

The Educator Journey

Five Decisions to Build a Thriving Teacher Pipeline

Today, fewer people are entering the teaching profession and earning certification, and those who do often encounter confusing or discouraging pathways into the classroom. As these pressures grow, traditional district recruitment tactics can't keep pace. EAB's research finds that every educator makes five pivotal decisions along their employment journey, from initial interest to long-term retention. Each decision represents a moment when a potential teacher either moves forward or steps away from the profession. Districts that anticipate and support these decision points can turn interest into commitment and build a stronger, more sustainable educator workforce.

Use this infographic to see how small, intentional actions at every stage of the educator journey can help your district strengthen its teacher pipeline.

Attract

Spark Early Interest in Teaching

Inform

Clarify the Path to the Classroom

Target

Convert Interest into Applications

Secure

Stand Out as the District of Choice

Retain

Sustain Growth and Belonging

DECISION CHECK

Am I interested in teaching?

Interest in education starts long before hiring. Districts that help students see and experience teaching early can spark a lasting interest and passion in teaching.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES THAT WORK

► Offer early exposure

Use tutoring, mentoring, or clubs to let students explore the education profession with minimal commitment.

► Promote teaching's long-term value

Highlight the leadership skills and community impact that make education a meaningful and rewarding career.

► Deepen engagement through hands-on learning

Offer dual-credit courses or structured career-exploration experience that connect with students' diverse interests.

DECISION CHECK

Should I get credentialed?

Many aspiring educators lose momentum between interest and licensure. Simplifying requirements and aligning preparation with real district needs helps keep them on track and future teachers see a clear, supported path ahead.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES THAT WORK

► Build stronger higher ed partnerships

Align on shared goals for expanding the local educator pipeline and co-design preparation programs to ensure candidates are ready for the roles your district needs.

► Clarify pathways to credentials

Create clear, district-aligned routes that guide candidates through alternative licensure pathways and prepare them for the classroom.

DECISION CHECK

Should I apply to this district?

A strong applicant pool depends on visibility, speed, and personal connection. When districts make it easy to apply, start outreach early, and expand recruiting beyond traditional schools of education, they capture more high-quality candidates.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES THAT WORK

► Use data to get ahead of vacancies

Analyze multi-year hiring trends and start outreach early to secure top candidates before other districts.

► Streamline the application

Keep postings visible and the process quick from click to submit.

► Activate your champions

Equip teachers and staff to share consistent messages about why candidates should join your district.

DECISION CHECK

Should I choose this district over another?

Today's candidates expect more—and something different—from their workplaces. Districts that clearly articulate their unique employee experience and demonstrate how they meet the needs of candidates are better positioned to become a district of choice.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES THAT WORK

► Define your Employee Value Proposition (EVP)

Clearly communicate what makes your district a rewarding place to work and reinforce it consistently across every hiring touchpoint.

► Showcase the full educator experience

Showcase the full educator experience. Pair total compensation with concrete examples of collaboration, flexibility, and professional growth that reflect what today's candidates value most.

► Modernize the daily work experience

Incorporate team-based models that reduce educator isolation, burnout, and enhance mentoring and professional collaboration.

DECISION CHECK

Should I stay at this district?

Strong education retention means creating school environments where educators feel supported, valued, and able to grow. When teachers experience strong morale and supportive leadership, they are far more likely to stay and become champions for your district.

DISTRICT STRATEGIES THAT WORK

► Invest in teacher morale

Diagnose the drivers of low morale and work with teachers and leaders to co-design solutions that improve day-to-day support, collaboration, and belonging.

► Develop principal leadership

Equip principals with the strategic and people-leadership skills needed to support educators and lead effective schools.

For more information on teacher recruitment and retention, visit

eab.com/k12

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