



DISTRICT LEADERSHIP FORUM

Strengthening District-School of Education Partnerships Toolkit

Guidance for Leveraging Mutually Beneficial Partnerships to Support Educator Credentialing



District Leadership Forum

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Align District Actions to Key Candidate Decisions

A Structured Approach to Help Districts Secure Top Talent

This toolkit focuses on the “**Inform**” stage of the recruitment funnel, when individuals enrolled in higher education—whether they are traditional undergraduates, graduate students, or alternative pathway candidates—are deciding whether to complete a teaching credential. At this stage, many express initial interest in teaching, but that interest often fades when the credentialing process feels unclear or hard to navigate.

While district partnerships with higher education institutions can help address this challenge, most remain too informal or fragmented to provide the necessary support, leaving candidates without the consistent guidance needed to stay on the path to the classroom. These partnerships often fall short because they:



Rely on individual relationships or informal connections



Involve one-time commitments with no long-term structure



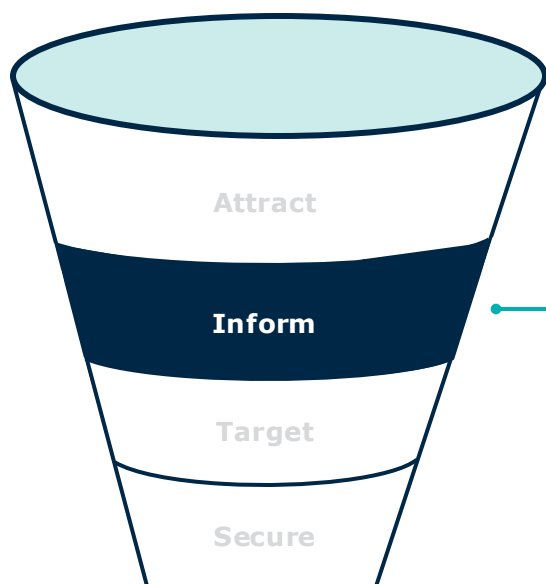
Have limited interaction beyond basic transactions

Using the recommended strategies, tools, and implementation guidance in this toolkit, districts can build stronger, more structured partnerships with higher education institutions' schools of education. These partnerships help clarify the path to licensure, sustain candidate interest, and support more prospective educators in becoming credentialed. See the Table of Contents on **pg. 4** for a summary of each focus area and the resources included.

The Educator Talent Funnel helps districts address persistent recruitment challenges by targeting the key moments that influence whether someone chooses a career in education. It breaks the candidate journey into four critical decision points where strategic district action can shape potential talent's interest, engagement, and follow-through in becoming an educator. By applying targeted strategies at each stage, districts can build a stronger, more sustainable pipeline of future educators.

The Educator Talent Funnel

District Steps to Secure Talent



Key Decision Points for Prospects

- ▶ *Am I interested in teaching?*
- ▶ *Should I get credentialed?*
- ▶ *Should I apply to this district?*
- ▶ *Should I choose this district over another?*

Sources: EAB interviews and analysis.

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- *Goal-Setting Discussion Guide*
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Use these tools to assign owners for each action step and establish a cadence to monitor progress.

- *Partnership Responsibilities Checklist*
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Use this tool to document partnership responsibilities, shared goals, and accountability measures through a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

- *Memorandum of Understanding Blueprint Tool*



Assess Current Partnerships

Use this section to identify and evaluate existing higher education partnerships, evaluate their effectiveness, and identify opportunities to strengthen collaboration on shared educator priorities.

PART I



Partnership Assessment and Improvement Guide

Tool Description

Many districts rely on informal or transactional partnerships with schools of education that lack sustained collaboration and therefore fall short of supporting teacher pipeline efforts. In contrast, stronger, more structured partnerships help align teacher preparation with district hiring needs and provide candidates with the guidance necessary to stay on the path towards credentialing.

This assessment and improvement guide helps districts evaluate the current state of their higher education partnerships, identify where connections with schools of education might be missing, and surface strengths and opportunities for growth. By using the implementation steps and reflection activities that follow, district leaders can begin to build or refine more intentional and mutually beneficial partnerships with schools of education.



Implementation Steps

- 1. Assess your current higher education connection(s).**
 - a) Complete the Partnership Assessment and Improvement Guide (**pgs. 7-8**) to evaluate your current higher education partnerships.
 - b) Review each question and answer 'Yes' or 'No' based on different aspects of your partnership.
 - c) For each question answered 'No', refer to the advice column for recommended next steps and tools in this toolkit to help you get started.
 - d) Complete an assessment guide for each higher education institution you currently partner with to assess the strengths and create a clear plan for building a stronger more sustainable partnership.
- 2. Prioritize and assign next steps to strengthen your partnership.**
 - a) Identify 2-3 areas to focus on that would have the greatest impact on your partnership.
 - b) Assign ownership to the appropriate team members to lead implementation.
- 3. Build a plan for continuous partnership assessment and improvement.**
 - a) Establish a routine (e.g., quarterly, every academic year) to review your partnership.
 - b) Use the guide as a collaborative tool in leadership or partnership meetings to ensure your partnership meets all shared goals and outcomes.

Partnership Assessment and Improvement Guide

Use this Partnership Assessment and Improvement Guide to evaluate the strength of your current higher education partnerships. For each question, select '**Yes**' if the statement reflects your partnership, or '**No**' if it does not. For each '**No**', review the recommendations in the '**If no**' column.

Complete this assessment guide for each higher education partner to develop a clear action plan for building stronger, more sustainable, and mutually beneficial partnerships that support your educator pipeline.

