down payment of an apartment building, which they in turn renovate and rent to their teachers at affordable rates. With the rental income covering districts' mortgage payments, this is a workable and positive solution for teachers and districts.

⁶ Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). *Solving the teacher shortage: How to attract and retain excellent educators*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

⁷ Simmons, A. (2018, July 17). *Can Affordable Housing Ease Teacher Turnover?* | Edutopia. Edutopia; George Lucas Educational Foundation. <https://www.edutopia.org/article/can-affordable-housing-ease-teacher-turnover>

Offering housing assistance sends a message to prospective educators that they are valued not only for their professional expertise, but also as desired members of the community. Educators who live in the community in which they teach potentially gain a rich understanding of the culture and norms that influence their students' lives. Opportunities for extended connections through coaching, advising, and attending school and community events strengthens relationships with students and their families, which may lead to better academic and social outcomes for students.

Teachers throughout Maine agreed that creative use of time would be a welcome alternative to support and retain experienced educators in place of a salary increase or financial bonuses. Suggestions include flex time, early release/late start days, job sharing, and increased professional learning.

Sabbaticals lasting for a semester, or a year are frequently associated with higher education, but many districts throughout the country recognize the benefit of offering Pre-K-12 teachers this extended leave. One example of a robust sabbatical program is found in Rochester City School District in New York, which has up to five of its teachers taking advantage of their sabbatical program in any given year, recharging their teaching batteries via extended coursework, travel, or a combination of both. Teachers taking advantage of this opportunity receive 60% of their salary, retain full benefits, and are expected to share their new learning with colleagues upon their return to the district.⁸ Maine's statute (20-A M.R.S. [§13604](#)) permits leaves of absence for up to one year for experienced educators (minimum of 7 years of service), to be granted by local school boards. Several districts in Maine include sabbatical language in their contracts.

Strategy B: Increase Scholarship and Loan Forgiveness Programs

There is a considerable financial commitment for becoming and remaining a qualified educator in Maine. Costs range from \$15,000 for one-year graduate-level preparation at a public university, to over \$100,000 for a four-year private school baccalaureate degree. On average, new teachers have over \$20,000 in student loan debt for a bachelor's degree and \$50,000 for a master's degree. Combined with low starting salaries, this debt is a challenge for beginning teachers.⁹ Well-prepared teachers increase student learning and remain in the profession longer.¹⁰ However, the cost of

⁸ Stark, Lisa. "Paid Sabbaticals for K-12 Teachers? This District Embraces the Idea (Video)." *Education Week*, <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/paid-sabbaticals-for-k-12-teachers-this-district-embraces-the-idea-video/2019/02>. Accessed 15 Nov. 2021

⁹ U.S. Department of Education. (2015). Web tables: Trends in graduate student financing: Selected years, 1995–96 to 2011–12. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education. Accessed 2018 August 23. <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2015/2015026.pdf>

¹⁰ Clotfelter, C. T., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2010). Teacher credentials and student achievement in high school: A cross-subject analysis with student fixed effects. *Journal of Human Resources*, 45(3), 655–681.

preparation is increasingly difficult to afford and paying for a teacher's undergraduate and continuing education often falls solely on the professional.

Financial assistance for pre-service and graduate teacher education programs can take the form of service loans, grants, and scholarships. Service loans can be forgiven after a specified number of years teaching, thereby creating incentive to remain in teaching through the most difficult years of induction. A thirty-year study of over 11,000 new teachers found high retention and increased student learning linked to loan forgiveness.¹¹ A limited number of grants and scholarships are awarded by government entities, corporate and private foundations, religious, and social organizations. Many of the scholarships range from \$500 - \$1,000. Increasing access to scholarships and forgiveness of loans for pre-service and in-service teachers requires a substantial increase in grant funding, as well as a robust centralized system of communication about the available programs and technical support for individuals to access the programs.

Actions to further address this goal include:

B1: Expand Service Loan Forgiveness and Tax Incentive Programs

Forgiveness of student loans in exchange for service in high need areas is a well-established practice in the medical field. Many states provide this for educators at the state level. Student loan forgiveness creates financial opportunities for individuals for whom becoming a teacher would otherwise be beyond their financial capabilities. Many loan forgiveness programs require a five- or ten-year service commitment. Additionally, loan forgiveness benefits could bring a highly qualified, diversified educator workforce to Maine by providing the financial opportunity to enter teaching for some candidates for whom teaching would not be a financially viable option otherwise. Expanding education opportunity tax credits and simplifying the application process could also support new educators.

In Maine, the [Educators for Maine Program](#) provides loan forgiveness and loan repayment options. To qualify for loan forgiveness or cancellation, a borrower's qualifying teaching service must be performed at a school or an Education Service Agency (ESA) that is listed in the TCLI (Teacher Cancellation Low Income) Directory.

B2: Increase Awareness of Funding Sources

While funding may be available to assist educators in financing their preparation and continuing education, accessing this information may be challenging. The State of Maine has designated the Finance Authority of Maine ([FAME](#)) as the administrator of programs including federal programs, the Paul Douglas Teacher Scholarship, PELL

¹¹ Henry, G. T., Bastian, K. C., & Smith, A. A. (2012). Scholarships to recruit the 'best and brightest' into teaching: Who is recruited, where do they teach, how effective are they, and how long do they stay? *Educational Researcher*, 41(3), 83–92.

Grants, and the Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education (TEACH) Grant Program. FAME indicated that in 2018 over ten million dollars in PELL grants were unused in Maine.¹² Building structures to ensure these funds are fully utilized would serve Maine well.

Many grants and loan forgiveness programs rely upon the (TCLI) Directory. The TCLI Directory lists low-income elementary schools, secondary schools, and ESAs that are tuition assistance-eligible schools. The US Department of Education develops the TCLI Directory with input from states.

To facilitate educators' access to available funds, a comprehensive database for available pre-service and graduate education grants and loan forgiveness programs should be developed. This expanded online database of loans and grants available would provide more equitable assistance for all Maine students.

