

TeachReadyNC

A Bold New Teacher Apprenticeship Initiative

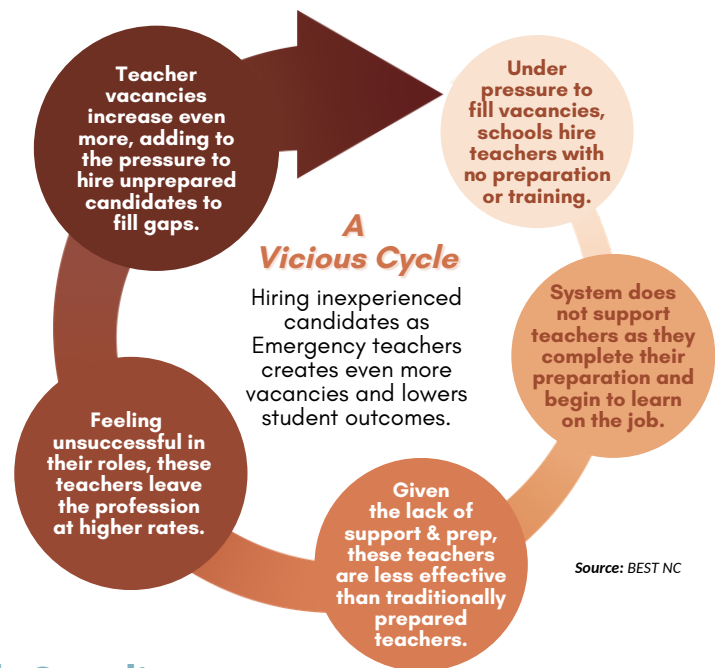
A Paid Pathway to Prepared Teachers

TeachReadyNC addresses the challenges created by the growing pipeline of alternatively licensed teachers – college educated professionals who are interested in becoming a teacher but have no required traditional teacher preparation or classroom experience. This initiative is designed to disrupt the costly cycle of teacher turnover, while giving students access to more experienced, more effective teachers.

The Problem

- In 2025, 44% of new teachers entered through alternative licensure (Emergency or Permit to Teach), doubling the rate from just ten years prior.
- Alternatively licensed candidates enter classrooms as teachers of record without any required training, classroom experience, or enrollment in an Educator Preparation Program (EPP).
- Furthermore, 47% of alternatively licensed teachers never earn full licensure. This leaves students with teachers who were never fully read to teach, or without a teacher because they weren't supported and left the profession.
- Research shows that consecutive years of ineffective teaching can have effects on a child's academic future that are difficult to reverse, even when followed by years of effective teaching.

When a school has to go through the costly process of replacing even one teacher, it negatively impacts student learning across the entire building.



TeachReadyNC: A Bold Plan for North Carolina

TeachReadyNC is now law under the 2026 Appropriations Act (S.L. 2026-41) with \$1 million in recurring state funding. BEST NC is supporting the design and launch of TeachReadyNC in partnership with the NC Department of Public Instruction and ApprenticeshipNC. Districts may begin launching apprenticeship cohorts as early as the 2026-27 school year. Educator preparation programs (EPPs) are beginning to align their coursework to support apprentices, and BEST NC will engage Advanced Teaching Roles™ (ATR™) districts as the program rolls out statewide.

TeachReadyNC creates the nation's first paid apprenticeship pathway for college educated professionals who are eager to enter the teaching profession but might not have had adequate formal training or experience as an alternative entry teacher working toward a Residency License.

These candidates are ready and willing to teach, and they represent North Carolina's largest immediate source of new educators. But readiness to serve is not the same as readiness to teach. Without a paid apprenticeship option, these candidates enter classrooms unsupported, and students shoulder the resulting academic consequences.

In 2024-25,
44%

of new North Carolina teachers had no formal teacher preparation or in-class experience before entering the classroom as the teacher of record.

Source: NC DPI (Data Request)



Theory of Change

Redirect alternative entry teachers into structured, paid apprenticeships within ATR teams to improve practice and increase teacher retention (an estimated 2,000 teachers per year at scale).

What Is the Goal?