Higher Education Institution:

Question	Yes	No	If no:
1. Do we have multiple active contacts at the higher education institution, including individuals in the school of education?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Step 1 in the School of Education Key Contact Mapping tool (pg. 11) to identify missing contacts. • Expand relationships beyond a single individual by connecting with program leads, faculty, and administrators tied to educator preparation. • Establish introductions through networking events, faculty meetings, or mutual partners.
2. Is at least one of our contacts in a role with authority to influence decisions (e.g., program design, admissions, partnership priorities) and connected to educator preparation programs that align with our district's highest hiring needs (e.g., SPED, STEM)?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review district hiring priorities and compare them to existing contacts' program affiliations. • Use Step 2 in the School of Education Key Contact Mapping tool (pg. 11) to identify decision-makers within the school of education based on their capacity and expertise. • Use Step 3 (pg. 12) to plan and target outreach that will establish connections with leaders who can approve or advance partnership initiatives in high need areas.
3. Do we have clear, outlined shared SMART goal(s) that align with both partners' priorities?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Goal-Setting Discussion Guide (pgs. 14-16) to better understand the school of education's priorities and surface areas of alignment. • Use the Partnership Goal-Setting Template (pgs. 17-29) to write 3-5 mutually beneficial shared SMART goals that align with partner priorities.
4. Do we have clear strategies and actions assigned to each partner that contribute to the success of the shared SMART goal(s)?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Goals-to-Action Planning Activity (pgs. 20-22) to turn your shared SMART goals into clear execution strategies and specific actions for both the district and school of education partner. • Refer to the example execution actions (pg. 23-24) to see how a partnership can activate partnership strategies through action.

Partnership Assessment and Improvement Guide (cont.)

Question	Yes	No	If no:
5. Are the partnership responsibilities clearly outlined, assigned to a point of contact, and monitored frequently?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Partnership Responsibilities Checklist (pgs. 25-28) to identify recurring responsibilities, assign a point of contact for each, and set the frequency each task should occur.
6. Do we have a documented, consistent communication cadence (e.g., quarterly meetings) that both partners follow?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a recurring meeting schedule and confirm with all relevant contacts. Use the Partnership Responsibilities Checklist Collaboration & Communication section (pg. 28) to document the cadence and contacts involved.
7. Do we have quantitative or qualitative data that demonstrates progress toward our partnership objectives?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Goal Progress Monitoring Tracker Template (pgs. 29-30) to track the progress of each shared goal and monitor the broader impact of the partnership. Use the tracker to outline success metrics for each action and regularly monitor the progress.
8. Do we regularly review partnership outcomes with our higher education partner and use them to guide next steps?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Partnership Responsibilities Checklist Progress Monitoring section (pg. 27) to set a cadence to review partnership outcomes and adjust as needed. Use the Goal Progress Monitoring Tracker Template (pgs. 29-30) to track and monitor partnership outcomes that will inform regular reviews.
9. Do we have a formal, written document that establishes and maintains the partnership?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Memorandum of Understanding Blueprint Tool (pgs. 31-33) to learn about the key elements of a strong MOU and review a sample document. Use the Partnership MOU Template (pg. 34) to create or update your partnership MOU and ensure it is clear and sustainable.
10. Do we have a process to regularly identify and address partnership risks, such as turnover, misalignment, or lack of accountability?			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use the Partnership Responsibilities Checklist Progress Monitoring section (pg. 27) to set a cadence to review the partnership. Review the Key Elements of a Strong MOU (pg. 32) to understand how to set MOU conditions and establish a formal process for reviewing and making changes to the partnership.



Align on School of Education Key Contacts

Use this section to identify, evaluate, and prioritize your district's most important contacts within schools of education who can help your district strengthen pipeline goals and sustain collaboration overtime.

PART II



School of Education Key Contact Mapping

Tool Description

K–12 district–higher education partnerships often struggle not because of a lack of good ideas, but because they rely on contacts without the authority or influence to drive change. The success of any district–higher education partnership depends on building strong relationships with key leaders within schools of education, especially those positioned to shape program direction and sustain long-term efforts. Without the right people at the table, even the most promising ideas or initiatives risk stalling before they gain traction.

This activity helps districts identify and engage the right higher education contacts in schools of education with the authority, influence, and capacity to strengthen educator pipeline efforts and move collaborative efforts forward.



Implementation Steps

- 1. Gather information on the staff** within the school of education at your higher education partner institution. Draw information from department webpages, staff directories, internal contact databases, or personal contact lists.
- 2. Evaluate school of education contacts most critical to supporting your district’s goals and priorities.**
 - a) List the most relevant contacts (**pg. 11**) within the school of education (e.g., department dean, department chairs).
 - b) Assess each contact’s expertise and capacity to determine who is best suited to support and advance the district partnership.
- 3. Record key contacts and assign a district staff member to lead an outreach plan.**
 - a) Use the contact table (**pg. 12**) to record potential contacts to reach out to that fit the criteria (i.e., expertise and capacity).
 - b) Add relevant information for each contact, including department, expertise, capacity, and any other notes related to district pipeline goals.
 - c) Assign a district contact to initiate outreach and begin partnership development.

School of Education Contact Prioritization Worksheet

Use this worksheet to identify and prioritize the contacts within the school of education who are most critical to supporting your district's educator pipeline efforts.

Higher Education Institution:

1 Identify the most relevant contacts within the school of education.

To build a strong teacher pipeline, identify the individuals within the school of education who are best positioned to support district's goals.

- Focus on those who oversee teacher preparation, licensure, student advising, or field placements.
- Prioritize staff with decision-making authority or direct influence over program structure and enrollment.
- Use past relationships as a starting point but refine your contact list based on current alignment with district needs.



Department or School Dean



Associate Deans



Director of Communication and Marketing



Director of Strategy and External Relations



Department Chairs



Faculty and Adjunct Professors



Licensure or Certification Coordinators



Program Alumni

Write down potential contacts below:

2 Evaluate each contact's expertise and capacity.

Not all institutional contacts will be equally suited or willing to support a district partnership. Use the criteria below to guide your evaluation and record your notes in the table on **pg. 12** to inform prioritization.

- **Expertise:** Does the contact have the knowledge and role-specific authority to influence or shape educator pipeline efforts?
- **Capacity:** Does the contact have the time and interest to engage in deeper partnership work?

School of Education Contact Prioritization (cont.)

3 Prioritize key contacts and assign outreach.

Review and evaluate which contacts are best positioned to support your educator pipeline and recruitment goals. Determine who should lead or support future outreach and collaboration. Use the table to:

- 1. Record each contact’s title and department.
- 2. Assess priority based on their expertise, capacity, and alignment to district needs.
- 3. Capture any relevant context in the relationship history and notes column (e.g., previous collaborations, existing district relationships).
- 4. Assign a district point of contact and outline the outreach plan (e.g., method of communication, timing, follow up) to start conversations.