Theme 2: Diversify and Expand Educator Workforce Efforts

Strategy C: Diversify Maine's Educator Workforce

Building an educator workforce that reflects the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the student population has been shown to have positive impacts on student achievement.¹³ Teacher identities matter to students' education. Research has shown that matching teacher racial identity with student identity can improve academic achievement, high school graduation rates, and college enrollment rates.¹⁴ Additionally, all students who have had teachers of diverse race or cultural background are better prepared for success in a global world.¹⁵



The diversification of Maine's educator workforce is a top priority for the Maine DOE. The Department recently hired a Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) to lead internal and external DEI initiatives and professional learning. Additionally, Maine will build on the work of the [New England Secondary School Consortium](#)'s (NESSC) Diversifying the Educator Workforce Task Force, of which Maine DOE was an active contributor, as well as Portland Public Schools (PPS) initiatives. Both organizations have generated reports with recommendations for the recruitment and retention of diverse

¹² *Over \$10M Dollars Left on the Table by Maine College Students in 2018 - FAME Maine.* (n.d.). FAME Maine. Retrieved November 20, 2021, from https://www.famemaine.com/fame_news/over-10m-dollars-left-on-the-table-by-maine-college-students-in-2018-2/

¹³ Redding, C. (2019). A teacher like me: A review of the effect of student-teacher racial/ethnic matching on teacher perceptions of students and student academic and behavioral outcomes. *Review of Educational Research* 89(4), 499-535.

¹⁴ Dee, 2004; Easton-Brooks, 2019; Gershenson, 2018.

¹⁵ Page, 2007; Phillips, 2014.

educators (NESSC's report: [Increasing the Racial, Ethnic, and Linguistic Diversity of the Educator Workforce: A Call to Action for Leaders](#), PPS's report: [Educators of Color Insights Full Report: What Will It Take For Educators of Color to Thrive in PPS?](#))

Actions to achieve this goal include:

C1: Recruit, Prepare, and Hire Racially, Ethnically, and Linguistically Diverse Educators

Strategic recruitment of diverse educators include marketing job opportunities to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs); marketing to diverse high school students currently living in Maine, as research indicates that 60% of teachers teach within 20 miles of where they grew up; and intentional outreach to a diverse population of educational technicians for grow your own programs mentioned in strategy E3.

Strategies to support the preparation of diverse educators include investing in educator preparation programs to increase enrollment and improve the preparation of diverse educators, such as providing targeted scholarships to support diverse students to pursue teaching as a profession; providing financial supports to help ensure completion of educator preparation programs; removing testing barriers; and improving reciprocity of teacher credentialing. A leadership pipeline should be created for diverse educators. This includes a clear, supported pathway with multiple opportunities for leadership roles.

Strategies to support the hiring of more racially, ethnically and linguistically diverse educators include setting clear goals at the local and state level to increase student access to diverse educators; directing resources to support SAUs in hiring and recruiting diverse educators; and reviewing hiring practices. This includes examining the make-up of hiring committees, educating hiring committees about the role of bias in hiring processes, and being deliberate in the design of interview questions to support a more diverse pool of candidates.

C2: Retain Diverse Educators by Addressing the Policies and Practices of Structural Racism

Maine must invest in efforts to retain diverse educators by ensuring that Maine schools are welcoming, inclusive institutions that can retain persons of color and culturally and linguistically diverse teachers, administrators, and staff. Providing high-quality DEI professional development to all school staff supports this strategy.

Further, schools should outline equity-based and culturally plural norms that are evidence for teaching excellence. They should nurture and support local and regional affinity groups and mentorship programs for educators of color to support each other and compensate diverse educators for leading professional learning. SAUs should develop and publicize policy regarding the value of and appropriate uses of home language by staff and students, and find ways to recognize, reward, and remunerate staff who use language skills to benefit the school and districts.

Strategy D: Increase Educator Recruitment Efforts

Maine has already taken some policy actions toward expanding the pool of qualified educators, by incentivizing and reducing barriers for retired teachers to return to the profession in high shortage areas. In a 2019 change, law (5 M.R.S. [§17859](#)) allowed teachers to return to teaching while collecting retirement, earning 100% of the salary for the position (increased from the previous 75%), and continue to contribute to the state retirement system, thereby enlarging the pool of qualified educators.

In July, 2021, Governor Mills signed into law [L.D. 1189: An Act to Amend Teacher Certification Statutes](#), which reduces barriers for individuals to join Maine's educator workforce. Changes resulting from this law include:

Emergency teacher certificate: applicants who are issued a criminal history record check (CHRC) may qualify with either a 4-year postsecondary degree or equivalent work/academic experience, or enrollment in an approved teacher preparation program, or currently hold an Education Technician III certificate qualify for an emergency teacher certificate. The certificate is issued for one year, with a maximum of 3 emergency certificates issued per applicant.

Reciprocal professional certificate: teachers, specialists, or administrators who are issued a CHRC and hold a comparable certificate in another state, the District of Columbia, a United States territory or another country may qualify for a professional certificate, to be issued for 5 years.

Testing: although Praxis testing is no longer required, it remains an option for obtaining a teacher certificate. Additional options include meeting a 3.0 GPA in required coursework, or approval of a portfolio submission, based on Maine's Initial Teaching Certification Standards.

Emergency education technician certificate: applicants who are issued a CHRC and complete a Maine DOE approved program, including Eastern Maine Community College's (EMCC) [Learning Facilitator](#) program, may be issued an emergency Education Technician certificate for a period of 5 years, and may be hired as an Education Technician III.

This legislation also removes barriers for language immersion teachers and school psychologists.

Building on LD 1189, Rule Chapter 115 credentialing is under revision. It has received broad-based input from the Consensus-based Rulemaking Committee, consisting of administrators, Career and Technical Educators, Special Educators, teachers, and education specialists, who have provided credentialing recommendations for Chapter 115 [Part I](#) and [Part II](#) to the [State Board of Education](#).

In addition to policy changes, in 2016, Maine's certification process moved to an online platform (MEIS: Maine Educator Information System), and the Maine DOE Certification Team has revised the [certification website](#) for easier navigation. These major changes have streamlined the application and renewal process for education professionals.

Along with these efforts, Maine should continue to explore strategies to expand the pool of qualified educators in the state with targeted policies that promote flexibility while ensuring continued high standards to enter the profession. Actions to achieve this strategy include:

D1: Support educators from out-of-state

If Maine is to recruit educators from out of state, it must build on current efforts to streamline licensure reciprocity and address policies that would encourage teachers to move to Maine, including pension portability across state lines.

D2: Reduce Costs

Out-of-pocket costs for candidates applying for initial teacher certification can be a barrier for recent college graduates, military families experiencing transfers, and individuals new to Maine. These include the \$55 fingerprinting fee, the [\\$15 Criminal History Records Check \(CHRC\)](#) that accompanies fingerprinting, the [\\$100 application](#) for initial certification fee, the \$100 renewal fee, and the fees for services contracted to external providers. Also, the fee for [international transcript verification](#) is at least \$205, if teaching candidates attended higher education outside of the United States, including Canada. A legislative fund could be established to cover the costs for qualified candidates.