The goal of TeachReadyNC is to improve student outcomes by ensuring all students — especially in low wealth or hard to staff districts — have access to effective, well-prepared teachers by:

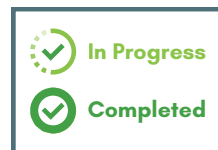
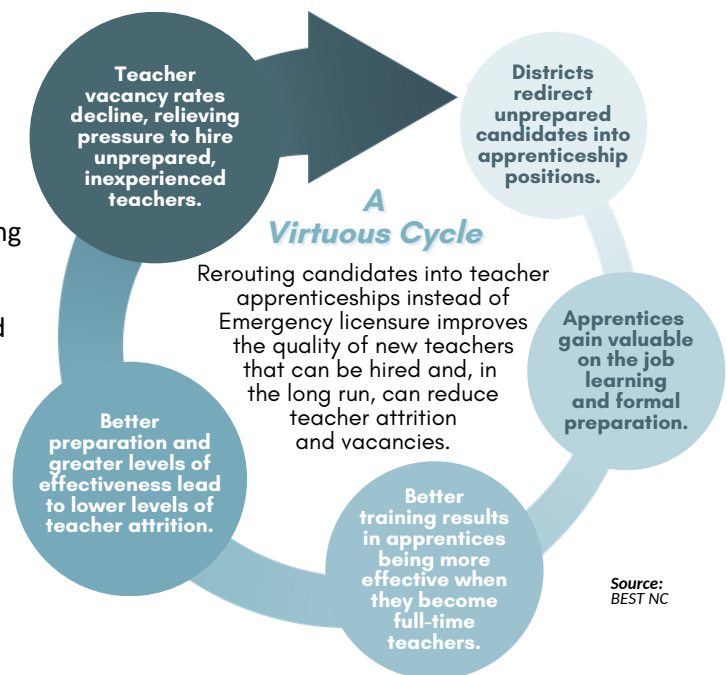
- Reducing reliance on underprepared candidates;
- Offering affordable, accessible licensure pathways for teacher candidates;
- Improving teacher retention through mentorship and progressive pay;
- Enhancing teacher preparedness with job-embedded training;
- Using evidence-based tools to identify core qualities and skills that are needed for teaching;
- Establishing a select corps of well-supported mentor teachers; and
- Empowering HR/personnel administrators with tools and skills to staff strategically.

How Does It Work?

- **Paid, Progressive Apprenticeship:** Apprentices are full-time paid employees, earning a teacher assistant salary with up to \$7,500 in additional supplements as competencies are mastered through a defined wage progression.
- **High-Quality Mentorship:** Each apprentice is paired with a mentor teacher on an ATR team. Mentors are compensated \$5,000, and receive support from ApprenticeshipNC and training from the NC Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI). Additionally, teachers who accept a small number of additional students to support the model also receive \$5,000.
- **Integrated Educator Preparation:** Apprentices are enrolled in a recognized Educator Preparation Program (EPP). Up to \$5,000 per year may be applied toward tuition after other scholarships and grants have been used.
- **Clear Pathway to Licensure:** Apprentices may participate for up to three years, progressively building competencies, earning credits and completing requirements that lead to a full professional license.
- **Designed so Students Benefit Immediately:** Qualified teachers can temporarily teach more students for a significant stipend, immediately addressing the challenges that arise when underprepared teachers are placed in our state's highest need classrooms.

Better. Faster. Less Expensive.

- At scale, programs would be able to produce thousands of apprentices per year, not hundreds.
- Apprentices are ready to teach, typically in one year.
- Three different layers of support: apprentice teacher supervisor, ATR team, and EPP training.
- Students are not subjected to unqualified teachers.



TeachReadyNC Projects Under Way

- ✓ 1. Apprenticeship Competencies
- ✓ 2. Technical Assistance and Onboarding Systems
- ✓ 3. Mentorship System Redesign
- ✓ 4. HR Triage Tool and Candidate Readiness Assessment
- ✓ 5. EPP and ATR Alignment

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Learn More About the
TeachReadyNC Program



The Future Core of North Carolina's Teacher Recruitment Strategy

North Carolina should utilize learnings from the TeachReadyNC pilot programs to inform how to scale the initiative statewide. As with any innovation, expansion will require an intentionality, patience, persistence, and a commitment to fostering public-private partnerships to ensure all students and teachers benefit.