School of Ed Contacts for Consideration

Higher Education Contact Name	Title & Department	Contact Expertise & Capacity	Relationship History & Notes	District Contact & Outreach Plan



Establish Goals and Structures for Mutually Beneficial Partnerships

Use this section to establish shared goals, clarify partner roles, and build the structures needed to track progress and sustain effective collaboration over time.

PART III



Goal-Setting Discussion Guide

Tool Description

Before developing partnership goals, districts need a clear understanding of their school of education partner's priorities, capacity, and program offerings. Without this foundation, goals risk being misaligned, unrealistic, or ineffective and may fail to meet the needs of either partner because they are not anchored in needs or capacities.

The Goal-Setting Discussion Guide provides a structured starting point to build mutual understanding and align district pipeline needs with school of education priorities. It also helps identify barriers and opportunities for stronger collaboration.

This activity includes a discussion guide worksheet and a completed example to support districts through this exploratory conversation. Insights captured during this process will lay groundwork for more targeted and realistic goal setting in partnership planning sessions.



Implementation Steps

1. Prepare for the conversation.

- a) Schedule a meeting with your school of education partner and invite key contacts, district leaders, and relevant staff.
- b) Review the Discussion Guide (**pg. 15**) and consider if there are outstanding questions you have for the partner.
- c) Gather relevant documents (e.g., MOUs, data reports, program information) that may contribute to the conversation.

2. Facilitate the conversation using the Discussion Guide.

- a) Use the Discussion Guide (**pg. 15**) together with your school of education partner during a scheduled meeting to surface priorities, current offerings, and opportunities for collaboration. Use the right column to capture responses that may reveal opportunities for future collaboration or other insights.
 - If a joint meeting isn't possible, have the school of education partner complete their response individually and then reconvene to review, align on responses, and address any questions.
- b) Reference the completed example (**pg. 16**) as a model for how insights can be documented by gathering information that supports future planning and goals.

3. Translate insights into shared goals.

- a) Share the captured insights with your team to align on priorities.
- b) Take time as a team to reflect on the biggest takeaways (e.g., What surprised you?; Where is there momentum?; What gaps still need to be addressed before setting goals?).
- c) Complete the Partnership Goal-Setting Template (**pg. 17**) using your discussion outcomes.

Discussion Guide for School of Education Partnership

Use these questions to learn about the school of education’s priorities and programs and to identify opportunities for collaboration. Consider using this guide beyond the school of education where relevant (e.g., social work, mathematics).

Partner Information

Institution Name: _____

Main Point of Contact: _____

Area of Interest: _____

Discovery Questions	Notes from Conversation
What current educator preparation programs do you offer? Do they align with our district’s needs? Are there opportunities to add new programs or certifications?	
How many seats are filled in the school of education and/or relevant programs? Does the university want to or have resources to grow enrollment?	
Can students outside the education program easily transfer in? What resources do we already provide? How can we remove barriers?	
What hands-on opportunities (e.g., classroom placements, tutoring) exist, and how can the district help to expand them or create more?	
Where do students tend to drop off during the program? What supports are already in place, and where could we partner to fill remaining gaps?	

Example: Discussion Guide for School of Education Partnership

This example shows how a district could use the goal-setting conversation guide to understand its higher education partner's capacity, alignment with district needs, and opportunities for collaboration. The "Notes from Conversation" column highlights the type of insights districts can capture and use to shape next steps, shared goals, and strengthen partnership efforts.

Partner Information

Institution Name: EAB University

Main Point of Contact: Jane Doe, Dean of Education Department

Area of Interest: Expanding enrollment for bilingual and SPED pathways

Discovery Questions	Notes from Conversation ¹
What current educator preparation programs do you offer? Do they align with our district's needs? Are there opportunities to add new programs or certifications?	"We offer certification programs for elementary ed, secondary ed, and special ed with an option to concentrate in subject areas like math or literacy. We know there's a high need for ESL educators, so we could add a bilingual track with minimal costs or changes. We'd also be open to reviewing district hiring data to prioritize future certification options."
How many seats are filled in the school of education and/or relevant programs? Does the university want to or have resources to grow enrollment?	"We average about 75% capacity across our certification programs. We would like to grow our enrollment numbers without making substantial changes to the department. We're especially interested in recruiting more diverse candidates and exploring opportunities to build a pipeline of educators that reflect our local student populations. Partnerships that support outreach or dual enrollment efforts could be helpful."
Can students outside the education program easily transfer in? What resources do we already provide? How can we remove barriers?	"Students can apply to the education program in their second year, but test requirements can hold some back. While they're allowed to declare as late as junior year, few do unless they've had early exposure. We could explore alternative entry options and would love to co-host a freshman event to surface interest sooner and help remove entry barriers. We'd be open to adjusting advising materials or info sessions to make entry points more visible, too. Maybe the district HR team could support with revising these materials?"
What hands-on opportunities (e.g., classroom placements, tutoring) exist, and how can the district help to expand them or create more?	"In addition to the required semester of student teaching, we offer career advising, but our career services are stretched thin. Hosting joint events with district teachers or providing mentors could improve program retention. We've contemplated exploring short-term classroom observations for students earlier in the program but haven't found a school to partner with because it's an additional ask of classroom teachers."
Where do students tend to drop off during the program? What supports are already in place, and where could we partner to fill remaining gaps?	"We lose some before they get to student teaching senior year. Earlier exposure to classrooms could help with building deeper relationships with future co-ops and students to make student teaching more appealing and less intimidating. Support from the district could help students stay engaged earlier."

¹ Sample responses have been simplified for example purposes. When completing this tool, teams should aim to gather more detailed and comprehensive information from contacts.



Partnership Goal-Setting Template

Tool Description

Establishing shared goals is a critical first step to building a focused, results-driven partnership. When goals are unclear or misaligned, districts and schools of education struggle to coordinate efforts, allocate resources effectively, and measure progress over time. Without shared direction, collaborations risk becoming fragmented and failing to deliver meaningful outcomes. To prevent this, partners must negotiate and agree on goals that reflect each other's priorities to create a clear foundation to coordinate action. Well-defined goals keep both sides focused, accountable, and moving toward results that benefit the educator pipeline.

This activity guides partners through the process of clarifying individual priorities, identifying areas of overlap, and co-creating shared goals that address challenges and desired outcomes. The completed template serves as the foundation for the next step where partnerships will outline execution strategies to achieve goals (**pg. 20**).