Additionally, Maine policymakers should revisit and consider a recommendation from the 2001 K-12 Educator Recruitment and Retention Commission study to remove the reduction of social security benefits for career changes.¹⁶ Called the “windfall act” it states that educators receiving their contributions to the Maine retirement system are not allowed to also collect any prior contributions to federal social security, including spousal survivor benefits.

D3: Marketing for Active Recruitment of Educators

Maine has many strengths it can capitalize on to attract a strong educator workforce. In 2019, the Maine Department of Economic Development published the [Maine Economic Development Strategy](#), a dynamic strategic ten-year plan designed to support a “diverse and sustainable” economy for Maine. Included in the recommendation is the need for an intentional branding effort highlighting the benefits of living and working in Maine. Participants in the regional Think Tank sessions also suggested a branding campaign featuring the beauty of Maine, opportunities for

¹⁶ *MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied (searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)*. (n.d.). Retrieved November 2, 2022, from http://ldc.mainelegislature.org/Open/Rpts/lb2833_3_m2m31_2001.pdf

outdoor recreation and outdoor learning, and the relative safety of Maine with an overall improved quality of life.

Maine can look to other [regions](#), [states](#) and [countries](#) for examples of active marketing campaigns to recruit educators. They offer centralized communication and access to resources. They mail targeted brochures and posters to college and university educator preparation programs, and they use social media campaigns and incentives targeted to specific audiences. The Maine DOE is consulting with a marketing specialist to assist in these efforts.

Strategy E: Increase High Retention Pathways into Teaching

The single most important factor in quality education is quality teachers.¹⁷ The financial costs of teacher turnover are significant for local school districts ([calculate your district costs here](#)).¹⁸ The academic costs of high teacher attrition impact student learning. Attrition also results in the loss of human capital and has a lasting impact on institutional memory.

Investing in evidence-based models of high retention pathways into teaching addresses the high financial and human capital costs of teacher turnover. The long-term retention for graduates of higher education teacher preparation is [substantive](#).¹⁹, making the investment cost-effective.

Traditional teacher preparation through colleges and universities occurs at the bachelor's and master's degree levels. Maine currently has [fifteen institutions of higher education](#) (IHEs) that prepare teachers at the undergraduate level and four that prepare teachers at the graduate level. As pointed out previously, costs of higher education for teacher preparation range from \$15,000 for a public master's degree to over \$100,000 for a private four-year degree.

There are a variety of high retention models for teacher preparation nationally, several of which currently exist in Maine and can be strengthened and brought to scale. These include teacher residencies, grow your own, and education career pathways starting in high school. There are one year, four to six-year, and eight to ten-year models to build a sustainable, diverse, and well-prepared teaching workforce.

[Federal Every Student Succeeds Act \(ESSA\) Title II, Part A](#) funds can be leveraged with state allocations and matching SAU funds to create these pathways. These strategies provide high expectations, scaffolded support, and intentional clinical experiences, resulting in a well-prepared educator workforce.

¹⁷ Cochran-Smith, M. (2003). Teacher quality matters. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 54, 95-98

¹⁸ Carver-Thomas, D. & Darling-Hammond, L. (2017). [Teacher turnover: Why it matters and what we can do about it](#). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

¹⁹ Burstein, N., Czech, M., Kretschmer, D., Lombardi, J., & Smith, C. (2009). [Providing qualified teachers for urban schools: The effectiveness of the accelerated collaborative teacher preparation program in recruiting, preparing, and retaining teachers](#). *Action in Teacher Education*, 31(1), 24–37.

Actions to achieve this strategy include:

E1: Teacher Residencies for High-Need SAUs and Content Areas - One Year Models

Teacher residency models are high-impact, high-cost models to address immediate critical shortages, and should be utilized in Maine. They are usually one-year, post-baccalaureate pathways offered through SAU and university partnerships that ensure year-long mentored apprenticeships paired with high-quality, clinically based coursework. Ideally, residents receive funding for tuition and living expenses plus a stipend or salary while working in schools full-time and attending courses full-time. While most residency programs are concentrated in urban centers, there are a growing number of programs with a rural focus, such as the [Teacher Residency for Rural Education](#) at the University of New Hampshire funded by a federal Teacher Quality Partnership Grant that the [Teach Western Mass Residency](#) coordinated through a multi-district, foundation, and state department of education collaboration. Accepted applicants receive 50% in-state tuition discount, \$28,000 salary and a laptop in exchange for teaching for three years in a rural NH partnership school.

Examples across the nation are well established, researched, and collaborate through the [National Center for Teacher Residency Network](#). Effective models create vehicles to recruit teachers, offer strong content and clinical preparation, and provide mentoring support. Guha, Hyler, and Darling-Hammond (2016) describe these characteristics in greater depth [here](#).²⁰

The [Bowdoin Teacher Scholars](#) is a model endowed by the Snow Family Fund that waives postgraduate tuition, provides a living stipend, and helps offset costs including fingerprinting, testing, and certification application fees as well as housing and transportation costs.

The [University of Southern Maine graduate ETEP \(Extended Teacher Education Program\)](#) collaboration with Biddeford Schools has developed a model in which students in the two-year pathway are hired part-time by the school administrative unit. The graduate students take their methods courses the first year and the internship courses the second year while working part-time for the SAU in a mentor teacher's classroom, allowing the mentor teacher flexibility for other teacher leadership roles.

E2: Promote Additional Dual Certification Programs for High-Needs Content Areas

Currently in Maine, two universities offer dual certification in general education and special education. The [University of Maine at Farmington](#) offers early childhood special education at the undergraduate level and the [University of Southern Maine](#) offers K-8 and 7-12 general education and special education in an integrated master's degree. These dual certification programs prepare teachers to work with students with diverse abilities and special needs in both a general education and special education setting,

²⁰ Guha, R., Hyler, M.E., and Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). The Teacher Residency: An Innovative Model for Preparing Teachers. Palo Alto, CA: *Learning Policy Institute*.

while also allowing for teacher mobility across programs. These programs may serve as a model in creating dual certification programs for other high-needs areas.

