

FOUR IDEAS TO HELP PA TEACHERS REMAKE LEARNING

The teaching profession in Pennsylvania is at a crossroads. Persistent statewide teacher shortages and a lack of diversity in the field leave schools struggling to fully serve all students. Outdated pre-service training and professional development prevent teachers from improving their practice. At the same time, expectations for teachers and students are higher than ever as they work to meet the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century.

HOW CAN PENNSYLVANIA PREPARE TEACHERS TO REMAKE LEARNING?

Here are four ways policymakers can ensure that each and every student in Pennsylvania is taught by teachers who are well prepared to provide the education all students deserve.

ADAPTED FROM *PREPARING PENNSYLVANIA TEACHERS TO REMAKE LEARNING: A REVIEW OF STATE POLICIES*.

PREPARED BY



IN COLLABORATION WITH



1 Curb the teacher shortage trend



33 PA school districts have an inadequate supply of teachers

WHY

When teachers complete comprehensive preparation programs, they are more effective in the classroom and stay in the profession longer.

Unfortunately, to achieve this level of preparation, more than two-thirds of teachers go into debt. And low teacher salaries are often a disincentive to taking on such debt.

As a result, Pennsylvania is faced with a persistent shortage of teachers, especially in high-need communities and essential subjects.

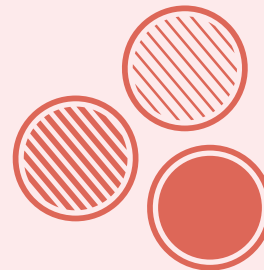
HOW

- Offer targeted service scholarships to incentivize teaching as a career path
- Fund loan forgiveness programs to reduce the burden of becoming a teacher

“Service scholarships could be Pennsylvania’s ‘go to the moon’ effort.”

- Dr. Tom Ralston, Superintendent of Avonworth School District

2 Diversify the teacher workforce



Subjects with teacher shortages:

- English as a second language
- Science
- Mathematics
- Special education
- Vocational education

WHY

Increasing teacher diversity benefits all students and has significant benefits for students of color in particular, including positive impacts on academic performance and social-emotional learning.

Reviewing the existing licensure and accreditation system used in Pennsylvania is a first step toward realizing the state’s priority to diversify its teacher workforce.

Creating and supporting high-quality and comprehensive points of entry into the profession, such as teacher residencies, has proven successful in recruitment and retention of teachers of color.

HOW

- Offer service scholarships and loan forgiveness
- Evaluate use of tests as recruitment and admissions tools
- Support programs that prepare paraprofessionals to become teachers
- Increase use of teacher performance assessments to evaluate readiness
- Consider alternatives to GPA requirements for program acceptance

Teacher preparation enrollment in Pennsylvania is down 65% since 2009–10

3 Improve clinical field experiences



WHY

When pre-service teachers have more time to practice in the field, districts have more opportunities to identify and support their needs. Plus, expanded clinical experience improves teacher practice, initial competence, and long-term retention.

Currently, pre-service teachers are only required to complete 12 weeks of clinical experience and there are no incentives to encourage more than the minimum.

Furthermore, Pennsylvania can ensure quality clinical experiences by supporting reciprocal partnerships between districts, teacher training programs, and professional development providers.

HOW

- Provide grants to incentivize “professional development schools”
- Increase support for experienced educators mentoring pre-service teachers in clinical experiences
- Emphasize clinical experience in program accreditation and review
- Expand the required duration of clinical experience to a full school year

Percentage of teachers of color nationally: **20%**

In PA: **5.6%**

Percentage of students of color in PA: **33.1%**

“We need to redefine teacher education from a 4- or 5-year collegiate experience to a 7-year collegiate and practice experience featuring increased quality of pre-service programs, induction, and continuing professional education, as well as improved linkages among them.”

4 Strengthen the K-12 prep framework



WHY

Excellent teachers are skilled in more than just the classroom instruction of their subject. They are also skilled in supporting equity and inclusion, modern teaching practices, and the social, emotional, and behavioral wellness of students.

Pennsylvania’s current framework for teacher preparation provides a strong foundation upon which to build.

As the Commonwealth begins the mandated 10-year review of Chapter 49 of the Pennsylvania Code, policymakers have an opportunity to establish priorities that will guide preparation for the next decade.

HOW

- Consider models like California’s Teacher Performance Expectations
- Emphasize project-based assessments, culturally responsive pedagogy, and trauma informed teaching practices
- Expand application of the Framework for Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Wellness to all teachers
- Enhance focus on equity in the PDE-430 student teaching assessment tool

- report from the Pennsylvania Governor’s Commission on Training America’s Teachers, 2005

ABOUT THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

These recommendations were developed in 2017-2018 by the Learning Policy Institute in collaboration with members of the Remake Learning network, including representatives from 4 public school districts and the 10 colleges and universities that produce the vast majority of teachers in Western Pennsylvania. Working together, the group identified the need to improve how Pennsylvania prepares pre-service and in-service teachers to provide deeper student learning experiences. Additional input was provided by the Innovative Education Policy Collaborative and Next-Generation Professional Learning Collaborative, working groups of Remake Learning that include representatives from regional school districts, policy advocacy organizations, schools of education, intermediate units, and professional development providers.

Implementing the recommendations outlined here will require additional capacity and funding for the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE). We stress the need for the Governor and General Assembly to ensure PDE has adequate funding and staff to provide statewide supports for quality teacher preparation.

**READ THE FULL REPORT AT
[REMAKELEARNING.ORG/PREPARINGTEACHERS](https://remakelearning.org/preparingteachers)**

LEARNING POLICY INSTITUTE

The Learning Policy Institute conducts and communicates independent, high-quality research to improve education policy and practice. Working with policymakers, researchers, educators, community groups, and others, the Institute seeks to advance evidence-based policies that support empowering and equitable learning for each and every child. Learn more at learningpolicyinstitute.org

REMAKE LEARNING

Remake Learning is a network that ignites engaging, relevant, and equitable learning practices in support of young people navigating rapid social and technological change. The Innovative Education Policy Collaborative is a working group of Remake Learning that seeks to leverage policies that scale and spread education innovation. Learn more at remakelearning.org