Implementation Steps

- 1. Gather partnership materials that capture each partner's strategic priorities, challenges, and desired outcomes** (e.g., strategic plan, discussion guide notes). These materials will inform the identification of shared focus areas.
- 2. Use the Partnership Goal-Setting Template (pg. 18) to identify 3-5 areas where district and school of education needs and capacity align.**
 - a) Partners can complete the template together during a meeting or fill it out separately and review jointly.
 - b) List overlapping areas of interest, drawing on insights from past conversations or discussion guide notes.
 - c) Pinpoint challenges or barriers that limit progress in these areas.
 - d) Co-create a shared goal for each area that reflects both partners' priorities, overcomes barriers, and clearly states the desired outcome.
- 3. Review and finalize the shared goals captured in the template.**
 - a) Use the SMART goal guidance (**pg. 19**) to ensure each goal is specific, measurable, achievable and actionable, relevant, and time-bound.
 - b) Confirm that each goal is mutually agreed upon. These goals will serve as the foundation for the next step in the mutually beneficial partnership process, where partners will outline strategies, assign responsibilities, and set timelines.

Partnership Goal-Setting Template

After your initial discovery conversation(s) (**pg. 14**), use this table to identify 3-5 areas where district needs and school of education capacity align. Consider challenges or barriers that effect the area of alignment. When drafting the Mutually Beneficial Shared Goal, refer to the SMART goal guidance (**pg. 19**) to ensure each goal meets the criteria.

- 1. Emerging Area of Alignment:** What opportunities are both partners interested in pursuing?
- 2. Shared Challenge or Barrier:** What obstacles are currently preventing progress in this area?
- 3. Mutually Beneficial Shared Goal:** What outcome would meaningfully support both partners?

Emerging Area of Alignment	Challenges or Barriers	Mutually Beneficial Shared Goal
<i>Example: One area we’re both interested in is increasing the number of graduates certified in secondary education in hard-to-fill subject areas like math.</i>	<i>Low enrollment in the certification program for secondary math education is a major barrier to increasing the completion rate and hiring secondary math teachers.</i>	<i>By 2027, increase the number of students who enroll in and complete the secondary education certification program with a concentration in math by 25%, with at least 80% securing teaching roles in local districts.</i>

SMART Goals Create Clarity and Drive Progress

Use the SMART Goal Framework to build clear and specific shared goals that will ensure accountability and drive progress forward. This framework is useful because it:

- ✓ Promotes accountability on both sides of the partnership
- ✓ Provides clarity and sets clear expectations for each partner
- ✓ Enables intentional implementation that drives progress forward

The SMART Goal Framework

Questions to Consider When Defining Mutually Beneficial Shared Goals

S

Specific

- Who is responsible for reaching the goal?
- What are specific outcomes of the goal?
- What are the criteria for success of the goal?
- Why is this goal our top priority?

M

Measurable

- What metrics are used to assess impact and progress toward or away from goal?
- At what benchmark is the goal considered achieved?
- Are the metrics used to measure progress effective, or do they need to be refined?
- Did I have access to the data or information needed to measure my goal's progress accurately?

A

Attainable

- Does our institution have reasonable means to achieve the goal?
- Has the goal been achieved at other comparable institutions?
- Are there any unexpected obstacles or challenges that affect the attainability of the goal?
- Is there a clear plan for overcoming any potential roadblocks?

R

Realistic

- Do all stakeholders agree on the desired outcome of the goal?
- How does the goal align with the strategic goals and objectives of the school?
- Does the goal remain relevant as circumstances and priorities change?
- What is the impact of the goal on stakeholders and our institution as a whole?

T

Timely

- At what point is the goal be achieved?
- At what point should progress updates be made?
- What factors, if any, influence the ability to complete the goal within the specified timeframe?
- Are regular check-ins or milestones scheduled to track progress?



Goals-to-Action Planning Activity

Tool Description

A strong partnership requires more than setting shared goals, it also demands clear strategies and actions to achieve them. Without a concrete plan, even well-defined goals can lose momentum and fail to deliver meaningful results. Defining partnership execution strategies ensures that high-level goals are translated into coordinated efforts, with each partner's role and contributions clearly outlined.

This activity helps partners take a mutually beneficial goal and break it down into clear strategies for both the district and higher education partner. Each side then outlines specific actions to put these strategies into practice. This step strengthens collaboration by turning intent into action and building a clear path toward measurable outcomes.



Implementation Steps

- 1. Gather key materials related to your shared goals.** Collect relevant resources from both partners, such as strategic priorities, existing initiatives, and the names of key implementation contacts.
- 2. Translate a shared goal into concrete strategies and actions.**
 - a) Select one shared goal from the Partnership Goal-Setting Template (**pg. 18**) to focus on first as your reference. Complete the Goals-to-Action Planning Worksheet (**pg. 21**) collaboratively with your school of education partner, or draft independently with your internal team and then review together.
 - b) Break the shared goal into four individual strategies (two per partner) that will drive progress toward the goal. Consider each partner's capacity and audience when determining execution strategies.
 - c) Outline specific actions for each strategy. Prioritize high-impact actions that will maximize the success of the strategy. Be clear about what will be done, by whom, and how it contributes to the goal.
 - d) Reference the example Goals-to-Action Planning Worksheet (**pg. 22**) and the example execution actions (**pgs. 23-24**) to help structure your responses and plan how you will follow through on each action.
- 3. Repeat the process for each additional shared goal.**
- 4. Review completed worksheets with the partnership leadership team.**
 - a) Use this time to confirm ownership, clarify expectations, and determine which strategies should be prioritized first.
 - b) Use the Goal Progress Monitoring Tracker Template (**pgs. 29-30**) to track implementation and maintain momentum.

Goals-to-Action Planning Worksheet

Use this worksheet to break a shared goal into clear strategies and actions for each partner. A **strategy** is a high-level approach to move toward the shared goal (e.g., outreach campaign, curriculum redesign, recruitment incentives). An **action** is a specific, concrete step to implement each strategy (e.g., host an information session, revise a course syllabus, launch a recruitment event). You can add more strategies or actions if needed, but we recommend starting with at least two strategies for each partner to enable prioritization.