E3: Grow Your Own Education Technician and Community College Partnerships - Four to Six Year Models

Grow Your Own (GYO) programs capitalize on promoting teacher candidates already living and working in local communities. Sixty percent of teachers teach within twenty miles of where they attended high school.²¹ Maine should invest in the workforce development of people already living in local communities and working in schools. The [research](#) demonstrates that the retention rates for GYO teachers are significantly higher than other models of teacher recruitment.

The most common model is to support educational technicians and others who are currently employed in schools to become certified teachers. Through strategically selected job positions, and slightly modified work schedules, employees can earn a salary and maintain health benefits, while pursuing their teacher certification at local partner colleges and universities. This is typically done at the graduate level with courses offered after school, in the evenings, and online to allow for the continuity of school day work schedule. Some promising models like [Teach Portland Academy](#) are capitalizing on summer school partnerships that allow for greater flexibility of work and school schedules.

For special education teachers, there are a variety of models for GYO teachers in Maine described in the [2019 Approaches to "Grow Your Own" and Dual General and Special Education Certification MEPRI Report](#).

Illinois has some of the longest existing and strongest networks of GYO programs supported in large part with their [Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act](#) of 2005, a legislative model that could be used in Maine. In Lewiston, Maine, efforts to grow their own diverse teacher workforce include collaborations with Lewiston Adult Education and funding through the Department of Labor workforce redevelopment funds to help support tuition costs.

Promoting community college to four-year baccalaureate programs can help mediate the tuition costs and travel needs for teacher candidates. Since 2016, the University of Maine at Farmington has partnered with Southern Maine Community College to offer the [Early Childhood Education degree](#) and K-3 teacher certification. With a newly proposed Elementary Education major, the University of Southern Maine is partnering with York Community College for K-8 teacher certification.

E4: Education Career Pathways in High School/CTE Schools - Eight to Ten Year Models

²¹ Reininger, M. (2012). Hometown disadvantage? It depends on where you're from: Teachers' location preferences and the implications for staffing schools. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 34, 127-145.

Building education career pathways in our state's network of 27 [Career & Technical Education \(CTE\) schools](#) has the potential to foster a sustainable pipeline of future teachers. Many of Maine's CTE schools already offer an early childhood program for careers that have not historically required a college degree. Programs to support future teachers must be academically rigorous to meet college entry expectations, as well as, offer engaging applied learning in educational settings.

Across the nation, many high schools partner with [Educators Rising](#), a professional organization that supports secondary students interested in education-related careers. Educators Rising offers [micro-credentials](#) that may be recognized in place of an entry level three credit course, as is the case at the University of Southern Maine (USM). CTE schools may also participate in a [two-year curriculum](#) that has been accepted at some universities for up to 16 credits, allowing students to begin their college programs an entire semester ahead of schedule. This helps address the costs of the college degree and the distance learning options needed in rural communities. Students enrolled in an Educators Rising program are also more likely to continue their undergraduate work with the partnering college or university, making this a strong recruitment tool for Maine's Educator Preparation Programs.

Strategy F: Expand Data Systems

Maine currently collects data related to our educator workforce through a variety of sources. These sources include the educator certification data ([MEIS system](#)), SAU data on staffing ([NEO](#)), and [Title-II](#) reporting from institutions of higher education on pre-service educators. Each year, the Maine Department of Education submits a [teacher shortage report](#) to the US Department of Education. This data is based on the percentage of inexperienced, out-of-field, or emergency certificates issued in comparison to the total educators working under specific certifications (as well as, suggestions from school administrative units). While this is a starting point, it does not provide a comprehensive overview of the trends in supply and demand that are critical in strategic planning.

To make progress towards recruitment and retention initiatives, Maine needs a comprehensive and transparent data system. Initially, Maine should collect baseline data including those entering the profession, those leaving the profession, and the number of vacant positions at the start of the school year. For example, CERRA, the Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement in South Carolina, generates [yearly reports](#) related to educator supply and demand which are readily accessible to the public. This is a model that Maine may wish to consider as the State strives to better understand changes in the educator workforce and the reasons behind such trends.

Actions to achieve this goal include:

F1: Characterize the current educator population in greater detail

Currently, the Department does not formally collect data on the race and ethnicity of school staff. As Maine strives to diversify the educator workforce, it should collect this data, as well as educators' primary/home language to make educator diversity data visible and actionable to stakeholders.

F2: Determine educator needs geographically in Maine

Maine currently does not generate a shortage report that is specific to geographic regions. In order to develop initiatives that target specific needs, it is critical that this information is represented. Maine should also consider collecting data on current openings and anticipated needs by geographic region.

F3: Create a Statewide Job board

To help address educator shortages, most states have a centralized job listing service. Maine is not among them, but Maine should be. Currently Maine SAUs list open positions on private job list platforms such as Serving Schools or School Spring. Not only is the lack of a centralized job platform a barrier for potential applicants, it also raises the issue of equity, as many smaller, rural districts cannot afford to participate in private listing services. A centralized and comprehensive job search tool would efficiently match job openings with qualified candidates and make the hiring process more equitable among SAUs. Data from this job board system could also help higher education and other organizations be more strategic in educator preparation and recruitment to address the needs in the field.

F4: Collect SAU Level Data (Exit interviews, surveys)

Exit surveys are one way in which SAUs can better understand teacher attrition and mobility. Quantitative and qualitative data can provide insight into the reasons that educators leave the SAU or the profession. Some SAUs in Maine have been using this practice to find ways to support their educators. Tools have been developed that SAUs may consider adopting or adapting to have a more concrete understanding of retention strategies. The Ohio Department of Education developed a survey that Local Education Agencies use.²² Maine should work with educational leaders to create a model that could be used locally.

²² *Teacher Exit Survey | Ohio Department of Education*. (n.d.). Home | Ohio Department of Education. Retrieved October 20, 2021, from <https://education.ohio.gov/Topics/Teaching/Educator-Equity/Teacher-Exit-Survey>

Theme 3: Support Educator Development, Growth, and Leadership

Strategy G: Expand Induction and Mentoring for New Educators

The support that new educators are given throughout their pre-service career and first few years of teaching has a direct impact on their retention as career educators. According to the [Learning Policy Institute](#), key elements of high quality induction that are strongly associated with reduced rates of teacher turnover include: assigning mentors from the same field, common planning time and opportunities to collaborate with teachers in the same subject area, and being part of an external network of teachers.²³ Many of the practices regarding collaboration, planning time, and mentor matching are being implemented in SAUs throughout the state. External networks for educators are available based on content area/specialty, interest, or years of teaching.