Shared Goal:

District Strategy 1

District Strategy 2

School of Education Strategy 1

School of Education Strategy 2

Action(s)

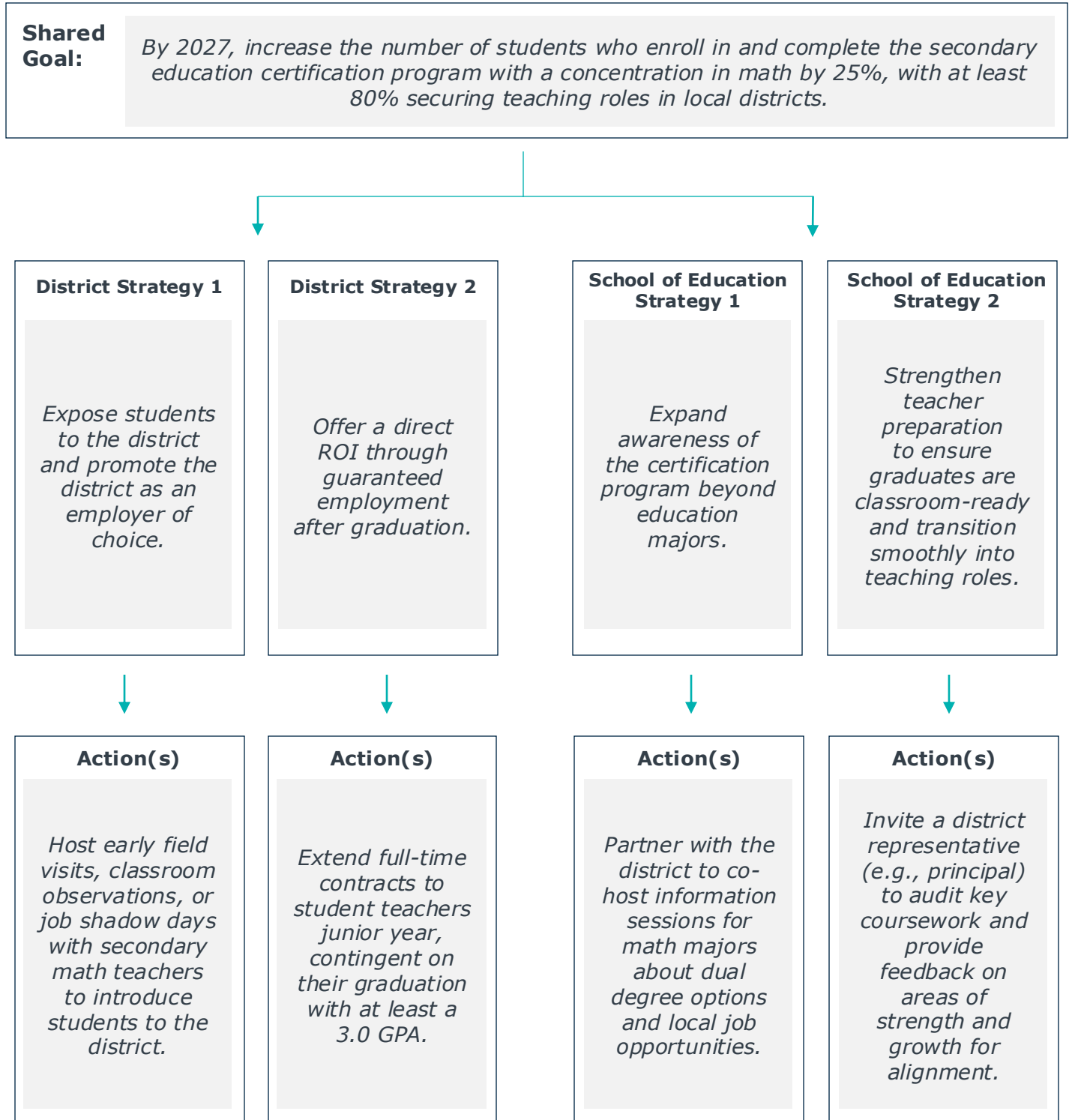
Action(s)

Action(s)

Action(s)

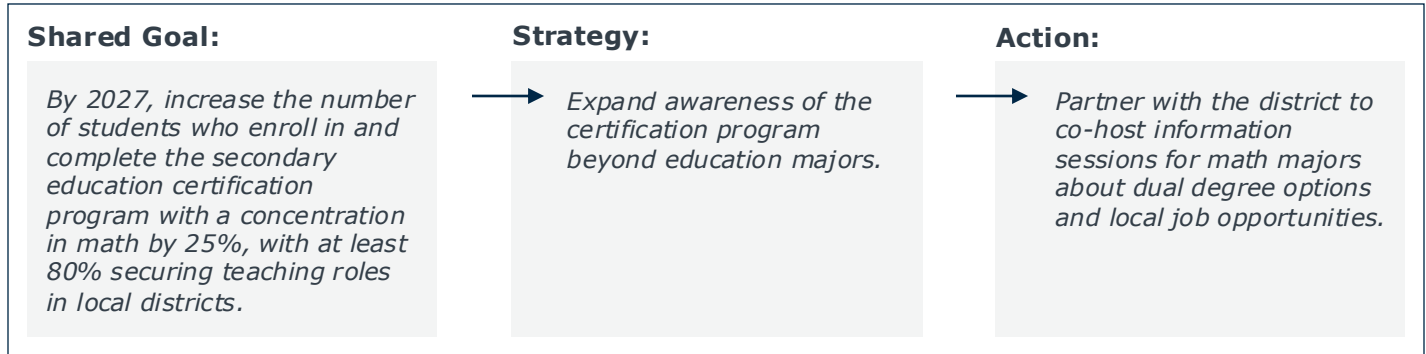
Example: Goals-to-Action Planning Worksheet

This completed example shows how a shared goal can be translated into specific strategies and actions. Review how both the district and school of education partner contribute. Use this example as a reference when filling out your own worksheet.



Example: Executing a Shared Goal Through Partnership

This case example illustrates how a district and school of education could advance a shared goal by co-hosting information sessions for math majors. Use it as an example to guide your own efforts to activate partnership strategies.



Case Example 1: Putting a Shared Goal into Action

Expand Certification Pathways to Engage Math Majors

1 Coordinate with Campus Stakeholders

- Partner with math faculty and academic advisors to identify promotion channels
- Co-sponsor the session with career services

2 Host a Targeted Info Session

- Co-brand the event as "Turn Your Math Major into a Career in Education" to appeal to non-education majors
- Highlight local job demand, early field experiences, and guaranteed hiring offers
- Explain how the dual degree works, what credits count, and how to graduate job-ready

3 Use a Student-Facing One-Pager

- Share a flyer that highlights steps to enroll in the program, benefits, and career outcomes

4 Capture and Follow Up on Interest

- Send a short interest form to students
- Follow up individually to schedule guidance sessions

Turn Your Major into a Career in Education

Program at a Glance

- | | |
|---|---|
| ✓ Earn dual degree in Math and Secondary Education | ✓ Apply up to 15 credits from existing coursework to streamline your degree path |
| ✓ Apply math skills (i.e., logic, problem-solving) to support all learners succeed | ✓ Start field experience early sophomore year |
| ✓ Gain in-demand teaching skills that enhance your classroom readiness | ✓ Graduate job-ready with a professional teaching degree |

Why Students Pick This Path

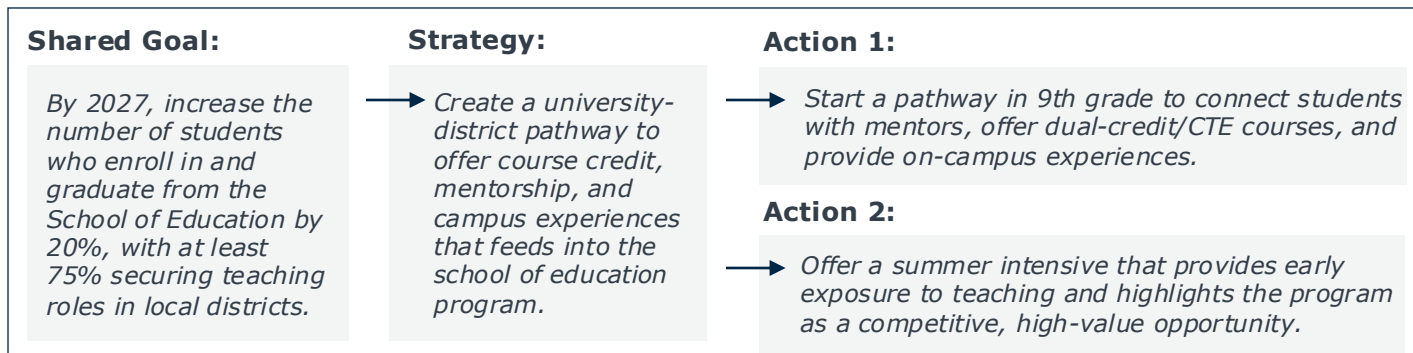
- | | |
|--|---|
| ✓ Meaningful career with community impact | ✓ Built-in certification with undergrad degree—no extra schooling required |
| ✓ Transferable skills (i.e., communication, leadership, adaptability) | ✓ Paid opportunities while completing your degree |

How Do I Get Involved?

- Attend an info session** (online or in-person) hosted by your university. Find upcoming session times [here](#).
- Try it out – start small!** Tutor high school math students or shadow a teacher. Check out local opportunities [here](#).
- Talk to your advisor** to see how to fit certification into your current degree.

Example: Executing a Shared Goal Through Partnership

This case example shows how a district and university partner worked together to build an educator pathway to achieve a shared goal. Use it as an example to guide your own strategy with clear goals, targeted strategies, and coordinated actions.



Case Example 2: Putting a Shared Goal into Action

Future Educators Pathway¹ Builds a Strong Pipeline Into Teaching

1 Design a District-and-Labor Market-Informed Pathway

- Analyze multiple district staffing gaps and regional labor market data to identify high-need teaching areas
- Build a pathway to address these needs and increase matriculation from local high schools into the School of Education

2 Recruit and Engage Students Early

- Launch outreach through school counselors and teacher ambassadors
- Introduce teacher careers through a pathway starting in 9th-grade and a three-week summer intensive on the university campus to offer course credit, mentorship, classroom shadowing

3 Engage High School Families

- Host orientation sessions for families to explain pathway value
- Involve families early through regular check-ins to encourage student persistence

4 Build Teacher Mentorship Connections

- Pair high school students with district teacher mentors for ongoing support
- Connect students with university mentor for guidance once enrolled

5 Evaluate Programming and Track Results

- Track participation, matriculation, persistence outcomes
- Use feedback to adjust recruitment, mentorship, and family engagement strategies from shared learning across participating districts

Early Success Metrics for Districts & University

20

Participating districts within eight years of launch strengthening local pipeline development efforts

1,000+

Student participants in the three-week summer residency program to learn about education career

60%

Matriculation rate of students from high school pathway to university school of education program

1) Anonymized university-district partnership



Partnership Responsibilities Checklist

Tool Description

Over time, partnerships face shifting priorities, staff turnover, and changing dynamics. To remain effective, both districts and schools of education need a clear record of who is responsible for ongoing tasks and actions. This checklist provides a simple tool to document responsibilities, maintain accountability, and support regular communication to keep efforts coordinated.

Use the checklist to assign key contacts to recurring responsibilities, set expectations for ongoing communication and collaboration, and keep both partners aligned as priorities evolve. Regularly reviewing and updating the checklist helps sustain momentum and ensure the partnership continues to drive progress toward shared pipeline goals.



Implementation Steps

1. Identify key recurring responsibilities.

- a) Review the Partnership Responsibilities Checklist (**pgs. 26-28**) to identify core responsibilities for both district and school of education partners.
- b) Add or customize responsibilities as needed to reflect partnership-specific needs (e.g., data sharing, communications).

2. Assign a point of contact to every responsibility to ensure individuals have the capacity and authority to follow through based on their expertise and capacity.

3. Set a frequency or cadence for each responsibility by clarifying how often each task should occur (e.g., monthly, per quarter) to keep expectations aligned and consistently working toward intended outcomes.

4. Revisit and update the checklist regularly.


- a) Use partnership meetings to reflect on role changes, evolving needs, or task handoffs.
- b) Updates from this checklist can also support the Goal Progress Monitoring Tracker Template (**pg. 29**), helping clarify ownership of specific strategies and support regular check-ins.