Peer support and mentoring is a requirement under Maine's [Rule Chapter 180](#). Educators new to a SAU, holding a conditional certification, or new to teaching are required to have a peer mentor or coach for a minimum of one year. The rule requires two observations and ongoing opportunities for peer support and feedback. SAUs are provided with flexibility in determining the frequency of support, additional qualifications of mentors, and the ways in which observation and peer support takes place.

Recognizing the need for certified special education teachers and a significant amount of turnover of new educators, Maine also developed [Maine's Alternative Certification and Mentoring](#) (MACM) program. This program includes coursework and ongoing support from certified special educators for conditionally certified educators. MACM, which began in 2018, has served over 250 educators.

Actions to support the strategy include:

G1: Strengthen State and SAU Supports for Mentoring and Induction

As SAUs navigate legislative changes, many are looking to update their new teacher supports. The Maine DOE should share clear and consistent messaging regarding mentoring expectations and promising practices.

The Maine DOE, in collaboration with educational leaders from across the state, has updated [mentor modules and training](#). The Maine DOE offers support to mentor trainers with these new modules. A handbook is currently in development to support mentor

²³ Espanoza, D., Saunders, R., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Taking the long view: State efforts to solve teacher shortages by strengthening the teaching profession*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

trainers in customizing these modules to serve their unique context. It is important to note that while Chapter 180 no longer specifies a mandated DOE training for mentors, training for mentors is a best practice. It is crucial that all Maine schools have high quality and well-trained mentors to continue to support new educators.

The Department could explore virtual and/or in-person convenings across SAUs. Regional collaborations across the state have utilized collective expertise to hold mentor trainings and discussions around ways to strengthen existing practices.

SAUs that are considering making changes to existing mentor supports will benefit from tools to guide this conversation. One external resource includes The Southern Regional Education Board's guide: [Mentoring New Teachers: A New Approach](#). This guide invites districts to rethink existing mentor practices based on the needs of new teachers.

G2: Scaffolded Induction with Time to Learn

As SAUs begin to assess the existing practices and policies in place to support new staff, it is important they take into consideration the specific conditions that are in place to provide ongoing and scaffolded support. A common practice and requirement under [Rule Chapter 115, Part 1, Section 9](#) is to provide a formal orientation for new staff. This often takes place before or during the first part of the school year. Many school administrative units (SAUs) have also established monthly check-ins for new teachers to convene, learn, and share their experiences.

In addition to an initial orientation and access to a mentor, SAUs or regional collaboratives could provide access to coaches, common planning time with mentors, and resource allocation to support success. While resources are often tight, it is recommended that new teachers are given scaffolded support, dedicated classroom space, and course load allocation that would ultimately set them up for continued success. In some cases, substitutes have been utilized to provide additional time for new teachers to meet with mentors or receive additional professional development.

An example of a strong mentor and induction program is the one that has been implemented in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. This program offers first, second, and third year teachers a comprehensive system of support through a program called Right Start. Educators are placed with [Right Start Advisors](#) who provide instructional coaching and professional learning opportunities for new teachers. Right Start Advisors are master classroom teachers who are released from the classroom to serve in this capacity. In addition to observations and ongoing feedback, educators also have an opportunity to participate in a self-directed [PD menu](#).

G3. Establish a Network of New Educators for Peer Support

Maine DOE is encouraged to establish a network or portal for new teachers to convene. By establishing this network, new educators would have the opportunity to discuss issues, share practices, and provide peer support. The [Young Education](#)

[Professionals \(YEP\)](#) of the Maine Education Association (MEA) is an established opportunity for new educators to build personal and professional relationships through networking, social events, and community service. While there are systems in place to support ongoing convenings of new educators, this may not be happening in every SAU.

Strategy H: Strengthen Ongoing Professional Support

One way to support educator retention is through high-quality professional learning opportunities. In Maine, professional learning opportunities are offered at the school, SAU, regional, and state levels.

As Maine strives to best support educators, professional learning experiences should be designed to reflect elements of effective learning. Linda Darling Hammond describes seven elements of professional development that have been effective in improving the professional practices of educators and increasing student achievement: content focused; incorporates active learning utilizing adult learning theory; supports collaboration typically in job-embedded contexts; uses models and modeling of effective practice; provides coaching and expert support; offers opportunities for feedback and reflection; and is of sustained duration.²⁴ These characteristics should be taken into consideration as professional learning experiences are developed.

In response to COVID-19, Maine has already adapted many in-person opportunities to a virtual format. During the Spring of 2020, Maine's content specialists offered office hours to connect teachers across the state. These office hours have served as an opportunity to not only provide timely and relevant support, but also to bring together educators that may not have had the opportunity to collaborate in the past. Many SAUs have also invested in the hiring of instructional coaches. These coaches can play a critical role in providing timely support to new educators and veteran educators alike.

The Department understands that for many Maine schools, high-quality professional development costs can be prohibitive. Acknowledging this financial constraint, the Maine DOE is actively applying for grant opportunities to supplement innovative professional learning experiences. In 2020, the Department was awarded \$16.9 million from the U.S Department of Education's [Rethink K-12 Education Models Funding](#), and the Department continues to engage educators in co-designing units for Maine's online student learning platform: [MOOSE](#) (Maine Online Opportunities for Sustained Education). Educators involved in creating MOOSE modules continue to provide feedback on the professional growth they have experienced as a result of working in collaboration with colleagues throughout the state to create these interactive, project-based units.

Actions to support this strategy include:

²⁴ Darling-Hammond, L., Hyster, M. E., Gardner, M. (2017). *Effective Teacher Professional Development* (research brief). Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

H1: Identify Local and State Professional Learning Needs

Data collection and analysis from the state, district, school and classroom level should guide the development of professional learning opportunities. There are numerous sources of this information to consider including, but not limited to, student/family/educator surveys, teacher questionnaires, [Performance Evaluation and Professional Growth \(PEPG\)](#), student achievement data (formative and/or summative) and research from educators' classroom practice and institutions of higher education. Examination of these data could be used by educators to develop professional development goals, by administrators to plan SAU/building-wide collaborative learning experiences and by the State to develop engaging professional development opportunities that educators may access when needed. Maine has robust and collaborative educational organizations that can serve as partners in identifying professional learning needs, opportunities, and potential overlaps. These organizations include, but are not limited to [Maine Principals' Association](#), [Maine Education Association](#), [Maine School Superintendents Association](#), [Maine School Board Association](#), [Maine Curriculum Leaders Association](#), and [Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities](#), and content-focused professional groups.

H2: Develop and Promote Engaging Remote, Hybrid and In-person Professional Training, Development and Learning Experiences

Learning opportunities must be readily available and accessible for all educators in Maine. Since the beginning of the pandemic, Maine has quickly shifted from in person professional development to the use of remote sessions. As the state emerges from this unprecedented time, the use of remote modes of instruction should continue. Ideally, the State would house an extensive online library of engaging interactive courses that SAUs and educators could use when needed in a Learning Management System (LMS). Maine is a large state and utilizing remote instruction would provide educators with equitable access to this content and development.

Using analysis of the data gathered about educator and student needs, schools, SAUs and the State are encouraged to develop a variety of professional experiences for educators. These experiences could range from training for administrative tasks to long term professional learning opportunities paired with job embedded coaching.

Professional learning can be created and implemented by experts in academic instruction, behavioral, and social emotional supports with a whole student focus. Successful professional learning programming exemplars in the state can be explored and used as models of how to align professional learning with school improvement efforts.

H3: Develop Coaching Cohorts and Other Opportunities for Educators to Examine Professional Learning as it Relates to Their Practice

Ongoing coaching strengthens the impact of professional learning.²⁵ Educators take what is learned in professional development sessions and implement it into their daily practice. Coaching provides reinforcement of the learning as the coach and educator engage in dialogue and reflect on classroom practice. Technology should be integrated through both online training and coaching to ensure equitable access to professional learning.

Groups of educators may also serve as coaches for each other as a form of professional learning as peer coaches. Educators decide an area of their practice they want to focus on, have their colleagues make observations and then discuss action plans. This collaborative job-embedded professional learning has positive effects on educator practice.²⁶ In order for this strategy to be successful, time must be designated for educators to engage in this collaborative work.

Strategy I: Develop and Support High-Quality Teacher Leadership

States across the country are utilizing teacher leadership opportunities to elevate the profession and move student learning forward. Teacher leadership, when well-designed, can support systemic change and academic progress in schools. The Great Teachers and Leaders Center (GTL) at American Institutes for Research (AIR) developed a [Teacher Leadership Toolkit 2.0](#) to help State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) better understand what teacher leadership is, how teacher leadership could be implemented, and what this might look like at various levels of implementation. Maine has several well-established opportunities for teacher leadership at the state, SAU, and building levels. At the SAU or building level, teachers serve as leaders when mentoring pre-service or new educators. These roles are critical to the retention of new educators. In addition, leadership opportunities range from serving on a leadership team, serving as a committee chairperson, assisting in unit-wide initiatives, and acting as a department head.

The Maine Department of Education partners with the [Teach to Lead initiative](#). This teacher-led program brings teams of teacher leaders and administrators together to tackle a problem of practice. Using an action planning tool, teams from across the state identify root causes and begin to develop frameworks to address the problem. This [professional learning experience](#) is provided at no cost to teams. Maine is encouraged to secure sustainable funding sources to support this initiative moving forward. In Maryland, state activities funds are set aside for each team and used throughout the year to sustain the progress made at the Teach to Lead Summit.

²⁵ Kane, B. D., & Rosenquist, B. (2019). Relationships Between Instructional Coaches' Time Use and District- and School-Level Policies and Expectations. *American Educational Research Journal*, 5, 1718–1768. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831219826580>

²⁶ McREL International, Jarvis, R., & Dempsey, K. (2017, September 28). *Peer coaching that works: The power of reflection and feedback in teacher triad teams*. <https://www.mcrel.org/peer-coaching-that-works/>

In addition to Teach to Lead, Maine has a strong cohort of [County Teachers of the Year](#). These educators represent Maine's sixteen counties during their year of recognition. Professional learning opportunities are in place to support advocacy, teacher leadership, written and oral communications, and more. Since starting the cohort model, almost 100 educators have been supported through this model. Maine has a variety of teacher leadership opportunities that are content-specific. Examples include Elementary Literacy, Social Studies, Science, Visual and Performing Arts, and Mathematics teacher leader cohorts. Teachers are essential in their roles on standards review committees, the state literacy team, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Community of Practitioners, and the Professional Standards Board. Structures are also in place for a Teacher on Special Assignment or Teacher-in-Residency at the Maine Department of Education.

Actions to achieve this goal include:

I1: Statewide Definition of Teacher Leadership with Tools to Support SAUs in Implementation

A shared definition, description, and understanding of teacher leadership would support the coordination of policies and programs state-wide. The Teacher Leader Toolkit 2.0 (referenced above) explores key aspects of teacher leadership and provides resources to assist leaders in planning, decision-making, and building understanding alongside stakeholders and colleagues.

I2. Systematize Teacher-led Professional Development

Professional learning is one way to strengthen culture, climate, and ultimately student outcomes. Oftentimes, professional development is provided from external organizations or consultants. Educators within a system have the contextual understanding of the needs of their peers, students, and communities. In some instances, rather than bringing outside speakers into a school for professional development, SAUs should consider leveraging the expertise of their staff. Teacher leaders can serve as valuable contributors to action research, critical friends' networks, professional development, and seminars or conferences. In some states, federal title funds have been set aside to compensate teachers for this work.

Elevating and Celebrating Effective Teaching and Teachers - [ECET²](#) is an example of a professional learning opportunity that was developed for teachers, by teachers. The focus of this conference is to celebrate and elevate the teaching profession. This [statewide convening](#) has since been recreated at the local level in both Washington and York counties.

The [Teacher-led Professional Learning hub](#) is one resource for planning, accessing funding sources, and evaluating the impact of such opportunities. Opportunity Culture, an initiative designed to help pre-K-12 districts extend the impact of teachers,

principals, and their teams, has a [comprehensive resource](#)²⁷ which provides funding source information for teacher-led professional learning.

13. Differentiated Career Ladder

Defining, recognizing, and compensating teacher leadership roles can provide career ladder steps that support teacher retention. Shanghai, Singapore, and British Columbia all have taken systematic approaches to honor the expertise of current educators.²⁸ These countries utilize the content area and pedagogical expertise of the teachers within their systems to build capacity, support new educators, and lead initiatives. As a result, there is a shared ownership of student outcomes and additional opportunities to collaborate. One key element of these teacher leadership opportunities is the process for evaluation based on clear expectations. The teacher leaders are held to a higher standard and their results are based in part on the success of the mentees, programming, or survey data.