Partnership Responsibilities Checklist

Use this checklist to assign clear responsibilities that align with shared goals, build accountability, and ensure long-term sustainability. In each column, indicate the following:


- **Owners(s):** Identify which partner (i.e., district, school of education) will own the responsibility.
- **Point of Contact:** Name the individual(s) responsible for overseeing the task.
- **Frequency:** Specify how often the task will be performed (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually).

The responsibilities listed below are examples to guide your planning. You can customize or add additional tasks to fit your partnership's specific needs. The checklist should be updated regularly to reflect evolving responsibilities.

<div>  Program Management </div>			
Responsibility	Owner(s)	Point of Contact	Frequency
Oversee student recruitment, enrollment, and completion for educator pipeline programs and initiatives.			
Provide academic and career counseling to ensure students stay on track to complete the program.			
Support academic and career advising to strengthen recruitment of future educators.			
Maintain student records by specifying who monitors attendance, credits, transfers, and completions .			
Facilitate learning experiences and coordinate logistics between partners.			
Develop industry-aligned competencies and learning outcomes that prepare students for future teaching roles in various high-need content areas.			
Support faculty, including hiring, professional development, and credentialing aligned to pipeline goals.			
Maintain ongoing communication with participants and their families to support engagement and success.			
Provide transportation to campuses and field experiences where needed.			

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Partnership Responsibilities Checklist (cont.)

<div>  Progress Monitoring </div>			
Responsibility	Owner(s)	Point of Contact	Frequency
Track and monitor progress toward shared goals and action items to ensure follow-through and accountability.			
Evaluate partner priorities and actions to confirm alignment with shared goals and pipeline objectives.			
Review student data related to educator pipeline programs and update dashboards to inform decisions.			
Identify trends or gaps from data and adjust strategies or actions as needed.			
Collect feedback from leaders, students, educators, and faculty involved in pipeline programs to evaluate program effectiveness from multiple perspectives.			
Document lessons learned and best practices to inform future pipeline strategies and campaigns.			
Audit partnership documents (e.g., MOU) periodically to ensure they reflect current priorities and agreements.			
Review and adjust funding sources and partner responsibilities regularly to sustain educator pipeline initiatives.			

Partnership Responsibilities Checklist (cont.)



Collaboration & Communication

Responsibility	Owner(s)	Point of Contact	Frequency
Develop and maintain a shared communication plan (e.g., how updates are shared, who is included, timelines).			
Plan regular check-ins with key contacts to share progress updates, discuss challenges, and align next steps to maintain transparency and alignment.			
Send and review detailed reports on student engagement, enrollment, and completion trends.			
Share any changes in partner priorities or strategies to guide joint decision-making.			
Coordinate joint presentations or updates to stakeholders (e.g., boards, district leadership, university leadership) to maintain buy-in.			
Review and confirm that key contacts align with partnership needs, communicate any changes, and update roles if capacity or expertise changes.			
Plan succession for key contacts to prevent disruption during leadership or staff changes.			
Create a plan to resolve disagreements or miscommunications.			



Goal Progress Monitoring Tracker Template

Tool Description

Without regular progress tracking, partnerships risk losing visibility into whether initiatives are succeeding. Consistent monitoring is essential to understand what's working, identify challenges early, and make informed adjustments. This tool provides a template to track goal progress and keep efforts aligned and impactful.

Use the Mutually Beneficial Goal Tracker to record updates on specific partnership strategies. Regularly review it with your school of education partner to support transparency, maintain alignment, and move shared goals forward.



Implementation Steps

- 1. Regularly track progress for each shared goal** using the Mutually Beneficial Goal Tracker (pg. 30).
 - a) Document the strategies and actions that were prioritized in the Goals-to-Action Planning Worksheet (pg. 20).
 - b) Assign an owner to each action who has the capacity and expertise to initiate, lead, and monitor it.
 - c) List the success metric(s) that define what success looks like for each action.
 - d) Set a timeline and milestones for when actions will start, end, and be reviewed. Identify ideal check-in points to assess progress, hold milestone meetings, or adjust plans if needed.
- 2. Review and update the tracker regularly.** Treat the tracker as a living document and reference it in partnership check-ins to reinforce accountability, make timely decisions, and ensure both sides stay aligned.
- 3. Share updates with key stakeholders.** Ensure action owners and leadership from both the district and school of education review progress regularly.

Mutually Beneficial Goal Tracker Template

Use this table to monitor progress on each shared goal and its associated strategies and actions from the Goals-to-Action Planning Worksheet (pg. 21). Complete a separate table for each shared goal identified in the Partnership Goal-Setting Template (pg. 17).

Adjust as needed to fit your partnership’s monitoring practices, and review regularly during check-ins to keep both partners aligned so they can make responsive decisions.

Shared Goal:

Strategy	Action	Action Owner	Success Metric(s)	Timeframe (Start-End or Key Milestones)	Comments (Progress Updates, Learnings, Adjustments)
Example: Offer a direct ROI through guaranteed employment after graduation.	Extend full-time contracts to student teachers junior year, contingent on their graduation with at least a 3.0 GPA.	District HR Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Offer contracts to high-quality, eligible student teachersReceive at least 60% acceptances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Initiate conversations in OctoberOffer contracts in NovemberSolidify positions by March	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Add evaluation structure for next student teacher cycleReview retention outcomes at the end of the academic year



Memorandum of Understanding Blueprint Tool

Tool Description

After districts invest in building partnerships with schools of education, staff turnover and transitions can cause agreements, expectations, and progress to be lost or delayed due to miscommunication or lack of continuity. This often happens because many commitments rely on personal relationships or informal understandings rather than documented processes.

Formalizing the partnership with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) helps prevent this breakdown. When implemented effectively, an MOU strengthens buy-in, ensures continuity, and provides a framework for transparent collaboration over time. It codifies decisions and establishes consistent processes that sustain the partnership beyond individual relationships.

This tool helps districts draft new or refine current MOUs. Use this tool to understand what information to include in each section, review example language, and create a document that solidifies partnership commitments for long-term success.



Implementation Steps

- 1. Gather any existing partnership documentation.** Collect any prior MOUs, meeting notes, communications, materials related to the partnership, or documents developed throughout this toolkit (e.g., SMART Goals, Goals-to-Actions Planning Worksheet, Goal Tracker, Partnership Responsibilities Checklist).
- 2. Review the Key Elements of a Strong MOU.**
 - a) Use the checklist (**pg. 32**) to understand the components required for an effective, long-lasting MOU agreement.
 - b) If your partnership already has an established MOU, evaluate it against the key elements to identify strengths and areas that need improvement.
 - c) If your partnership does not have an MOU, use the key elements as a guide to begin drafting a new agreement for the partnership.
- 3. Review the sample MOU document (pg. 33)** to see strong elements applied in practice.
- 4. Complete the MOU template with your partnership information.**
 - a) Fill in the template (**pg. 34**) with your partnership information, incorporating all key elements.
 - b) Collaborate with your higher education partner to write, review, and confirm the details, verifying the document reflects shared commitments.
 - c) Finalize and share the completed MOU with all relevant stakeholders to secure approval and ensure everyone understands their roles and responsibilities outlined in the agreement.

Key Elements of a Strong MOU

MOUs are most effective when they clearly define shared priorities, expectations, and processes for long-term collaboration. Use this tool to audit your current agreement or develop a new one that is structured, aligned, and sustainable.

1 Context and Mission Alignment



Establish how the partnership connects to each institution's priorities and goals. Clear alignment keeps efforts focused on educator recruitment.

The MOU should explicitly state and include:

- ☐ The shared SMART goal(s) you have developed together.
- ☐ How the shared goal(s) align with both the district's and higher education institution's priorities (e.g., filling educator vacancies, increasing degree enrollment).
- ☐ A description of how educator recruitment connects to the district and higher ed institutional mission and/or values.

2 Partner Expectations



Define roles, responsibilities, and standards so both parties work toward shared goals and avoid conflicting actions. Outlining expectations builds accountability and ensures decisions and actions align with the partnership's objectives.

The MOU should explicitly state and include:

- ☐ Both partners' planned strategies and actions to achieve the shared goal(s).
- ☐ The responsibilities assigned to key contacts from the district and school of education.
- ☐ The process for measuring and reporting progress for each strategy and action (e.g., data sharing, check-ins).
- ☐ The data points or success metrics each party will monitor and how they will be collected and reviewed.
- ☐ A description of how disagreements or miscommunications will be resolved.

3 Conditions of the MOU



Describe how the agreement will be maintained over time, including processes for updates, reviews, and leadership transitions to ensure it remains relevant.

The MOU should explicitly state and include:

- ☐ The duration of the agreement (start/end dates) and renewal terms.
- ☐ The process and regularity for reviewing the MOU.
- ☐ The process for making changes to or terminating the MOU.
- ☐ The signatures of authorized representatives from both district and higher ed partner.

Sample Partnership MOU

This sample MOU highlights key elements of a strong agreement. Reference it as you build your own draft agreement.

District X & University Y Partnership MOU

Effective Date: January 1, 2022

Duration: Five years

I. Summary

The purpose of this MOU is to formalize a partnership between the District and the School of Education at University to establish a Math Teacher Pathway Program. This partnership aims to recruit and support students in college to obtain their secondary education mathematics teaching certification and teach in a full-time position at the District.

This will address the secondary math teacher vacancies at the District and the low enrollment in the secondary certification program at the University.

II. Partnership SMART Goals

By 2027, increase the number of students who enroll in and complete the secondary education certification program with a concentration in math by 25%, with at least 80% securing teaching roles in local districts. Progress will be tracked using student enrollment, completion, and employment data reviewed quarterly.

Shared goal is clearly outlined and aligns to partner priorities.

III. Program Components

A. Student Recruitment: The District and University will co-host information sessions for math majors to promote the dual degree option and encourage program enrollment.

B. Experiential Learning: The District will provide field visits, classroom observations, and student teaching opportunities to familiarize candidates with the district and its environment.

C. Employment Pipeline: The District will offer full-time contracts to University student teachers with at least a 3.0 GPA, helping to meet hiring goals.

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

The District shall: Provide field placements, offer resources and mentorship, and prioritize graduates for hiring consideration.

The University shall: Provide course curriculum and advising, facilitate certification attainment, and maintain program evaluation and data sharing with the District to ensure all candidates are prepared to meet hiring needs.

Progress toward the SMART goal will be reviewed at least quarterly using the agreed upon success metrics and data sources, with adjustments to strategies made as needed to stay on track.

Partner expectations hold each partner accountable.

V. Partnership Review and Audit

This MOU is effective as of the date signed and will remain in effect for five years unless terminated by either party with 90 days' written notice. Modifications to the SMART goal, partner actions, or progress monitoring may be made by mutual agreement. This document will be reviewed every academic year by all parties.

Conditions of the MOU establish regular reviews and audits.

VI. Signatures


The District


The University

Source: EAB interviews and analysis.

Partnership MOU Template

Use this template to draft or update your MOU. Refer to the Key Elements of a Strong MOU (pg. 32) for support. Adapt the template as needed to fit your partnership.

[District] and [University] Partnership MOU

Effective Date: _____
Duration: _____

Context and Alignment

I. Summary

The purpose of this MOU is to formalize a partnership between [District] and [University]. This partnership aims to _____ and aligns to [District] and [University] priorities through _____.

II. Partnership SMART Goals

Shared SMART goal(s): [State each shared goal clearly]

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Partner Expectations

III. Program Components

[List each strategy and its related action. Metrics for success should be identified and refined through the progress monitoring process.]

A. Strategy: _____ Action(s): _____ Success Metric(s): _____

B. Strategy: _____ Action(s): _____ Success Metric(s): _____

C. Strategy: _____ Action(s): _____ Success Metric(s): _____

D. Strategy: _____ Action(s): _____ Success Metric(s): _____

IV. Roles and Responsibilities

The District shall: [Briefly state how each responsibility directly supports achieving the shared goal]

The Institution shall: [Briefly state how each responsibility directly supports achieving the shared goal]

Progress toward the SMART goal will be reviewed _____ using the agreed upon success metrics and data sources, and strategies will be adjusted as needed.

Conditions of the MOU

V. Partnership Review and Audit

This MOU is effective as of the date signed and will remain in effect for _____ unless terminated by either party with _____ written notice. Modifications may be made by _____. This document will be reviewed _____ by all parties.

VI. Signatures

 The District

 The University



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ABOUT EAB

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