In 2019, think tanks were held at venues across the state to gather input regarding educator recruitment and retention. Teachers across Maine expressed a desire to stay in the classroom, while also sharing their expertise through leadership roles. In order to provide these opportunities SAUs may wish to consider a differentiated career ladder with built in leadership roles. The RESPECT Project, Envisioning a Teaching Profession for the 21st Century offers a model for teacher leadership that progresses from pre-service educator to Master Teacher, Teacher Leader, and/or School Principal. Sample role structures are outlined in a [graphic with accompanying descriptions](#).

SAUs may also consider ways in which full time equivalent positions could be restructured to incorporate teacher leadership roles.

14. Differentiated Role for Cooperating and Mentor Teachers

Cooperating or supervising teachers play a critical role in the development and retention of teachers new to the profession. These educators often take on a significant responsibility which includes support, ongoing collaboration, observation, and goal setting with pre-service educators. Maine currently has fifteen approved education preparation programs that use cooperating or mentoring teacher. This creates a great opportunity for rich teacher leadership experience.

Regional collaboratives such as the [Penobscot River Educational Partnership \(PREP\)](#) are exploring ways to provide strengthened field placements for students while also building a pool of highly qualified new educators. PREP's Teacher Preparation

²⁷ Public Impact. (2018). Career paths and pay in an Opportunity Culture: A practical guide. Chapel Hill, NC: Public Impact. Retrieved from <http://opportunityculture.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Career Paths and Pay in an Opportunity Culture A Practical Guide-Public Impact.pdf>

²⁸ Jensen, B., Sonnemann, J., Roberts-Hull, K., and Hunter, A. 2016. Beyond PD: Teacher professional learning in high-performing systems. Washington, DC: National Center on Education and the Economy.

Committee, composed of SAU leaders and college faculty, is an example of how collaboration can fuel teacher development.

In [Louisiana](#), all pre-service teachers in education preparation programs are required to complete a year-long residency with a mentor teacher. Mentor teachers are chosen based on their expertise, receive extensive training, and are compensated for their service.

In most SAUs, mentors are practicing educators with experience working in the SAU. While each SAU may set its own requirements, the minimum expectation for mentors is two observations and ongoing opportunities for feedback and support. In Maine, stipends for mentors varies considerably from SAU to SAU. Some mentors receive no monetary compensation, while others receive up to \$1,700. Financial incentives to support mentoring are important, and SAUs may need to consider structural changes. Allowing flex time, providing shared planning time, and providing release time to mentors are some ways that SAUs could support mentors, in addition to stipends. Strategy G describes the role of mentoring and induction in further detail.

Strategy J: Develop and Support Well-Qualified School and SAU Leaders

School and SAU leaders are essential to the overall culture and climate of a system. School and SAU leaders are tasked with carrying out the mission and vision of the system, while also balancing the day-to-day tasks. Comprehensive strategies to address teacher shortages consider the central role principals play in attracting and retaining talented teachers. According to the Learning Policy Institute's 2018 report, research demonstrates that a principal's ability to create positive working conditions and collaborative, supportive learning environments plays a critical role in attracting and retaining qualified teachers...²⁹

Principals often are expected to serve as instructional leaders, transformational leaders, building managers, evaluators, and disciplinarians. Each of these roles is important, but a great deal of time and expertise is required to carry out each effectively.

In Maine, there are several established supports in place for educational leaders based on their specific area of leadership. Maine is fortunate to have very active and collaborative professional organizations such as [Maine Principals' Association](#), [Maine School Superintendents Association](#), [Maine School Board Association](#), [Maine Curriculum Leaders Association](#), and [Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities](#), all of which work closely with leaders to provide ongoing support, policy updates, and professional learning opportunities. In addition, several networks for school and SAU leaders have emerged both regionally and based on area of certification.

²⁹ Espanoza, D., Saunders, R., Kini, T., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2018). *Taking the long view: State efforts to solve teacher shortages by strengthening the teaching profession*. Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

Actions to achieve this goal include:

J1: Explore Distributed Leadership and Areas to Reduce/Restructure Workload

School and SAU leaders have experienced increased demands on their time and focus in recent years. One approach to alleviate some of the existing workload is to explore distributed leadership with shared principal and teacher-leader models. In Maine, some schools have moved to a co-principalship model where responsibilities are differentiated.

J2: Recruit and Prepare Well-Qualified School Leaders

It is imperative that Maine continues to recruit and prepare a diverse and well-qualified leadership pipeline. Maine currently has five Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) that offer educational leadership programs at the Certificate of Advanced Study, Master's, or Doctoral Degree levels. These IHEs include University of New England, St. Joseph's College of Maine, University of Southern Maine (USM), Thomas College, The University of Maine, and University of Maine Farmington.

Regional or SAU models have been established with these programs to recruit and prepare promising leaders. [Leaders for Tomorrow's Schools](#) is a regional cohort model offered at USM. The Maine Educational Leadership Academy is a pipeline program offered through the University of Maine in partnership with Bangor Public Schools. Each of these programs aims to support aspiring school leaders in hands-on, practical ways through a supportive cohort.

Maine might look to other states in order to strengthen support for those interested in pursuing school leadership. [The North Carolina Principal Fellows Program](#), established in 1993, aims to prepare outstanding candidates for school administrator positions—assistant principals and principals—in the state's schools. In this cohort model, Principal Fellows receive a competitive, merit-based scholarship loan to attend one of eleven participating UNC system institutions and earn a master's degree in School Administration (MSA).

J3: Expand Professional Learning Opportunities and Support Systems for Administrators

Maine has several programs that support the development of new leaders and the professional network of veteran leaders. While some of these initiatives or collaboratives have been providing support for years, several new supports have emerged in the past five years. It is critical that leaders are aware of the opportunities available to them and are connected to support in a timely manner. Maine may wish to utilize Federal ESSA Title II, Part A set aside to expand leadership development opportunities.

The Maine Principals Association (MPA) offers [The New Administrator Induction and Mentoring Program](#) specifically tailored to meet the needs of new administrators. These

new administrators (protégés) are paired with veteran administrators (mentors) for ongoing professional learning and support.

In addition to the support offered through the MPA, the Maine Department of Education has established a [Transformational Leaders' Network](#) (TLN). The TLN is intended for principals in Maine SAUs and is designed to improve leadership capacity to help reach school improvement goals. Building on the success of the TLN, the Maine Department of Education established the [Maine Leadership Development Program](#). This program, in partnership with the National Institute for School Leaders (NISL), supports school and SAU leaders in a blended approach. The goals of the Maine Leadership Development Program are to prepare educational leaders to lead for excellence and equity, increase student achievement, foster a culture of high expectations, and enhance teacher recruitment, retention, and quality. Since starting the program in 2019, Maine has supported two cohorts of educational leaders.

In addition to the Maine LDP and the TLN, the Maine Department of Education has expanded leadership development opportunities in partnership with experts in the field through both the Leading Early Learning Series. In fall of 2021, the [Leading Early Learning Series](#) was offered as a pilot to Pre-K- 3 building leaders in partnership with the Maine Roads to Quality Professional Development Network, U-Maine Center for Community Inclusion and Disability Studies, Maine Association for the Education of Young Children, and Maine Principals' Association. Leading Early Learning series was designed to promote knowledge of best practices in early childhood education and leadership abilities to support children, teachers, and families during this pivotal time in children's development.

To better support current and aspiring Adult Education Directors, the Maine Department of Education has partnered with the American Institutes for Research (AIR), Adult Education and Research and Technical Assistance Center to provide training in a cohort model. Participants develop skills and knowledge across four key domains and engage in practice-based leadership in action capstone projects to build and leverage partnerships. This form of targeted support not only helps support existing directors, but also is critical to supporting the educator workforce pipeline.

Theme 4: Elevate Educators and the Education Profession



Strategy K: Promote Positive Public Perception

The systemic problems described in previous sections, especially economic concerns, and lack of support for teachers and school leaders contribute to a negative narrative about the teaching profession. According to [PDK's 2018 national poll](#), 54% of parents said they would not like their child to become a teacher (a record high since the question was initially asked in 1969), even though those same respondents gave high ratings to their local public schools and had positive memories of their own teachers' influence on their lives...³⁰

At the state level, stakeholders participating in regional [Think Tank](#) sessions cited negative public perception as one of the top three challenges in recruiting and retaining talented educators. School administrators, teachers and school board members expressed frustration over the lack of respect given to Maine's public educators. They recalled the days when teaching was considered a noble profession, one valued and supported by local communities and state-wide leaders.

The Maine DOE finds this lowered respect for the teaching profession and public education unacceptable and unmerited and has taken intentional steps to correct this false and harmful narrative. In 2019, the communications team launched "[Maine Schools Sharing Success](#)", an ongoing series of positive stories highlighting the heroic work happening in Maine schools (pre-K through Adult Ed) throughout the state. Knowing the importance of having legislators understand the work happening in their local schools and classrooms, in 2020 Gov. Mills issued a [proclamation](#) declaring January as *Take Your Legislator to School Month* – a month for Legislators to visit classrooms to establish productive relationships with teachers and administrators. Most recently, the Department partnered with NewsCenter Maine in the [#LoveSchoolStaff and #LoveTeaching campaign](#), a two-week event featuring video clips of a broad range of school and SAU staff, working in all regions of Maine, sharing where they work and why they find relevance and meaning in the role they play in supporting and educating today's students and tomorrow's workforce.

Actions to further achieve this goal include:

K1: Partner with Maine Organizations to Promote Maine's Educators and Schools

The Maine Department of Education is encouraged to strengthen partnerships with nonprofits, the private sector, and the tourism industry to promote Maine's educators

³⁰ PDK. (2018, September). *Teaching: Respect but Dwindling Appeal*. Kappan . https://pdkpoll.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/pdkpoll50_2018.pdf

and schools. Collaborating with these groups to create positive messaging campaigns and build on existing efforts described above will help shift public perception of educators and the education profession.

K2: Expand the #TeachMaine Website

The Maine Department of Education has created an online presence for their #TeachMaine Campaign. The [#TeachMaine website](#) provides general information regarding the work of the Educator Talent Committee, the Learning Facilitator program, and additional efforts to recruit high school students to the teaching profession. As the Maine DOE and stakeholders implement the action steps identified in this plan, the website should be expanded and interactive, increasing awareness of the initiative and progress made in achieving the goals of this work.

Strategy I: Expand and Diversify Educator Recognition Programs

In order to create a climate and culture in which educators feel valued, it is important to recognize achievements at the school, SAU, and state levels. Educator recognition is one strategy to retain high-performing and dedicated educators. Examples of recognition include but are not limited to: monetary awards, non-monetary awards, and opportunities for teacher leadership roles.

Currently, the Maine Department of Education administers and/or supports several recognition programs including the [Maine Teacher of the Year Program](#), the [National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Program](#), the [Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science](#), the [Milken Educator Award](#), and the [Gilder Lehrman History Teacher of the Year Award](#). In recent months, the Maine DOE established the [English for Speakers of Other Languages \(ESOL Teacher of the Year Award in partnership with the Foreign Language Association of Maine \(FLAME\)\)](#). In addition, Maine joined 20 states across the country in the implementation of the [RISE Award for Inspirational School Employees](#). Each of these programs aims to elevate the exceptional work of those in the educational workforce.

While some recognitions may include financial awards or scholarships, others offer ongoing professional learning, opportunities for travel, honorary memberships to organizations or conferences, and national recognition. As Maine looks to expand and diversify educator recognition programs, it is important to evaluate existing programs and find ways to strengthen them.

L1: Expand Existing Recognition Programs

Starting in 2014, the Maine Teacher of the Year Program expanded the network by honoring an educator from each of Maine's 16 counties. As a result of this decision, educator voice, geographic representation and advocacy increased, and more educators accessed high-quality professional learning experiences. A model like this could be replicated with many educator awards.

L2: Diversify Educator Recognition in Existing Programs

Collecting racial and ethnic data for educators nominated for recognition programs may help identify gaps in outreach and other barriers that may preclude diverse representation of nominees, or of nominees “opting in” to recognition programs.

L3: Create New Recognition Programs

The Maine DOE should review current recognition programs, and in collaboration with stakeholders, identify new programs to ensure every position that makes up the fabric of our public education system is represented in its recognition and awards programs. This may include recognizing groups within schools and SAU's (Professional Learning Communities, innovative practices), or schools demonstrating outstanding work in addressing current, real world issues, such as climate change/environment or social justice.

Educator Talent Committee

Thank you to the countless stakeholders from across Maine who provided input, joined focus groups, and continue to advocate on the behalf of Maine's educator workforce. In addition, a special thank you to the members of the Maine Department of Education's Educator Talent Committee for making this report possible.

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